

The Gender Dichotomy and Its Impact on the Attitude and Satisfaction Levels of First-year Female College Students towards their High School Physical Education Experience

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the adolescent girls who are struggling to find an active identity and all the physical education teachers helping them. My hope is that this research will help physical education teachers (as well as curriculum developers and physical education teacher educators) develop a greater understanding of adolescent girls with regard to physical activity. May they continue to strive to understand their students so that every girl might experience and engage in activities that empower her to foster and develop an active, healthy lifestyle.

Abstract

Current research (Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011) indicates a significant lack of participation among adolescent girls in physical education. This behavior, the research suggests, may be explained by the possibility that physical education inadvertently foster a gender dichotomy by deploying learned ideologies of femininity. According to research (Azzarito, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Jeanes, 2011), young women are more explicitly affected by the gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom. This mixed method study sought a dynamic answer to the question of women's avoidance and apparent dissatisfaction with physical education by exploring the attitude and satisfaction levels of first-year female college students toward their high school physical education classes. Questionnaires were used to examine the attitude and satisfaction levels that first-year female college students (N=51) exhibited towards their high school physical education experiences and to gauge their perception of the presence of a gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom. The quantitative data criteria narrowed the potential interview participants to nine girls. To give voice to their experiences, and to gain a better understanding of the gender dichotomy associated with participation in physical education, a feminist perspective guided the qualitative interviews. A basic qualitative approach with a feminist perspective guided the analysis of the interview data. The results of this study offer further and more complete evidence to explain young women's lack of involvement in physical education classes. It also offers curricular and pedagogical suggestions for achieving a more inclusive physical education environment.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

While the benefits of physical activity (e.g., increase in bone mass, decrease in blood pressure, gains in psychological well-being) have been well supported in the literature (National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE] & American Heart Association [AHA], 2012; PE4life, 2007; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2008, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2010), many young people, and especially girls, fail to meet the minimum guidelines set forth by the Surgeon General (DeBate, Gabriel, Zwald, Huberty, & Zhang, 2009; NASPE & AHA, 2012; Parker, Schmitz, Jacobs, Dengel, & Schreiner, 2007; PE4life, 2007). In fact, researchers report that “low and declining levels of physical activity are a particular concern among preadolescent and adolescent girls, as population-based surveys consistently report that girls are significantly less active than their male counterparts” (Ransdell & Petlichkoff, 2005, p. 4). Many physical education teachers have experienced the frustration of trying to motivate adolescent girls to participate and be active in class, only to have at least one group of girls consistently exhibit avoidance and resistance behaviors towards physical activity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Couturier, Chepko, & Coughlin, 2007; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Wang & Liu, 2007; Webber et al., 2008). These avoidance and resistance behaviors often manifest in skipping class, refusing to change into proper clothes, and neglecting to participate in class activities (Couturier et al., 2007; Hills & Croston, 2012; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011). The behaviors often contribute to the misconception that girls are lazy, unmotivated, and uninterested in physical activity

(Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Ennis, 1999; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Rich, 2004; Robbins, Gretebeck, Kazanis, & Pender, 2006; van Amsterdam, Knoppers, Claringbould, & Jongmans, 2012). Physical educators are often misinformed regarding adolescent female behavior, however, and are thus ill equipped to address the problem of class participation. As a consequence, physical education classes can become a lose–lose situation for both female students and physical education teachers.

Class environment and curriculum constitute important components of participation. The physical education class environment became more standardized in 1972, when federal legislation, known as Title IX, was passed to help make educational institutions more equitable in terms of opportunity, participation, and involvement in organized, competitive sports (Coakley, 2009). Title IX impacted the physical education classroom, in most cases, by prohibiting gender segregation, making many classes coeducational. Physical education teachers brought a multisport curriculum (emphasizing competition and sports) into these coeducational courses (Couturier et al., 2007; Ennis, 1999; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002). Now, over 35 years later, and in the face of growing research indicating girls’ lack of involvement, physical educators must ask whether the physical education environment and the physical education curriculum provide equitable, nongendered opportunities for student participation.

In 2001, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) sought to encourage physical education participation by issuing national standards for physical educators. These standards specifically address the need for teachers to understand the diverse, individual learners in their classes, and to work to provide these

learners with a safe, active, motivating environment. Often, however, and perhaps without even knowing it, teachers design curricula (such as the male-dominant multisport curriculum) and structure and teach classes without addressing these standards. When adolescent girls resist and avoid multisport curricula and/or fail to participate, they are often seen by physical education teachers and other students as unmotivated and part of a “problem” (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Rich, 2004; Robbins et al., 2006; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Velija & Kumar, 2009; Walton & Fisette, 2013). The end result is that girls are often issued consequences, such as failing grades or enforced nonparticipation, with little to no regard given to promoting their participation levels (Olafson, 2002; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Velija & Kumar, 2009).

Previous Research

A significant amount of research exists regarding the lack of physical participation and involvement among adolescent girls in physical education, and much of it agrees that the traditional, multisport curriculum is inequitable towards girls (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Couturier et al., 2007; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gabbei, 2004; Hill & Cleven, 2005; Klomsten, Marsh, & Skaalvik, 2005; Olafson, 2002; Wang & Liu, 2007; Webber et al., 2008). This curriculum, and the behavior among students that it sometimes provokes, is often based on traditional discourses about what it means to be feminine or masculine, with the male-oriented definitions of power and strength predominating. The discourses that define femininity and masculinity are socially constructed (Hills & Croston, 2012; Jeanes, 2011;

van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013), and the expectations associated with gender are learned and understood from both life experiences and the media (Walton & Fiset, 2013). According to research (Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; Walton & Fiset, 2013), traditional, idealized characteristics of femininity include gentleness, passivity, and quietness, and are associated with engagement in activities such as dance and cheerleading; traditional, idealized characteristics of masculinity include aggressiveness, activity, and loudness, and are associated with engagement in activities such as football and wrestling. Because of the unique, highly public nature of the body in physical education, the socially constructed idealized opposite images of femininity or masculinity are often expressed via a powerful gender dichotomy. This gender dichotomy is often played out in and as this study indicates, potentially reinforced by curricula (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fiset, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013).

However, femininity and the associated characteristics and ideologies of passivity and submissiveness may serve to constrain girls in physical education. Research indicates that girls who conform to learned definitions of gender and adhere to gender-appropriate activities in traditional discourses are often at a disadvantage when participating in the traditional curriculum of the physical education classroom (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; Walton & Fiset, 2013). To avoid the association with masculinity that results from participation in an activity perceived as masculine, or from the exhibition of masculine characteristics (such as sweating), some girls in the physical education classroom work to avoid any participation at all (Couturier et al., 2007; Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; Velija & Kumar, 2009; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). While general suggestions for changing curriculum and pedagogy have been

made to accommodate all participants, very few specific curricular designs (Ennis, 1999; Fraser-Thomas & Beaudoin, 2004; Pate et al., 2005) have been offered to address this specific issue.

Research has offered some potential solutions to these problems, but each of these solutions is incomplete. For example, studies (Fraser-Thomas & Beaudoin, 2004; Pate et al., 2005; PE4life, 2007) have shown that a comprehensive, school-based intervention can increase regular participation in vigorous physical activity among adolescent girls, but there are limitations. Fraser-Thomas and Beaudoin's (2004) study examined a Canadian program called the *new curriculum*. This new curriculum is more fitness-oriented than the multisport curriculum, focuses more on cooperation than competition, and claims to "address the issue of gender equity, stating 'all students will be successful, regardless of gender'" (Fraser-Thomas & Beaudoin, 2004, p. 47). The study utilized observations and interviews and focused on girls' appreciation of physical education classes and their integration of physical activity into their lifestyles. While results showed an increase in participation, evidence also surfaced indicating the continued existence of problems related to gender. Girls still had less of an opportunity to participate than boys, "were often victim to boys' derogatory remarks," and there were indications that "they were insecure, and they felt watched and judged by boys" (Fraser-Thomas & Beaudoin, 2004, p. 51).

There has also been some support to suggest that same-sex groupings in physical education may increase adolescent female participation; however, the research (Derry & Phillips, 2004; Evans, 2006; Garcia, 1994; Lee, Carter, & Xiang, 1995; Pipher, 1994) has been carried out within the traditional, multisport curriculum. This may be due to the

limitations of Title IX, which make it difficult to create a curriculum based on same-sex groupings. Same-sex groupings are also controversial, however, and in fact, there are fears that a same-sex physical education design might exacerbate the discrimination currently existing in schools by further stereotyping girls and boys (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Couturier et al., 2007; Hedlund et al., 1999). For example, if girls were put in one class and boys in another, both genders might view this placement as an expectation to appropriate stereotypical behaviors with regard to physical activity. The result may thereby perpetuate socially dominant definitions of masculinity and femininity and prevent both girls and boys from learning to appropriately exist in a coeducational world (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Couturier et al., 2007; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Hedlund et al., 1999).

Theoretical Perspectives

Many theories help explain the theoretical underpinnings of the current research regarding the lack of involvement among girls in the physical education classroom. Among the most pertinent to this study are fear of masculinization (or learned gender dichotomy) theory, feminist theory, attitude theory, and curriculum design theory.

Fear of Masculinization Theory

The fear of masculinization theory constitutes one powerful explanation for the lack of participation among girls in the physical education classroom. “The ‘fear of masculinization theory’ is based on the assertion that in Western societies, dominant discourse constructs corporeal femininity as based on appearance and masculinity on strength/ability” (Evans, 2006, p. 551). As indicated above, these socially constructed dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity are learned at young ages and set up

an imbalanced gender dichotomy, with masculinity functioning as the superior standard (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation; 2012). According to the fear of masculinization theory (Evans, 2006), learned ideologies of femininity in the physical education curriculum have been produced and reproduced in the physical education classroom (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Coakley, 2009; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012). The female body, seen as frail, weak, and passive in the physical education classroom, functions as inferior when compared with the strong, active male (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fisette, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Velija & Kumar, 2009). This gender dichotomy influences the attitudes, satisfaction levels, and behaviors of many adolescent girls, and contributes to the silencing of girls with regard to their perceptions and views about physical education and physical activity (Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; Jeanes, 2011).

Because of the power imbalance and subsequent silencing, adolescent girls often exhibit various forms of resistance in physical education. The message to behave according to society's definition of femininity is so powerful that many girls avoid behavior that is contrary to this definition (Evans, 2006; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Hills & Croston, 2012; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). Resistant behaviors can take many forms, including avoiding physical activity by opting out of physical education, playing a more passive position (like goalie or defense), skipping class, intentionally losing, refusing to take a turn,

bringing a note from a parent or nurse to be excused from participation, hiding in the locker room after attendance, and generally not exhibiting effort (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Olafson, 2002; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). For many girls, it is easier and more desirable to resist and avoid participation than to risk the consequences. Although girls may not want to risk participation in the physical education classroom for fear of association with masculinity or masculine characteristics, many researchers (Azzarito et al., 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Evans, 2006; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Gordon, 2006; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012) indicate that the majority of these girls *want* to do well in physical education, *want* to do what is expected of them, and *want* to be physically active.

Attitude Theory

In addition to the fear of masculinization theory, the lack of participation among girls in physical education class may also be explained by attitude theory (Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Cunningham, 2007). The basic tenet of attitude theory states that student learning is influenced by attitude and satisfaction, meaning that someone with a positive attitude about an activity will be more inclined to participate in that activity (Bernstein, Phillips & Silverman, 2011; Cunningham, 2007; Peterson, Puhl, & Luedicke, 2012; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007). In fact, research suggests that a positive attitude about and high satisfaction with an activity may increase the likelihood of an individual's engagement outside of school and on into adulthood (Bernstein et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2007; Kjonniksen, Fjortoft, & Wold, 2009; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007; USDHHS, 2008; USDHHS, 2010). A study by Subramaniam and

Silverman (2007) illustrates the correlation, albeit negatively. Examining student attitudes toward physical education in middle school, they found that positive attitudes declined as students aged, coinciding with current trends indicating that physical activity decreases as age increases (Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Datar & Sturm, 2004; Gao, 2009; Marcus et al., 2006; PE4life, 2007; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). Another study, by Rikard and Banville (2006), looked at student attitudes towards a high school physical education curriculum and made suggestions for possible curricular changes based on what types of activities students indicated they were positive about and motivated to participate in. Again, this suggests the correlation between attitude and participation and indicates the possibility that positive student attitudes and a sense of satisfaction will increase motivation and participation.

Curriculum Theory

The fear of masculinization theory and the attitude theory both manifest in relationship to the traditional, multisport physical education curriculum, which features coeducational classes and a public *gaze* or *glare* (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Connell, 2008; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Hills & Croston, 2012; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; Velija & Kumar, 2009). According to research (Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Walton & Fisette, 2013), this gaze or glare (sometimes referred to as a male glare) results from the public nature of physical education and refers to the inhibitions and subsequent passivity girls and women demonstrate when they feel as though they are being watched and/or are on display.

Often, the traditional curriculum and its accompanying gaze have helped establish and reinforce the social construction of gender and what it means to be female and physically active (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fiset, 2011; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; van Amsterdam et al., 2012).

Feminist Theory

Based on the notion that girls' voices have been silenced and marginalized with regard to their perceptions and attitudes about their physical education experience, a feminist theory was used to help guide this study (Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; Patton, 2002). Feminist theory, while seeking to understand the nature of inequality, sees gender "as a basic organizing principle which profoundly shapes/mediates the concrete conditions of our lives" (Lather, 1991, p. 71). According to feminist theory, the experiences and stories of girls are what ground the research, and these experiences are understood and represented by using the lens of gender to steer the research inquiries and analysis (Fiset, 2011; Gordon, 2006; McHugh, Kowalski, Mack, Crocker, Junkin, & Lejback, 2008; Patton, 2002; Walton & Fiset, 2013).

Purpose Statement

With increased levels of sedentary behaviors among adolescents, there is a need to develop a physical education class environment and curriculum that has the potential to increase all students' interest levels, motivations, and positive attitudes for physical activity participation. This need is especially pertinent for girls, many of whom often exhibit problematic resistance behaviors.

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the attitude and satisfaction levels of first-year female college students towards their high school physical education courses. Those participants who indicated dissatisfaction and a negative attitude towards high school physical education were interviewed. College students were sought for interviews so that answers to questions might reflect an objectivity conferred by distance. Similar to the justification given by Coelho (2000), college students were chosen because “college students represent the final link in school physical education and are one source that may provide valuable insight into students’ positive and negative perceptions of physical education” (p. 224).

While a questionnaire was used to help with sample selection and to help assess attitude and satisfaction levels, qualitative interviewing with a feminist perspective was also conducted in an effort to give voice to participants. Due to the potential for girls to be silenced and remain quiet with regard to their experiences, potential that is tied to the traditional social discourse of femininity, girls’ thoughts and feelings are often missing from physical education literature (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Gordon, 2006; Walton & Fisette, 2013). This mixed methods approach was deemed the most effective method for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of survey responses and enhancing the interpretation of data.

Research Questions

1. What were the satisfaction levels of first-year female college students toward their high school physical education class?
2. What were the attitude levels of first-year female college students toward their high school physical education class?

3. What were the reasons for dissatisfaction among first-year female college students toward their high school physical education class?
4. What were the reasons for negative attitude levels of first-year female college students toward their high school physical education class?
5. Was there a perception of a gender dichotomy in the first-year female college student's physical education class?

Significance of the Study

This study offers several significant contributions to the field. The physical and emotional benefits of physical activity (e.g., increases in bone mass, decreases in blood pressure, gains in psychological well-being) have been listed above. However, recent research has established a link between participation in physical activity and academic achievement, including improved school grades and higher standardized achievement scores (Donnelly et al., 2013; NASPE & AHA, 2012; Ratey, 2008). These invaluable benefits and the growing evidence, via national reports, of youths' inactive and unhealthy lifestyles indicate the need for promoting physical activity among adolescents (NASPE & AHA, 2012; Lee, Nihiser, Fulton, Borgogna, & Zavacky, 2013; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010).

Physical education seems like an obvious choice to provide adolescent girls in particular with the tools necessary for learning the importance and components of physical activity and to provide them with the recommended amounts of physical activity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Couturier et al., 2007; Fisette, 2011; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; NASPE & AHA, 2012; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010; van Amsterdam et al., 2012). Accordingly, research that reveals factors that could enhance adolescent girls'

attitudes about and satisfaction levels with physical education may hold the significant potential to increase girls' physical education participation now and in the future. The benefit to the girls is obvious, but such benefits also extend to parents, teachers, and community members concerned about the health and future of their children.

In addition, research and knowledge about learned gender dichotomy could instigate changes towards breaking barriers and unlearning stereotypical gender definitions. Certainly, a primary goal of all physical educators is to get students to participate and move their bodies so they can be healthy throughout their entire lives (NASPE & AHA, 2012; USDHHS, 2010). It is the challenge of the physical educator to meet the needs and interests of his/her students and provide curriculum options that enable the maximum participation of all students. By enabling maximum participation, physical education has the potential to provide not only meaningful learning experiences about one's individual body, but also important insights into gender related beliefs and behaviors (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fisette, 2013).

By being physically active and using their bodies, adolescent girls may begin to learn to value and appreciate a strong, athletic body and may also begin to renegotiate and develop their physical identities as females, thereby disrupting the gender dichotomy (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Crawley, Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Crawley, Foley & Shehan, 2008; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Walton & Fisette, 2013). Gaining a greater bodily awareness (changing the habitus) can lead to an increase in self-confidence and competence and can therefore empower girls to rely on

their own bodies for knowledge (embodied knowledge; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Crawley et al., 2008; Fisette, 2011; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Gorely, Holroyd, & Kirk, 2003; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fisette, 2013). Indeed, when used, the body has the potential to become an instrument of power, enabling individuals the opportunity to become aware of their movement potential and to value themselves when their bodies are active rather than passive (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Crawley et al., 2008; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Walton & Fisette, 2013).

More practically, this study may also contribute to helping physical education instructors meet national goals and standards. As stated by NASPE (2012): “The goal of physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.” Some of the standards include regular participation in physical activity, achievement and maintenance of a health-enhancing level of physical fitness (Standard 3), and valuation of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction (Standard 5). Designing and offering well-researched curricula with these standards in mind increases the chances that all students may potentially meet them.

This study also provides the valuable insights of the girls themselves: hearing directly from these students can help overcome misconceptions and misunderstandings among physical educators about satisfaction, attitude, and participation in physical education. Gender construction and awareness should be an integral part of physical education teacher education. Teachers need to become aware of and confront personal biases, and they must be educated on how to create a safe environment where all involved can challenge dominant discourses and gendered power relations.

Limitations

As with any work of depth, this study was limited by several factors. First, the selection of girls may not be exclusive to the researcher's target population. Second, the results are difficult to generalize beyond the participants in the study. Third, there was no way of assuring that the girls' responses were truthful and accurate. Fourth, the participants came from a pool of high achieving, grade motivated young women. Fifth and finally, the perceptions the girls have towards their high school experience may differ from what they had in high school.

Delimitations

This study confined itself to surveying and interviewing first-year college students enrolled in an ACT or FIT course at a small, private college in the upper Midwest.

The participants were recruited from a school with a relatively homogenous ethnic and socioeconomic background. This study was confined to those girls who had access to the Internet.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter first proceeds from the primary literature to explain the low levels of adolescent female involvement and participation in physical education. It then reviews the literature relating to the major reasons cited by adolescent girls for their dissatisfaction with and negative attitudes toward physical education, including: the presence of a gender dichotomy and an accompanying gender power imbalance, the presence of a gaze or glare in the classroom, the major issues related to the gender makeup of classes, the pedagogy of physical educators, and the physical education curriculum. Finally, a review of the methods used in the physical education literature and the ways these methods informed this research design follow.

Current Status of the Problem

According to current research on physical activity (Bryan & Solmon, 2012; NASPE & AHA, 2012; Lee, et al., 2013; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010), the health of young adults and adolescents in our country is far from robust. Some alarming trends and statistics from this research include the findings that nearly half of young people aged 12–21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis, that physical activity declines dramatically with age during adolescence, that female adolescents are less physically active than male adolescents, that only 27.3% of girls and 33.2% of boys attend physical education class on a daily basis in high school, and that only 19% of all high school students are physically active for 20 minutes or more in physical education classes every day during the school week.

The multitude of physical, psychological, and emotional benefits to physical activity and the ability of physical activity to combat the current obesity epidemic makes it clear that without physical activity, the health of adolescents in our country is at serious risk. Adolescent females may have the most to lose because research indicates that they are the least active group in our society (Johnson, 2003; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010). Children and young adults who are not active are much less likely to be active adults, leading to potential expensive health problems through adulthood (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Gao, 2009; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010). School physical education may be able to play a major role in reversing these negative trends by increasing participation in physical education classes (Couturier et al., 2007; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; NASPE & AHA, 2012; USDHHS, 2010; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012).

Because not every student has equal opportunity to participate in sports and activities outside of school, American public schools appear to be the most logical, effective way to teach students about the importance of physical education and to give students opportunities to be active. Physical educators (and their curricula) have the crucial task of ensuring that opportunities exist for all students to be educated about the value of lifelong physical activity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Couturier et al., 2007; Fisette, 2011; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; NASPE & AHA, 2012; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). In addition, the physical activity that occurs in physical education can play an important role in enhancing a student’s development of bodily competence and movement potential (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fisette, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fisette, 2013). “The embodied nature of physical

education, in which students are actively learning by moving their bodies while developing deeper understanding of the ways in which they affect such movement, has the potential to provide meaningful learning experiences” (Satina & Hultgren, 2002, p. 524).

Despite the data, physical educators often face obstacles to ensuring that all their students achieve embodied knowledge. The lack of participation among students, and especially girls, represents one of the most meaningful obstacles. Indeed, if other major issues were overcome, if, for example, school budget issues were removed and every adolescent were required to take regular physical education classes (at least 2–3 times per week), the participation of girls would likely not increase. Research (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Gabbei, 2004; Hill & Cleven, 2005; Klomsten et al., 2005; Olafson, 2002) suggests that participation and interest in physical education has diminished for girls, perhaps because the notion of gendered physical activity is still widespread in school physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fiset, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012).

Learned Gender and the Gender Dichotomy

Compared to one’s biologically born sex of male or a female, one’s gender is a dynamic social construction that includes negotiated ideologies about what it means to be feminine or masculine (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Crawley et al., 2008; Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013). Typically, the notion of gender manifests along a narrow dichotomy of socially accepted constructions of femininity and masculinity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fiset, 2011; McHoul & Grace, 1993; Ratna, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013). From a

very early age, children learn what society expects of them based on their gender, and these expectations are negotiated and resisted throughout life.

Gender, then, is a binary set of social meanings that typify female and male bodies as “truly” different. Because we believe in a gender difference on an everyday basis, we put these ideas into practice through and on our bodies. (Crawley et al., 2008, p. 39)

As children grow older, gender becomes a social performance of the body that is interpreted as natural, and there is high pressure to conform and be appropriate (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Jeanes, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012). To be successful at “doing” gender, one must display gendered behaviors dependent upon the situation at hand. “Doing gender consists of managing such occasions so that, whatever the particulars, the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender appropriate or, as the case may be, gender inappropriate” (West & Zimmerman, 2002, p. 4). Because the dominant ideologies that dictate gender are set up by those in power, gender inequities often exist, resulting in identity negotiations (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Hills, 2006; Walton & Fiset, 2013): either a person accepts and conforms to particular gender expectations, or she resists and risks the consequences, thereby negotiating gender identity for herself (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Crawley et al., 2008; West & Zimmerman, 2002; Fiset, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013).

Gender is one of the societal factors that affect one’s habitus, which “is manifested through the development of tastes, dispositions and schemes of perception and appreciation that helps structure, but not determine, choices and lifestyles” (Gorely et

al., 2003, p. 441). The habitus influences factors such as how one feels about one's body, what sports one is interested in (based on the current societal definition of what particular sport is popular or dominant), what sports one is involved in, and how one behaves while participating in sport (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Gorely et al., 2003; Hills, 2006; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Wellard, 2006). From an early age, gendered dispositions are learned and are difficult to deconstruct. For example, the notion of "throwing like a girl" is a learned process of constructing the habitus that starts in preschool and only becomes more stable and ingrained as an individual ages (Gorely et al., 2003; Mean & Kassing, 2008). Both boys and girls learn at early ages that sport (e.g., behavior, appearance, activity choice) is associated with masculinity (and masculine characteristics such as muscularity, aggressiveness, difficulty, toughness, competitiveness) and that this dominant ideology and discourse is considered socially superior, valued, and powerful (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Hills, 2006; Jeanes, 2011; Mean & Kassing, 2008; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Wellard, Pickard, & Bailey, 2007).

Gender is also influenced by other discursive constructs, and as indicated by the research of Azzarito and Solmon (2009), these various discursive constructs can influence adolescent participation in sports. The researchers identified parents, teachers, students themselves, and peers as discourses that become embodied and that influence participation in physical activities. The research results showed that significantly more girls than boys rated the construct of their own gendered body as the most influential construct towards determining activity preferences (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009). In fact, "individuals who rated the gendered body as most influential were more likely to select

feminine activities, whereas support and encouragement from influences outside of physical education were associated with the selection of masculine activities” (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009, p. 183). While their own gendered bodies counted as the most significant discursive construct among girls’ preferences for physical activities, all of the discursive practices explored in the study influenced the choice of masculine or feminine physical activities (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009).

Construction of one’s gender identity can be learned and formed via numerous sources, with social institutions such as public schools acting as a primary resource. Public schools, and the institutional and bureaucratic nature of schooling, produce gendered discourses that become institutionalized, unchallenged, and difficult to change (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; McHoul & Grace, 1993; Olafson, 2002; Satina & Hultgren, 2001). Specifically, physical education and its sometimes hidden curriculum has been a key site for constructing, maintaining, and reinforcing the gender dichotomy explained above (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Evans, 2006; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fisette, 2013). In fact, avoidance and resistance behaviors (e.g., exhibiting minimal or no participation, refusing to change into physical education clothes, skipping class) by adolescent girls seems to be especially specific to physical education (versus engagement in sports outside of school), with research (Evans, 2006) showing that a strong dislike of physical education does not necessarily correlate with a low participation in sports in general. Depending on experiences and opportunities offered, physical education can perhaps play a crucial role in either enhancing body

competence or maintaining and reaffirming traditional, gender related behavior and beliefs (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Hills & Croston, 2012; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Walton & Fiset, 2013; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012).

The Gendered Power Imbalance

According to Satina and Hultgren (2001) in their discussion of Foucauldian (1983) theory, society is based on systematic power imbalances that manifest in various forms of resistance. Quoting Foucault, Satina and Hultgren argue, "Just as the voices of the oppressed are silenced, so are female bodies oppressed by rendering them docile and immobile, inhibiting their development of competence" (Satina & Hultgren, 2001, p. 524). Social and cultural pressures and the gendered discourses they form have established power imbalances that impact physical education curriculum and instruction, often resulting in resistance by females (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fiset, 2011; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Velija & Kumar, 2009). Because these gender power imbalances have been socially and culturally constructed (and often institutionalized) they are often very difficult to change (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Foucault, 1983).

Patriarchal consciousness has been manifest in physical education by the different expectations that have been held for girls and boys in terms of the development of bodily competence, reproducing cultural expectations by emphasizing physical activities that are considered to be "for males," or "masculine." (Satina & Hultgren, 2001, p. 525)

Public schools, and the often institutional and bureaucratic nature of schooling, contain a network of social and cultural power relationships between administrators, teachers, and students, and this network gives rise to various forms of resistance (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Foucault, 1983). The power imbalances in public schools is specifically played out between boys and girls in physical education classes and is a direct cause of female resistance in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fisette, 2013).

Activities traditionally considered feminine are those that involve flexibility, cooperation, balance, grace, and passivity, whereas masculine activities, which have traditionally been the focus of public school physical education curricula, include activities that are generally competitive, aggressive, and that promote strength and power (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Jeanes, 2011; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). Teachers, students, and parents have embraced masculinity and therefore boys and their activities, making masculinity the powerful, dominant culture within physical education; boys are seen as superior to girls, and unlike girls, they have been explicitly and implicitly encouraged to participate. "Institutions such as schools are sites of creation and reproduction of masculinization practices through sports, fostering male hegemony and privilege" (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005, p. 36). In most cases, physical education and physical activity is not important to being female: girls are valued when they are inactive; they must fight to be active (Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Evans, 2006; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). The

female body has been stereotypically accepted as “‘naturally weaker’ ‘unable’ and ‘passive’, and therefore possessing naturally inferior physical ability compared to the male body” (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005, p. 31).

The Public Gaze or Glare

Because of the power imbalance outlined above, it makes sense that girls, in a time of adolescence and major bodily changes, feel self-conscious and uncomfortable being active because doing so goes against what society indicates is appropriate and desirable for girls (Evans, 2006; Hills & Croston, 2012; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011). Research indicates that many girls feel as though they are under a microscope in physical education and that girls would rather skip class or avoid participation than continue to endure the pressure of what they feel to be the judgment of others (Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). Research by Evans (2006) found that girls in physical education classes “felt pressure from a male gaze to present their bodies to boys as passively beautiful” (p. 547), and that this gaze was felt in both mixed and same-sex classes, “suggesting this gaze [had] been internalized” (p. 547).

Further, Fisette (2011) discovered that the “public nature of physical education reinforced gendered power relations, sending the message to some of the girls that they were ‘not as good’ as their classmates” (p. 191). The threat of perceived judgment in physical education caused girls to become anxious about being teased and ridiculed, often because of the public display of their ability (or lack thereof; Evans, 2006; Hills & Croston, 2012; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). Research by Hills and Croston (2012) found that “the potential for teasing made

[some girls] feel under pressure and anxious, particularly in the context of team games where mistakes were felt to be more public and more salient in relation to winning and losing” (p. 596).

Some girls also feel that the pressure to wear a physical education uniform (including a swim suit) and to expose parts of their bodies with which they are uncomfortable is overwhelming (Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010, 2011; Velija & Kumar, 2009). Tied into this self-consciousness is self-esteem and self-confidence. Importantly, studies have demonstrated that girls score lower than males on physical self-concept (Klomsten et al., 2005), and adolescents with lower self-esteem and self-confidence have been shown to utilize *more* avoidance coping strategies and exhibit *less* participation and effort than adolescents with higher self-esteem (Chapman & Mullis, 1999; Derry & Phillips, 2004, Ennis, 1999). In addition to the perception of a possibly internalized public gaze or glare, Evans (2006) and the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012) found that girls experienced a powerful, critical gaze from their physical education teachers. This perceived gaze, combined with the girls’ perception of their low abilities, removed the fun out of participation and risked resulting in a further decline in participation levels.

Same-Sex Versus Mixed-Sex Classroom

Due to the patriarchal power imbalance in physical education and the disempowerment of many girls (who consequently exhibit avoidance or resistance behaviors), much research has been completed suggesting that single-sex environments provide the most effective setting to increase female participation and meet national and

state physical education standards (Derry & Phillips, 2004; Gabbei, 2004; Hannon & Ratliffe, 2007; Hedlund et al., 1999; Olafson, 2002). Research by Hannon and Ratliffe (2007) found that female participation opportunities and teacher–student verbal interaction was higher in favor of same-sex groupings in physical education. The problem with much of the research (Derry & Phillips, 2004; Hannon & Ratliffe, 2007) is that curriculum and pedagogy were not taken into consideration. Both the same-sex class and the coeducational class were taught in accordance with a traditional, multisport curriculum. If both groups had been taught a gender-fair curriculum, the outcome may have favored coeducational classes.

Research by Berg and Lahelma (2010) looked at the Finnish physical education curriculum in which male teachers teach all-male classes and female teachers teach all-female classes. The curriculum was the same for both genders. While the authors do not necessarily advocate that mixed gender classes are better, they found that segregating teachers and students by gender was “an active practice in which male and female teachers construct gender” (Berg & Lahelma, 2010, p. 43). Thereby, same-sex classes necessarily teach and model a gender dichotomy (with corresponding boundaries) to their students.

Research also seems to express a widely held belief that there is some danger in heading back to same-sex physical education environments, and the results of this study agree with conclusions by Osborne, Bauer, and Sutliff (2002), which stated that the preference of girls and boys for same-sex physical education depends on the situation at hand. Do preferences and same-sex groupings depend on the activities, the teacher, the curriculum, or something else? Some research, including the present study, answers in

the affirmative. By taking a general approach and limiting physical education to same-sex groupings, the very stereotype that has given such power to males may actually be perpetuated. If girls are offered activities and sports outlined above as feminine, and boys are offered activities outlined above as masculine, the stereotypes that sports are for boys and not for girls, and that boys have power and girls don't, may be perpetuated (Couturier et al., 2007; Ennis, 1999; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Gabbei, 2004). Further, comments like "girls respond better to climates that foster fun and enjoyment," and "girls usually prefer noncompetitive activities where fun is the primary goal" (Johnson, 2003, p. 2), can be problematic not just for the types of activities physical educators offer to students, but for social progress towards gender equity. Do girls prefer activities where fun is the primary goal just because that is all they have been offered or just because an alternative goal might be considered masculine and therefore frowned upon? A study by Hill and Cleven (2005) questioned male and female ninth-graders about their preferences regarding coeducational versus same-sex classes. Although they found that the majority of males and females favored same-sex classes, their study involved students who registered for physical education as an elective. Students who register for physical education as an elective usually do so because they enjoy a class, and their preferences might greatly differ from those students required to take a class. For girls required to register for physical education, same-sex classes may be perceived as another means by which special attention is drawn to girls and to their status as "problems" in the traditional physical education classroom (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001).

Accordingly, even if sex-segregated classes become the norm, girls may still exhibit avoidance behaviors. In an article by Evans (2006), the concept of *inhibited*

intentionality is explained as involving the underestimation of one's physical ability.

This underestimation can be so great and internalized that even in same-sex classes where there are no males, the male gaze is internalized to the extent that there is low participation, and avoidance and resistance behaviors still exist.

Pedagogy

Physical education pedagogy can either enhance learning for girls and young women in physical education or increase their avoidance and resistance behaviors (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Hills & Croston, 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). Teachers who use phrases like "throw like a girl" or who are not careful about the strategies they utilize while teaching (e.g., picking teams, demonstration format), can do a great deal of damage and perpetuate the imbalance of power within the physical education classroom (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Rikard and Banville, 2006; Wang & Liu, 2007). "Instructional bias places pressure on both boys and girls; boys can develop domineering and aggressive behaviors in seeking teacher attention, while girls can become silent and submissive because their voices go unheard" (Williamson, 1996, p. 81). Unless the cycle of physical educators who enter into the profession believing that it is acceptable and expected for females to be inactive, uncompetitive, and unathletic is broken, physical education pedagogy and curriculum will continue to be an environment with a significant gender imbalance (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Peterson et al., 2012; Rikard & Banville, 2006; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Wang & Liu, 2007).

Curriculum

The physical education curriculum contains two potentially damaging aspects to adolescent girls and to their participation and involvement. The first is called the “hidden” curriculum. While teachers do not intentionally teach students that characteristics associated with masculinity are dominant and preferred in physical education and sport, students learn these messages through the actions and behaviors of teachers and other students, and they learn early on how to resist and negotiate in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fiset, 2011; Walton & Fiset, 2013). Research has shown that, for the most part, students have conformed to the dominant definitions and expressions of masculinity and femininity in physical education (Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Olafson, 2002; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Walton & Fiset, 2013). Girls learn that the feminine body is more of an object to look at; it is not to be used for sports (Evans, 2006; Fiset, 2011).

Through this gender role training, girls often learn that masculinity is preferred and dominant and that they will be considered masculine if they participate in activities requiring characteristics such as strength, aggression, dominance, or, speed (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fiset, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2005; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Walton & Fiset, 2013). Girls also learn that they are actually more highly valued when they act feminine and are therefore *inactive* in physical education (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). The hidden curriculum often contains great pressure for girls to hide their bodies and to minimize their physical activity (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fiset,

2011; Satina & Hultgren, 2001). Ultimately, the hidden curriculum sets forth a tough choice for girls and women

if they conform to dominant forms of femininity, they are either unlikely to play sport at all or, if they do, they are most likely to participate in traditionally “female” activities. If, on the other hand, they choose to play in a manner traditionally viewed as masculine, sporting women risk having their femininity and their sexuality scrutinized and questioned.

(Gorely et al., 2003, p. 436)

In a study by Cockburn and Clarke (2002), girls who decided to deviate from the gender order and participate in masculine-defined activities expressed the need to reconstruct their feminine identities afterwards by dressing and acting especially feminine or by disengaging or not participating in physical education the day after their deviation. Environmental factors such as changing clothes, drying hair, and reapplying makeup becomes an additional barrier to participation (Cockburn & Clarke; 2002; Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). The pressure to live up to society’s definition of femininity is so strong that many girls may go to relative extremes to avoid behavior that is contrary to this definition (Evans, 2006; Hills & Croston, 2012; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008). This resistant behavior can take many forms, as outlined above, including avoidance of physical activity by not registering for physical education, skipping class, intentionally losing, not taking a turn, bringing a note from a parent or the nurse to be excused from participation, hiding in the locker room after attendance, or generally not exhibiting any effort (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Chepyator-

Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Couturier et al., 2007; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Olafson, 2002; Satina & Hultgren, 2001).

The second curriculum is the traditional, multisport curriculum used in the past and still widely used in physical education classes today, and which is based on a European, male, middle-class sporting model (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Ennis, 1999; Evans, 2006). The male-oriented definitions of power and strength predominate in this curriculum, and it has been thought to be very effective at limiting opportunities and alienating females in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Couturier et al., 2007; Ennis, 1999; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). Controlling aggressive play has been a problem under this curriculum, as has the ability to provide an emotionally safe environment for student participation. "In fact, [the traditional curriculum] appeared to encourage boys, who individually were considerate of others, to accept the dominant culture of aggression necessary to protect and maintain their own space and status within the male peer group" (Ennis, 1999, p. 34). Through this multisport curriculum, girls have received messages that they are weak, fragile, and inept. This curriculum itself has therefore been a barrier to girls' participation in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009). By choosing this curriculum, teachers often send a message to students that masculinity is valued and preferred in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012).

Alternatives to the traditional multisport curriculum have been investigated. For example, a study examining female participation in physical education was conducted

using a curriculum called *Sport for Peace* (Ennis, 1999). While the multisport curriculum has an imbalance of power (an authority figure and male dominance control the environment), the Sport for Peace curriculum offered a safe and positive environment for all students. Students still played in sports, but there was a strong emphasis on giving everyone on the team a role and rotating those roles, with an additional emphasis on conflict negotiation, care and concern for others, and self and social responsibility. Students reported a number of positive effects: because they were placed in and participated on small teams and groups for a lengthy period of time, they didn't feel the pressure of male gaze; there was a change from a competitive to a more cooperative environment; student ownership increased (students were given more opportunities to make decisions); and there was an emphasis on second chances with the potential for students to realize success and believe in themselves (Ennis, 1999). While the Sport for Peace curriculum has potential, much of the success and enjoyment experienced by the girls came as a result of their roles scorekeeping or being statisticians, and the boys enjoyed more participatory and coaching roles. There were improvements to the traditional curriculum, but boys still held leadership roles, and the power imbalance persisted. In the long run, it is questionable whether the girls gained an appreciation for actual participation in sports that they could carry on throughout life.

Other than the positive curriculum alternative offered by Sport for Peace, there are several other changes to the physical education curriculum that may decrease avoidance and resistance behavior among adolescent girls and increase their participation. One is to give girls a choice about activities they will be involved in and to offer choices that deviate from the traditional, multisport activities. In this way, girls can

share in the vision of their own physical activity and be accountable to that vision (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Kovar, Ermler, Mehrhof, & Napper-Owen, 2001; Olafson, 2002; Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Ward, Wilkinson, Graser, & Prusak, 2008; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). "Opportunities for all students to develop and express self-affirming views of their body in an atmosphere that does not replicate culturally imposed limitations, would be refreshing and motivating to students" (Satina & Hultgren, 2001, p. 530). A study by Enright and O'Sullivan (2010) looked directly at girls' disengagement from physical education as a result of not being a part of the curriculum design (not having choice). The researchers first examined the barriers to female engagement by asking the girls directly for their input on the curriculum. They then involved the girls in all aspects of curriculum design and development. While the research was able to involve students in a girls-only setting and to offer a very flexible curriculum (both scenarios not readily available to most institutions), some positive and important outcomes occurred because of the girls' involvement. The teachers discovered that the girls were disengaged because they did not feel like they had a voice, or choice, in the matter, and because they thought physical education was stupid (not meaningful or relevant). Because the teachers listened to the girls, the girls felt valued and empowered. After participating in a physical education curriculum that they helped create, the girls felt more autonomy and accountability. They felt like they were more invested in their experience, and their engagement in class increased. Also important, the activities they chose and participated in were more relevant and meaningful, and there was more "connection between the

nature of their negotiated curriculum and the physical activities the girls would choose to engage in outside of school” (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010).

Some other curricular characteristics thought to decrease resistance and avoidance behaviors and increase engagement include the following: an opportunity for gender separation; noncompetitive activities; an emphasis on lifelong physical activity; and fun and enjoyable classes (Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Hills & Croston, 2012; Melton, Hansen & Gross, 2010; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Ward et al., 2008; Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012).

Mixed Methods Research Design

Numerous research designs have been used to study various aspects of physical education. The design choice greatly depends on the researcher’s purpose, the research questions, and the research paradigm. In this section various approaches that have been utilized in physical education research will be reviewed and discussed.

Quantitative research is based on a positivist theoretical perspective for developing knowledge and an objectivism epistemology (Silverman, 2003). “Hence, ideas only deserve their incorporation into knowledge if they can be put to the test of empirical experience” (Gray, 2004, p. 18). Quantitative studies are generally descriptive in nature, and often involve comparing means, standard deviations, and tables to represent the data (Silverman, 2003). Typically, the population is large and the approach provides the ability to collect large amounts of data in a reasonable amount of time; they are often used to ascertain attitudes, values, and opinions (Gray, 2004). One such example was executed by Couturier et al. (2007) and involved the administration of an attitude survey to over 5000 physical education students in order to find out if there were

significant differences in attitude and preferences in a school's physical education curriculum. One specific factor analyzed for differences was gender. The survey yielded many statistical results that could be reported and compared for future potential curriculum and pedagogical decisions in that particular district's physical education program. For example, the survey showed that 81.5% of males liked playing competitive sports compared with 51.8% of females. Also, females were more likely (61.9%) than males (14.5%) to rate dance or fitness activities as a first or second choice. The quantitative data allowed the researchers to obtain objective, descriptive information about student attitudes in physical education. What was missing in the survey, however, was any understanding of *why* the girls and boys scored the survey the way they did. If a learned gender dichotomy were in fact present in the physical education classes, girls would likely indicate that they prefer cooperative sports. If a decision is made to offer more cooperative activities to girls—and competitive activities to boys—physical education curriculums might simply be reinforcing and maintaining the gender dichotomy (Hills & Croston, 2012).

A primary reason for a researcher to pursue qualitative or mixed methods research is to gain a greater (richer) understanding of an answer to that *why* question from the participants themselves (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Evans, 2006; Fiset, 2011; Hills, 2006). Based on a constructivist worldview, qualitative researchers believe humans generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Creswell, 2003). Ethnographic and phenomenological approaches are two qualitative methodologies to consider. "While both are based upon description and interpretation, ethnographic research is focused more on culture and phenomenology, on human experience of the 'life-world.' So, while the

unit of analysis of phenomenology is often an individual, ethnographers make use of ‘sites’” (Gray, 2004, p. 21). Both approaches involve in-depth data collection.

Typically, ethnographers utilize observations while immersing themselves in the culture being studied, while phenomenological research involves several in-depth interviews of the individuals being studied (Gray, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002).

An example of a phenomenological approach utilized in physical education was a study by Hicks (2004) looking at student attitudes towards physical education when taught by a Teacher of the Year Award winner. Hicks also looked at how other factors, such as age and gender, influenced attitudes. She defended her use of phenomenology by stating that it “is an appropriate application when studying the common or shared experiences of physical education students, individually or in a group, such as those found in the classes taught by a Teacher of the Year (TOY) Award winner” (Hicks, 2004, p. 71). Hicks stressed the need for an approach that would grasp the everyday “lived experiences” of participants and the need to gather firsthand interpretations. Observations and in-depth interviews were methods used to collect data, and the qualitative analysis revealed that classes taught by a Teacher of the Year had significant influence on student attitudes (Hicks, 2004).

Research by Azzarito (2004) demonstrated an example of ethnographic research. The purpose of the study was to look at how high school students constructed meanings about the body and how these meanings related to their participation in physical education classes. The researcher also looked at gender and racial differences in the students’ construction of meanings. Observations and formal interviews of students and teachers were used, and results showed that, in fact, there were racial and gender

differences regarding the students' construction of meanings about the body. These differences were influential in students' participation in physical education. Azzarito (2004) chose an ethnographic research approach because it allowed her to examine participants' behavioral patterns, cultural meanings, and beliefs as they occurred in naturally specific settings. Her selection of an ethnographic versus a phenomenological approach was attributed to the fact that she was looking at how the students constructed meanings about their bodies based on culture and wanted to apply these meanings to possible curriculum and pedagogical decisions in physical education. Azzarito (2004) found that physical education discourses are defined by a narrow gender dichotomy and that students negotiated or resisted physical education practices depending on how the practice supported or disagreed with this gender dichotomy and associated meanings. The qualitative data gave the researcher an understanding of the context or setting in which the students were in and a description of the experience from the students' voices. The weakness in only using qualitative data, however, is that the number of participants is often very small and interpretations are subjective. This can result in bias and make generalizations about the larger population more difficult (Gray, 2004).

Despite some drawbacks, qualitative interviewing can help give voice to young women when quantitative surveys and questionnaires fail to interpret and understand meanings regarding gender and embodiment issues (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Gordon, 2006). A study by Gordon (2006) found that girls tend to take up less space and are more silent with regard to their embodied experiences. In fact, to take up more space and talk back may put a female's femininity into question. "Girls are expected to be more still in space, their bodies more contained, and their voices quieter"

(Gordon, 2006, p. 6). Learning to talk back can help to empower young women and give teachers a better understanding of students' embodied identities and behaviors (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fiset, 2011; Gordon, 2006). Many studies (Bibik, Goodwin, & Omega-Smith, 2007; Couturier et al., 2007; Ryan, Fleming, & Maina, 2003; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007) have examined students' attitudes in physical education using an attitude questionnaire, but those looking from a feminist perspective who strive to gain a better and deeper understanding of the girls' lived experiences have used qualitative interviewing. "Because thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds are involved, the researcher needs to understand the deeper perspectives that can be captured through face-to-face interaction" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 53).

A study by Cockburn and Clarke (2002) looked at how girls negotiate the feminine deficit in physical education; the authors wanted to explore the cultural aspects of girls' lives that influenced their involvement in physical education. In-depth, semistructured interviews were therefore used in response to their previous quantitative study. The interviews were used to better understand and unpack the issues associated with girls and their relationship to sport and physical education. Another study by Hills (2006) used feminist interviewing strategies to help explain and understand how girls negotiate gendered physicality with physical education. Hills's premise held that girls are often misunderstood and appear uninterested in physical education because their stories have not been told and analyzed from a feminist perspective. The design of the researcher's study

was influenced by feminist research in relation to the following general tenets: to centralize girls' and women's experiences while acknowledging the diversity of the categories; to situate gender as a site of social power relations; and to aspire to social change for girls and women. (Hills, 2006, p. 544)

An additional study by Flintoff and Scraton (2001) used feminist interviewing of adolescent girls to allow a voice for girls and to better understand girls' perceptions and attitudes towards physical education. Their research was guided by feminist theory, stating "that a more complete understanding of women's lives comes from a recognition of the complex, interrelationships between different aspects of their lives" (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, p. 6).

In summary, the literature on attitudes and satisfaction levels of girls in physical education classes reveals that physical activity levels of adolescents in the United States have been declining, with adolescent girls being the least active group in society (Johnson, 2003; Marcus et al., 2006; NASPE & AHA, 2012; USDHHS, 2008, USDHHS, 2010). Especially concerning is the lack of participation and involvement among adolescent girls in physical education classes (Azzarito et al., 2006; Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Fisette, 2011; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Webber et al., 2008). Multiple theories regarding this concerning trend exist, such as the traditional multisport curriculum, which typically focuses on competition and gendered activities, the gendered power differential in physical education which favors masculinity, and the gender dichotomy and bias demonstrated and taught by physical educators. Several research designs have been utilized to ascertain relevant data and develop pertinent theories. The present research,

which sought to buttress qualitative data with quantitative data, used a mixed methods approach.

CHAPTER 3

Method

The primary purpose of this research was to examine the attitude and satisfaction levels of first-year female college students towards their high school physical education courses. Specifically, the reasons given by the young women for their negative attitudes and dissatisfaction were examined, with a particular focus as to the existence of a gender dichotomy. The design that best answered the research questions was based on a mixed methods approach. A mixed methods research design is based on a pragmatic, pluralistic, and problem-centered worldview (Creswell, 2003). “It employs strategies of inquiry that involve data collecting either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems” (Creswell, 2003, p. 19). The premise of mixed methods research is based on the notion that a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches will provide the best understanding of the research problem than using either quantitative or qualitative by itself (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Research Design

As stated above, the design that best answered this study’s research questions was based on a mixed methods approach; specifically, a sequential, quan/QUAL design from a feminist perspective. While examining attitudes and satisfaction levels of those students who disliked high school physical education, a quasi-experimental quantitative approach was used (*quasi* because participant selection was not necessarily random). To answer questions about specific reasons participants did not like physical education, and to detect a possible gender dichotomy, a qualitative interpretive approach was utilized. Although the study sought information about a culturally defined gender dichotomy, the

focus was primarily based on personal meanings and the girls' perceptions of their experiences in physical education classes. Therefore, a phenomenology-like interpretive approach was used (Silverman, 2003). While this study was not as in-depth or as extended as traditional phenomenology, it did address personal meaning and sought to find out how experiences came together to form a participants' worldview. Although the specific mixed methods analysis used in this study will be explained later in this chapter, the sequential quan/QUAL design involved collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data sequentially, with the qualitative interviews taking priority in the analysis (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Research Context

A small, private, liberal arts college located in the upper Midwest of the United States was the site for this research study. There are approximately 2400 students in the 4 grades coming from 40 states and 20 foreign countries. The gender ratio consists of 56% women and 44% men. Approximately 35% of first-year students were in the top 10% of their high school graduating class, with an average composite ACT score between 25 and 30. Yearly tuition rates are currently (class of 2017) \$38,660. The site selection was partially based on the fact that the researcher is employed there and participant access to first-year females was straightforward and convenient.

Sample

At the college the participants are from, students are required to take a personal fitness class (FIT) before they graduate. A purposive sample of 54 students was taken from all of the FIT courses offered during fall semester of 2012. The inclusion criteria for participants was as follows: female; first-year student enrolled in a FIT course during

fall semester 2012; and signed consent form for participation. FIT courses were visited during the fall of 2012 to briefly explain the research study and to distribute consent forms. In addition, an email was sent to all females registered in a fall FIT course, inviting them to participate in an online survey via Survey Monkey. Consent forms were issued either directly or via intercampus mail, and the Survey Monkey link was emailed directly to participants after the signed consent form was received.

Fifty-four females, between the ages of 17-20, started the online survey and 49 completed it. Of these 49 females, 9, aged 17-19, were significantly dissatisfied and disliked their high school physical education class and were selected to be interviewed. Participants came from high schools throughout the United States, with all 9 interviewees coming from the upper Midwest. The inclusion criteria to be interviewed was as follows: an average score equal to or less than 1.5 on Part 1 of the questionnaire; an average score equal or less than 4.5 on part 2; and an average score equal or less than 3 on Part 3 of the questionnaire.

Pilot Study

Parts 2 and 3 of the questionnaire had been previously pilot tested during their creation. In April of 2012, the entire questionnaire was administered online to a group of 88 high school students from Minneapolis, MN. The results were reviewed by a panel of 3 experts in physical education and analyzed using Survey Monkey tools (data trends and individual responses). Two of the experts are colleagues of the researcher and specialize in physical education pedagogy in higher education. The 3rd expert is a secondary physical educator with over 20 years of experience working with adolescents. Survey Monkey was utilized because it was relatively inexpensive, it was secure, and there was

already some familiarity and experience using it by the researcher. Minor changes and adjustments (as detailed below) were made to make items clearer to participants and to better answer the research questions. The interview questions were pilot tested on adolescent associates of the researcher to check for clarity and understanding. In addition to pilot testing the interview design, the same expert group described above read and critiqued the questions. Based on the feedback obtained, the number of questions was narrowed down so they specifically addressed the research questions, without being so lengthy that interviewees became disengaged and stopped elaborating on their experiences.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative Data

For the quantitative portion of this study, a three-part online questionnaire was used for the purpose of measuring attitude levels, satisfaction levels, and the possible presence of a gender dichotomy of first-year college women towards their high school physical education experience. Specifically, the intent was to narrow the population to a group of young women representing those who disliked their high school class and who felt they had experienced a gender dichotomy. The survey also included demographic information and general information about the participants' high school physical education experiences. To delineate the sample of women to be interviewed, women had to average less than 50% on all three parts of the online questionnaire.

Part 1 of the questionnaire included a section with eight questions, and students were asked to *agree* or *disagree*. This part was modified after the pilot test was analyzed and a peer group of experts reviewed results. Results from the pilot test and comments

from the peer experts suggested that a section was needed to further assess possible barriers to participation, and whether or not a gender dichotomy was present in the participants' high school courses.

Part 2 of the questionnaire included the physical education attitude instrument (Subramaniam & Silverman, 2000), and Part 3 included the physical activity class satisfaction questionnaire (PACSQ; Cunningham, 2007). These two parts contained established instruments designed to measure student attitude and satisfaction levels towards physical education. The PACSQ by Cunningham (2007) was developed with the theory that if a person can develop a sense of satisfaction with a particular activity or class, he or she will be more intrinsically motivated to perform or participate in the activity, both at the time of satisfaction and in the future. Accordingly, if a physical education class can meet the needs of students, the students will be more satisfied with physical education. This satisfaction among students is “related to (a) increased motivation, (b) time spent in an activity, (c) commitment to a team activity, and (d) intentions to remain in an entity or activity” (Cunningham, 2007, p. 162). Because there is often a misconception that girls are lazy, unmotivated, and uninterested in physical activity and because they are therefore seen as a problem in physical education (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Ennis, 1999; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Rich, 2004; Robbins et al., 2006; van Amsterdam et al., 2012), using a questionnaire designed to look at satisfaction levels was crucial to understanding the unique needs of adolescent girls in physical education. Assessing why girls are unsatisfied with physical education may help physical education teachers develop curriculums and utilize teaching methods to increase participation and better meet the needs of all students.

Several dimensions (or factors) of satisfaction arose during Cunningham's (2007) development of the PACSQ. The nine factors were the following: *mastery experiences, cognitive development, teaching, normative success, interaction with others, fun and enjoyment, improvement of health and fitness, diversionary experiences, and relaxation*. After the results from the pilot test and the peer group of experts were consulted, three changes were made to the PACSQ used in the present study. First, because it was thought to be irrelevant to the research purpose and questions, and somewhat repetitive, the relaxation factor was removed. The second change involved adding a ninth factor called *gender*, with three questions. This addition was thought to allow for more insight into satisfaction levels regarding gender and embodiment issues in physical education. Finally, a question under the factor *normative success* asked about how the participants' skills compared to others. Because this study has a gender focus, this item was broken down further into two items: one asked about how the respondent's skills compared to other females, and one asked about how the respondent's skills compared to other males.

The attitude instrument (Part 3), designed by Subramaniam and Silverman (2000) and based on attitude theory, contained 20 items designed to measure student attitudes towards physical education. Attitude theory assumes that student learning is influenced by attitude and satisfaction and that someone with a positive attitude about an activity will be more inclined to participate in that activity (Bernstein et al., 2011; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007). Additionally, attitude theory suggests that a positive attitude towards and high satisfaction with an activity may increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in the activity outside of school and beyond school age (Bernstein et al., 2011; Rikard & Banville, 2006; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007).

Items from the attitude instrument were selected for this study because analyzing participant attitudes towards high school physical education was useful towards answering the research questions. The only change made to the attitude instrument was a change of wording with an accompanying definition to increase construct validity. Some of the questions asked the students to assess their satisfaction with games that they engaged in during physical education. Because it is possible that the term “games” might suggest only one type of curriculum, any item with the word “games” was changed to “skills,” “concepts,” or “activities.”

Qualitative Data

Following the quantitative questionnaire, select participants were interviewed. All interviews were conducted in the researcher’s office. Interviews were face-to-face and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. To help facilitate interview transcription and to allow the researcher to focus on the participants during the interview, the interviews were digitally recorded. The list of standardized, open-ended interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

The number of participants selected for the interviews was purposely chosen based on criteria from the questionnaires. The purpose of the interviews was to confirm and validate the questionnaire items, to further explain and give meaning to reasons for disliking physical education, and to explore the theory regarding the possible presence of a gender dichotomy in physical education.

As stated earlier, many physical education teachers have experienced the frustration of encouraging adolescent girls to participate and be active, only to have a consistent group exhibit avoidance and resistance behaviors towards physical activity

(Evans, 2006; Couturier et al., 2007; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Wang & Liu, 2007; Webber et al., 2008). Literature regarding physical education and embodiment issues has neglected to take girls' thoughts and feelings into account (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, 2011). To help gain a better understanding of girls' behaviors towards physical education and to understand why some are unsatisfied (and therefore more likely to abstain from participating in physical education), interviews in the study were conducted with a guiding feminist perspective. "A feminist perspective presumes the importance of gender in human relationships and societal processes and orients the study in that direction" (Patton, 2002, p. 129). An underlying assumption of a feminist perspective is that the woman's voice has been absent, marginalized, or misrepresented and that including this voice is crucial to the research study (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Gordon, 2006; Lather, 1991; Mertens, 2008). A feminist approach seeks to include additional interpretations and "ways of knowing" with regard to the experiences of women (Domangue & Solmon, 2009; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996). Interviewing with a feminist perspective

offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. This asset is particularly important for the study of women because in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women. (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19)

Understanding girls' emotions about their bodies and sport is crucial to understanding their decision to participate or not (Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011). The theory driving this present study is that a learned, gendered dichotomy is present in many

physical education classes and that this dichotomy is influential in the attitudes, satisfaction levels, and behaviors of many adolescent girls.

This study utilized standardized open-ended interviews. Compared to both the more unstructured and flexible informal conversational interview and the interview guide, the standardized open-ended interview is very structured and entails asking identical questions to all interviewees (Patton, 2002; Turner, 2010). Standardized open-ended interviews have the advantage of minimizing variation from interview to interview, thus increasing validity and reliability (Patton, 2002). Because questions are so specific and focused, time can be used efficiently and responses are easy to find and compare, making analysis straightforward (Patton, 2002). “A weakness of the standardized approach is that it does not permit the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview was written” (Patton, 2002, p. 347). This makes the use of a pilot test even more crucial. Pilot testing helps identify limitations or flaws, allowing the researcher to modify and change as necessary (Turner, 2010).

Open-ended interviewing of participants was selected to better understand the issues and reasons related to why the participants were unhappy and dissatisfied with their high school physical education class—issues uncovered in the quantitative questionnaire. A specifically feminist perspective was the basis for the focus and formation of the interview questions, and interview questions were formed with the use of Patton (2002). The following section contains the specific guidelines from Patton (2002) that were considered and incorporated into the formation of questions. The questions were truly open-ended to allow interviewees their own voices and permit them to use their own words to describe their stories. Using this guideline meant questions

could not be phrased as a dichotomy, as questions that afford a “yes” or “no” response have the capability to limit the expression and depth of the interviewee. An effort was made to ask singular questions to avoid vagueness and confusion about what was really being asked. Care was taken to be clear about what was being asked, including using words that were familiar and made sense to the participants being interviewed. The use of “why” questions was avoided, which in the case of the present study, may have limited the validity of the answers the researcher sought to achieve. For instance, asking the girls why they disliked physical education may have opened up a multitude of answers that may not have been related to or have been able to help answer the research questions. A better question aimed at answering the research questions about why girls had poor attitudes and were dissatisfied with physical education was the following: “I’m interested in learning more about you as a person and your involvement in high school physical education. What was it about your high school physical education curriculum that led you to dislike it?” and “in your opinion, were there any barriers to participating in physical education? If so, what were they and how did they act as barriers for you?” Asking role-playing or simulation questions was helpful for achieving rich and detailed descriptions and for decreasing the possible power differential between the interviewer and interviewee. Asking the participants “tell me about your perfect day in physical education,” “what do you see yourself doing”, and “what makes it ideal” served to help respondents re-experience a class, thereby affording their specific stories and their clear communication of those activities they enjoyed participating in. Likewise, asking participants to describe their worst class period helped portray a more specific picture of their reasons for dissatisfaction. Utilizing presupposition questions helped to enhance the

quality of interviewee descriptions. By asking, “What is your opinion of an all-girls physical education class for some activities?” the interviewer presupposes that the interviewee has an opinion and that it is important and worth sharing and hearing about. The preceding question also gave participants the opportunity to explain their thoughts and feelings regarding participating with boys in physical education. Similarly, asking participants to name activities better done in a girls-only class or those done in a mixed-gender class, or to describe the ideal body for girls and activities best suited for that ideal body, helped determine whether participants experienced a gender dichotomy in physical education. An effort was made to utilize clarifying follow-up questions such as a contrast probe to help define the boundaries of a response.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

In general, validity is defined “as the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all of the data in the study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 146). With regards to quantitative instruments and procedures, research (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004; Howell, 2002; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2008) identifies some major threats to both instrument and procedural validity that researchers must acknowledge or recognize. These include the following: internal validity, external validity, statistical conclusion validity, content validity, and construct validity.

For this mixed methods study, a quantitative questionnaire was used for the purpose of group selection and to measure attitude and satisfaction levels of first-year college female students towards their high school physical education experiences. The ability to draw inferences from a particular sample to the greater population outside of a study is termed *external validity* (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004; Howell, 2002). If the

sample is representative of the desired population, then one can generalize, and procedural external validity is considered high. In order to minimize threats to external validity and ensure that samples are representative of the larger population, researchers should take steps to choose an adequate, *random* sample (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004; Howell, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2008). In order to ensure the results reflect what was intended, random assignments to groups help to ensure procedural “internal validity” (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004; Howell, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2008). “Sampling decisions are important here because if [the researcher] does not have a good sample of the phenomena of interest, then [the researcher’s] inferences related to the research questions will lack clarity or be inadequate” (Teddlie & Yu, 2008, p. 223).

To increase the statistical likelihood that the sample in this study was representative of the larger population of adolescent girls and young women, and that type I errors (apparent differences that in reality do not exist) have been avoided, the sample of females to be interviewed was to be narrowed to approximately 30 girls (Vincent, 2005). This number was based on a desired effect size of .80, a power of .80, and an alpha of .05, all figures appropriate to applied research in kinesiology (Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2011; Vincent, 2005). The sample size in this study was 9, and this had the effect of decreasing the power, or the ability to detect real differences in the larger population based on the study sample (Vincent, 2005). It should be noted that while power and sample size are important, the researcher’s first priority was to delineate those participants who expressed significant dissatisfaction and dislike towards their high school physical education courses. Because the questionnaire was aimed at a specific population, the representativeness of the sample was more important than its size

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Thomas et al., 2011). “Representativeness in qualitative research, and extrapolating from the particular to the general, is secondary to the participants’ ability to provide information about themselves and their setting” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 104).

Both content validity and construct validity needed to be addressed with regard to the quantitative questionnaire (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004). A study by Rikard and Banville (2006) examining adolescent high school student attitudes about physical education established construct validity by using constructs recognized in the supporting literature, and this study was used as a guide. Accordingly, with regard to this study, the concepts of attitude, satisfaction, and gender dichotomy were developed and clearly defined through supporting literature (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2004). Then, numerous reminders on the survey site were deemed necessary to indicate that answers were to be made with reference to their high school (not college) physical education experiences. Next, the questionnaire was given to a peer group in the field of physical education in order to check for agreement and content validity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Fiset, 2011; Gray, 2004; Ryan et al., 2003). Finally, a pilot study was administered to a group of high school students with specific attention to the following (Gray, 2004, p. 205): the instructions given to respondents; the formality or informality of the questionnaire in terms of tone or presentation; the length of the questionnaire; the quality of the individual questions in terms of whether they were understood and answered in a way that was intended; the effectiveness of the Likert scale; and redundancy. The review of the question items by a professional peer group and the use of a pilot study were crucial to establishing the validity and reliability of the new, edited questionnaire.

To effectively assess whether or not a gender dichotomy might exist in physical education and to help initial sampling of the population, one additional subfactor was added to the PACSQ, as indicated above: *gender*. The following items were added to the questionnaire under gender: I did not feel comfortable performing various skills in physical education class; I believe girls and boys enjoy participating in the same games and activities in physical education; and my physical education teacher treated the boys and girls equally and fairly. To be consistent with the initial design of the instrument, all of the items on the questionnaire included an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*no satisfaction/strongly disagree*) to 8 (*very satisfying/strongly agree*). The revised PACSQ can be found in Appendix A.

Subramaniam and Silverman's (2000) attitude instrument also contains subfactors (or dimensions) that have been tested for validity by a panel of experts and by computing reliability coefficient scores to assure fit. The alpha reliability coefficient for the scores for the complete instrument was .83, and "the percentage agreement among the experts for items in each subfactor was above .90" (Subramaniam & Silverman, 2000, p. 37). Similar to Part II, and for design consistency, all of the items on Part III of the questionnaire included a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The modified questionnaire used for this study can be found in Appendix B.

Once questionnaire respondents completed the online survey, the quantitative data was imputed into SPSS to delineate those participants to be interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to confirm and validate the questionnaire items, to further explain and give meaning to the girls' reasons for disliking physical education, and to test the

researcher's theory about the possible presence of a gender dichotomy in physical education. Like the quantitative questionnaire instrument, the interview questions were designed with validity and reliability in mind. Utilizing a pilot study and concentrating on the research questions when designing the interview questions contributed to validity by focusing the questions on what was intended to be measured (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Gray, 2004; Patton, 2002; Onwuegbuzie, & Johnson, 2008). In addition, care was taken to ensure questions were truly open ended. "The truly open-ended question allows the person being interviewed to select from among that person's full repertoire of possible responses those that are most salient" (Patton, 2002, p. 35). The questions must therefore be clear, age-appropriate, and singular (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Again, with regards to this study, it was made clear to participants what was meant when concepts and vocabulary such as *same-sex*, *coed*, *attitude*, and *satisfaction* were used.

With regard to interview procedures, because of the fact that the participants within this study were young women, some special validity and reliability issues needed to be addressed. Because younger people can be especially reluctant to talk to strangers about sensitive issues (such as their bodies and members of the opposite sex), building rapport and assuring neutrality are important (Gray, 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002). With regard to this study, time was taken before the interviews began to converse about life at the college and matters unrelated to the interview. This was done to establish a calm, safe environment and to help build rapport. Students were informed in writing and reminded prior to interviews that questions and answers related to the interviews were in no way related to any class or experience at the college they were attending.

“Trustworthiness is a global term used by some QUALs as a substitute for QUAN validity issues” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 26). Some of the ways a researcher can address trustworthiness include accounting for the following: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Gray, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Credibility, analogous to quantitative internal validity (whether or not findings can be generalized), involves the use of triangulation techniques, persistent observations, and member checks. Sampling technique also comes into play; the researcher should “try to select a sample that allows for a subject to be viewed from all relevant perspectives” (Gray, 2004, p. 219). Transferability, analogous to quantitative external validity, involves the use of thick descriptions and purposive sampling. Dependability, analogous to quantitative reliability, involves the use of audit trails through the data. Finally, confirmability, or objectivity, pertains to having evidence that there are connections between data and the researcher’s interpretations (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Gray, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The act of using multiple methods can help gain a greater understanding of a potentially complicated issue and comprehend a wider range of responses. “Multiple methods work to enhance understanding both by adding layers of information and by using one type of data to validate or refine another” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 201). Patton (2002) recommends the collection of data from multiple sources (mixed methods) to improve the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data. A study by Gibbons and Humbert (2008) utilized questionnaires, focus group interviews, and one-on-one interviews to measure what adolescent girls want from physical education. These authors justified multiple methods by stating that the three sources “afforded the participants

several different ways to tell about their experiences and facilitated triangulation of the data” (p. 173). Another study by Constantinou, Manson, and Silverman (2009) looked at how adolescent girls perceive their physical education teachers’ gender-role expectations and how the girls’ attitudes were affected by these perceptions. Again, using multiple data sources helped establish trustworthiness of the data through triangulation.

Constantinou et al. also utilized peer debriefing in the form of peer researchers who checked themes and subthemes and came to a consensus. Other research (Rikard & Banville, 2006; Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007) involving adolescent attitudes regarding physical education, and as mentioned above, utilized a mixed methods approach to provide evidence of validity; both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to show evidence that scores were valid. “With multiple mixed measures, you are afforded a much better opportunity to assess the overall ‘goodness’ of the data” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 209). If measures are taken to ensure that both the qualitative and quantitative data instruments and procedures are valid, reliable, and credible, a mixed method study will have high overall data quality.

Data Analysis

As stated earlier, this study consisted of a sequential, quan/QUAL design with a feminist perspective. The type of mixed methods design used strongly influences the type of data analysis chosen for a research project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The design depends on the following criteria: implementation, priority, integration, and theoretical perspective (Creswell et al., 2008). The following section explains and discusses the four criteria, providing a description of the mixed method design selected for this study.

The sequence in which the quantitative and qualitative data are collected is referred to as implementation. The choices consist of either collecting data at the same time (simultaneously or concurrently) or collecting it in phases over time (sequentially; Creswell et al., 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Because the present study involves an initial quantitative collection to test variables (via a questionnaire), followed by a qualitative collection to explore a smaller number of cases in depth (via interviews), it is considered sequential.

The second criterion is the priority (or emphasis) given to the quantitative and qualitative methods. Priority is determined by many variables, such as the theoretical emphasis of the study, the goals of the study, and the research questions (Creswell et al., 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Because of the emphasis on a feminist perspective and the desire to deeply understand the girls' thoughts, feelings, and understanding of gender's influence on physical education, the qualitative interviews took priority in this study.

The third criterion involves the decision of when to integrate or mix the quantitative and qualitative data sets. The intent or purpose of a study determines when the integration occurs (Creswell et al., 2008). Possibilities include collecting both types of data and then integrating at the data analysis and interpretation stages, analyzing the data separately and then integrating in the interpretation stage, or integrating directly at data collection (Creswell et al., 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). For this study, different stages of integration occurred. Initially, the quantitative data was analyzed to inform participant selection for qualitative interviews. Next, because a feminist perspective about a gender dichotomy was part of the focus of both the quantitative and

qualitative pieces, integration occurred at the data analysis and interpretation stages. Finally, integration of both data sets (qualitative and quantitative) occurred in the concluding and comparative data analysis and interpretation stages. The final criterion to consider with the mixed methods design is whether or not a theoretical perspective is present and whether it is explicit or implicit (Creswell et al., 2008). As stated above, this study involved a feminist perspective (specifically the assumption of a gendered dichotomy in physical education), which therefore affected integration of the mixed methods.

Interview Selection and Three-Part Questionnaire

The three-part questionnaire provided the data that enabled the selection of interview candidates. These candidates uniformly expressed avoidance and resistance behaviors in their high school physical education classrooms and indicated on the questionnaire that they were dissatisfied with and had negative attitudes towards high school physical education. The following section explains the criteria for interview selection and the analyses performed on that criteria to determine which respondents were eligible to be interviewed. All three parts of the online questionnaire criteria needed to be met for a respondent to be eligible for an interview.

Interview Criteria for Part 1

The items in Part 1 of the questionnaire (see Appendix C) indicated whether respondents experienced a gender dichotomy and exhibited avoidance and resistance behaviors in high school physical education. Part 1 therefore enabled the identification of potential interviewees who disliked physical education. There were eight dichotomous (*agree/disagree*) statements in Part 1 that asked respondents to address possible barriers

to participation in physical education and to indicate preferences that could reveal the presence of a gender dichotomy in physical education. For example, statements such as, *I did not like participating in front of males, I did not like to sweat during the school day, and I preferred to work out when I chose to*, which describe the barriers given in the literature for why girls dislike high school physical education, were included in Part 1. A value of 1 was given if a respondent answered *disagree*, and a value of 2 was given if a respondent answered *agree*. Scores for all eight statements were then added together, and a mean score was calculated for each respondent. Possible scores ranged from 8 to 16. Because women who had experienced avoidance and resistance behaviors in high school physical education were sought, an overall mean score greater than or equal to 1.5 was set as the criteria for a respondent to be interviewed. This score indicated that those meeting the criteria to be interviewed agreed with at least half of the items in Part 1.

Interview Criteria for Part 2

Part 2 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A), the satisfaction section, was modified from an established instrument (Cunningham, 2007) designed to measure satisfaction levels towards physical education. Forty-four total items represented nine categories (each category contained three to six statements) relating to class satisfaction. These categories included: *cognitive development* [CD], *diversionary experiences* [DE], *fun/enjoyment* [F/E], *improvement of health and fitness* [IHF], *interaction with others* [IO], *mastery experiences* [ME], *normative success* [NS], *teaching* [TCH], and *gender* [GEN]. Examples of statements regarding class satisfaction included: *the improvement of my health due to this class* (from the IHF category), and *my ability to outperform others* (from the IO category). To stay consistent with the established instrument

(Cunningham, 2007), this part of the questionnaire used an 8-point Likert scale for responses, with *strongly disagree* assigned a 1, *moderately disagree* a 2, *disagree* a 3, *slightly disagree* a 4, *slightly agree* a 5, *agree* a 6, *moderately agree* a 7, and *strongly agree* an 8. One statement (item 42) was reverse coded because a high score indicated dissatisfaction with physical education. Scores from all 44 statements were then totaled, and a mean score for each respondent was calculated. Possible total scores ranged from 44–352, with mean scores ranging from 1–8. Respondents with a mean score less than or equal to 4.5 met the criteria to be interviewed for Part 2.

The final portion, Part 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B), was the attitude section. Similar to Part 2, this section was modified from an existing instrument (Subramaniam & Silverman, 2000) designed to measure attitude towards physical education. Part 3 was comprised of 19 items and included statements such as the following: *the games I learned in physical education seemed important to me*, *I felt my physical education teacher made my physical education class boring for me*, and *I felt the games and activities I learned in physical education were valuable to me*. To stay consistent with the established instrument, Part 3 used a 5-point Likert scale with *strongly disagree* assigned a 1, *disagree* a 2, *uncertain* a 3, *agree* a 4, and *strongly agree* a 5. Eight items (statements 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, and 18) were reverse coded, and then scores from all 19 statements were totaled, and a mean score for each respondent was calculated. Possible total scores ranged from 19–95 with mean scores ranging from 1–5. The criteria set for interview selection was a mean score of less than or equal to 3. This score indicated that on at least half of the items, respondents expressed a negative attitude towards their high school physical education class.

The questionnaire data was uploaded into the statistical software program SPSS for Windows, and descriptive statistics were computed for all variables to provide a profile of the data. Specifically, these descriptive statistics included the following: frequency distributions, stem and leaf display, histograms, box plots, mode, median, mean, and standard deviation/variance.

Finally, a quantitative bivariate analysis was performed. Phi correlation and Cramer's V were used to look for relationships between individual items on the questionnaire and the participant's interview status. Although the items on Parts 1, 2, and 3 had varying scales, they were collapsed into *agree* or *disagree* for the statistical analysis. Any significant relationships were then compared (with $p < .05$) with the qualitative interview data to check for agreement.

A qualitative approach with a feminist perspective was used to guide the analysis of the interview data. Basic qualitative research is based on constructionism. In other words, understanding is constructed from the participants' experiences and how the participants assign meaning to those experiences (Merriam, 2009). The overall purpose of basic qualitative research "is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). While all qualitative research involves constructed meanings, the main objective of basic qualitative research is to try to unearth and decipher those meanings (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). A feminist inquiry approach to data analysis is directed by the question, "How does the lens of gender shape and affect our understanding and actions?" (Patton, 2002, p. 129). Consequently, using gender as the analytical focus causes patterns and themes to develop and emerge (Lather, 1991).

Indeed, “feminist researchers see gender as a basic organizing principle which profoundly shapes/mediates the concrete conditions of our lives” (Lather, 1991, p. 71).

The recorded interviews were uploaded onto an Apple MacBook laptop and, using the software program *Dragon Dictate*, transcribed verbatim onto word documents. Mac File Vault was used to encrypt the data. The Dragon Dictate interpretation was checked for accuracy by the researcher and corrections were made as needed. Initially, each interview was analyzed by hand in order to find common ideas and concepts related to evidence of a gender dichotomy and possible reasons or barriers why interviewees had negative attitudes and dissatisfaction in physical education. A summary form for each interviewee was created to review and document reflections and thoughts regarding each interview. Interviews were then read and analyzed again, using the constant comparative process to assign codes and generate themes. The constant comparative method involved “comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 30). Guided by a basic qualitative approach, the analysis involved searching for and identifying themes that recurred in the data (Merriam, 2009). Next, interview transcripts were uploaded into the qualitative data analysis software *Dedoose*, making it possible to interpret and find meaning from the interviews (Patton, 2002). Using this approach with a feminist perspective to analyze the qualitative data worked best to answer the research questions and serve the research purpose. Specifically, this path helped the understanding of the participants’ negative attitudes and dissatisfaction towards physical education. Table 1 displays the initial codes and themes. A more detailed explanation of themes with their respective subthemes can be found in Appendix F.

Table 1

Themes and Their Meanings

Code Name and Abbreviation	Code Meaning
Unique (UNI)	Evidence that physical education is a unique subject with particular challenges and dynamic that influence attitude and satisfaction levels
Gender Related (GEN)	Something related to gender influenced the attitude and satisfaction levels or was evidence of a gender dichotomy
Pressure/Stress/Anxiety (PRES)	Pressure felt by the presence of boys in class
Avoidance and Resistance (AVOID)	Evidence of avoidance and resistance behaviors
Curriculum (CUR)	Evidence that the physical education curriculum influenced attitude and satisfaction levels
Teachers/Pedagogy (TEACH)	Evidence that the physical education teachers and accompanying pedagogy influenced attitude and satisfaction levels
Social (SOC)	Friends or peers influenced attitude or satisfaction levels
Ideal Class (IDEAL)	Characteristics participants gave for an ideal physical education class

Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations

Technical Considerations

Every effort was made to acknowledge any bias regarding adolescent girls and physical education (as well as any bias the researcher might hold as a woman) and to keep this bias out of the research process. The level of the researcher's participation was completely revealed to the participants before the research began. Participants knew what the researcher had access to and that they could remove themselves from the study at any time, and they were made aware that their participation had nothing to do with any of their classes or grades at the college. Marshall and Rossman's (2011) recommendation that "researchers be themselves, true to their social identities and their interests in the setting and/or topic (page 114)" was adopted: participants were aware that the researcher was an instructor at the college in the Department of Health and Exercise Science.

The revealedness regarding the specific purposes of a study can vary from full disclosure to complete secrecy (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In order to ensure that knowledge based on interviews is as valid and as objective as possible, it is recommended that the researcher informs human participants of the specific purpose of the study and allows them to be fully involved in what is said about them (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participants should have "maximum possibilities of protesting against what the researchers say about them; where the objects are allowed to raise questions in their own terms and not in the researcher's terms, a researcher whose interests they need not share" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 244). A study by Constantinou et al. (2009) followed an obverse model. In this study, which looked at how physical education teachers' gender-role expectations and how these perceptions then

influence the girls' attitudes toward, and participation in physical education, the purpose of the research was intentionally withheld. This was done "in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and to keep the research environment as 'natural' as possible" (Constantinou et al., 2009, p. 86). Another study by Ryan et al. (2003), involving middle school students and attitudes toward their physical education teachers and classes, did not inform participants of the survey topic and purpose of the study. Again, the given justification was to avoid a power differential between the participants and the interviewers, and to better ensure the trustworthiness of the data. The present study followed the latter protocol. Because of the specific and potentially sensitive nature (gender and body issues) of this study, and the possibility of first-year college students withholding or not revealing sensitive or embarrassing information, the researcher did not make my specific purpose regarding a gender dichotomy known on the questionnaire or during interviews.

Interpersonal Considerations

Some of the interpersonal considerations included maintaining a respectful relationship with the participants. Because the researcher has had extensive experience (17 years as a junior high teacher and 9 years as a college instructor) working with young women, and is also a woman, the researcher felt able to develop good rapport with participants and to demonstrate an understanding and respect for their perspectives. Rapport is the ability to convey the message that what the interviewee has to say is important and will not be judged. This establishes trust (Patton, 2002). Sometimes, a selection of interview questions can be designed to develop rapport (Constantinou et al., 2009). "Neutrality means that the person being interviewed can tell [the interviewer]

anything without engendering [her] favor or disfavor with regard to the content of her or his response” (Patton, 2002, p. 365). Because of the age difference between the researcher and the participants, a power imbalance could emerge that could influence findings; thus, establishing rapport and neutrality can also help avoid unreliable or false information (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To facilitate a quiet, private area for interviews, all interviews were held in the researcher’s office. Time was taken at the beginning of interviews to offer a snack and beverage and to get acquainted with interviewees in a nonthreatening manner. All efforts were made to establish and maintain a respectful relationship with participants.

Ethics

Several ethical aspects were considered. All permissions necessary to work with participants were obtained (via the institutional review boards from the University of Minnesota and the college participants came from). Consent forms (Appendix E) were received before any data collection with participants began. Full disclosure regarding my involvement and general purpose was made to all involved participants.

In an effort to increase security regarding sensitive participant material, Mac File Vault was initiated on the computer used to store materials and documents related to this study. Survey Monkey was used for the online questionnaire, and access to the questionnaire was password protected. Access to the data from the questionnaire was password protected and only accessible by the researcher. Fictional names have been used for all documents regarding the findings of the study and for specifics regarding any of the participants. Finally, any specific information about individual participants was kept confidential and secure.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Quantitative Findings

Based on the quantitative questionnaire, interview participants for this study were selected because they had negative attitudes and low satisfaction levels, and because they indicated that they experienced gender-related issues and/or barriers in their high school physical education classes. The quantitative data allowed for an analytical determination of the relationship between responses to specific questions on the questionnaire and the respondents selected for interviews.

All first-year female college students enrolled in a personal conditioning course (approximately 140) at the college were invited to participate in this research study in late September of 2012. By late October, 51 women (39%) completed the consent form and started the online questionnaire. The 51 women yielded 49 completed questionnaires (2 did not fully complete the questionnaire, making them ineligible for interviews). The following section presents the results of the questionnaire and the quantitative analyses of the results.

Demographic Data

The prefatory portion of the online questionnaire included questions about descriptive information. Although the answers to this section had no bearing on the criteria for interview selection, it was included because it contained variables that may have influenced a respondent's attitude or satisfaction level towards physical education. The information sought included the following: the type of high school physical education curriculum experienced by the respondent, the composition of the high school

physical education class (i.e., whether the respondent's high school physical education class was mixed gender, single sex, or a combination of both), the public or private designation of the respondent's high school, and the city and state in which the respondent's high school was located. All 9 interviewees, aged 17-19, came from high schools located in the upper Midwest. See Figures 1–3 for demographic results.

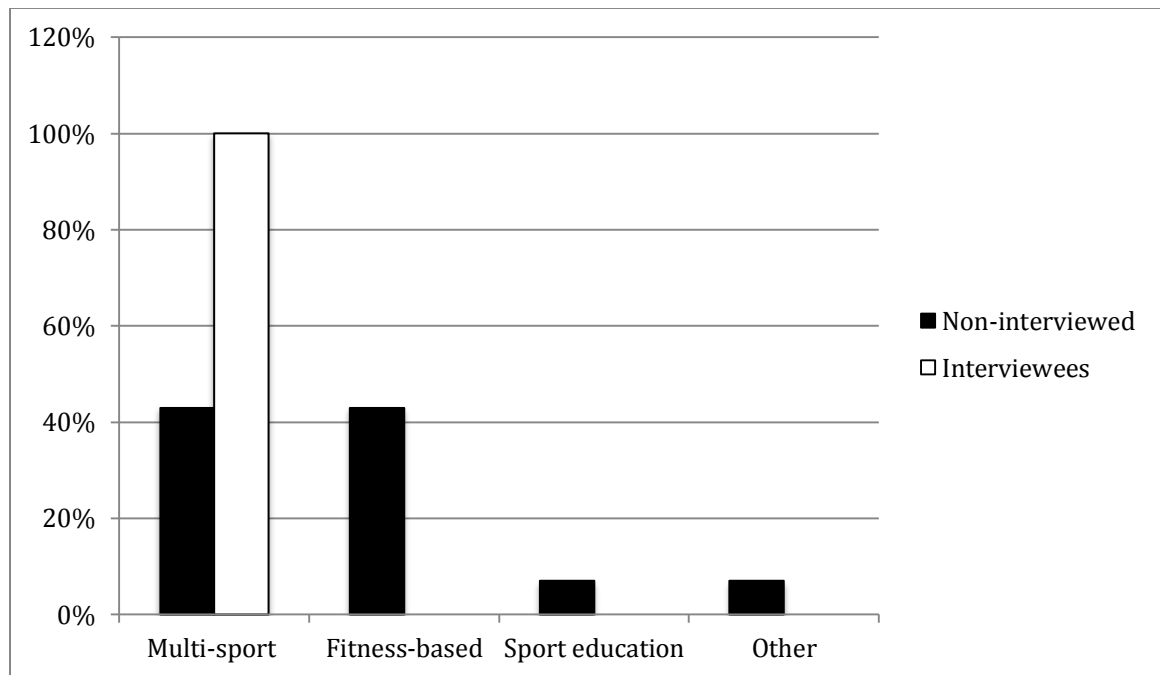


Figure 1. Type of physical education curriculum for all respondents: 82% multisport curriculum, 35% fitness-based curriculum, 6% sport education, 6% other.

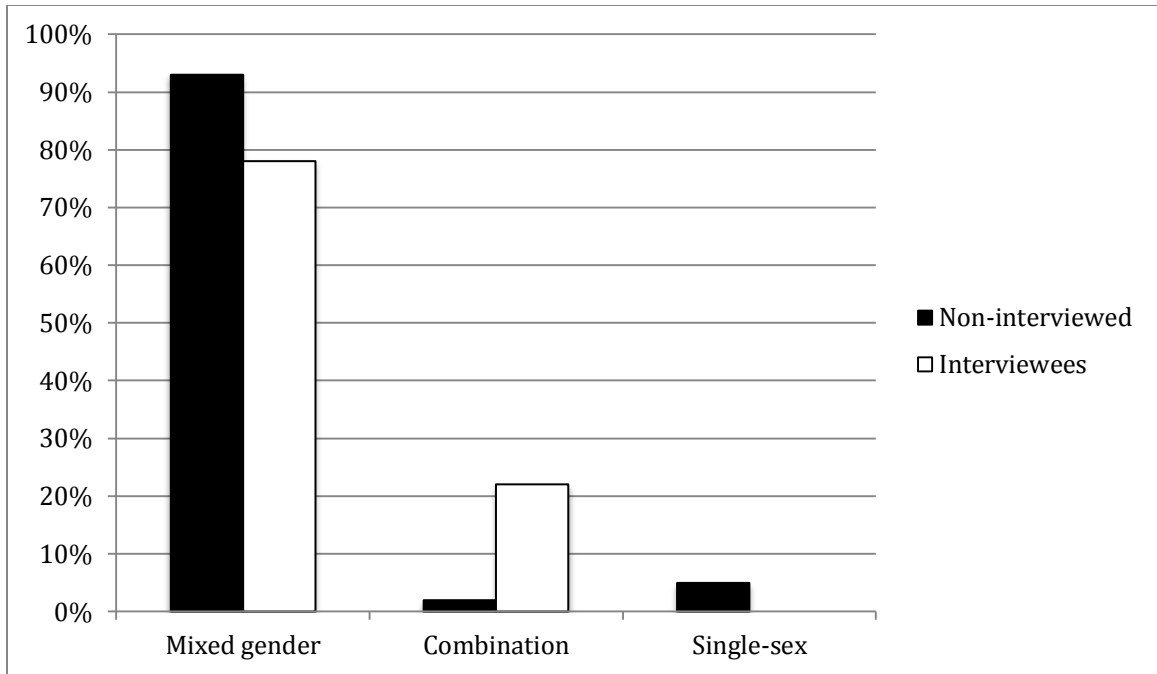


Figure 2. Gender composition of class for all respondents: 80% mixed gender, 16% combination, 4% single-sex.

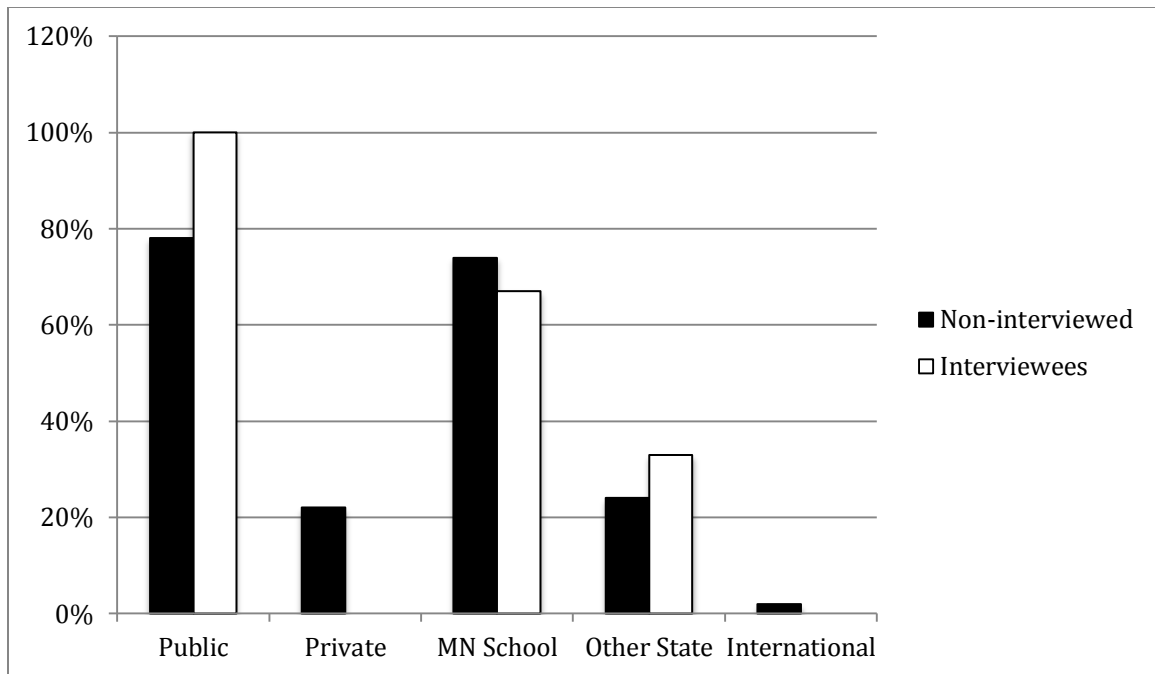


Figure 3. Type and location of school for all respondents: 80% public school, 18% private school, 71% Minnesota school, 27% other state, 2% International.

Interview Selection and Three-Part Questionnaire

The three-part questionnaire provided the data that enabled the selection of interview candidates. These candidates uniformly expressed avoidance and resistance behaviors in their high school physical education classrooms and indicated on the questionnaire that they were dissatisfied with and had negative attitudes towards high school physical education. All three parts of the online questionnaire criteria needed to be met for a respondent to be eligible for an interview. The items in Part 1 of the questionnaire (see Appendix C) indicated whether respondents experienced a gender dichotomy and exhibited avoidance and resistance behaviors in high school physical education. All 49 respondents answered all eight items: 32 (65%) met the interview criteria for Part 1, and 17 (35%) did not. Part 2 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A),

the satisfaction section, was designed to measure satisfaction levels towards physical education. Eleven (22%) of the 49 questionnaire respondents met the interview criteria for Part 2. The final portion, Part 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B), was the attitude section, designed to measure attitude towards physical education. Of the 49 respondents, 9 (19%) met the interview criteria for Part 3.

The results from all three parts of the questionnaire were used to select interviewees; thus, interview participants needed to meet the criteria for all three parts. Of the 49 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 9 met the questionnaire criteria and were selected for interviews. All 9 agreed to be interviewed and were interviewed in November and December of 2012. The qualitative findings, presented below, augmented the quantitative findings and indicated further reasons for women's dissatisfaction with and negative attitudes towards their high school physical education experience.

Qualitative Findings

One purpose of the quantitative portion of this study was to select a group of respondents to interview. Interview participants were selected because they had negative attitudes and low satisfaction levels, and because they indicated that they experienced gender-related issues and/or barriers in their high school physical education classes. Qualitative interviewing was utilized because a better, richer understanding about the participant's dissatisfaction with physical education was sought, and because it enabled the participants to further speak their own opinions as young women looking back on their high school physical education experiences. Because the voices of women are often missing or marginalized (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, 2011; Gordon, 2006;

Patton, 2002), interviews were transcribed verbatim and guided by a feminist approach that privileged the interviewees' direct interpretations.

During coding, three additional codes emerged which, after further analysis, were found either to not prove as meaningful as expected or to overlap and ultimately fit better with another theme. These codes were *social*, which included evidence related to popularity and friends, *stress*, which included statements related to stress felt by lack of ability and pressure from peers or from teachers, and *ideal class*, which included characteristics of an ideal physical education class. For example, the following quote from Joanie was coded as *stress* but later moved to *ability* where it was deemed more appropriate (stress emerged as a consequence of ability): "To have the entire class sitting in the dugout watching me, and I can't hit the dang ball for nothing, and I left gym crying some days because people would laugh at me and it was horrible." Similarly, the following quote from Julie was coded as *social*, but there was not a great deal of additional evidence to warrant further analysis of the theme: "Like some of the girls liked a boy who was in gym class so then they would try to be really good at certain sports and stuff like that." The characteristics of an ideal class were effectively collapsed into the appropriate code. For example, if a participant stated that an ideal class should be fun and relevant, it was coded and collapsed into curriculum. Finally, subcodes related to ability were combined into one code called *ability*.

The transcripts were uploaded into the data analysis software *Dedoose* where they were digitally coded and analyzed. Using *Dedoose* helped to generate a table (see Table 2) that tallied the number of times a code was utilized for each interviewee. (Note that the GEN and CUR totals include their respective subcodes). This chart afforded a visual

representation of the regular or irregular occurrence of a particular code and theme throughout the transcripts.

Table 2

Codes and Subcode Frequency Counts per Interviewee

Interviewee	CODE					
	UNI	GEN	AVOID	CUR	TEACH	ABI
Amy	3	14	0	9	1	6
Annie	1	12	2	7	0	5
Cindy	2	17	2	4	9	8
Joanie	2	10	2	21	6	7
Julie	3	14	2	16	4	9
Laurie	3	10	2	27	2	4
Mary	8	11	1	23	0	2
Nancy	0	15	1	10	2	4
Sarah	4	12	5	13	2	2
Totals	26	129	17	130	26	47

The remainder of this chapter presents the core themes from the nine open-ended, semistructured interviews. Because the focus was primarily based on personal meanings and the interviewees' perceptions of their physical education classes, direct quotes are used to explain and support the results, and interviewees are allowed to speak for themselves.

Uniqueness

Most of the interviewees (67%) commented on the uniqueness of the physical education discipline and how that contributed to their dislike of their courses in high school. Amy compared her high school physical education class to other high school courses and noted that, while she felt physical education was academic, “when compared to a math class or history or science class, you don’t feel like you’re studying anything, although you are, it’s just, it’s so different that people don’t take it into account.” The distinct nature of grading in physical education also came up as a factor that influenced interviewees’ experiences. Laurie reflected on the academic differences and said:

I think because it’s, really, you can’t sit in a desk and listen to the things and write down your own notes; it really forces you to engage with other people because you’re usually playing a team sport, and that’s how that works. Your math homework you can do alone. I think also because it’s not necessarily what comes up in people’s minds when they think this is a standardized test so they don’t necessarily have as much drive at least to really improve or try hard. And like, maybe that should be like a standard for people but it isn’t necessarily something that you’re being evaluated on to get into college or pass state tests. You just have to sort of show up and do it. It’s much more participatory than evaluation based.

Sarah reflected on how unique physical education was compared to sport participation:

It’s so weird, like, I had a different mentality in the gym than I did in the pool. In the pool I wanted to swim hard and I wanted to get a workout in

and I wanted to have fun, but it was more like I wanted to push myself, and in physical education it wasn't like that. In physical education, I didn't want to push myself as much.

Sarah indicated that she may have tried to outswim a male classmate in physical education, but if she beat him, she would not disclose that information to anyone else.

Gender Dichotomy

The majority of the interviewees (78%) indicated that they believed the behaviors, expectations, likes, and dislikes regarding physical education typically differed by gender. In general, these participants noted that the boys tended to be more competitive and aggressive in nature. As Laurie offered, "I feel like girls are a little less competitive and a little more, like, understanding if you're not." Another interviewee, Annie, said, "Females are afraid. Well not afraid but males are typically more aggressive. When they play sports, females might not want to get in the way of that aggressive behavior or feeling." Cindy also noted that "girls were intimidated by the boys who thought it was the Olympics," and Amber agreed with this sentiment, stating, "So you get this imbalance in class and boys kind of take over. Actually that's true for most sports; the males usually run the show."

Forty-four percent of the interviewees expressed frustration that the competitive and aggressive behavior of the boys was not controlled in physical education. Mary complained that there was "no regulation to it." Nancy agreed, saying:

I wouldn't mind if it were mixed if only the boys were kept in line more from using too much force. Ah, I know all the injuries I received were from boys from playing sports—you know, they were just getting too

reckless—hitting the ball right into my face. Yeah broken glasses! I did not like it because the boys were way too competitive. Um, the boys were kind of really violent; I took many balls to the face [giggle].

The majority of the interviewees (89%) indicated that high school girls (either themselves or other girls in their classes) exhibited avoidance or resistance behaviors in their high school physical education class. Several interviewees (33%) cited the assumption that girls in physical education were to opt out of competitive play. Cindy, for example, remembered that, “some girls would intentionally strike out to avoid participating.” Mary commented that there were frequently “clusters of girls standing around not doing a lot.” Another interviewee said:

I didn't like how as a girl there was this consensus between all girls that we didn't want to try very hard and we hated gym and we just wanted to talk and laugh and do funny things. Like when we played badminton, my friends would try to hit it up into the stands and then we could climb up under the stands to get the birdie. (Sarah)

Several interviewees (3 of 9) recognized these behaviors in themselves and acknowledged that they did not like this gendered expectation and the pressure that came with these behaviors. Others indicated that they themselves intentionally avoided participation. Laurie admitted, “I do remember kind of trying to get in the back of the line hoping that the inning would switch before I'd have to bat.” Nancy stated, “we'd try to hang back and be like goalie for soccer and be in the back when running.”

When asked about activities or games that might be more appropriate for a single-sex or a coeducational class, 67% of the interviewees based their answers on male or

female characteristics. Nancy offered, “[G]ymnastics, maybe that’s more of a feminine thing that the girls would be more comfortable with—and maybe softball—I know it’s more of a girly sport. That’s the only sport I really liked was softball.” Two other interviewees put it in similar terms. According to Mary,

Girls tend to be a little more interested in the learning aspect of it as opposed to guys that I know. A lot of this is psychology and gender studies, but guys tend to be a lot more apt at any sport because they are a lot more, I mean, girls tend to focus a little more on flexibility and balance, whereas guys tend to be more of strength and just overall raw ability and focus less on finesse. Like yoga and certain flexibility and even some sports tend to be a lot more feminine oriented as opposed to males, but truth is, yoga is just as influential and productive for each. Is there one that’s better for females as opposed to guys? I would say no, but I think girls tend to be a little more into the aerobic as opposed to the anaerobic.

Julie, for her part, expressed that:

Boys can’t do a lot of the things because their bodies just are not capable of doing the things that a girl can do in gymnastics. And so the boys would do things like the parallel bars, the horse, and the rings, where for girls it’s more balance beam, the uneven bars, stuff like that, so it would be hard to put them together because you kind of have to have them do different things.

When asked about pedagogical and curriculum concerns, and specifically about coeducational classes, all interviewees indicated that there had been a degree of discomfort participating with boys in high school physical education. Some of the interviewees attributed the discomfort to certain units in physical education. Sarah, for example, indicated that she would have especially preferred a girls-only class for the weight room unit because “we get really self-conscious about weight rooms.” Julie echoed this sentiment: “I think it’s just more stuff that’s more personal like when it comes to weights and judging yourself and stuff because I feel like girls are more uncomfortable doing that in front of boys, and maybe the swimming unit too.” Cindy discussed her discomfort running in front of boys: “I think running was a big one; we were not interested in running in front of the boys. My face gets red when I run and I don’t like doing that in front of guys.” Annie pointed out that it was her ability that caused the discomfort. “If it’s coed, then females competing in front of males would be, like, oh I don’t want that guy to see me bad at sports or something.”

While all of the interviewees noted that they felt uncomfortable participating with or in front of boys at some point in their high school physical education experience, the majority (56%) indicated that they preferred having boys in class for *some* activities. Two interviewees reminisced about the times they enjoyed physical education. According to Joanie,

Well I think boys are a lot more fun than girls because they kind of, I don’t know, they are a lot more excited about the game and, like, boys are funnier to me. So it was more fun with boys. Like, if I would’ve been better I think it would have been more fun especially because of the boys.

We had this one game called capture the flag. I actually kind of liked that game. So the boys would always like (I don't know why it was always the boys) but they would always get like groups of warriors together and be like 'okay here's the plan you guys' and like that was fun for me because they included me in that and I was always like the decoy. But I don't care, whatever, I'll sit in jail while they get the flag.

Amy recalled a similar situation:

And football, I have never understood football. And I remember this instance where I was kind of like, 'OK I know the general gist of what's going on,' and then I had like a guy say 'I'm on the football team—let me explain this to you.' It was helpful, like, their knowledge, and then the team itself, with the guys in it, um, it made the team do better in certain sports where they were broken up into teams. Some of the guys were more motivated to do certain things; like, they make it look easy so you kind of wanted to work harder.

Finally, more than half of the interviewees (67%) suggested that the gender issues they experienced in the physical education classroom would not be solved by a single-sex class and that the gender issues they experienced were not exclusive to girls. Sarah indicated that she had some experience in an all-girls class, and the girls "still didn't want to work hard." Nancy also mused about an all-girls class:

The only problem would be that the girls then could become competitive.

The more tomboyish girls would take on the role of the boys, and some of

the girls (say the ones who aren't physically fit) could be more likely to be picked on because girls are more likely to be teased.

Interviewees revealed that boys or lesser skilled students could be stereotyped too.

According to Julie:

The guys were more competitive, and I think it's more of a self-conscious aspect. Because you're so young and it's like the girls just want to impress the boys and the boys want to impress the girls so the girls don't want the boys to see how much they weigh and the boys don't want the girls to see how many pull-ups they can do and so everyone was just like afraid to do anything in front of the class.

Joanie claimed that:

I don't really think it was gender related. I mean, this is going to sound bad, but one of my good friends is larger (it's a guy), and he would always be with me in the back of the group kind of. We would like laugh at ourselves and think it was funny but people made fun of him just as much.

I don't really think it's gender, or at least it wasn't at my school.

Physical Education Curriculum

All of the women interviewed indicated that the inability to find physical education relevant or important was a reason for their dislike of their class in high school. Most of them noted the importance of physical activity, but they also noted that they could not find meaning in their high school curriculum. Mary described her frustration this way: "Honestly I'm sick of doing those things or being asked to do those things without an explanation behind it." Without meaning, activities became boring and

useless; the purpose behind movement for participants came down to just getting a grade. Laurie admonished her past physical education teachers and their interactions with students:

Don't just tell students, but ask them. Ask them why you should care about this because otherwise they're not going to care about it and why even show up? Because it can be painful—sometimes it's just I need to get an "A" because I need to pass this class. And I need to graduate high school. Which actually looking back I think that was my reason for doing things, but now I'm looking for something a little bit more because now I don't need to pass high school. That's done and I fulfilled that part of it so the benefit only lasted me until graduation. So maybe I didn't even benefit from it. So a little bit more reason. I think more specifically for those people who are not athletic—you know why it's really important. Because I think as a freshman and sophomore in high school I just didn't think about that. I was, like, I got to do this, I hate this—and at the end, like...whatever. If someone had really convinced me and made me understand that this is actually really important for you and for you to learn how to do this stuff so you can enjoy it when you get older and it becomes your responsibility.

Many of the interviewees (89%) also noted how difficult the physical work (especially running) could be in physical education, and without an activity's obvious relevance, there was not much to motivate them. Having to run and participate in other high-intensity exercises was, again, tied to lack of ability. As Laurie explained, "We had,

like, a conditioning unit that I really hated because personally, physically, I couldn't do some of the activities—like they were painful.” Joanie elaborated:

Well, I don't like to run, which is part of it. When they made us run the mile, I just physically can't do it so it was really humiliating for me because they like yell at you when you start walking and I was like I honestly cannot run a whole mile. Like that seems like forever to me! I see these cross-country kids running like 6 miles a day and I'm like I don't know how that's physically possible because I honestly could not do that.

The majority of the interviewees (89%) indicated that their high school physical education class was not fun for them and that having fun was an important motivator towards liking a class. As Sarah explained, “I just don't get why gym class can't be fun for people. That's the problem.” Joanie made a direct connection between having fun and participating when she said:

Well I mean I would say it is important to have fun in gym class because if you're having fun it makes you more apt to participate. And it just makes your life less miserable. I never did have fun in gym and I really can seriously tell you that I left gym class crying sometimes because it was that horrible. So I mean I don't think any subject in school deserves physical tears over it.

When asked to describe her ideal physical education class, Laurie's description involved having fun enjoying a particular class:

You know, actually one time we did have my ideal physical education class in high school. It was the end of our biking unit and we biked to a

Dairy Queen nearby [giggles] so, and then there was a lake nearby so we kind of—it was spring so we splashed around in the lake and ate ice cream. So there was that activity of actually biking there, but we had a little bit of chill time and had fun.

Over half of the interviewees explained the presence in the physical education classroom of a division by which they could either be competitive *or* have fun: the two states of being could not be synonymous. These interviewees described themselves as being uncompetitive in nature; therefore, if the curriculum took on a competitive focus, this was not fun, and as a result, they disliked the course. As Laurie explained, “I guess I’m not that competitive. It’s more like I would rather just have fun and be able to laugh at myself than be awkward around other people because they really want to win and I don’t really care.” According to Joanie, “I’m not very competitive so the games weren’t fun for me. I just got hit in the face a lot so it wasn’t like fun.” When asked how the competitive girls fit in, she stated, “Well, it seemed like they were having more fun than me.”

When asked to explain what they liked in an ideal physical education class, 79% of the interviewed women said they wanted or liked an individualized curriculum, 67% preferred having choices or options regarding the activities, and 44% desired a curriculum with “alternative,” less traditional activities. Individualizing the physical education curriculum was connected to helping students find meaning in activities. As Julie explained,

I think one of the goals of the physical education class should be to, like, incorporate a lifetime activity and help students find something that they

actually enjoy doing. And for a lot of students that is going to be a lot more individual like yoga or tai chi or kayaking or something that they can do on their own because if you're just getting into fitness you're not going to join a sports team right away.

Individualizing the curriculum is also tied, again, to ability. Mary noted, "everyone has their own abilities, and I think it should be just like recess where you have all the stuff there, and there are three or five activities that you have to do; you pick three and you get done."

Interviewees also cited the importance of having a variety of less conventional activities that students can choose from. Laurie offered the following information regarding her ideal physical education class:

So I think something that is noncompetitive and outdoors—again I'm really outdoorsy, I like going camping and I like biking and stuff like that. Things like that like we had an archery unit in sophomore year and that was really fun too. Because I mean it's like let's shoot a bow and arrow and that was really cool [giggles]. And again it was more like again the noncompetitive stuff and the stuff that's not like necessarily like a huge team sport where you're the only one or two people who don't know what's going on and everybody else's sort of like really into it.

Julie described another ideal class:

I know it is impossible for most high schools, but if they could, like, have options for students whether you wanted, like multicurriculum. Have the soccer, baseball, basketball or you could choose like a lifetime activity and

do kayaking and rock climbing and stuff that you could do on your own. If you actually offered something that people were interested in, they might actually stick with it, whereas if you take a student who is not in any sports, and make him play 12 different sports in a semester for a week and they barely learn them and hate them all, then they are never going to go into a sport, whereas if you offer them stuff that they could actually get into I feel like it would be better.

Physical Education Teacher and Pedagogy

According to the interviewees, their physical education teachers influenced student attitudes and satisfaction levels. Sarah described the teacher's role this way: "I think the instructor really does it, to make or break a class." Several (33%) of the interviewees expressed what they did not like about their high school physical education teachers by comparing them to a teacher they especially liked in middle or elementary school. For Sarah, a good teacher treated her as an individual and encouraged her:

My middle school teacher talked to me individually sometimes. When I told her I wanted to be in swimming, she was really supportive of that and that was really cool. She just kind of provided encouragement whenever I did really well on my lap tests. That was really nice; I liked that. That made me want to participate because I got so much positive [sic].

Joanie described enjoying a former physical education teacher's willingness to participate with the students:

My [high school] gym teacher didn't participate whereas in middle school I had this really awesome gym teacher that would like to play with us and

that was always fun. It took the focus off of me being terrible to be, like, oh, this is funny, she's playing too. But my high school teacher was like 450 pounds and would just tell us to run faster and throw harder, and I'm like, seriously that just made me so mad. Like we would run the mile and he would just sit there in the bleachers and watch us run. So I think that kind of made me mad that he really wasn't making me want to participate at all.

According to interviewees' responses, physical education teachers who appeared to focus on athletes or aggressive boys negatively influenced attitude and satisfaction levels. Some interviewees felt that they were not getting the attention they needed. Cindy's physical education teacher "was just not interested in girls participating. He was very much, what's the correct word, helping the boys that thought it was the Olympics." Julie shared a story where, during floor hockey, the boys would body check her (and others), and the teacher let it go on without regard to safety or the others in class. Interviewees suggested they would have preferred a teacher who was more understanding and encouraging, one who was flexible enough to offer alternatives and accommodations when appropriate. Laurie explained,

I would have liked an educator [a teacher] who understands you personally and your personality. So, one who would allow for breaks. You know, alternatives. So, like, if you can't do this, try that. Alternatives, but not like completely different, but just a little bit [pause] individualized. Understanding. So you could like, go into the office and

say, 'I want to borrow a pair of shoes, or borrow a shirt,' and they would just give it to you, which would be nice.

Julie also described the importance of the teacher–student relationship: I think your relationship with your teacher does make a difference. And if you have anything like, some kids had asthma and stuff, to go talk to the teacher and, like, let them know what's going on and not just have the teacher tell them to get out there and run, or whatever.

Ability

All (100%) interviewees cited motor or cognitive ability levels as significant contributors to their dislike of and negative attitudes towards physical education. When asked about barriers to participating in physical education, Joanie stated, "I would say my ability was a barrier and then after so many times that I had tried and done really crappy, then it was like I didn't want to try anymore so that was probably a barrier." All of the interviewees felt some stress from the perception (whether their own or another's) that they lacked ability and competence and were not prepared to participate in physical education class. As Mary put it:

I didn't like the intimidation of other people since a lot of those people were also into school or into sports; you know volleyball or baseball where they were all technically supposed to be in those classes and participated at a much higher athletic level which was a much more intrinsic part of their nature. Whereas me, I just participate for recreation. The social intimidation and the 'out of your comfort zone,' and the entire thing that it's required and there is a gun to your back.

The majority of interviewees (78%) mentioned wishing there had been some kind of balancing of ability levels in physical education, by, for example, sport experience, individual competitiveness, or gender. When asked about her ideal physical education class, Julie said it would be advantageous and helpful “if the teacher kind of tested you and matched you up based on your skill set with partners because there would be people like me who had never played tennis before, matched up against guys who were on the tennis team. So then it’s like I don’t even have a prayer.”

Other interviewees spoke about the lack of motor skill development and cognitive knowledge. Joanie recalled, “I don’t remember ever learning how to throw a ball.” In addition, they all suggested that those students with a high degree of sports experience, knowledge, and expertise were considered the norm and what was expected of everyone. Laurie pointed out that she “didn’t have basic skill”:

Ah, like I can’t shoot a basket to save my life [giggles]. Ah, you know we would work on the basics a little bit but the kid who has been playing basketball for like, you know, six years knows how to do that and they don’t want to spend a lot of time on the basic things. And because they [teachers] don’t separate by skill level—I mean, we’d do like tournaments. We’d spend like two days working on skills and then two weeks playing tournaments. Knowing some of those basic skills was a big thing.

According to Julie,

I was in that one group in high school with all the really competitive, three-sport athletic boys, and so he [the coach] would split us into teams, and if it was something like floor hockey and I’ve never played anything

like that in my life, and it's like if you weren't good they would yell at you and like the teacher would be just like well [pause] I guess you need to work harder. And it's like I don't know how to play, I've never done it! There were a lot of kids who were in the sports at the time and he just assumed that everyone knew them and some did but I didn't know, you know, like basketball and how many points per shot you got? And so that kind of made me mad that we didn't actually learn about what we were tested on or played.

Finally, several interviewees (33%) mentioned wishing their high school physical education class could have been more like it was before adolescence when everyone was on a more even playing field with regard to ability. Nancy expressed this sentiment by saying, "I think it harkens back to the day of elementary school where pretty much everyone was equal and so everyone [was] just like 'yay!' when we played the games."

The results from the interview data allowed the interviewees to explain, in their own words, their specific experiences as they related to their dissatisfaction with and negative attitudes towards high school physical education. Specifically, these interviews were guided with an emphasis and focus on gender. The results of the bivariate analysis, outlined below, allowed a retrospective consideration of correlations between questionnaire responses and group (interviewed or noninterviewed) designations.

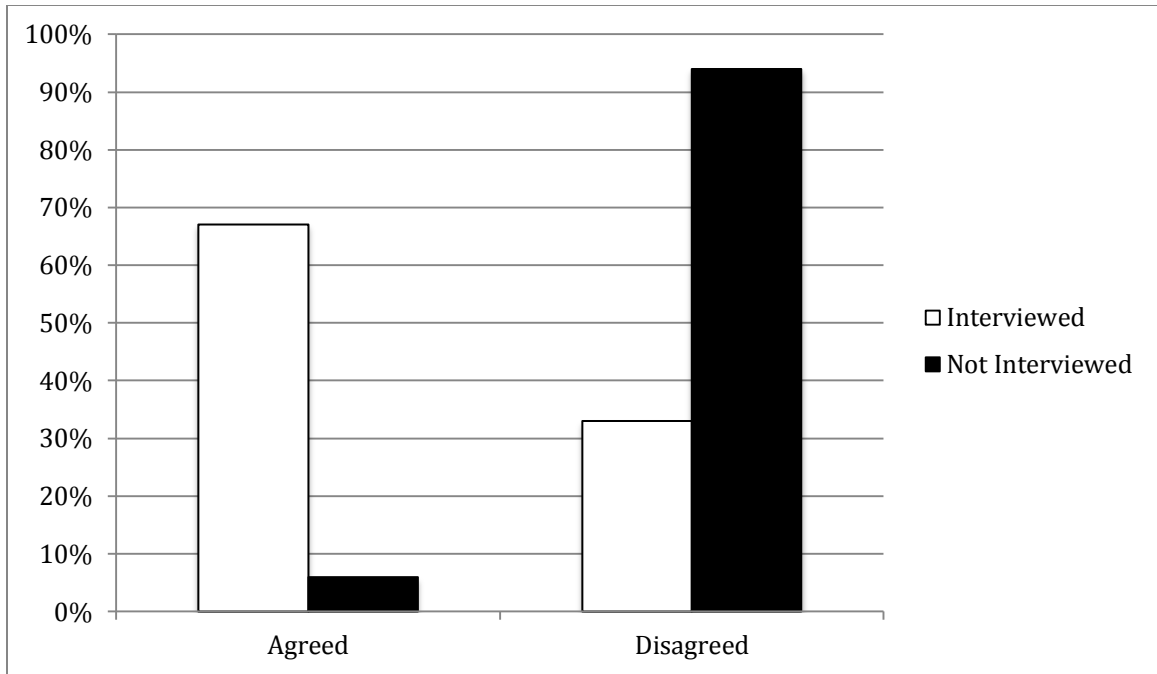
Bivariate Analysis

After the interviews, a bivariate analysis was performed. This analysis made it possible to analyze whether there was a correlation (and if so, the strength and significance of that correlation) between responses to individual questions and the

selection of respondents for the interview portion of the study, specifically, the items on the questionnaire that had an especially strong relationship with the group of interviewees. Another purpose of the bivariate analysis was to look for relationships that might support the findings yielded from qualitative data. This section reviews the results of the bivariate analyses on each part of the questionnaire.

Part 1

Because Part 1 of the questionnaire involved dichotomous variables and 2X2 cell tablets (*agree or disagree* and *interviewed or not interviewed*), a Phi correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between the response to each statement (*agree or disagree*) and the selection of the respondent for interviews. A Phi correlation test yields coefficients between -1 and 1, with scores closer to 1 or -1 indicating a strong relationship, scores closer to .5 or -.5 indicating a moderate relationship, and, scores closer to 0 indicating a weak relationship (all with a significance level $p < .05$). Of the 8 statements in Part 1, a moderate relationship was found between 2 of the items (statements 1 and 6) and those respondents who were interviewed. Questionnaire respondents who agreed with statement 1, *I did not like participating in front of other students*, were significantly more likely to meet the interview criteria than those students who disagreed (Phi = .344, $p < .05$). Those who agreed with statement 6, *I preferred or would have preferred a female only physical education class*, were also more likely to be interviewed (Phi = .357, $p < .05$).



*Figure 4. Item 1: Ten (25%) of those not interviewed agreed and 6 (67%) of the 9 who were interviewed agreed with *I did not like participating in front of other students.**

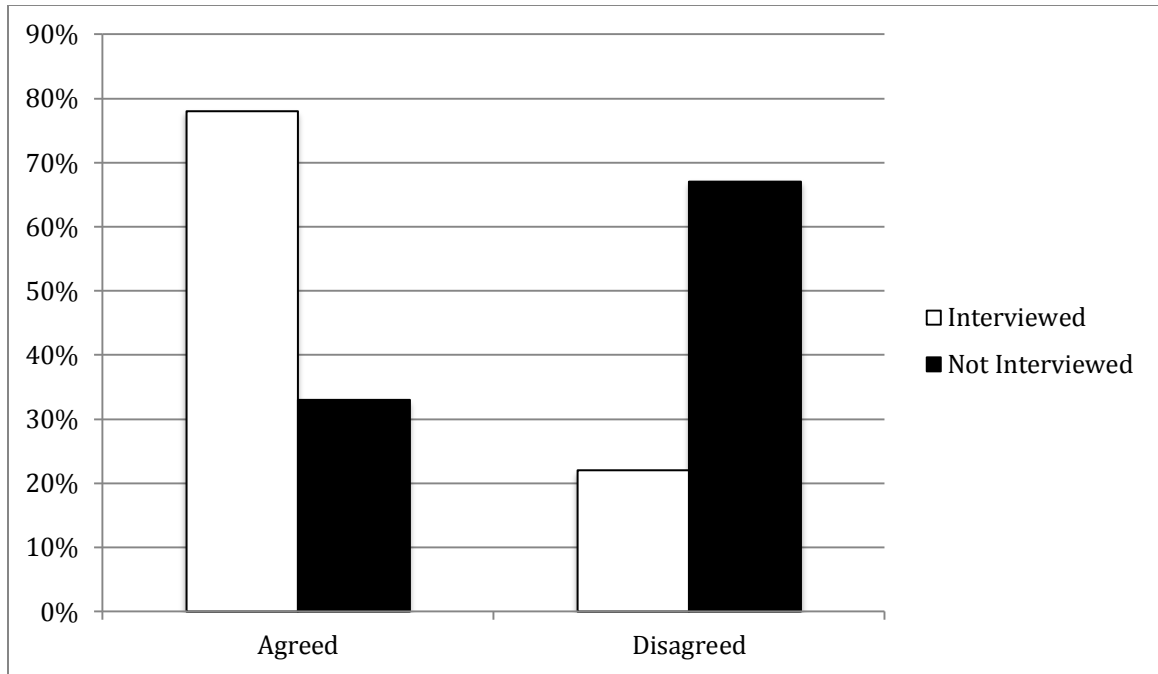


Figure 5. Item 6: Thirteen of those not interviewed (33%) agreed; 7 of those interviewed (78%) agreed with *I preferred or would have preferred a female only physical education class*.

While there was no significant relationship ($p < .05$) on items 2, 3, and 8, the majority of respondents agreed with the statements. In other words, even if the respondents liked their high school physical education class, the majority of them indicated that they agreed with the statement (and therefore experienced a barrier or avoidance issue). On item 2, *I preferred to work out when I chose*, 41 of the 49 respondents (84%) agreed, indicating a preference to work out when they chose to. On item 3, *I preferred to work out where I chose*, 39 respondents (80%) agreed with the statement, preferring to work out where they chose. Finally, on item 8, *I did not like to sweat during the school day*, 39 of the 49 respondents (80%) agreed.

There was no significant relationship ($p < .05$) between items 4 and 7 and the interview status of respondents: the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statements. On Question 4, *I did not like participating in front of males*, 33 of the 49 respondents (67%) disagreed. For Question 7, *there was not enough time to participate and change*, 33 (67%) of the respondents disagreed.

Part 2

In order to facilitate 2X2 cell tables and use Phi correlation analyses, the scores for each respondent on Part 2 were collapsed from the 8-point Likert scale into dichotomous variables of either *satisfied* or *dissatisfied*. Like Part 1, Phi correlation values with scores closer to 1 or -1 indicated a strong relationship, scores closer to .5 or -.5 indicated a moderate relationship, and scores closer to 0 indicated a weak relationship (all with a significance level $p < .05$). Statement 42 was reverse coded, and then all 44 statements were analyzed. Of the 44 statements, 1 (2%) showed a significantly strong relationship between whether respondents were satisfied or dissatisfied and whether or not they were interviewed, 21 (48%) were moderately correlated, and 21 items showed no significant relationship (all at $p < .05$). Table 3 displays those statements with significant relationships.

Table 3

Bivariate Analysis of Part 2 (Satisfaction Questionnaire)

Category and Item	Interviewed		Not Interviewed		Total		Phi
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Mastery Experiences (ME)							
1. The opportunity to learn new skills	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	35 (88%)	5 (13%)	39 (80%)	10 (20%)	.414*
2. The degree to which I improved on a particular skill	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	25 (64%)	14 (36%)	26 (54%)	22 (46%)	.415*
3. How much I learned about how to perform better in activities	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	27 (69%)	12 (31%)	29 (60%)	19 (40%)	.375*
4. My improvement in performance	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	32 (80%)	8 (20%)	34 (69%)	15 (31%)	.485*
5. My opportunity to practice new skills	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	35 (88%)	5 (12%)	39 (80%)	10 (20%)	.414*
Teaching (TCH)							
11. The quality of the overall instruction	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	32 (86%)	5 (14%)	34 (74%)	12 (26%)	.518*
13. The instructor's enthusiasm during the class	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	33 (85%)	6 (15%)	36 (74%)	12 (26%)	.462*
14. The empathy the instructor showed to the students during class	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	30 (75%)	10 (25%)	31 (63%)	18 (37%)	.513*

(continued)

Category and Item	Interviewed		Not Interviewed		Total		Phi
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
<i>Table 3, continued</i>							
Interaction With Others (IWO)							
23. The opportunity to make new acquaintances in class	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	33 (85%)	6 (15%)	37 (80%)	9 (20%)	.428*
24. My communication with others in class	5 (56%)	4 (44%)	35 (90%)	4 (10%)	40 (83%)	8 (17%)	.358*
26. The overall atmosphere of the class	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	32 (82%)	7 (18%)	35 (73%)	13 (27%)	.428*
Fun and Enjoyment (FE)							
27. My overall enjoyment of the class	0	9 (100%)	30 (79%)	8 (21%)	30 (64%)	17 (36%)	.646**
28. How much fun I had in class	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	33 (83%)	7 (17%)	35 (71%)	14 (29%)	.517*
29. The pleasant experiences I had in the class	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	33 (83%)	7 (17%)	36 (73%)	13 (27%)	.431*
30. The extent to which I had a good time in class	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	31 (79%)	8 (21%)	33 (69%)	15 (31%)	.482*
Improvement, Health, and Fitness (IHF)							
31. The improvement of my health due to this class	0	9 (100%)	27 (68%)	13 (32%)	27 (55%)	22 (45%)	.525*
<i>(continued)</i>							

Category and Item	Interviewed		Not Interviewed		Total		Phi
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
<i>Table 3, continued</i>							
32. The physical workout I received in class	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	27 (69%)	12 (21%)	29 (60%)	19 (40%)	.375*
33. The development of greater fitness as a result of this class	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	22 (56%)	17 (44%)	23 (48%)	25 (52%)	.354*
34. The class's contribution to my overall health	0	9 (100%)	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	24 (49%)	25 (51%)	.465*
35. The progress I made toward a healthier body	0	9 (100%)	29 (74%)	10 (26%)	29 (60%)	19 (40%)	.593*
Diversionsary Experiences (DE)							
36. The stimulating nature of class	0	9 (100%)	23 (61%)	15 (39%)	23 (49%)	24 (51%)	.476*
37. How I felt rejuvenated as a result of the class	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	25 (63%)	15 (37%)	26 (53%)	23 (47%)	.399*
39. The way the class made me feel re-energized	0	9 (100%)	24 (62%)	15 (38%)	24 (50%)	24 (50%)	.480*
41. The manner in which the activity contributed to my overall well-being	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	30 (61%)	19 (39%)	.380*

Note. Items with significant Phi ($p < .05$) are displayed.

** - strong significance

* - moderate significance

Three of the 9 categories in Part 2 of the questionnaire exhibited no significant correlation between the respondents' responses to the statements and whether or not they were chosen to be interviewed. These three categories included the following: the *cognitive development* (CD) category, which contained five statements that determined how satisfied respondents were with learning rules, concepts, and strategies of various activities in their high school physical education class; the *normative success* (NS) category, which contained five statements asking how satisfied respondents were with their skills in high school physical education compared to others; and the *gender* (GEN) category, which included three statements relating to gender and satisfaction in high school physical education.

While these three categories did not show significant correlation, each of the categories indicated that on two or three of the questions, more than 50% of the respondents in both the interviewed group and the noninterviewed group provided similar answers. In the CD category, the majority of all respondents indicated that they agreed with items 8, 9, and 10. For item 8, *what I learned about the basic content of the activity*, 35 (90%) of those not interviewed, and 8 of the interviewees (89%) indicated satisfaction. Item 9, *the knowledge about the fundamentals of the activity I gained*, showed 34 (85%) noninterviewees and 5 (63%) of the interviewees expressing satisfaction to the statement. Finally, on item 10, *the extent to which I learned the essential concepts of the activity*, 33 (83%) respondents who were not interviewed and 7 (78%) of the interviewees indicated satisfaction with the statement.

For the NS category, 21 of the respondents (54%) indicated that they were dissatisfied with item 17, *the superiority of my skills in comparison with that of others in*

physical education. Of those interviewed, 4 (67%) were dissatisfied, or did not think their skills were superior to that of others in their high school physical education class. On item 18, *my performance compared to males in the class was better*, 25 (64%) of those not interviewed were dissatisfied, and 8 (89%) of those interviewed were dissatisfied.

Of the 3 statements in the GEN category, 2 of them were answered similarly by over 50% of all respondents (both the interviewed and noninterviewed groups). Item 42, *I did not feel comfortable performing various skills in physical education*, was reverse coded because a *satisfied* response indicated dissatisfaction. Twenty-seven of those not interviewed (68%) and 5 of those interviewed (56%) indicated dissatisfaction with the statement. On item 44, 25 of the 39 respondents (64%) not interviewed agreed (or indicated satisfaction) that their high school physical education teacher/s treated males and females equally and fairly in class. Seven of the 9 participants interviewed (78%) responded with satisfaction to this statement.

Part 3

Part 3 of the online questionnaire contained 19 statements aimed at assessing the attitude of the respondents towards their online physical education course. Questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, and 18 were reverse coded. Because a 5-point Likert scale was used, respondent scores were collapsed into *agree*, *neutral*, or *disagree* for the bivariate analysis. While Parts 1 and 2 contained 2X2 cell tables (*agree/disagree* and *interviewed/noninterviewed*), Part 3 contained a 3X2 cell table (*agree/neutral/disagree* and *interviewed/noninterviewed*). Therefore, a Cramer's V test of association was used. A Cramer's V analysis yields coefficients that lie between 0 and 1, with scores closer to 1

indicating a strong relationship, scores closer to 5 indicating a moderate relationship, and scores closer to 0 indicating a weak relationship (all with a significance level $p < .05$). Of the 19 items on Part 3, 1 statement (5%) showed a strong relationship, 15 (18%) showed a moderate relationship, and 3 (16%) showed a weak or insignificant relationship between responses and respondent designation into the interviewed or noninterviewed groups (all at $p < .05$). Table 4 displays those statements with significant relationships.

Table 4

Bivariate Analysis of Part 3 (Attitude Questionnaire)

Item	Interviewed			Not Interviewed			Total			Cramer's V
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
2. The games and activities I learned in physical education made learning unpleasant for me	5 (56%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	0	4 (10%)	35 (90%)	5 (10%)	7 (15%)	36 (75%)	.795**
3. The games and activities I learned in physical education got me excited about physical education	0	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	17 (44%)	10 (26%)	12 (30%)	17 (35%)	11 (23%)	20 (42%)	.468*
4. My physical education teacher made my physical education class seem important to me	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	2 (23%)	5 (13%)	6 (15%)	28 (72%)	8 (17%)	10 (21%)	30 (62%)	.400*
5. I felt the games and activities I learned in physical education made my class boring for me	5 (56%)	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	6 (15%)	5 (13%)	28 (72%)	11 (23%)	6 (13%)	31 (64%)	.378*
6. I felt the games I learned in physical education were useless to me	7 (78%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	10 (26%)	7 (18%)	22 (56%)	17 (35%)	8 (17%)	23 (48%)	.432*

(continued)

Item	Interviewed			Not Interviewed			Total			Cramer's V
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
<i>Table 4, continued</i>										
8. My physical education teacher made my class seem important to me	1 (11%)	2 (23%)	6 (66%)	23 (60%)	6 (16%)	9 (24%)	24 (51%)	8 (17%)	15 (42%)	.409*
9. My physical education teacher made my class seem interesting for me	2 (23%)	0	7 (78%)	21 (54%)	5 (13%)	13 (33%)	23 (48%)	5 (10%)	20 (42%)	.358*
10. The games I learned in physical education were useful to me	0	0	9 (100%)	14 (36%)	11 (28%)	14 (36%)	14 (29%)	11 (23%)	23 (48%)	.501*
11. I felt my physical education teacher made learning in my class fun for me	1 (11%)	0	8 (89%)	19 (49%)	8 (21%)	12 (33%)	20 (42%)	8 (16%)	20 (42%)	.462*
12. I felt my physical education teacher made my class boring for me	7 (78%)	0	2 (22%)	7 (18%)	6 (16%)	26 (66%)	14 (29%)	6 (13%)	28 (58%)	.517*
13. I feel the games and activities I learned in physical education class were valuable to me	0	0	9 (100%)	14 (36%)	12 (30%)	13 (34%)	14 (29%)	12 (25%)	22 (46%)	.522*

(continued)

Item	Interviewed			Not Interviewed			Total			Cramer's V
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
<i>Table 4, continued</i>										
14. The games and activities I learned in physical education seemed unimportant to me	9 (100%)	0	0	14 (36%)	7 (18%)	18 (46%)	23 (48%)	7 (15%)	18 (37%)	.501*
16. My physical education teacher made my class useful for me	0	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	18 (46%)	12 (30%)	9 (24%)	18 (38%)	13 (27%)	17 (35%)	.543*
17. I felt my physical education teacher made learning in my class valuable for me	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	7 (78%)	15 (38%)	16 (41%)	8 (21%)	16 (33%)	17 (35%)	15 (32%)	.482*
18. I felt my physical education teacher made learning in my class useless for me	4 (44%)	4 (44%)	1 (12%)	2 (5%)	7 (18%)	30 (77%)	6 (13%)	11 (23%)	31 (64%)	.581*
19. I felt the games and activities I learned in physical education made learning fun for me	0	5 (56%)	4 (44%)	20 (51%)	8 (21%)	11 (28%)	20 (42%)	13 (27%)	15 (31%)	.422*

Note. Items with significant Cramer's V ($p < .05$) are displayed.

** - strong significance

* - moderate significance

Three (26%) of the 19 statements in Part 3 showed no significant relationship between respondent responses and designated group (interviewed or not interviewed); however, 2 of these 3 statements indicated that the majority of respondents answered similarly. The majority of all respondents (54%) disagreed with item 7, *the games I learned seemed important to me*. All 9 of those interviewed (100%) and 17 (44%) of those not interviewed disagreed (9 respondents [23%] were neutral). On item 15, the majority of the respondents (72%) indicated disagreement with the statement, *my physical education teacher made learning in physical education unpleasant for me*. Thirty of the noninterviewed respondents (77%) and 5 of those interviewed (56%) disagreed with the statement (6 respondents [15%] were neutral).

Summary

The majority of the interviewees in this study noted the uncommon nature of physical education in high school when compared to other disciplines. The unique expectations and culture of physical education influenced the interviewees' attitudes and satisfaction towards their course. Because the quantitative questionnaire was used to select women to interview who indicated that they experienced a gender dichotomy and who significantly (by meeting the established criteria on the questionnaire) disliked their experience in high school physical education, it is not surprising that items related to fun, enjoyment, and relevance negatively correlated with the group of girls interviewed.

The mixed methods analysis of the data revealed several common themes as to why interviewees had negative attitudes and dissatisfaction with their high school physical education class. All of the interviewees noted factors related to gender as reasons for their dislike, and these factors played out in the following main areas: the

physical education curriculum, the physical education teacher and accompanying pedagogy, and the interviewee's perception of her ability and athleticism.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitude and satisfaction levels of first-year female college students towards their high school physical education courses. Specifically, the reasons given by the young women for their negative attitudes and dissatisfaction were examined, with a particular focus as to the existence of a gender dichotomy. All of the interviewees noted the presence, to at least some degree, of a gender dichotomy in their high school physical education class. The aim of this chapter is to provide an interpretation and discussion regarding this and related results from Chapter 4.

The Discussion Chapter is organized according to the themes that emerged as reasons given for the interviewees' dissatisfaction with and negative attitudes towards high school physical education. The Chapter begins with the context of physical education, including its uniqueness and its reproduction of a gender dichotomy, described by interviewees as informing their responses. It then proceeds by offering a deeper investigation, with respect to gender, of the following: the physical education curriculum, the physical education teacher and accompanying pedagogy, and the participant's own ability (or perception of ability) in physical education.

Implications of the Uniqueness of the Physical Education Classroom

While the results of this study offer an important contribution to understanding the presence of a gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom, they also indicate the uniqueness of the physical education classroom. Specifically, interviewees noted distinctly different expectations and requirements (more vague and less academic)

in physical education than other subjects in high school. In addition, interviewees were often angry and confused about the expectations for getting a good grade in class. This was especially important to the study participants of this study, as all attended the college where the data was collected and therefore tended to be very grade-motivated. Joanie, representative of a typical interviewee, remembered the frustration of not knowing how to be academically successful in physical education:

I got my only A- in my physical education class because of my teacher. It wasn't like I didn't participate, but we would be quizzed on, like, the rules of the game, but we didn't actually play by the rules of the game. Like we would play softball and basketball and he would kind of just let us free play a lot. And then he would give us a quiz on the rules and I never knew what the rules were because we never actually learned them.

In addition, and in agreement with Fiset (2011), because of the public nature of physical education, the physical education classroom is a place where gender and power relations are more visibly played out.

The Pervasiveness of the Gender Dichotomy in the Physical Education Classroom

According to the primary literature (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Connell, 2008; Ennis, 1999; Fiset, 2011; Hills, 2006; Mean & Kassing, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; Wellard, Pickard, & Bailey, 2007; van Amsterdam et al., 2012), the traditional gender dichotomy typically consists of feminine characteristics (e.g., lack of aggression, flexibility) associated with females, and masculine characteristics (e.g., aggressiveness, muscularity) associated with males, with the latter being preferred and dominant in physical education.

The interviewees in this study corroborated the conclusions of previous research, indicating the presence of a gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom. Perhaps unsurprisingly, interviewees such as Mary referred to this dichotomy in terms that van Amsterdam et al. (2012) have called the “discourse of naturalness”:

In the end I think that quite honestly the public schools can try to force all these cross-sections and try to get students more involved in all these ways but in the end, truth is, I think females by nature are more into you know [pause] those sorts of things, and then guys are more into the strength aspect. And to be honest, that’s never going to change. In the end I don’t think you should try so hard to change something that is quite honestly intrinsic in each sex’s nature.

Although the gender dichotomy described by Mary (that girls and boys are adept at activities specific to their gender and specific to culturally based definitions of masculinity and femininity) is a learned gender behavior, Mary repeats the assumption that such a gender dichotomy is “natural.”

The present study sought to add to previous research by uncovering some of the dangers in the assumption of the naturalness of the gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom. Accordingly, it showed that interviewees often accepted the norm and its subsequent disempowerment of females in the physical education classroom. This acceptance radically undermined the positive experiences physical education might otherwise have provided the interviewees by putting them in something of a double-bind: having learned to accept as natural that passive, uncompetitive behavior is preferred for their gender, the interviewees found that this acceptance conflicted with the specific

expectations of the physical education classroom. A hierarchy was thereby learned and established that gave preference to the dominant characteristics of masculinity and, therefore, males (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Hills & Croston, 2012).

Consistent with the primary research (Evans, 2006; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; O’Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002), most of the girls admitted to behaving as the gender dichotomy and established hierarchy dictated by being passive, avoiding participation, and resisting any behaviors to act contrary to the expectations of being female in physical education. Sarah reminisced about having to look “feminine, dainty, and crap,” and further expressed her frustration with the behaviors related to the gender dichotomy in her physical education class:

I guess the really big thing that bugged me about the attitude in my gym class was that we were acting like housewives and pretending it’s like competing for that job. I would’ve loved to have seen more competition. I would’ve liked to have seen more competition out of the girls and just working a little bit harder because it just seemed like it was half-assed.

Sarah saw competition as a masculine characteristic and something only boys should exhibit. Girls, in her view, learned to hide any behaviors related to masculinity in the physical education setting. For example, although she was a competitive swimmer outside of school, Sarah acknowledged that if she beat a boy in physical education class, she would never have told anyone; “it would’ve been between just me and him.” While she may have displayed characteristics (competitive, athletic) contrary to the gender

dichotomy outside of school, she desired to keep those characteristics hidden in physical education.

Learning to adhere to the gender dichotomy and therefore hide in the physical education classroom takes various forms. Research by Olafson (2002) examined students who exhibited classic avoidance and resistance behaviors to physical education. These behaviors included skipping class, forging parental excusal notes, and hiding out in the locker room. While the interviewees in the present study exhibited similar avoidance and resistance behaviors in physical education, their behaviors tended to be more hidden and subtle, such as playing goalie, or hoping the person in front of them would strike out so the inning would change. Again, it must be noted that at the time this study took place its participants were enrolled at the small, private college, where students are generally very concerned with and motivated by earning good grades. Incoming students have an average high school grade point average of 3.64 and an average composite ACT score of 27. Cindy illustrated the typical concern with grades among these students when she described her motivation in physical education as doing the minimum expected of her to get the good grade and the fulfilled credit: she was “more apathetic and wished the class was over so [she] could get to [her] next one.” Annie admitted not liking physical education; however, she modified her admission by noting that, “I won’t purposely not try. Like, I will participate, but I won’t like the competition side.”

While the traditional gender dichotomy expressed in the primary literature (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Connell, 2008; Ennis, 1999; Fisette, 2011; Hills, 2006; Mean & Kassing, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Wellard, 2006) was apparent in the experiences described by the interviewees in this

study, the dichotomy described by interviewees appeared to differ in its complexity. As defined above, the gender dichotomy has traditionally consisted of girls adhering to feminine characteristics and activities (passivity, uncompetitive, cooperative), and boys adhering to masculine characteristics and activities (aggressive, competitive, team sports). Sometimes, however, the interviewees suggested that the hierarchy (and its implicit preference for masculine characteristics) had less to do with gender and more to do with athleticism. Some of the girls noted that they viewed their ability as dependent on the unit or their perceived level of competitiveness:

Yeah it really depended on the unit. I'm a really good swimmer and I'm really flexible and stuff like that, but then there was some stuff like when I played floor hockey and games like tennis. Games that I had never played until I got into gym class so I wasn't very good at them, and then you'd always have the kid that was on the tennis team. I was kind of disappointed in that because we moved through units so fast. (Julie)

Things can be OK if you have people of the same competitiveness because there are some females that are really competitive and really like to play sports, and they do fine, but then you have the not so competitive people and they don't do as well. (Annie)

While competition in physical education was overwhelmingly linked with males, some interviewees admitted that there were competitive girls. The display of athletic ability among girls did not erase the gender dichotomy, but it did serve to complicate it. In fact, results from this study indicate that an athletic—or ability—hierarchy also existed, allowing girls with athletic ability to occasionally cross over to the *boys' side*.

Specifically, some interviewees accepted the athletic female and placed her in a hierarchal order between the athletic male and the unathletic female

The complexity of the traditional gender dichotomy extended into the class composition as well, as the athletic-based hierarchy described above seemed to also apply to boys. As Joanie said:

I don't think it was a gender issue; it's just that I think guys hide it better. My friend [who was male] always tried more than I did, and I think that's because to be a guy you have to. If you're not participating then you're given more crap than if you suck I guess. I'm not against it [an all-girls class] but I don't think it's like *wow* that would totally solve everything. If we had to be in a gym class where we have to play sports like football and soccer and that kind of stuff, it would have been, I don't know [pause], I was going to say get rid of the athletes and put them in a different class, but then it would be just as humiliating that I'm in the dumb class.

Laurie echoed this sentiment, saying, "I think that for an all-girls gym class that would be good, but I can imagine why on the opposite side if I was a guy who was not very good at athletics, I would not want to be in an all-male gym class." Perhaps unsurprisingly, among interviewees, the unathletic male was considered the most unaccepted participant in the physical education classroom.

This evidence is consistent with research from Azzarito (2010) and Hills and Croston (2012), which indicates that the complexity of the gender dichotomy has been reinforced in the unique environment of the physical education classroom. In mixed-

gender classes, Hills and Croston (2012) witnessed resistance from excluded athletic girls. Rather than accepting the expectations for their gender and disengaging, some athletic girls voiced their dissatisfaction at not being passed to and excluded from play and stepped up to participate. The authors dubbed this resistance by athletic girls during physical education “sporting femininity.” Research by Azzarito (2010) laid the foundation for Hills and Croston’s research by examining evidence of a global movement in which girls have a new discourse of gender, one with “new ideals of femininity...that display the girls’ body as a powerful, strong, self-confident body” (p. 266). Dubbed the *Future Girl* and *Alpha Girl*, these girls are competitive, healthy, athletic, and they resist the traditional, docile girl who is oppressed by sport. While the present study offered some evidence that the *Future Girl* and *Alpha Girl* exist, interviewees did not themselves identify with these new discourses of femininity. Their lack of identification supported Azzarito’s (2010) conclusion that the *Future* and *Alpha Girls* may present a danger: they sustain an illusion that these roles are available to all girls (as presented in the media), when in fact, the characteristics associated with the roles are available and achieved only by a select few. Girls who are not able to achieve the status of the *Future* and *Alpha Girls* risk being deemed failures by society with “backward physicalities.” Despite the positive indication of a more complicated hierarchy based on ability potentially available to some girls in physical education class, other girls, such as the interviewees in this study, remain marginalized participants.

The Impact of the Curriculum in the Physical Education Classroom

The traditional, multisport physical education curriculum involves the rotation (usually biweekly) of various competitive team sports. Research (Azzarito & Solmon,

2009; Couturier et al., 2007; Ennis, 1999; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010) has discussed its effect of establishing and affirming a gender dichotomy through which masculinity (and males) are encouraged, valued, and preferred. The male-oriented definitions of power, aggressiveness, and strength predominate in this curriculum, and research (Azzarito & Solmon, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Connell, 2008; Couturier et al., 2007; Ennis, 1999; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; O'Donovan & Kirk, 2008; Olafson, 2002; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010) has concluded its effectiveness in disengaging and alienating females and limiting their opportunities in physical education.

The interviewees in this study implicitly corroborated this research, repeatedly citing curriculum as a major factor in their dissatisfaction with and negative attitudes towards physical education class. They identified the multisport curriculum as a manifestation of the gender dichotomy. Expressing dissatisfaction with the multisport curriculum, the girls often argued that it privileged boys, athletes, competition, and aggression. As Joanie expressed:

It almost seems like they [physical educators] were trying to choose activities where control issues could occur, such as dodgeball. It was terrible with those big strong guys who whipped the ball right at your face. Kickball was also horrible because these big football players would just launch this ball right at your stomach and seriously, I'm not going to be able to catch it, so I would just step aside and let everyone get mad at me. I'm not going to get hit in the gut, I don't care; it's a gym class. I hate gym and I don't want to catch the ball.

Julie expressed her frustration with the “super competitive” boys who “just sucked all the fun out of it.”

The multisport curriculum and its accompanying gender dichotomy threatened to make physical education irrelevant for some of the interviewees. Laurie summed up the importance of a relevant curriculum by stating, “I think talking or having some sort of conversation about why you should actually give a damn about wanting to improve, I think that would be good.” Mary echoed this frustration:

I was in it and I got through it, but I wish they had focused more on the reasoning behind it. I think it should definitely be something that you want to do. In fact, you work out best without even realizing it. The kids were bored and then started screwing around.

Failure to make the curriculum relevant with enjoyable activities jeopardizes the motivation and engagement of students in physical education (Duffy, 2013; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010, Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007; Thorp, 2013). Enright and O’Sullivan (2010) found that a physical education curriculum with no meaning for its participants resulted in passive, unengaged girls. In addition, they discovered that when they gave the girls a voice in the curriculum by incorporating them in the planning process, the relevance and, ultimately, the girls’ engagement, increased. The interviewees in this study similarly described their desire to participate more meaningfully in physical education curriculum decisions. Their desire points to the findings in Enright and O’Sullivan’s (2010) research. After giving high school girls an active role in the physical education curriculum, allowing them to choose from a variety

of activities, the authors found that girls increased their preparation for class and their engagement with and enjoyment (or fun) in class. As one of the girls from the study put it, “We chose it, so we do it” (p. 216).

Providing girls with choices outside the multisport curriculum may also redound in further gains. While research by Hills and Croston (2012) determined that “it continues to be boys who have the most chance to embody forms of physical capital associated with success as they tend to have more relevant experience, skill, knowledge and ability within the dominant activities” (p. 598), Enright and O’Sullivan (2010) discovered that giving girls choices outside of the multisport curriculum increased confidence and familiarity when participating in activities considered to be more *lifetime* activities (such as weight training and using gym equipment): “The girls felt that the coconstructed curriculum provided for and facilitated them in building pathways to participation” (p. 216).

The interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the prevailing curriculum, a dissatisfaction that reflected their implicit comprehension of their place in that curriculum, by indicating their preference for working out on their own terms, where and when they chose. Amy described what she would prefer in her ideal physical education class:

We would do more fitness activities and we would do a mix of workouts, not just running or lifting. There was one year that we actually had a yoga unit and that was cool. Bring back dance, things besides the usual things like push-ups and running. And the sports that we’d do, more than just football [pause], more than just soccer, like, we could experience

Lacrosse, or [pause] field hockey. Yeah, like do a mixture of more than just the typical sports.

Laurie agreed, adding:

We did also have choice day so like badminton you could do which was usually really, really fun because you could pick who you are going to play with and that was good. Having options, having anything to go outside was a big thing for me because I'm a really outdoorsy person.

The ideal curriculum for participants, which tended to be characterized by participant choice, did not extend to agreement on the gender composition of the class. There was an inconsistency regarding the desire to have boys in class, suggesting that the gender dichotomy is more pervasive and more complicated than the researcher initially assumed. In fact, although the majority of interviewees indicated they preferred a same-sex class on the quantitative questionnaire, they were less clear during interviews. Laurie described how she thought boys might influence motivation:

I think actually having the girls and the guys together motivated people; like, I think one time we played the girls and the guys in flag football and that was pretty fun. Like, you know, so maybe that is actually something that might help motivate. Yeah, I mean, because maybe that [coed] would root out a little more of the competitiveness.

Julie agreed:

I think it is good for girls and boys to work together for some things because, for one, that's an important life lesson to learn and I think that because there is the self-consciousness girls maybe try a little harder

because there are boys there, whereas if it was all girls they wouldn't care how they looked and wouldn't put in as much effort.

Other girls described how the presence of boys might inhibit motivation and participation. Cindy indicated that a same-sex class would be more fun "because no one [would be] trying to impress each other." Annie said:

If it's coed then females competing in front of males would be like, 'oh I don't want that guy to see me bad at sports,' or something. Females are afraid. Well, not afraid but males are typically more aggressive. When they play sports females might not want to get in the way of that aggressive behavior or feeling.

Many times participants would qualify a preference for a same-sex class based on the context or activity. Amy noted that for some activities, like yoga, "the poses that we do [pause] might elicit some laughter from the boys and just make the girls self-conscious." Cindy noted that football should not be taught in a same-sex class. As she explained, "in elementary school it was fun because we were taller than [the boys] still. Then they became too physical and it was just awkward, not as fun." There does not seem to be consensus about the efficacy of same-sex classes in the literature either. Hills and Croston (2012) found mixed attitudes, and interestingly, the preference did not seem to depend on the athletic ability of the individual. Some of the more skilled girls enjoyed a mixed-class formation because they felt more challenged and the class was more exciting. Some of the lesser skilled girls stated that they preferred a mixed class, but that if often depended on the activity. Other participants, regardless of skill level, expressed a preference for same-sex classes. Some studies (Hannon & Ratliffe, 2007; Osborne et al.,

2002) also noted the influence of the particular activity, and the context, on attitudes towards class formation.

The Meaningful Role of the Physical Education Teacher and the Chosen Pedagogy

The physical educator and his or her accompanying pedagogy served as another major theme for dissatisfaction and negative attitudes among participants towards their high school physical education class. Most of the interviewees saw their teachers as perpetuating and teaching a gender dichotomy and athletic hierarchy. The interviewees expressed frustration at teachers who allowed competitive, aggressive boys and athletes to dominate and take over. Julie expressed her dislike of the physicality of her class, citing an example “like floor hockey [where] boys would, like, check you, and tackle you, and the teachers would just kind of let it happen.” Cindy expressed similar frustration and acknowledged that her teacher “just didn’t care” about the less athletic girls, and let the “nondomineering” students just sit out on the side.

According to the interviewees, the general expectation from teachers that students come to high school physical education knowing how to play various sports and knowing the rules and strategies often created pressure and stress and ultimately led to disengagement and passivity in physical education. Participants were not willing to risk the embarrassment and ridicule of performing. Joanie, for example, remembered, “My teacher was yelling at me and telling me I wasn’t trying, and I’m, like, I’m trying, I cannot hit the stupid ball.” She admitted she eventually stopped trying because she got hurt (or feared she would). Hills and Croston (2012) found similar frustration in participants and observed that boys, and athletes, came to class with more experience and skill, especially in the multisport curriculum. The expectations from the physical

education teacher gave preference to boys and athletes. Research (Domangue & Solmon, 2009; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; van Amsterdam et al., 2012) indicates that teachers and their expectations and curricular choices play a major role in reinforcing the gender dichotomy. The class's dynamics, which may recapitulate a typical gender dichotomy, are seen as natural, and there is very little challenge to traditional gender patterns.

A teacher's adoption of a particular pedagogy can also perpetuate the gender dichotomy. Amy remembers a teacher who adopted different rules to accommodate the girls in class:

Well we played this game, I forgot what it was called, but you had to throw the ball at people and if you hit them, they're out—whatever—and they always, well, made that rule, like, guys throw with their nondominant hand. Well, it made sense because they're, like, stronger. At the same time, it's kind of like they [the boys] *want* to throw with their dominant hand, so if you split them up, they can throw as hard as they want and hit each other wherever they want. It felt like we were just compared with them like we were not as strong, or we can't take it as much as them.

Other research (Domangue & Solmon, 2009; Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Hills & Croston, 2012; van Amsterdam et al., 2012) has demonstrated and discussed the danger of teachers constructing and perpetuating the gender order. Research from van Amsterdam et al. discovered that teachers saw girls as naturally “less capable or ‘lacking’ in physical education and concluded that ‘that’s just the way it is’” (p. 795). This attitude among teachers serves to perpetuate the notion of a natural hierarchy based on gender and

can ultimately lead, as indicated by the interviewees in the present study, to a lack of motivation and engagement among girls in physical education.

The Impact of Perceived Ability

A final theme influencing the satisfaction and attitude levels of interviewees was lack of ability, or a low self-perception of ability, especially when compared to boys and other athletic students. The interviewees perceived themselves as lower skilled and unathletic and as therefore the problem in physical education. This notion of the girls being the problem—both in the class as a whole and on teams—is consistent with the literature (Azzarito, 2010; Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; van Amsterdam et al., 2012; Velija & Kumar, 2009). According to Flintoff and Scraton (2001), girls are often seen as an *issue* and in need of special attention (something they do not desire). Indeed, Velija and Kumar (2009) found that when girls did not show an interest in some sports (like football) offered in the curriculum, they were viewed as lazy and unmotivated.

The interviewees' attitudes attest to the findings of Fiset (2011), which determined that “the public nature of physical education reinforces gendered power relations, sending the message to some of the girls that they are ‘not as good’ as their classmates” (p. 191). The interviewees' experiences in the physical education classroom were influenced not just by gender but also by perceptions of ability and athleticism (based predominantly on masculine definitions). Research by Fagrell, Larsson, and Redelius (2012) corroborates this finding: in their research, participants' enjoyment of physical education was determined by competence and by their engagement in sports in their free time, rather than by gender. In addition, Hills and Croston (2012) found that girls who felt they had a weaker ability were under greater pressure in the physical

education classroom because they felt vulnerable to disappointing classmates and to being teased. Hills and Croston (2012) also found, however, that the more skilled girls enjoyed physical education more than those girls who perceived themselves as unathletic and felt less apt to be teased, suggesting that ability is not solely attributable to gender.

Joanie described her experience with the pressure of participating with athletic classmates:

Well I did have friends who were really athletic too and I think they just got annoyed with all of us who had to be on their team, and they were like, 'oh I don't want her on my team,' and so they would just never throw the ball to you, or if I tried to make a basket in basketball, I would miss every time and then they would get mad at me. So I think maybe for someone who was more athletic and more able, they would like others to be as well.

In addition, Hills and Croston (2012) found that girls lacking experience and athletic ability felt especially prone to teasing from boys. In their study, the threat the girls felt about being teased served to create anxiety and pressure, especially when performing in competitive activities. Finally, Cairney et al. (2012) found a "3-way interaction between gender, competence, and time, reveal[ing] that PE enjoyment was lowest and declined most markedly among girls with low perceived athletic competence" (p. 1).

Further contributing to the sense that their low-skilled status was a problem was the interviewees' perception that their teachers graded and picked teams in accordance with student ability. Although Smith and St. Pierre (2009) found that students preferred situations where abilities were more balanced and equally distributed onto teams and

groups, when the interviewees in the current study were placed on teams with athletes, they felt great pressure to perform, and, having little confidence in their abilities, dreaded even attempting to participate. Again, the implied (learned) expectation to be successful in physical education was that all students came in with the same cognitive and psychomotor abilities. Annie remembered:

I don't think we actually learned; that was something more for the junior high, I guess. There was some, I mean, a little bit of explanation if you didn't know how to do something, but everyone was pretty much expected to know.

Often, the males and the female athletes were seen by the interviewees as far superior in terms of knowledge and skill, and the interviewees felt they never had a chance to learn and “catch up.”

The interviewees' low self-perception of ability, combined with the pressure and anxiety to perform (especially in front of boys), contributed to their sense of their conspicuous and problematic status in the physical education classroom. The experience of the interviewees supports what the literature (Evans, 2006; Fisette, 2011; Hills & Croston, 2012; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011) refers to, in different terminology, as the aforementioned *glare* or *gaze* (often a *male gaze*). This gaze was more commonly perceived as a *glare* by the interviewees and limited the interviewees' participation. The male gaze, as was evident in this study's findings, is especially damaging to participation when students do not feel confident or comfortable with their abilities, particularly when those students are asked to demonstrate skills or activities in front of other students.

When Amber asked if she was confident performing skills, she responded:

I was if I was playing with females, then it's like, okay, I can do this a little bit better than when I was playing with males. I don't think I performed as well with males as I did when it was an all girls' class.

Julie recalls the uncomfortable public nature of fitness testing in physical education, "so you might be on the pull-up bar and there are 10 people waiting in line behind you for their turn and so they're all watching." Slater and Tiggemann (2011) found that girls were more likely to feel like they were being stared at when they were participating in sports (such as the multisport curriculum). In addition, they discovered a relationship between feeling the presence of a male glare and a lower body image, thereby resulting in lower enjoyment and participation rates in physical education. For the interviewees in the present study, the perception of a gaze or glare ultimately negatively influenced attitude and satisfaction levels.

Limitations

Although this study sought to assess the attitude and satisfaction levels of high school physical education, there were areas of potential weakness that may have influenced the results. One such area was its low sample size. Utilizing the relatively small pool of women from the college, with the subsequent yield of nine interviewees, increased the risk that the sample was not representative of the larger population. In addition, students from the college are overwhelmingly homogenous (predominantly high achieving, white, higher socioeconomic status), thereby potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Also, the lapse between the study and the participants' enrollment in a high school physical education class was between 1 and 4 years. This gap between their high school experience and the questionnaire and interviews may have

served to limit the recollection and accuracy of the responses. Finally, the fact that there was likely variability among each participant's high school curriculum and physical education teacher limits the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation of this study was the absence of some potentially revealing questions, questions that came up during analysis. Examining the relationship between these questions and the attitude and satisfaction levels towards high school physical education may have helped with the understanding and interpretation of the findings. For example, asking participants whether they attended a rural or urban high school may have revealed meaningful trends among responses; asking about the gender of the participant's physical education teacher may have revealed further correlations between participant experiences and responses; and asking about whether the participant was an athlete (and what type of athlete) may have been helpful towards understanding the results. An exploratory factor analysis of the pilot study data may have helped identify some of these gaps and a statistical analysis of the pilot study data (specifically, Part 1) is recommended for future research. Despite these limitations, the data yielded by this study suggests that changes to the physical education classroom and physical education teacher education are necessary to meet the needs of all participants in the physical education classroom.

Implications of the Findings

The present study indicates that physical educators and their pedagogy can play a major role in perpetuating and teaching the gender dichotomy to students in high school physical education. Accordingly, they can also play a role in disrupting the notion that gendered discourses and practices in physical education are natural and inevitable. Guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE,

2009) stress that teachers “create an environment that is inclusive and supportive of all students, [and that] differences [should be] acknowledged, appreciated and respected.” Research (Berg & Lahelma, 2010; Duffy, 2013) stresses the importance of integrating opportunities for new teachers and for students in teacher education to explore their own gender biases and expectations (via self-reflection and journaling, for example) and to challenge their values and beliefs. The hope is that engaging in these opportunities will enable teachers to begin to see students as individuals with varying fitness and skill levels and make teachers less likely to base expectations on gender stereotypes (Azzarito, 2010; Duffy, 2013). Additionally, teachers can modify and adjust their pedagogy to raise awareness about and ultimately challenge gendered stereotypes and traditional discourses. Domangue and Solmon (2009) emphasized that “once students have the chance to understand how dominant discourse can foster an environment that hinders their development, students can have the knowledge to reassess the physical potential of their bodies” (p. 594).

To better reverse the perceived gender dichotomy and to foster student achievement, teachers need to be cautious about the terminology and practices they use when teaching. Using different equipment or having a different set of rules for girls and boys (e.g., when a boy walks in softball, the girl following him can opt to walk as well) teaches students that physical education is gendered. Also, teachers should avoid setting up situations where students are on display. When students are asked to demonstrate skills or perform fitness tests in front of the class (regardless of their gender), they may feel self-conscious or sense a hostile gaze, and they may therefore be less motivated and less inclined to participate (Beasley, 2013; Domangue & Solmon, 2009).

The present study's results also suggest that the traditional multisport curriculum, with its imposed valuation of masculinity, is ineffective in reaching the widest range of students. Instead, teachers should offer a curriculum with a variety of choices, including alternatives to the sport-based curriculum that gives preference to masculinity and athletes. Equally important, teachers should incorporate students into the curriculum planning process (give students a voice). By allowing students some control over what activities they participate in, teachers may be able to make class more relevant for a wider range of students (Bryan & Solmon, 2012; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Hills & Croston, 2012; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012). In addition, Beasley (2013) advises offering activities that are new and unique, activities less likely to reveal a wide disparity of experience and ability among high school students. This curricular change would serve to equalize ability levels and allow some participants an opportunity to catch up and enable girls to redefine their self-definition as a problem in the physical education classroom. Administering a periodic interest survey and curriculum evaluation would also help to assess whether students find class fun, relevant, and enjoyable, all factors believed to increase motivation, participation, and engagement (Beasley, 2013; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Thorp, 2013).

The NASPE released guidelines for appropriate strategies in physical education in 2009. In the guidelines, they recommend that the physical education curriculum contain an "obvious scope and sequence based on goals and objectives that are appropriate for all students and that are derived from national or state standards." Physical educators from all grades in a district should work together to determine what a physically educated person will look like (regardless of gender), and establish achievable objectives at each

grade level that *all* students master before moving on. This would make expectations regarding knowledge and ability transparent and attainable at all grade levels, to both students (of both genders) and teachers.

Conclusion

Results from this study indicate that a gender dichotomy exists in high school physical education and that it negatively affects the attitudes and satisfaction levels of some girls. The physical education teacher, her pedagogy, and the physical education curriculum influence this dichotomy. The dichotomy is complicated and dynamic, and it appears dependent not only on gender but on a student's experiences and athletic abilities. Based on the research and the findings from this study, it is apparent that some girls resist the expected docile behaviors of the dichotomy in physical education, establishing a place in the hierarchy between the athletic male (the preferred and advantaged position) and the unathletic female. The interviewees in this study, however, behaved in accordance with the traditional, gendered expectations in physical education and avoided participation and engagement in class. The results therefore indicate that unless changes are made to the gendered nature of high school physical education, girls will continue to be marginalized and may therefore continue to dislike and disengage from physical activity long into adulthood.

Directions for Future Research

While there is some evidence that progress has been made with regard to the gender dichotomy (and associated issues) in physical education (Azzarito, 2010; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010), results from this study suggest that added research is warranted. As physical educators strive to provide more equitable learning experiences for all students,

additional information directed at examining the gender dichotomy and exploring embodiment issues will help with understanding and clarity.

First, research in embodiment issues among high school girls in the physical education classroom is indicated. Azzarito (2010) discusses the emergence of a new femininity, identified by characteristics including confidence, assertiveness, and athleticism. The danger of this new femininity is that it is not available to all girls (Azzarito, 2010; Ratna, 2011). If girls do not possess these new characteristics, they therefore risk being defined according to the limited expectations of the traditional, passive femininity in physical education. Consequently, Azzarito (2010) offers the notion of a more equitable, achievable, *hybrid* body. Physical educators should foster a hybrid body that “represents changing, dynamic bodies, bodies that engage in and welcome ‘encounters’ with ‘difference’” (p. 272). Further and more expansive studies designed to probe embodiment issues of girls who feel excluded and who feel that the new femininity is unattainable will ultimately contribute to enabling both students and physical educators to understand and foster alternative versions of femininity that are more explicitly associated with health.

Second, examining the attitude and satisfaction levels of more diverse populations of high school girls to determine and understand the presence of a gender dichotomy in the physical education classroom is also suggested. Because the physical education classroom may perpetuate exclusive dichotomies in different ways for different populations (Ratna, 2011), studies that focus on these different populations will help to reveal the common and more varied attributes of the gender dichotomy. Relevant

populations appropriate for such study may include obese, urban, non-Caucasian, nonheterosexual, or disabled populations.

Third, because the perception of ability in this study proved a key influence on participants' attitude and satisfaction levels, an assessment measuring both objective and perceived ability levels is proposed. The presence of significant or of minimal correlation between actual and perceived ability levels will provide useful information towards improving physical education teacher education, and contribute to refining methods and pedagogy of all physical educators.

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APPENDIX A

Physical Education Class Satisfaction Questionnaire – Part 2

Physical Activity Class Satisfaction Questionnaire (PACSQ)—items are answered using an 8-point scale from 1 (“strongly disagree” or “a great deal”) to 8 (“strongly agree” or “not at all”).

Master Experiences (ME):

1. The opportunity to learn new skills
2. The degree to which I improved on particular skills
3. How much I learned about how to perform better in this activity
4. My improvement in performance
5. My opportunity to practice new skills

Cognitive Development (CD)

6. What I learned concerning the technical aspects of the activity.
7. How much I learned about the various strategies used in performing the activity
8. What I learned about the basic content of the activity
9. The knowledge about the fundamentals of the activity I gained
10. The extent to which I learned the essential concepts of the activity

Teaching (TCH)

11. The quality of overall instruction
12. The clarity of the instructor’s lessons
13. The instructor’s enthusiasm during the class
14. The empathy the instructor showed for the students in the class
15. The instructor’s ability to effectively communicate content matter

Normative Success (NS)

16. My performance was better compared to others in class
17. The superiority of my skills in comparison to others in the class
18. My performance compared to males in the class was better
19. My performance compared to females in the class was better
20. My ability to outperform other in class

Interaction with Others (IWO)

21. I had many chances to meet people with similar interests
22. I had interactions with others in class
23. The opportunity to make new acquaintances in the class
24. My communication with others in class
25. The chance I had to socialize with others
26. The overall social atmosphere of the class

Fun and Enjoyment (FE)

27. My overall enjoyment in the class
28. How much fun I had in the class
29. The pleasant experiences I had in the class
30. The extent to which I had a good time in class

Improvement of Health and Fitness (IHF)

31. The improvement of my health due to this class
32. The physical workout I receive in the class
33. The development of greater fitness as a result of this class
34. The class's contribution to my overall health
35. The progress I have made toward a healthier body during the class

Diversiory Experiences (DE)

36. The stimulating nature of the class
37. How I feel rejuvenated as a result of the class
38. How I feel exhilarated during the class
39. The way the class makes me feel re-energized
40. The physical exertion during the class
41. The manner in which the activity contributed to my emotional well-being

Gender (GEN)—added to questionnaire

42. I did not feel comfortable performing various skills while in physical education class.
43. I believe girls and boys enjoy participating in the same games and activities in physical education.
44. My physical education teacher treated the boys and girls equally and fairly.

APPENDIX B

Student Attitude Toward Physical Education – Part 3

Student Attitude Toward Physical Education—items are answered using a 5-point scale from 1 (“strongly disagree” or “a great deal”) to 8 (“strongly agree” or “not at all”).

1. The activities I learn in physical education (physical education) make my physical education class interesting for me.
2. The activities I learn in my physical education class make learning unpleasant for me.
3. The activities I learn in my physical education class get me excited about physical education.
4. My physical education teacher makes my physical education class seem unimportant to me.
5. I feel the activities I learn in physical education make my physical education class boring for me.
6. I feel the activities I learn in my physical education class are useless to me.
7. The activities I learn in my physical education class seem important to me.
8. The physical education teacher makes my physical education class seem important to me.
9. My physical education teacher makes my physical education class interesting for me.
10. The activities I learn in my physical education class are useful to me.
11. I feel my physical education teacher makes learning in my physical education class fun for me.
12. I feel my physical education teacher makes my physical education class boring for me.
13. I feel the activities I learn in my physical education class are valuable to me.
14. The activities I learn in my physical education class seem unimportant to me.
15. My physical education teacher makes learning in my physical education class unpleasant for me.

16. My physical education teacher makes my physical education class useful for me.
17. I feel my physical education teacher makes learning in my physical education class valuable for me.
18. I feel my physical education teacher makes learning in my physical education useless for me.
19. I feel my physical education teacher makes learning in my physical education class useless for me.
20. I feel the activities I learn in physical education class make learning fun for me.

APPENDIX C

Gender Dichotomy Questionnaire – Part 1

Based on your required high school physical education class, either agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I did not like participating in front of other students
2. I preferred to work out when I choose to
3. I preferred to work out where I chose to
4. I did not like participating in front of males
5. I preferred participating in physical education without males in the class
6. I preferred or would have preferred a female only physical education class
7. There was not enough time in the school day to participate and change for physical education
8. I did not like to sweat during the school day

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Open-ended interview questions:

1. I'm interested in learning more about you as a person and your involvement in physical education. Did you enjoy physical education in high school? If so, why? Did you dislike physical education in high school? If so, why? What about physical education didn't you like?
2. In your opinion, were there any barriers to participating in physical education? If so, what were they? How did they act as a barrier for you?
3. Imagine your ideal class period in high school physical education class. Tell me about your perfect day in physical education. What do you see yourself doing? What makes it ideal?
4. Imagine your worst class period in your physical education class. What do you see yourself doing? Describe what else is going on that makes it your worst class period.
5. Describe some events that could lead one to be dissatisfied with one's physical education class.
6. What is your opinion of an all-girls physical education class for some activities?
7. Can you tell me any activities you think you would like better if done with your female peers? Tell me more about why you think these would be better.
8. Can you tell me about any activities you think would be better if done with both males and females? Tell me more about why you think these would be better.
9. Describe the ideal body for girls. In your opinion, what activities and games in physical education best suit this ideal body?
10. What is your opinion about being fit? What is your opinion about physical education's role in affecting your fitness levels?

APPENDIX E

Student Consent Form

STUDENT ATTITUDES, SATISFACTION LEVELS AND GENDER DICHOTOMY
TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Bonnie Reimann
University of Minnesota
Department of Kinesiology

I am doing a research study for my dissertation at the University of Minnesota. I want to explore and compare the attitude and satisfaction levels of adolescent girls toward physical education.

You can be in this study if you choose to. If you want to be in this study, you will be asked to answer questions on an online questionnaire and, a few students will be asked to participate in an interview. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may choose to stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason. This study has minimal risk associated with it—no more risk than you would encounter in your day-to-day activities.

There are no direct benefits to participation in the study. The study has nothing to do with your experience so far at Gustavus or any teacher or professor at Gustavus Adolphus College.

When I am done with the study, I will write a paper about what I found. I won't use any real names in the report. You may ask questions at any time for any reason via email at breimann@gustavus.edu or reim0037@umn.edu or phone at 651-485-5434.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand this assent form. Please return this either to me (in person or mail) or your ACT/FIT instructor. I will email you the link to the questionnaire following the receipt of this form.

Student name (please print)

Student signature

Date

Student email: _____

APPENDIX F

Codes and Subcodes

Curriculum

Properties: Something related to the physical education curriculum influenced attitude and/or satisfaction levels and/or a gender dichotomy.

Subcodes:

- Fun – whether the curriculum was fun influenced attitude and satisfaction levels.
- Interesting or relevant
- Competitive – the competitiveness of the curriculum influenced attitude and satisfaction levels.
- Running – too much running
- Violent – too violent
- Athletes – favored athletes or boys
- Fitness – curriculum didn't make you fit

Gender related

Properties: Something related to gender influenced the attitude and satisfaction levels or was evidence of a gender dichotomy.

Subcodes:

- Pressure – felt pressure because of boys presence
- Control – boys were out of control
- Imbalance – ratio of boys to girls was imbalanced (too many boys)
- Uncomfortable – boys presence made them feel uncomfortable
- Fun – boys presence made them have more or less fun (ranged)
- Stereotype – gender stereotypes
- Boys – class or curriculum favored boys
- Same – just as bad for boys as for girls
- Coed – presence of other gender inhibited (or not) other gender
- Ability – Same as coed

Ideal Class

Properties: What participants were looking for in an ideal physical education class

Subcodes:

- Fun
- Individualized
- Inclusive
- Moderate – not too rigorous (running, sweating)
- Options/choices/variety
- Alternative activities – not competitive
- Regulated – less regulated (not required) – more autonomy

Pressure/Stress/Anxiety

Properties: Feeling pressure, stress, or anxiety in physical education

Subcodes:

- Friends – from friends or peers
- Teachers – from teachers
- Ability – because of ability

Social

Properties: Friends influence attitude or satisfaction levels

Subcodes:

- Fun – friends made more or less fun
- Popularity and peers – influenced participation and/or attitude
- Athletes – being popular was tied to being an athlete

Teachers/Pedagogy

Properties: Attitudes and/or satisfaction levels and/or gender related to the physical education teacher or pedagogy

Subcodes:

- Success – chances or perception of success
- Athletes – favored athletes
- Boys – favored boys
- Empathy – wanted teachers to show empathy
- Control – teachers didn't control the class
- Understanding – wanted teachers to be understanding
- Attention – gave personal attention – was encouraging or motivating
- Ability – skill or rule development

Unique

Properties: Physical education is unique – it is not academic and more public in nature – this influenced attitude and satisfaction levels.