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Research Article

“They are not cars, they are humans”: Puerto rican PE teachers experiences teaching disabled students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of PE teachers in Puerto Rico teaching disabled students through a post-colonial lens. An interpretative phenomenological analysis was conducted with eight (*n* = 8) Puerto Rican physical education teachers (7 men; 1 woman; ages 23–56 years) acting as participants. Data collection methods included in-depth semi-structured online interviews and researchers’ reflective notes. A four-step approach recommended for IPA research was adopted to analyze data. Three interrelated themes were constructed: (a) “We come into this world to help”: Beliefs about disabled students; (b) “they are not cars, they are humans”: Disability, humanization, and empathy, and (c) “It’s like a prison court”: systemic hurdles in teaching disabled students. The findings in this study reflect that Puerto Rican PE teachers have a unique connection when teaching disabled students associated with the service-oriented nature of developing countries. However, the socio-political context of Puerto Rico, reflected in the educational system, depicts forms of oppression experienced by teachers jeopardizing their well-being and the quality of physical education received by disabled students.

KEYWORDS

Physical education, adapted physical education, disability, postcolonial perspective

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Introduction

It is well known that physical education (PE) teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with disability and disabled students can exert a strong influence on the availability of favorable or unfavorable experiences for disabled1 students within their classes (Holland & Haegele, 2021; Hutzler et al., 2019). While it is well established that teachers attitudes shape disabled students’ experiences, these attitudes do not form in isolation (Holland & Haegele, 2021; Kavanaugh et al., 2021). In other words, teacher attitudes are often influenced by broader social, cultural, and historical narratives about disability (Ingstad & Whyte, 1995; Shakespeare, 2021). Further, PE teachers play an essential role in the selection of pedagogical approaches (Holland et al., 2023) that may facilitate the accessibility, or not, of meaningful participation of disabled students in the PE setting (Haegele et al., 2020). However, disabled students have reported unpleasant and unfortunate experiences in their PE classes that are often attributed to how PE teachers perceive students with marginalizing experiences such as disabled students (Tanure Alves et al., 2018; Wang, 2019). For example, according to recent findings from Tanure Alves and Carvalheiro Campos (2024), who investigated the implementation of a Paralympic sports unit into the PE curriculum in Brazil, teachers, as well as non-disabled students, shared negative narratives and beliefs toward disabled students. These narratives and beliefs may promote the idea that classroom settings and sports adaptations are exclusively for students who are perceived as “incapable”, “fragile”, “limited or ‘ill” (Alves & Calvalheiro, 2024).

While researchers have attempted to listen to and amplify the voices of PE teachers from various countries and cultures (Columna et al., 2016; Hodge et al., 2009; Ramírez-Forero et al., 2024), little is still known about the lived experiences of PE teachers in Global South countries or regions (Castelli et al., 2024; Columna et al., 2016). Specifically, there is limited knowledge about the experiences of PE teachers in places that have been historically marginalized and oppressed by their colonizers, such as Puerto Rico. Research in these contexts is often dominated by Western-centric perspectives and researchers, which may not adequately address the unique challenges faced by educators in these environments (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). To further explore and extend this area of knowledge, we focus this paper on understanding and exploring the experiences of Puerto Rican PE teachers about teaching disabled students. By examining Puerto Rico, a territory with a complex colonial history, this study aims to gain a better understanding of how disability is approached in physical education within historically oppressed regions.

Physical Education for Disabled Students: The Current State in Puerto Rican Schools

During the 2022–2023 academic year, 92,293 students, ages 3 through 21, received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in Puerto Rico (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Of those students, 79% spent at least 80% of their day with non-disabled students in the general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Since oftentimes PE classes are among the first academic subjects where disabled students are enrolled in classes with their peers within the United States (Maher & Haegele, 2022), it is reasonable to suggest that most disabled students spending considerable time in general education classes are also enrolled in general PE classes. Additionally, between 2016 and 2019, over 400 out of 1292 schools in Puerto Rico were closed by the Department of Education (Brusi, 2022) as a cost-saving measure, leading to an increased number of students, including disabled students, within the remaining open schools. Public schools in Puerto Rico fall under the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), while private schools operate independently but are still expected to comply with federal mandates under IDEA when receiving public funding.

Given the high number of disabled students in Puerto Rico, the high likelihood that they are enrolled in general PE classes, and the significant number of school closures leading to higher proportions of students in each school, there is likely to be increased opportunities for physical educators to instruct disabled children in general PE settings. However, to date, just a few studies have explored PE teachers' experiences teaching disabled students in Puerto Rico. In the first study of its kind, Samalot Rivera and Hodge (2008) examined the beliefs of PE teachers in Puerto Rico teaching disabled students in general PE classes, at secondary schools. The findings demonstrated that participants perceived teaching disabled students to be difficult, especially when teaching those that require more support (e.g. profound disabilities), which may reflect underlying deficit-based assumptions about disability. This is well aligned with similar findings with PE teachers in other Global South regions, such as Chile (Castelli et al., 2024). Similarly, in a study exploring teachers' experiences internationally, in which just five teachers from the northwestern region of Puerto Rico participated, physical educators expressed concerns about their ability to effectively teach disabled students, as well as a challenging experience that offered opportunities to grow as an educator (Hodge et al., 2009). These concerns may, in part, reflect limited training or preparation in inclusive instructional strategies, which continues to be a challenge in many educational settings. Most recently, while not focused specifically on teaching disabled students, Martinez-Rivera and Hodge (2022) explored the resilience of physical educators post-Hurricane María and revealed that PE teachers encountered difficulties before and still years after the impact of this catastrophic event. Cumulatively, this line of inquiry has begun to shine a light on the experiences of PE teachers in Puerto Rico, including when teaching disabled students, by depicting unique particularities that shape teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (Hodge et al., 2009; Martinez-Rivera & Hodge, 2022; Samalot & Samalot Rivera & Hodge, 2008).

The existing research has provided a foundational understanding of teachers’ attitudes toward teaching disabled students in Puerto Rico (Hodge et al., 2009; Samalot & Samalot Rivera & Hodge, 2008) and the unique educational context faced by PE teachers (Martinez-Rivera & Hodge, 2022). However, some limitations exist. For example, in examining the participants from each of these studies, it is important to note that most were recruited from the northwestern area of Puerto Rico, providing a limited perspective of the beliefs and experiences of PE teachers across the entire island. That is, each region of Puerto Rico has unique cultural and geographic particularities, and prior studies have specifically focused on the northwestern region, which may limit the transferability to the other six regions of the island (i.e. Arecibo, Bayamón, Caguas, Humacao, Ponce, San Juan). Furthermore, the socio-political and environmental shifts following Hurricane Maria in 2017 including additional school closures, infrastructure damage, and mass migration to the United States, altered the culture and environment of schools, particularly affecting physical education facilities and equipment, many of which were damaged or rendered unusable (Martinez-Rivera & Hodge, 2022; Rivera, 2020). These changes have amplified existing challenges and introduced new ones, making it critical to examine how these evolving circumstances influence the attitudes and practices of PE and APE teachers across the island, if any.

Furthermore, most of this prior research was conducted before 2016, when school closures began which contributed to overcrowding challenges within schools. In addition to these contextual changes, each of the studies conducted within the context of Puerto Rico and about teaching disabled students have adopted the theory of planned behavior (TPB). While TPB is a valuable lens for comprehending and predicting human behavior, including the intentions and beliefs of PE teachers regarding disabled students (Hodge et al., 2009), it may not fully capture the complexity of other factors influencing PE teachers' attitudes and beliefs when integrating disabled students into general PE classes. For example, factors such as the social, political, and economic legacies of colonialism in Puerto Rico need to be considered. That is, to date, the current research has not explored how the historical, political, and current exploitation and oppression of Puerto Rico by colonizers has affected educators, and specifically PE teachers, in this socio-cultural context. Examining the existing literature from a postcolonial perspective may provide a better understanding of how PE teachers perceive and construct narratives about disability and inform current pedagogical practices in Puerto Rico. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature by presenting a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of PE teachers in Puerto Rico through a post-colonial lens.

A Postcolonial Perspective

The concept of post-colonialism refers to the legacies that occurred to colonized countries, after ending their colonial relationship (Rivera-Quiñones, 2022). These legacies can take place in many forms, such as political and economic disparities among colonized countries or territories. In other words, the concept of post-colonialism may be perceived as the mechanisms of domination, oppression, and subordination that colonizers utilized that may result in social-economic inequalities in colonized countries, as reflected in the case of Puerto Rico. Therefore, studies that utilized a post-colonial view intend to challenge the idea that multiple identities may prevail or intersect among those who were colonized (Wright, 2006).

Following Wright (2006) and Azzarito (2016) there is a lack of postcolonial perspective in PE research. In other words, there are few examples of studies that have adopted a postcolonial view within PE scholarship, specifically regarding teaching students with marginalizing experiences (e.g. students of color, disabled students). In one such example, Azzarito (2016) argued that the neoliberal context of schools, and the increasing use of fitness testing in PE, for example, undermines the embodied identities of young people, particularly ethnic minorities. These disparities may promote an educational environment that erases cultural differences among ethnic minority groups contributing to colorblind approaches (Azzarito, 2016; Wright, 2006).

In the current study, we used a post-colonial lens to explore how the identity of colonizers intersects with the culture and identity of PE teachers in Puerto Rico, particularly when teaching disabled students. This perspective guided the analysis of the data and examination of our findings, allowing us to understand how historical colonial relations between Puerto Rico, Spain, and the United States may shape the perspectives of PE teachers towards disabled students. By incorporating a post-colonial framework, we not only examined the mechanisms of domination and oppression but also considered how contemporary resistance and social justice movements in Puerto Rico challenge these colonial legacies.

Methods

To examine the experiences of APE and PE teachers in Puerto Rico teaching disabled students, this study utilized an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA). Experience is a complex concept that can be understood as both a single moment with a clear meaning and a series of connected events that make sense as a whole, even if they occur at different times (Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith et al., 2022). IPA studies aim to understand and/or explore in rich detail the lived experiences that participants encounter in and with the world (J. A. Smith et al., 2022). IPA is designed to understand the complexity of participants’ individual lived experiences and realities, which are constructed based on their own interaction with and position within the world (Smith et al., 2009). In this study, IPA shaped both the research focus and method by guiding the development of open-ended questions that encouraged deep reflection and personal meaning-making, allowing participants to share their nuanced experiencds in their own words.

IPA has phenomenological, ideographic and hermeneutic roots. IPA is phenomenological because it centers on the meaning-making that each participant ascribes to their personal experiences. For example, in this study, we focused on exploring what it is like for PE/APE teachers when teaching disabled students in Puerto Rico. The idiographic root is centered specifically on each participant or case in detail, in attempt to understand how each specific event is experienced or understood for each individual. For example, for this study we will focus on examining individually physical educator’s unique experiences regarding teaching disabled students. This approach gives time and space for researchers to engage and interpret each lived experience as its own. Finally, the hermeneutic roots of IPA are demonstrated through the double hermeneutic cycle that guides interpretation, where researchers are responsible for interpreting participant experiences while the participant simultaneously attempts to comprehend their own lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008; J. Smith et al., 1999). This alignment between IPA and a post-colonial lens may be reflected in the shared emphasis on contextualized knowledge, lived experience, and the ciritcal role of positionality in shaping meaning. This study was reviewed and approved by the human subjects’ review committee of the institutional review board at [de-identified for review] University.

Participants

A purposive sample of teachers were recruited to participate in this study based on pre-established eligibility criteria, which included: (a) currently working as an APE or PE teacher in schools in Puerto Rico; (b) currently or previously teaching students with disabilities in PE; and (c) being willing to participate in a Zoom or telephone interview lasting between 60–90 minutes. A call for participants, which included the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, interview format, and details about participation incentive, was distributed through social media and via-email through the Association of Physical Education and Recreation in Puerto Rico (AEFR-PUR). Prospective participants were asked to email the lead researcher to express interest. At this point, those who expressed interest were asked demographic and screening questions about their age, gender, teaching licenses, current teaching role and location, and years of experience, to ensure that they met stated inclusion criteria. Those who met the inclusion criteria were then invited to participate in this study. This study was limited to eight participants, in alignment with recommendations by Smith and colleagues (2022) for IPA research. Each participant who completed the one-to-one interview was offered a $25 gift card incentive. The provision of incentives was used to appeal to more participants, increase participation, and provide compensation for time invested (Head, 2009).

In total, 8 participants (aged 23–56 years; 7 men, 1 woman) met inclusion criteria, completed interviews, and successfully participated in the study. All participants identified themself as Puerto Ricans. Of the participants, seven reported working in a public school and one in a private school. All participants held both K-12 APE and PE teacher licenses. Seven participants identified their role as an APE teacher, and one as PE teacher. To protect anonymity and confidentiality, we refrain from describing the specific cities for all participants. Instead, we provide the regions; for example, 2 participants were from the north area, 5 from the metro, and 1 from the east. Table 1 provides detailed demographic information about each participant. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants to protect their identity. Due to the interpretative features of IPA and the complexities inherent in interpreting the participants’ experiences, a relatively small sample size is common in IPA oriented research (Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith et al., 2022).

Data collection

Semi-structured one-to-one interviews~~.~~

Following consent, each participant completed a one-to-one, semi-structured, audio-recorded zoom interview with the lead researcher. The interviews ranged from 60–90 minutes in length. Zoom interviews were used to support accessibility, flexibility, and economical recruitment of participants across Puerto Rico. Prior to the start of the interview, screening questions regarding participants' demographics were confirmed. Each interview began with the lead researcher reviewing the study's purpose and sharing her positionality to facilitate a sense of familiarity and openness. At this stage, the lead researcher shared that she was born and raised in Puerto Rico, completed her undergraduate studies at a university in Puerto Rico, and previously worked as a faculty member training pre-service physical educators at the same university. By informing participants of her Puerto Rican heritage and experiences, she aimed to create a shared cultural context that could help them feel more comfortable sharing their own experiences. This disclosure was also part of a reflexive process, acknowledging the potential influence of the researcher’s background on how the data were interpreted. All interviews followed a semi-structured interview protocol based on an IPA approach previously developed by the research team. The interview protocol was used flexibly, allowing the order and magnitude of the questions to change depending on the conversational flow of the interview. Questions examples included: *(a) What is like to be an APE/PE teacher in Puerto Rico? (b) What challenges do you see are unique in Puerto Rico? (c) What is it like teaching students with disabilities?*

Reflective interview notes~~.~~

Reflective interview notes acted as an additional source of data in this study. During and immediately after each interview, the lead researcher documented notes detailing thoughts and reactions to what the participants expressed, the overall atmosphere of the conversation, and initial considerations regarding emerging themes (Smith & Sparkes, 2017). This procedure enabled the lead researcher to critically reflect on their role and position during the interviews, document the emerging ways in which their knowledge, experiences, values, and assumptions could influence data interpretation, and recall the interview context during subsequent data analysis (Walker et al., 2013). The use of reflective interview notes facilitated transparency and authenticity by making explicit how these factors shaped the research process. Rather than attempting to control bias, this approach supported a more open and reflective engagement with the data, ensuring that the findings were interpreted with a clear awareness of the researcher’s influence throughout (Smith et al., 2009).

Data analysis and quality assessment

Following data collection, audio recorded one-to-one interviews were transcribed verbatim in Spanish by thesecond author. A four-step approach, inspired by and recommended for IPA research, was then adopted by the lead researcher to help construct themes that reflect and typify the participants' experiences (J. A. Smith et al., 2022). First, the lead researcher read and reread each participant interview transcripts in her and the participants native language, Spanish, which helped to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the content of each participant’s experiences (J. A. Smith et al., 2022). Second, the primary researcher made exploratory notes in the margins of the transcript documents to identify relevant items of those related to the purpose of the study (J. A. Smith et al., 2022). Following, the exploratory notes and meaningful chunks of data were organized to develop drafted thematic clusters. At this stage, constructed thematic clusters were identified at the case level, and represented each participant’s individual lived experiences. After this stage, the first author shared and discussed the constructed themes with the fourth author, who challenged the first author’s interpretations and provided thoughts on alternative explanations. The lead researcher returned and reviewed the thematic clusters constructed at the case level to explore patterns and possible connections across participants to construct themes (Smith et al., 2009). After the construction of themes, the lead author shared the drafted themes with the research team, who again provided comments and questions to challenge the lead author’s interpretations. After reviewing the comments and revisiting the themes, the lead author returned to the original data to harvest direct quotes from participants, which were subsequently translated to English, and presented as findings in the proceeding section.

Four IPA principles for assessing quality were adopted in this study: (a) sensitivity to context, (b) commitment and rigor, (c) transparency and coherence, and (d) impact and importance (Smith et al., 2009). The interviewer acknowledged and transparently expressed her positionality and biases to the participants prior to each interview, to address sensitivity to the context (Smith et al., 2009). Commitment and rigor were supported through multiple, deliberate steps throughout the study. This included the careful selection of a small, purposive sample of PE/APE teachers who met the pre-established inclusion criteria, ensuring that participants could provide in-depth and relevant insights. (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). Also, a thorough explanation of the participants' recruitment, interview process, and analysis procedure description was provided to support transparency. This study's coherence was reinforced by the inherent significance of phenomenological research in elucidating the participants' firsthand experiences and realities. Finally, the impact and importance of this qualitative study will rely on our competence to adequately disseminate interesting and useful content (Yardley, 2000). Consequently, the impact and importance of this reading will be judged by those engaging in this research.

Additionally, a transparent and systematic analysis procedure was followed, where the researcher engaged in repeated readings of transcripts, exploratory note-taking, and iterative discussions with the research team to construct meaningful themes grounded in the data. The research team played an essential role in reviewing and challenging the emerging themes, adding another layer of scrutiny to the process. This ongoing process of reflection and feedback ensured that the analysis was both thorough and valid. Furthermore, the researcher's transparency about her positionality at the start of each interview minimized potential biases and ensured that the findings were reflective of the participants’ perspectives.

Findings

The following three interrelated themes were constructed from our participants’ lived experiences: (a) “We come into this world to help”: Beliefs about disabled students; (b) “they are not cars, they are humans”: Disability, humanization, and empathy, and (c) “It’s like a prison court”: systemic hurdles in teaching disabled students

We come into this world to help”: Beliefs about disabled students.

Our participants’ experiences were centered upon feelings of deep connection toward disabled students, which were informed by values for serving others with kindness and compassion. For example, Daniel remembered his initial encounter with disabled people: “That is where I fell in love. And I thought this is what I want to do the rest of my life [teaching disabled students]”. Similarly, Emanuel's service-oriented emphasis for teaching disabled students stems from his belief that “we come into this world to help. And not to be focused on money because when we worship money too much, it doesn't come”. Likewise, Angel stated that:

Sometimes the reward is not monetary; rather, its impact you are making, even if it’s a positive one on those [disabled] students who are growing.

The profound emotional impact of teaching disabled students, described by our participants, is highlighted by a service-oriented purpose they find in their work. It also underscores the participants’ belief in the intrinsic value of helping others at the expense of jeopardizing material gain in their profession.

Many of our participants' values about serving others, which also informed their teaching behaviors and philosophies, were strongly rooted in religious or spiritual beliefs. For example, Orlando recalled:

You have to like it [teaching disabled students]. This [my profession] is not something I just decided to do. You have to genuinely like it, but it is truly a blessing to see the kids and feel them [disabled students] in the morning, to have them hug you, because I think it is the purest love there is. They will hug you with so much love, and you will make a huge impact.

Orlando expressed that it is not merely a job he chooses to do but rather a calling,that he believes was a gift from a higher power. This is further referenced when he discussed children's hugs as “the purest love”, which, like religious discourses, associate children with unconditional love. Similarly, Emanuel recalled that:

At that time, there were very few [APE specialists], and I decided, you know what? I am going to become an adapted physical education teacher. I even believed that talking with children with disabilities holds value, right? Because it was within my Christian values, and I thought we must help people, especially those in need. And I thought, why not? Why not get into this [profession]? And when I did my internship, it really touched me.

Emanuel’s decision, like our other participants, to enter the profession appeared to be a response to a call to serve and make a positive difference in the lives of disabled children. There seems to be a strong connection that serving this population is more likely to happen in education than any other field. For example, Benito recalled that:

It also made me very curious because he [my dad, also a PE teacher] avoids them [disabled students], if they are kids just like the others [non-disabled students]. Obviously, now that I am growing up it is necessary to dedicate them [disabled students] more time, have a little more patience, and look for other alternatives [instructional strategies]. Maybe he [dad] wasn't open to that [time, patience, and alternatives], and it is understandable, right? He [dad] will have his reasons, he will have his experience, but well, I made it my task to explore it [the profession], and it is something that these kids [disabled children] also need; they need people who do not have problems with spending time there for them. Well, I know within myself, and I know from what I can see and from what I've studied and from the little I continue to read, that not many people will be willing to do that [spending time for disabled students], like any other thing [profession], like the nurse, like the doctor, like the engineer, but in this field, well, it's me.

Benito acknowledged the need for patience and understanding in his profession, recognizing that other individuals, like his father who was also a PE teacher, have their reasons and experiences influencing their behavior. Similarly, Daniel recalled that:

To love the [disabled] students, if they do not succeed today, have the hope that they will succeed later, and be as kind and caring as possible with the student. Those special education students really need that because many times they are mistreated at home, in the communities, so are you going to have them and mistreat them? You [teachers] must be an entity of love and hope and make them [disabled students] feel good. Make them feel safe.

Here, Daniel highlighted the importance of his role as a teacher, in light of the vulnerability and marginalization that disabled students experience within other socio-cultural contexts at home and in the community, to provide a safe and nurturing environment. It calls upon teachers to embody religious qualities as service sources for support and comfort for their students, aiming to make them feel valued, secure, and respected.

They are not cars, they are humans”: Disability, humanization, and empathy.

Our participants’ past experiences and religious views informed their perceptions of disabled students as equals, recognizing and valuing them as individuals. For example, Orlando noted “they [disabled students] are the same as us, they have a heart like ours, a mind like ours, they all feel sadness, they get excited, they're all the same”. Aligned with this, Angel shared that he refers to his disabled students by their names because “they are not their condition". The perspectives expressed by Orlando and Angel helped to foster their mindset that the success or failure of disabled students relied and centered on their abilities as teachers. Because of this, they explained that they planned classes with their disabled student in mind, rather than attributing success or failure based on their impairment or level of functionality. Further supporting this sentiment, Leo explained:

As teachers, we should not have a rigid idea of what a student with special needs is. They [disabled students] are not just a number or their disability; they are constantly changing. For instance, a student may perform well in hitting a ball this year but not next year. Why? Oh, because they have autism? Why? They [disabled students] are just like us, who are not skilled or proficient in many other things, don't know mathematics, don't know how to speak English, or any other thing. The idea of special education in our heads as teachers should not be so rigid. We [PE teachers] must find a way. Yes, it's difficult, I'm not saying it's easy, but we must find a way to find that strength and maximize it.

Based on the participants’ views of disabled students being “just like other kids”, it might be unsurprising that they, for the most part, believed that disabled students should be primarily or exclusively integrated into general physical education classes. For example, Orlando stated that:

I don't believe my children who are wheelchair users should be over here, the children with autism over there, and the regular [non-disabled] children somewhere else. It's simply one group, where I deliver instruction and if you can't perform a certain skill, I adapt it for them [disabled students], but I'm not dividing into groups. I like what inclusion stands for, and we know very well that children with autism have issues with socialization and they don't want to socialize. It works [the integrated setting] because they [disabled students] click [bonded] with my regular [non-disabled] children, and they stick with that child for the whole class. They [disabled children] attend the program simply because they want to see that [non-disabled] child, and for me, that's inclusion; it's having just one group.

Like Orlando, many participants described the need to integrate disabled students, and these opinions appeared to be based on the personal beliefs they had about inclusion and disabled students. That is, the participants identified that disabled students are like any other individual and have similar needs to any other students within the schools and therefore should be educated together.

Although the participants described wanting to instruct disabled students within integrated contexts, they also recognized that there were some risks involved, particularly when instructing students with some specific impairments. For example, Emanuel noted that:

I have taken many risks with brittle bone kids [students with osteogenesis imperfecta]. One of them fell again in my class. He fractured three parts of the bone. And you might be thinking you're crazy, how's that? He was just playing. And a kid tripped over him, I couldn’t do anything about it. I mean, it's not like I'm throwing him [student with osteogenesis imperfecta] off a parachute and letting him fall. He is always going to fracture. I always try to do everything possible to protect the kids. It's not like it happens all the time, but it will happen. And is it abuse? Leaving them [disabled students] sitting on the bleachers, or in a corner where they are watching the class, It's a form of institutional abuse.

Here, Emanuel expressed feelings of frustration about other physical educators' negative assumptions towards the integration of disabled students, and in particular students with osteogenesis imperfecta, due to the inherent risk they might face in the PE setting. For him, providing an opportunity for this student to be engaged within PE activities is his right, and he believes that not integrating him into the PE class would be a form of abuse. Emanuel also noted a poignant analogy that underscores the importance of treating disabled students with care and sensitivity in the educational setting. He said:

They [disabled students] are not cars, they are human beings. You're not working in a mechanic's workshop where you can just go back and replace a part. These are children, and if you cause them trauma, you've already traumatized them, and I wouldn't allow that.

Emanuel shared the deep and often long-lasting impact a traumatic experience may have on his disabled students, which again supported his decisions to include them within classes while attempting to be flexible and adaptable to their needs. Emanuel's analogy of disabled students as not being cars emphasizes the understanding that they are not objects that can be easily replaced or fixed. He also shared that “parents and society already impose enough barriers, and I am not going to add more in my class” (Emmanuel).

Interestingly, and in contrast, Fabiola expressed that even though she would want her autistic student to be in an integrated setting, she understands that this type of placement may create more stressful experiences for students. However, and unlike other participants, she expressed a more nuanced opinion about the integration of disabled students into general education. She recalled learning during her training that integrated settings were ideal, but this opinion changed as she began working in schools with autistic students. She reflected:

As much as I'd like my [disabled] students to be in the regular setting or in a group, they get more distressed than calm. We [physical educators] need to find the reason for that [why autistic children are feeling distress]. Once I manage to figure out the reasons, then I can find which group is suitable for them [autistic children], because it shouldn't be just any group. That's why I say you always have to carefully assess the needs of the student, without neglecting their socialization, because that's not the idea either. They [autistic children] live in this world; they can't be confined to a room for their whole life. But it all depends on the student.

Here, Fabiola shared her belief that her students may not benefit from integrated PE, but there is also tension in her opinion, where she questioned her beliefs because of her prior training and others' people perspectives regarding what's best for her students. Similarly, Angel recalled:

I had a student who was in a self-contained classroom and quickly, she [disabled student] was moved to a regular classroom. She didn't have many incidents, but she was a bit down a couple of times, like depression or not wanting to be there.

Continuing on, Angel also expressed the need of a strategic plan when transitioning disabled students to an integrated setting. The integration of a disabled student to general education settings, in some cases, can cause emotional and physical harm.

It’s like a prison court”: Systemic hurdles in teaching disabled students.

Despite the passion that our participants expressed about teaching disabled students, and their perspectives toward the integration of disabled students into general education classes, they also expressed feelings of frustration and hopelessness regarding the overcomplexity of the educational system in Puerto Rico and the impact it has on their ability to teach. For example, some teachers reported struggling with teaching in unfavorable conditions, which they attributed to the state of the educational system worsening their situation. In relation to unfavorable conditions, participants reflected that, “[the instructional space] is super small, no roof, surrounded by a fence, like a prison court” (Christian), “how can you teach a child in a wheelchair in a classroom with a temperature of 80–85 degrees” (Daniel) and “I have some autistic kids who tolerate little sun” (Benito). The participants' experiences and comparison with prison-like atmospheres depicted the harsh reality of teacher well-being and the quality of physical education disabled students are receiving in Puerto Rico. Further exemplifying this, Angel recalled that “just to buy five basketballs and three volleyballs, it took me almost two months. I did not have the time. It's frustrating”. Similarly, Benito exclaimed that:

If I had these materials, it will be better for them [disabled students]. But it's all ignorance, because they're not aware and sometimes they [administration] mark needs that aren't there, or they say they sent materials, and the materials are very generic, like for example 500 jump ropes.

Our participants attributed their negative experiences and the quality of physical education to the bureaucratic atmosphere that the Department of Education in Puerto Rico has regarding the acquisition of materials. For some, the challenges created by the educational system is driving people away from schools and unfortunately the island. For example, Orlando recalled:

Of course, I would not want to leave my country. I want to work here. I want to contribute to my country. I want to contribute to Puerto Rico. But honestly, things are not as one would like them to be. I understand that the teacher is one of the government employees who suffers the most because their rights are not respected, and so, well, I have colleagues out there [United States] who tell me, I'm fully bilingual and with my background, I would be perfect out there, but if I have all this and can do it here, why do I have to leave my country? But it is always on my mind every day.

Orlando expressed his commitment to making a positive impact on the island where he grew up, but that he understands that teachers are faced by precarious conditions, and in turn, may leave. Despite these systemic impediments that the government has created for educators, like Orlando, he expressed confidence in his worth and how others may value and respect his abilities as a teacher. The sentiment expressed by Orlando here was shared by several participants, who many noted being “frustrated with the government and their willingness or interest in leaving” (reflexive notes). For example, Emanuel expressed “I think the [educational] system is consuming us [teachers], draining us, and we don't have the same energy”, and Fabiola stated that:

Due to the bad administration, the professionals continue to leave [the island]. So here we [who remain on the island] stay less, and we are left with the burden of all those people who leave. Also, I do not know when I am supposed to retire. In 30 more years? But my useful life as a professional is going to be worse because I am going to be overloaded, and exploited by then, I will already be mentally “fried”. That is, one will not last 30 healthy and useful years. That does not make sense [ … ] and well, we are going to end up going to the United States, or we are going to end up being bitter old men who are doing the job, doing it for the sake of doing it, as has happened with many people and with many other professionals who cannot retire.

The exodus of teachers from the island has occurred consistently over the years. She referred to “those” which implies two distinct groups of Puerto Ricans - those who have stayed in PR and those who have left to form a diaspora. Fabiola and others expressed a high uncertainty about professional life expectancy due to the stress and strain of the precarious working conditions. These teachers believe that there may be an unfair reality for disabled students, where more high-quality teachers may leave due to some of the systematic impediments they experience, and those who stay may lose their sense of purpose as teachers.

Discussion

This study aimed to gain a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of PE teachers in Puerto Rico when teaching disabled students through a post-colonial lens. Generally, our findings demonstrated that despite the systemic challenges Puerto Rican PE teachers face when attempting to teach disabled students, our participants reported high levels of confidence as well as having a unique connection toward disabled students in both integrated and segregated settings. In this respect, our findings conflict with some prior studies by Hodge and colleagues (2009) and Samalot Rivera and Hodge (2008), where PE teachers were previously identified as having an inability to connect with disabled students and being concerned about not having the requisite preparation to teach this population effectively. We hypothesize that the inconsistency with previous findings may be related to differences in the training and professional development experiences of the participants. That is, in the previous studies, participants were described as being physical educators with little disability related training (Hodge et al., 2009; Samalot & Samalot Rivera & Hodge, 2008), whereas in the current study, our participants had both physical education and adapted physical education licenses which required additional training and may enhance attitudes and perspectives toward disabled students (Kavanaugh et al., 2021).

On the other hand, our findings align more so with recent research from other previously colonized countries like Chile (Castelli et al., 2024), Venezuela, Costa Rica (Columna et al., 2016), and Guatemala (Pinilla-Arbex et al., 2019), where PE teachers also expressed favorable and positive attitudes toward disabled students. This may not be surprising, as according to Shakespeare (2021), people in developing countries are more likely to support disabled individuals than those in Western regions, emphasizing the group or the community rather than the individual (Ingstad & Whyte, 1995; Shakespeare, 2021). This focus on community aligns with post-colonial views, suggesting that Puerto Rican PE teachers may be expressing, deliberately or not, a form of *resistance* to western educational models characterized by individualism and exclusion. This was exemplified in our first theme, which emphasized the love, connection, and service-oriented nature toward disabled students that was described by the participants. That is, Shakespeare’s assertions about the group or community emphasis within developing countries may help explain the service-oriented nature of Puerto Rican PE teachers toward disabled students and how their spiritual beliefs must be considered when trying to understand the deep connection and love our participants experienced when instructing disabled students. Importantly, our participants’ views toward disability were highly rooted in religious discourses of disability, which may be attributed to the historical influence of their previous (Spain) and current (United States) colonizers with the introduction and reinforcement of Christianity to Puerto Rico. This conceptualization of disability is important because it informs us how people form expectations and interact with disabled students (Barton, 2009) and how disabled students may ultimately perceive themselves (Haegele & Hodge, 2016). In other words, further research is needed to explore how understandings of disability influence how PE teachers in Puerto Rico interact with their students, while adopting a “savior role” when teaching disabled students, and how this may influence how disabled students perceive themselves in PE classes.

For the second theme, our participants highlighted the importance of perceiving and treating disabled students as equal to their non-disabled peers, including instructing them within the same PE spaces. It may be logical to suggest that this philosophical position may be influenced by the global social preference for teaching disabled students in integrated settings (Heck & Block, 2019). Taking in consideration the legacies of post-colonialism, it is possible that PE teachers in Puerto Rico had adopted a colonial mentality when seeking what is the “right thing to do” when teaching disabled students. This perspective may lead to the adoption and internalization of inclusion-centric ideologies from colonizing nations. Such practices could also reflect a form of *mimicry* (Bhabha, 2021), where colonial ideologies are internalized and reproduced, particularly in the conceptualization of disability and inclusion. This highlights the complex interplay between local cultural values and colonial influences in shaping educational practices. For instance, many educators in Puerto Rico have adopted “functional diversity” as a new term to conceptualize impairment and disability. While this terminology could be interpreted as a progressive step, it may also represent a form of *cultural hegemony* a remnant of colonial influence that shapes local understanding of disability in way that align with Western, colonizing framework (Wright, 2006). This term was proposed by Romañach and Lovato (2005) and used in, illustrating a continuing cultural influence from their colonial past (Spain). However, further research is needed to identify the consequences of adopting educational ideologies and practices from colonizers, as this may perpetuate a sense of inferiority among educators from colonized countries (Azzarito, 2016).

While the participants were keen to teach disabled students in integrated settings, they also identified a number of risks associated with this practice. Some examples of risks mentioned by our participants included increased susceptibility to injuries (e.g. fractures), sensory overload, social anxiety and depression, risks similar to those experienced by disabled students in other contexts internationally (Fitzgerald, 2005; Haegele, 2019). Clearly, there is a concern among PE teachers in Puerto Rico regarding the experiences of disabled students in integrated settings, suggesting that this marginalized population may be at risk of having unfavorable experiences within those spaces. Emanuel’s analogy, “They are not cars”, rejects a medicalized view of disability by emphasizing that disabled students are not objects to be fixed, but human beings with emotional and psychological needs. His framing reflects resistance to the deficit-based narratives often reinforced through Western educational and medical systems. His comment about parents and society imposing barriers further highlights how exclusion is socially constructed, and how he actively seeks to disrupt those patterns in his classrooms.

Our last theme exposed the emotional discomfort experienced by our participants due to the sensitivity of the current challenges they are facing in the school system in Puerto Rico. They expressed that the bureaucratic nature of the system does more to restrict, rather than facilitate the availability of appropriate facilities and equipment to provide high quality PE and meet the unique needs of disabled students. Those challenges are consistent with those described in a previous study that revealed that PE teachers in Puerto Rico had faced difficulties accessing needed resources before and still years after hurricane María (Martinez-Rivera & Hodge, 2022). This systemic impediment may be related to the colonial relationship Puerto Rico had with the United States. That is, we argue that mechanisms of colonial oppression, such as cultural control, political exclusion, economic exploitation, and fragmentation (Capielo Rosario et al., 2022), may have resulted in financial negligence and misconduct that influence the availability of resources for teachers. For instance, according to Atiles (2023), over the past 20 years Puerto Rico has endured budget cuts, privatization of public services, low corporate taxation, and a heavy reliance of bonds and debt issuance.

However, little is known about how these measures are affecting disabled students and PE teachers in colonized regions. What is known, though, is that PE teachers we spoke to explicitly described issues with diaspora that occurs as a result of limited resources to teach. That is, our participants exposed a strong desire and ***orgullo*** (pride) of wanting to stay on ***their***island, to contribute to the progress of Puerto Rican disabled students. However, there was also a sense of burden when other educators decide to leave the island and relocate to other countries due to the constant oppression they experienced by the educational system. This sense of shared struggle was present across school settings. Although one participant worked in a private school, all described facing similar challenges, as access to resources in both public and private settings is often shaped by regional disparities and political factors.

Conclusion

In this study, we aimed to understand the lived experiences of PE teachers in Puerto Rico teaching disabled students through a post-colonial lens. We found that Puerto Rican PE teachers had a unique connection and compassion toward disabled students, that may stem from their spiritual or religious belief of wanting to help others; and socio-cultural characteristics of historical colonized regions. Despite facing challenges and bureaucratic hurdles within the educational system, Puerto Rican PE teachers reported positive experiences toward disabled students, possibly associated to the service-oriented nature of developing countries. This study is the first of its kind to explore Puerto Rican PE teachers' experiences teaching disabled students through a post-colonial lens. However, more work is needed to identify the experiences of disabled students in PE settings in historical marginalized regions, and how post-colonial legacies may shape educational realities. Moving forward, we urge researchers to take in consideration a post-colonial lens, as Maldonado (2019, p. 337) noted, “the story of Puerto Rico cannot be told without reference to Wester modern catastrophe and coloniality”.

Endnote

1 Throughout the article, the term “disabled person” is used because it is compatible with the identity-first language preferred by disability self-advocates who view disability as an integral aspect of individual and collective identity (Catala et al., 2021). However, the participants used person-first language, which is respected and represented in the findings.

Table 1. Demographic descriptors of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Age | Gender | Years of Experience | School Type | Teaching role | Setting |
| Angel | 26 | Male | 4 years | Public school | PE | Integrated |
| Benito | 29 | Male | 4 years | Public school | Itinerant | Self-contained |
| Christian | 23 | Male | 2 years | Public school | School-based APE | Self-contained |
| Daniel | 56 | Male | 30 years | Public school | School-based APE | Self-contained |
| Emanuel | 39 | Male | 12 years | Public school | School-based APE | Integrated |
| Fabiola | 25 | Female | 2 years | Private school | School-based APE | Self-contained |
| Leo | 32 | Male | 5 years | Public school | Itinerant | Self-contained |
| Orlando | 28 | Male | 4 years | Public school | Itinerant | Self-contained |

Note. PE = physical education; APE = adapted physical education; Itinerant = teachers who travel to more than one school for APE services; School-based APE = teachers who performed all APE duties at one school, including both integrated and segregated school settings.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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[bib20]##AuthST##Holland,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#K.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Haegele,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#J.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#A.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Zhu,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#X.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Bobzien,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#J.##AuthEN## (2022). “Everybody wants to be included”: Experiences with ‘#inST#inclusive'#inEN##dlST#Inclusive’#dlEN# strategies in physical education.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#35(2), 273#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#293.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-022-09852-x##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref Pubmed##CMEN####CMST##The reference “Holland et al. 2022” is listed in the references list but is not cited in the text. Please cite the reference in the text. If no citation is supplied we will delete the unwanted.##CMEN##

[bib21]##AuthST##Hutzler,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#Y.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Meier,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#S.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Reuker,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#S.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Zitomer,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#M.##AuthEN## (2019). Attitudes and self-efficacy of physical education teachers toward inclusion of children with disabilities: A narrative review of international literature.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#24(3), 249#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#266.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2019.1571183##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref##CMEN##

[bib22]##AuthST##Ingstad, B.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Whyte, S.#inST# #inEN#R.##AuthEN###dlST# (eds).#dlEN# (1995). *Disability and culture*. University of California Press.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib23]##AuthST##Kavanaugh,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#T.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Tomaka,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#J.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Moralez,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#E.##AuthEN## (2021). Professional preparedness and psychosocial beliefs as predictors of quality physical education and recreation services to students with disabilities.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Therapeutic Recreation Journal*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#55(4#inST#), #inEN##dlST#). #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.18666/trj-2021-v55-i4-11040##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing page number for the "Kavanaugh et. al., 2021" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib24]##AuthST##Maher, A. J.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Haegele, J. A.##AuthEN## (2023). *Teaching #inST#disabled children#inEN#*#dlST#Disabled Children#dlEN# *in #inST#physical education#inEN#*#inST#.#inEN##dlST#Physical Education.#dlEN# Routledge.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##The reference “Maher and Haegele 2023” is listed in the references list but is not cited in the text. Please cite the reference in the text. If no citation is supplied we will delete the unwanted.##CMEN##

[bib25]##AuthST##Maldonado, N.##AuthEN## (2019). Afterword: Critique and decoloniality in the face of crisis, disaster and catastrophe. In ##EdAuthST##Y. Bonilla##EdAuthEN## & ##EdAuthST##M. LeBrón##EdAuthEN## (Eds.), *Aftershocks of disaster: Puerto #inST#rico#inEN#*#dlST#Rico#dlEN# *before and after the storm* (pp. 332#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#342). Haymarket Books#inST#. #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib26]##AuthST##Martinez-Rivera, C#inST#.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST#,#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# & ##AuthST##Hodge, S.##AuthEN## (2022). Resilience of Puerto #inST#rican#inEN##dlST#Rican#dlEN# physical education teachers post-Hurricane Maria. *International Education and Culture Studies*, 2(1), 42#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#71.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib27]##AuthST##Pinilla-Arbex, J.##AuthEN##, #dlST#J. #dlEN###AuthST##Duran, #dlST#and #dlEN#J#inST#.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST#, &#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# ##AuthST##Perez-Tejero#inST#, #inEN##inST#J.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST# (#inEN##dlST#. #dlEN#2019#inST#).#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# Actitud de Los Profesionales de la Educacion Fısica y Del Deporte Hacia la Inclusion de Alumnos Con Discapacidad en Guatemala. *RDIM*#inST#,#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# 4, 1#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#21.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing issue number for the "Pinilla-Arbex et. al., 2019" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib28]##AuthST##Ramírez-Forero, B. I.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Arroyo-Rojas, F.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Martínez-Rivera, S.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Noreña-Osorno, M. S.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Correia de Campos, L. F. C.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Nowland, L.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Haegele, J.##AuthEN## (2024). Barriers and facilitators to the inclusion of autistic students in integrated physical education: #inST#A colombian#inEN##dlST#a Colombian#dlEN# perspective.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*#inST#, #inEN##inST#1#inEN##inST#–#inEN##inST#10#inEN##inST#. #inEN##inST#https://#inEN##dlST#. Advanced online publication. http://dx.#dlEN#doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2024.2399376##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing volume number and issue number for the "Ramírez-Forero et. al., 2024" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib29]##AuthST##Rivera, F. I.##AuthEN## (2020). Puerto #inST#rico's#inEN##dlST#Rico’s#dlEN# population before and after Hurricane Maria. *Population and Environment*, 42(1), 1#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#3.#inST# #inEN##inST#https://doi.org/10.1007/s11111-020-00356-4#inEN###CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref Pubmed##CMEN##

[bib30]##AuthST##Rivera-Quiñones, M. A.##AuthEN## (2022). #dlST#(#dlEN#Post-) Colonial achipelagos. Postcolonial colonialism in Puerto Rico: inequality, capital, and social transfers. In ##EdAuthST##H. Burchardt##EdAuthEN## & ##EdAuthST##J. Leinius##EdAuthEN## (Eds.), *Comparing the legacies of Spanish colonialism in Cuba, Puerto #inST#rico#inEN#*#dlST#Rico#dlEN#*, and the Philippines* (pp. 224#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#237). University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11747103##CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib31]##AuthST##Romañach, J.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Lobato, M.##AuthEN## (2005). Functional diversity, a new term in the struggle for dignity in the diversity of the human being. *Independent Living Forum*#inST#.#inEN##dlST#: Spain.#dlEN###CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing volume number, issue number and page number for the "Romañach and Lobato, 2005" references list entry.##CMEN####CMST##The reference “Romañach and Lobato 2005” is listed in the references list but is not cited in the text. Please cite the reference in the text. If no citation is supplied we will delete the unwanted.##CMEN##

[bib32]##AuthST##Samalot Rivera, A#inST#.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST#,#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# & ##AuthST##Hodge, S.##AuthEN## (2008). *Secondary physical education #inST#teachers'#inEN#*#dlST#teachers’#dlEN# *beliefs on teaching students with disabilities at schools in Puerto #inST#rico. Efdeportes#inEN#*#dlST#Rico. EFdeportes#dlEN#. https://www.efdeportes.com/efd123/secondary-physical-education-teachers-beliefs-on-teaching-students-with-disabilities.htm##CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing publisher name for the "Samalot Rivera and Hodge, 2008" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib33]##AuthST##Shakespeare, T.##AuthEN## (2021). Disability in developing countries. In ##EdAuthST##N. Watson##EdAuthEN## #inST#&#inEN##dlST#and#dlEN# ##EdAuthST##S. Vehmas##EdAuthEN## (#inST#Eds.),#inEN##dlST#eds.), #dlEN# *Routledge #inST#handbook#inEN#*#dlST#Handbook#dlEN# *of #inST#disability studies#inEN#*#dlST#Disability Studies#dlEN# (pp.#inST# #inEN#321#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#334). Routledge.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib34]##AuthST##Smith,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#J.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#A.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Flowers,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#P.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Larkin,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#M.##AuthEN## (2009).#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Interpretative phenomenological* #dlST# #dlEN#*analysis:Theory, method and research*. #inST#Sage#inEN##inST#. #inEN##dlST#SAGE.#dlEN###CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib35]##AuthST##Smith, J. A.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Flowers, P#inST#.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST#,#inEN##dlST#.#dlEN# & ##AuthST##Larkin, M.##AuthEN## (2022). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Sage.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib36]##AuthST##Smith, J.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Jarman, M.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Osborn, M.##AuthEN## (1999). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis. In ##EdAuthST##M. Murray##EdAuthEN## & ##EdAuthST##K. Chamberlain##EdAuthEN## (Eds.), *Qualitative health psychology* (pp. 218#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#240). Sage.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib37]##AuthST##Smith, J.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Osborn, M.##AuthEN## (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In ##EdAuthST##J.#inST# #inEN#A. Smith##EdAuthEN## (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 53#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#80).#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing publisher name for the "Smith and Osborn, 2008" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib38]##AuthST##Smith, B.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Sparkes, A.#inST# #inEN#C.##AuthEN## (2017). In ##EdAuthST##B. Smith##EdAuthEN## & ##EdAuthST##A.#inST# #inEN#C. Sparkes##EdAuthEN## (Eds.),#inST# #inEN#*Interviews*. ##CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing publisher name and page number for the "Smith and Sparkes, 2017" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib39]#dlST#Tuhiwai #dlEN###AuthST##Smith, #inST#T.#inEN##inST###AuthEN###inEN##inST#, & #inEN###AuthST##L.##AuthEN## (2012).#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books.#inST# #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib40]##InstAuthST##U.S. Department of Education##InstAuthEN###dlST#.#dlEN# (2022). *44th #inST#annual#inEN#*#dlST#Annual#dlEN# *report to #inST#Congress#inEN#*#dlST#congress#dlEN# *on the implementation of the #inST#individuals#inEN#*#dlST#Individuals#dlEN# *with #inST#disabilities education act#inEN#*#dlST#Disabilities Education Act, 2022#dlEN#. https://sites.ed.gov/idea/2022-individuals-with-disabilities-education-act-annual-report-to-congress/##CMST##Reference Type: book -- Grobid##CMEN####CMST##Please provide missing publisher name for the "Name, date" references list entry.##CMEN##

[bib41]##AuthST##Walker,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#S.##AuthEN##, ##AuthST##Read,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#S.##AuthEN##, & ##AuthST##Priest,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#H.##AuthEN## (2013). Use of reflexivity in a mixed-methods study.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Nurse Researcher*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#20(3), 38#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#43.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2013.01.20.3.38.c9496##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref Pubmed##CMEN##

[bib42]##AuthST##Wang,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#L.##AuthEN## (2019). Perspectives of students with special needs on inclusion in #inST#General#inEN##dlST#general#dlEN# physical education: A #inST#Social-Relational#inEN##dlST#social-relational#dlEN# model of disability.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#36(2), 242#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#263.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2018-0068##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref Pubmed##CMEN##

[bib43]##AuthST##Wright, J.##AuthEN## (2006). Physical education research from postmodern, post structural and postcolonial perspectives. In ##EdAuthST##D. Kirk##EdAuthEN##, ##EdAuthST##D. Macdonald##EdAuthEN###dlST#,#dlEN# & ##EdAuthST##M. O’Sullivan##EdAuthEN## (#inST#Eds.),#inEN##dlST#eds),#dlEN# *The handbook of physical education* (pp. 59#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#75). Sage#inST#. #inEN###CMST##Reference Type: Edited Book -- Grobid##CMEN##

[bib44]##AuthST##Yardley,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#L.##AuthEN## (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#*Psychology & Health*,#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#15(2), 215#inST#–#inEN##dlST#-#dlEN#228.#inST# #inEN##dlST# #dlEN#https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302##CMST##Reference Type: journal -- Crossref##CMEN##