



**Physical Education in Trinidad and Tobago:
Dilemmas of and Opportunities for Movement
across a Contested Field**

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Acknowledgements

'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen' (Hebrews 11:1). I consider myself to be a spiritual individual and I rely heavily on my faith. I believe in God to propel me into my destiny - *'faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'*(Romans 10:17). On this premise, I could not have asked for a more understanding team of individuals to support me through this process of learning; as the calling of God unsettled, disrupted and shaped my academic and spiritual life in order to transform it into a new dimension. Sincere appreciation and gratitude is extended to those who supported me in prayer as I swam against the current at each phase of this journey.

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Dedication

To You, Mum.
I know why you did what you did
Thank You!

A daughter without her mother is a broken woman. I was broken and did not know it.

I thank God for healing and restoring our relationship during this journey

To You, Dawson.
Thank You for loving me from coals.
True love never dies!

'My silent prayer was that our love would last until you accomplished your goals. At recent junctures of your journey I sensed the urgency in you, your words and in your attitude, but I had to hold fast to what I thought was right. I wept for myself. Yes, I am still weeping because I have vested in you, even though I have not invested. To see the race is almost over and I am disqualified and someone else will be proclaimed the victor and claim the prize, a diamond; that I loved from coals and I guess applied pressure (or more pressure) not to have the things you wanted because I knew I would have a diamond in the end. I know we are bonded. I love you.'

*I now cast my faith upon the power of TRUE LOVE. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY...
DO YOUR THING AND WHEN WE MEET AGAIN, AT LEAST ONE OF THE
DIAMONDS WILL BE COMPLETE SIMPLE.....ain't it?'*

R.I.P. Dawson 'Simple' Simon 29-05-12

Abstract

This thesis is mainly concerned with gaining critical insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, by drawing on the personal and professional lives of six physical educators. It draws upon a critical approach to qualitative research to portray experiences of physical education within a colonial and postcolonial society. The thesis adopts a critical life history approach to study the case of physical education in schools in the context of a small island state. This approach uses ‘storying’ and methods which critically reflect on these stories to interrogate the life histories of six physical educators in order to provide invaluable accounts of their experiences of physical education as students, teachers and administrators.

The new understandings that emerged from this enquiry illustrate a central concern about the contested nature of the term physical education and the quality of experiences that individuals gain from the practice of physical education teachers in schools. The empirical findings also present concerns about the influence of global perspectives on physical education in schools. In particular, emphasis is placed on the historical shifts in policy and practice occurring in education in general and physical education in particular at the school, national, regional and international levels. The research uses excerpts from a collection of personal stories deemed significant by the researcher and the teller of the story, in terms of their contribution to policy development, to show how the historical challenges that physical education faced as a subject, continue to shape current practices of physical education in schools.

The thesis presents a critical historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. The perceptions and attitudes of policy makers, parents, teachers and school administrators globally continue to challenge the legal status of the subject that it is compulsory. This account shows how this twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago has the capacity and aspiration to reconceptualise how we understand, experience and practise physical education, despite the global challenges. This case study demonstrates how a democratic process towards mass participation in physical education can provide meaningful movement experiences at the level of the school, in order to establish a culture in which lifelong physical activity engagement is encouraged and maintained within a society that favours and embraces freedom of choice and equal rights for all.

The thesis also shows evidence of a personal and academic journey, similarly understood in terms of critical incidents.

Themesa Yenole Neckles

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Preamble

The purpose of this Preamble is to orient the reader to the contents of the thesis.

This thesis, entitled '**Physical Education in Trinidad and Tobago: Dilemmas of and Opportunities for Movement across a Contested Field**', aims to gain critical insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. It does so by utilising qualitative inquiry to interrogate a journey of experience which takes critical and reflexive methods to analyse personal narratives. The thesis explores the development of physical education through a number of experiences in order to construct narratives of how physical educators experienced physical education in Trinidad and Tobago at varying junctures in their lives. It seeks to document a thorough history of the way individuals perceive physical education, and attempts to evaluate, how this perception influences their professional judgements as physical educators. This journey of experience also attempts to reconceptualise the way physical education in Trinidad and Tobago is conceived and practised now and, as an aspiration, how it might be conceived and practised in the future. I am of the firm belief that, in order to chart a way forward, one must critically reflect on and learn from the past. The thesis therefore represents such an approach and draws on a number of biographical stories, including elements of my own, which foreground the development of physical education in a small island state during the colonial era, and within a postcolonial, post-independence, democratic society.

Throughout the thesis, I refer to 'mentors' as the group of people who most explicitly contributed data to my research. I justify the use of the term in chapter four of the thesis. The information shared with me by these mentors played a significant part in the way in which the thesis is structured. Through the research, I intended to explore physical education as a vehicle for social transformation and aimed to reconceptualise this subject as a practice which can produce and sustain a way of life for our society. Through my exploration of what this practice of physical education should look like, a concept of 'physical culture' emerged. This concept represents an aspiration, which was

envisioned not only by myself but also by my mentors. I knew that I wanted physical educators to begin to rethink the way in which they conceptualise and practise physical education while I was collecting the data for this thesis, but the data from my mentors gave way to crystallizing new possibilities for this idea or concept. Sharing our lived experiences of physical education, extracting and analysing critical incidents from experiences offered through the research, provided opportunities to further explore the concept of the Cuban model of physical education and sport. This is discussed in detail as the thesis proceeds.

Structure of the thesis

In Chapter One, I explore the background and context for the work. This chapter also identifies the key research questions and overarching aim to be addressed. Chapter Two continues to develop the context for this research through a process of reflexivity, by showing how my understandings of physical education developed through my own lived experience of it. I provide insights into my motivations for wanting to engage with this research topic. I also expand upon the main argument of my thesis.

Chapter Three provides a theoretical and philosophical framework that informs the research and defines the key concepts that are applied to subsequent empirical chapters. This chapter discusses how philosophical discussions of understanding experience, postcolonial theory, ideas about physical education as an educational practise, and the nature of physical education as praxis contribute to understanding and reconceptualising the way physical education is practised.

In Chapter Four, I provide a discussion of methodology and methods used in this research. This chapter also provides details and appropriate justification of the methods used and provides a profile of the six physical educators chosen as my sample to whom I refer as mentors. I use one of my own lived experiences to justify my decision to give a detailed profile of these individuals. Methodological and ethical issues associated with

conducting research in small states as an insider researcher are also discussed. I describe my data collection strategies and the issues that emerged from the process. Finally, I consider the framework used to analyse the data and discuss how the process of analysing critical incidents was used to construct the research and build the thesis.

Chapter Five is the first empirical chapter. It includes a critical historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, as presented by the research mentors. This account takes significant events selected from the physical educators' experiences of physical education and uses them to identify and interpret a critical historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. These significant events are events that occurred simultaneously with developments in policy as critical policy incidents. This chapter is informed by the experiences of these physical educators and is additionally supported by main policy documents and reports identified through the experiences shared.

Chapter Six presents a critical discussion of the mentors' early childhood and career experiences of physical education and shows how these initial experiences influenced the professional judgements they made later on in their career. This chapter is mainly informed by the experiences shared by my mentors, but also uses literature based on the information provided by them to support their stories.

Chapter Seven provides a case study of the 'Right on Track' programme of Trinidad and Tobago's National Gas Company (NGC), to introduce an example of a participatory approach to physical education which could be usefully applied, and or more fully developed, within our nation's schools. This case study is informed by my own experiences as a coach on the programme, thus bringing experiential evidence and critical incident analysis right through to the conclusions of this piece of work. In my view, the concept of the 'Right on Track' programme is a modified version of a model for physical education and sport developed by the Cuban government during the 1970s to enable an analysis of how physical educators can reconceptualise physical education

to benefit the Trinidad and Tobago society through praxis. The key concepts described and discussed in this chapter come from the experiences of physical education shared by my mentors. These concepts include the notion of participation, physical culture and the Cuban system of physical education.

The final chapter, Chapter Eight, summarises the main argument of the thesis, that a critical approach to physical education has vital capacity to inspire and successfully transform and reproduce the society of Trinidad and Tobago by establishing physical culture through inclusive physical education in our schools. My vision is to have a practice of physical education which engages all students in well-structured, meaningful physical education lessons, so that these experiences evolve into and perpetuate physical activity as a way of life for the development of lifelong engagement in physical activity for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

During my fieldwork, auto-/biographical accounts presented by mentors allowed me to explore more deeply the concept of mass participation and physical culture in relation to Trinidad and Tobago and to gain a deeper insight into the Cuban model of physical education and sport. I have deliberately avoided including a separate chapter for reviewing the literature on this model and the concepts aligned to it, however. I felt that separating the literature on participation and the literature on physical culture from the auto-/biographical accounts would disrupt the narrative style and flow of the thesis. It was whilst mentors were sharing their stories that I began to explore the Cuban model of physical education and sport. One of my mentors revealed how he interviewed a number of young Trinidad and Tobago nationals who returned home after spending five years on academic scholarship in Cuba. These students shared their experiences of Cuban culture with him and described physical education not simply as a subject in which one engaged in physical activity, but as a way of life for Cuban society. It was at this time that I also began to engage with the term 'physical culture'. Thus, a review of the literature pertaining to this concept will be found later in the thesis.

I therefore came to use the Cuban model of physical education in this thesis to interrogate data and to explore ideas my mentors contributed on perpetuating and maintaining physical culture through mass participation in physical education. Application of the Cuban model shows how providing quality and meaningful experiences of physical education at all levels of the education system can influence the development of physical education, and I apply this idea to the context of Trinidad and Tobago. I see possibilities for achieving an aspirational agenda, and I cite one of our local programmes – the ‘Right on Track’ programme – as a ‘best fit’ in terms of how a critical approach to the practice of physical education can be both emancipatory and participatory. Chapter Seven provides evidence to support a practice of physical education that is both emancipatory and participatory and shows possibilities for applying such a local model as a way of reconceptualising the practice of physical education locally, regionally and internationally.

I am a scholar for whom this thesis cannot be complete without a discussion of experiences of faith-based practices and spirituality. My opening acknowledgement begins with the quotation ‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ I approach this research from the perspective of a black Caribbean, born-again Christian and in my view this position should not go unnoticed. I hold firmly to the principles of the Bible and live, learn and understand according to these principles. Along with the stories I therefore share in Chapter Two, I also tell a story about a critical spiritual incident that has shaped my life. I hope this will help the reader understand why I could not possibly leave out reference in the thesis to an essential part of who I am – ‘I grew up in church’ as Caribbean people would say. My mother made me pray every morning, and every night I read the Bible. I was christened in the Roman Catholic Church, made first communion, then confirmation and never missed a Sunday morning service. ‘Granny’ as she was fondly called, was an old woman that lived on our street, who made sure that every child on our street, and the next, I suppose, did not miss Sunday school or Church (see Lavia, et al., 2011). This experience however, was no match for my godmother’s preaching to me; perhaps you might call it a form of

indoctrination, but she drilled into my head that; ‘Church cannot save you, it is the relationship that you develop with God that is important. It is not about religion, but about relationship. Read your Bible, you hear me, read your Bible’ (original emphasis) (Lavia, et al., 2011, p. 118). She would also say ‘Talk to Your God!’

I view myself as not necessarily religious but as spiritual. I say this because although I attended a Bible-based church all my life before coming to the UK, when I lived in the UK between 2008 to 2010, I did not attend church in a physical building; church for me was on the internet in my flat. I would sit in front of my laptop every Sunday morning and tune in to Intouch Ministries with Dr. Charles Stanley. My godmother introduced me to Intouch Ministries on the television when I was about the age of 11. I attended denominational primary schools and, although I attended a government secondary school, we had a religious education period every Wednesday.

My early school experiences of physical education occurred alongside many spiritual experiences and, while on this PhD journey, I came to recognise more and more how significant the role of spirituality has been in my academic development. Initially I found myself struggling to express in writing the spiritual part of my life that became increasingly stronger when I began my studies in the UK in 2008. Writing about how my position as a born-again Christian woman from the Caribbean region influences my research and my writing was an issue of concern for me. I struggled in the early stages of my doctoral journey, partly because other students and academics in my department did not speak of writing about faith-based practices. Persons who openly acknowledged their faith or spoke about their religious affiliations with confidence were not common, except for the few Muslim students who would disappear from our research room to go for prayer five times a day. One of my supervisors even suggested that I have a separate journal for my spiritual journey. So my struggle to reconcile my faith with my academic journey was complicated because ‘spirituality and faith-based practices are central elements in the lives of Caribbean peoples’ (Lavia, et al., 2011, p. 113) and it seemed to me ‘out of character’ not to fully acknowledge and represent my faith in my work.

Additionally, all my life I relied heavily on my faith and my practise as a spiritually minded person to propel me into my destiny and I could not discard it at this time of academic venture. There was also something about this idea of ‘experience’ which I value on both a spiritual and academic level.

Alongside my academic journey, I longed for the opportunity to write about my beliefs and my convictions about God in my work as well as to share my experiences of trusting and obeying the principles of the Bible. I longed for a space to share how beliefs and convictions shape who I am as an individual. My reason for wanting to write about spirituality is to openly admit and acknowledge that I could not have completed this PhD on my own and in my own strength. I am not declaring this as a form of conversion for those who do not believe in God, or to be a narcissist, but I do so because I recognise the power of God working in my life and through me.

In the end, I constructed this thesis to give myself the opportunity to begin to interrogate and to problematize notions of spirituality in the academy and to openly share with the reader that I rely on my belief and convictions on a daily basis. I have interwoven a discourse of my own spirituality to illuminate these convictions because they add meaning to the research issues (as a critical component of context) and add meaning to interpretation of data contributed by mentors from that same background.

Since I do, then, combine an academic journey with exploration of personal narrative, the final chapter of this thesis takes the reader on a reflexive journey, which brings together all elements of this PhD journey. I seek to discuss, from a theoretical and methodological perspective, what the thesis was ultimately able to achieve. I offer a discussion of the ethical dimensions of my journey and, in particular, return to the question of why I referred to interviewees as mentors. I discuss how teachers can benefit from beginning to rethink the way in which they practise physical education in schools in Trinidad and Tobago so that it becomes more meaningful and inspires students, as well as the wider society over time, to perpetuate and maintain physical

culture. The final part of this thesis will show how unexpectedly I have come to make sense of the academic and spiritual dimensions of my life in the wake of losing a loved one just before the end of this doctoral journey. This discussion will show how experience as well as relationship often shapes and defines who we are and sometimes who we become.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Stories from the Field

This research focuses on the development and practise of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. From my own professional observations, I see that physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago have struggled, and continue to struggle, with varying views of and misconceptions about physical education. This struggle significantly affects the way in which physical education as a school subject is conceptualised and ultimately practised. More often than not, I observed that a direct result of this struggle corrupts students' early primary school, as well as some of their secondary school, experiences of physical education so that they eventually believe the subject is exclusively concerned with competitive élite sport and athletes. The way in which students perceive physical education therefore, is a cause for great concern. I believe that it is necessary to gain critical insights into the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago in order to understand why varying views of, and misconceptions about, physical education continues today. I begin by using an auto-/ethnographic account of my experiences to look at my own practise as a physical educator and provide me with a focal point for beginning this research and for beginning to construct knowledge about the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to shed some light on the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago by drawing on my early career experiences of physical education as a teacher at all levels of the education system. This serves to provide a context for my research by giving a brief overview of Trinidad and Tobago and introducing the issues which I feel are pertinent to addressing the concerns of this research. I engage in a process of reflecting on my experiences of physical education as a teacher in order to make sense of the way in which physical education is understood and practised. I introduce the perspectives shaped from my life experiences and include reference to elements of my professional teacher training.

1.2. Education in Trinidad and Tobago: A Brief Overview

Trinidad and Tobago is one of the English-speaking countries and small independent twin-island states situated in the southernmost end of the Caribbean region. It is strategically located at the crossroads of North, Central and South America, located in the southern part of the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is the geographical location to which I belong, as well as the space from which I write. Trinidad and Tobago is located within a contested space, a space that has often been ‘unrecognized, often evident in practise, or often unreflected ... The Caribbean ... [a region], that could not speak, that had no official accounts of its own transportation, no official historians’ it is a place that is still being described in this way (Hall, 2001, p. 29). Trinidad and Tobago, referred to as a twin-island Republic, is one nation comprising two islands. The population of Trinidad and Tobago, according to the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago (CSO), is an estimated 1.4 million with 50,000 living in Tobago (Central Statistical Office, 2010). The population of Trinidad and Tobago is cosmopolitan. It is a society made up of people of African, Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, European and Native American descents.

The education system in Trinidad and Tobago mirrors the British education system (Campbell, 1997). Universal public primary and secondary education is free, but there are a few fee-paying schools. Students enter primary school at the age of three and spend seven years in the system. At the end of this period, students sit the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination to determine the secondary school they will attend. The composition of secondary schools includes five- and seven-year government colleges and denominational high schools and convents. Students spend a minimum of five years at secondary school. At the end of their third year, students sit Level 1 NCSE (National Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations (implemented in 2006) in the eight core subject areas offered. Students write the NCSE Level 2 examinations at the end of their fifth year (Form 5). These examinations were piloted at selected schools in 2007 and they are now administered by the National Examinations Council. At the

end of this fifth year, students also sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations in subjects that they selected to study at the end of their third year (Form 3). Students who are successful at the CSEC examinations have the option of continuing high school for a further two years to prepare for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). The Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) holds and administers both the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate Examination and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination. This council, established in 1972, conducts examinations in 16 English-speaking Commonwealth countries. These examinations replaced the General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'O' Levels Examinations and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'A' Levels that the British offered and are equivalent to these.

Secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago are classified as government schools, government-assisted denominational schools and private schools. Government secondary schools are fully funded by the government and students can attend without a fee being charged. Government-assisted denominational secondary schools receive some funding from the government but they are controlled by denominational boards. These schools follow the national curriculum but also teach values according to their religious affiliation. Students attend free of charge. Private primary and secondary schools receive little funding from the government and students pay to attend. Some of these schools offer education following their own curriculum, a British, US or Canadian model. The Ministry of Education has little authority over their private schools' curriculum.

1.3. Identifying the Issue

During my practise of sixteen years as a physical education teacher in Trinidad and Tobago, I have come to realise that the term 'physical education', as well as the way in which it is practised, is more 'contested' than I previously imagined. It is 'contested' in the sense that researchers and physical educators alike continue to engage in a constant

struggle to explicitly define the term physical education, even on a global scale. Physical education is a term that is fluid, unstable, constantly shifting, used interchangeably with the term ‘sport’, and, from my perspective as an educator and researcher, physical education is dangerously misrepresented and practised in Trinidad and Tobago. My experiences of teaching across the various levels of the education system of Trinidad and Tobago during a twelve-year period caused me to begin to problematise what I have come to know and understand physical education to mean. This affects how I define it, my philosophical views on it, and how all these factors influence the decisions I make regarding what and how I teach. I realize that I am not alone in this dilemma as physical educationists globally continue to grapple with ambiguities in terminology and, even though they ‘explicitly challenge any potential discrepancies in definitions between North America, Australia and European physical educationalists’, the extent to which this is occurring successfully remains debatable (Waring, 2004, p. 326). As I reflect on the process of becoming a physical education teacher, and of my early practise as a physical educator, reading around this topic has made me even more interested in the practice of physical education.

1.4. The Context: Physical Education in Trinidad and Tobago

The commencement of my physical education career was not a deliberate act but occurred rather unexpectedly as a turn in the career of a newly appointed, untrained primary school teacher at a semi-specialist primary school in Trinidad. When asked to be *in charge* of planning a programme of work in physical education for the infant department of a prestigious boys’ Catholic school to which I was appointed, I had the privilege of making value judgements about what knowledge was important for my students to learn and why I felt such knowledge to be important. Initial enquiries about a curriculum document suggested and later proved that there was no prescribed curriculum available. Accepting this responsibility meant that I was about to develop a

programme of work by making critical decisions based on judgements about my previous knowledge and skills acquired as an athlete, and my experiences of physical education as a student. These experiences were a mixture of good and not so good.

I did have some assistance from a very senior member of staff who had taught at the school for a number of years. I made observations of this teacher's practise and saw him on many occasions taking different groups of boys to football, cricket, and track and field competitions, as he was not a classroom teacher. These competitions operate on a seasonal basis. He later explained that he too was an athlete when he was a youngster and as a young teacher attended basic workshops on sports and physical education conducted by the Ministry of Education from time to time. He admitted that he had received no professional training to become a physical education teacher. Most in the teaching fraternity knew him as the 'Games' or 'Sports Master' at the school. He would take groups of lower- and upper-school students to the savannah, two or three blocks away from the school, to release some of their energy and to train them in a particular sport, especially on a Friday. With the appropriate equipment in hand, the average ability students were sent to designated areas to play team games, mostly football and cricket, on their own. The more talented students engaged in highly structured activities, planned by this teacher, as they practised their skills in preparation for representing the school at various sporting competitions. When time permitted, and before being reassigned to his role as classroom teacher, he took the younger boys outside to play games, or to do fun activities from time to time. He would engage them mainly in gross movement and motor skill activities. The boys of the infant department used the small courtyard located next to their classrooms for supervised 'play', once their classroom teachers were willing to take them outdoors. What the school needed, given the fact that physical education was and still is a timetabled core subject, according to the vice principal, was a more structured programme of work in which the entire school population could benefit from participating in physical education classes at least once a week.

Physical education is one of the compulsory general education subjects on the national primary schools' curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago. While a large number of teachers during their teacher training at teachers' college receive basic training in how to plan and teach fundamental motor skill lessons and modified games, many of them rarely teach these or they perpetuate the idea of competitive sport. Some teachers often avoid teaching physical education because they themselves had poor experiences or disliked the subject when they were students, while others who may have experienced a 'games-oriented programme believe they hold a 'subjective warrant' to teach P.E. and perpetuate a programme of competitive sports' (Morgan & Hansen, 2008, p. 375). This has resulted in many students leaving primary school with few worthwhile experiences in physical education. Few primary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago offer a semi-specialist system where a subject specialist teacher teaches subjects such as art and craft, music and physical education. Even within this type of system, from my experience, I can place students' experiences of physical education on a continuum, ranging from positive to negative, for a number of reasons. Reasons for this include teachers' value orientations, the culture of the school, the teacher's past physical education experiences and the perceived relevance of the subject by teachers and the school.

Reflecting on this experience made me realize that, whether curriculum documents are available or not, there is some autonomy in practitioners being able to decide what, when, how and whom to teach. Additionally, although curriculum documents dictate the expected learning outcomes as outlined by the Ministry of Education, school administrators, teachers' preferences, and traditional practices often take precedence (Schwille & Dembélé, 2007). From general observations, attending workshops and meetings with colleagues, I have also come to realize that, as specialists in the field (physical educators), we tend to engage students mainly in seasonal sporting activities (football, cricket, netball, track and field) in the name of physical education. Some of us express with some conviction that we teach our subject but, in reality, we have little or no time to allow all students at our schools to experience physical education in a more

meaningful way – a way that encourages and perpetuates future physical activity engagement. From my experience, as physical educators we seem to be too busy attending workshops, coaching school teams and district teams for competition, officiating in sports meetings or attending meetings to plan for and organize these competitions. In non-specialist primary schools, the level of classroom teachers' commitment to the teaching of physical education is also relatively low.

This I discovered after six years of being a teacher, as I began introducing physical education to first form students (Year 7s) over time at three different secondary schools in Trinidad, having transferred to the secondary school system in 2001. Most of the students entering secondary school from varying non-specialist primary schools acknowledged that, throughout their primary school years, their class teachers seldom, if at all, conducted structured physical education lessons with them. Those who had an opportunity to engage in lessons indicated that they were restricted from doing so when they entered the penultimate year of their primary school experience, prior to their writing the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination. This situation stems from the fact that, as is the case with most societies, Trinidad and Tobago's education system is based on principles of meritocracy, and thus student preparation for national examinations often takes precedence over play and physical education programmes, resulting in many students leaving primary school having experienced significantly low levels of physical activity engagement. This is another of my concerns as early inadequate or bad experiences of physical education set a precedent for non-participation in the future. These kinds of early experiences, as previously suggested, often taint students' perceptions of physical education and do not necessarily inspire them enough to continue engaging in physical education when they enter the secondary school. They also tend to discourage them from adopting a position of lifelong physical activity engagement when they enter into adulthood.

In 1998, more than two years after commencing my teaching career, I attended one of our teachers' colleges on a full-time basis and received professional teacher training. I

selected physical education as my elective and learned how to teach physical education. This professional training lasted two years and, though somewhat rewarding, it left me disappointed, with a void, and again concerned. Although I learned extensively about, and did examinations on, a world history of physical education, there was little information about Trinidad and Tobago's own historical journey, and no official documentation. This left me wondering 'how can we progress as a society and inform policies and practises, if there is no history to evaluate?'

My concerns about physical education increased further when our training lectures focused on issues relating to exploring national forces that influence the practice of physical education and what we, as student teachers, thought should constitute a physical education programme in our nation's schools, given the increasing global shifts in policy and practise. These issues and debates around growing pedagogical discourses and practices in physical education teaching, are taking place among physical educators and researchers globally (Tinning, 2010; Salter, 1999; Siedentop, 1998; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Kirk, 1992; Tinning, 1991; Tinning, 1987).

In 2000, I graduated as a newly qualified and trained generalist primary school teacher and, having done physical education as my elective, I was recognized as a specialist in this subject area. I spent one year practising as a physical education specialist at one of our prestigious semi-specialist primary schools and then later transferred to the secondary school level in 2001. For teachers trained as specialists in physical education at teachers' college, to transfer to a secondary school after a period of one year is a usual occurrence within our education system.

At the secondary level, with a new draft curriculum document in hand, a wider knowledge base, a wider range of experiences, and a greater level of enthusiasm, I faced a different set of challenges and issues as I engaged with the practice of physical education at this post-primary level. These new challenges were related to my practise and decisions about what I felt were important for students to learn from what I

considered an overloaded curriculum. The recently appointed principal of this particular school (a girls' college) was interested in sports, forming teams and getting students to compete in various national secondary school competitions, so that the school's recognition and reputation in sports could be on par with other prestigious secondary schools throughout the country. I thus met again the deeply entrenched view that sport, predominantly team sport, and physical education are one and the same (Evans & Penney, 1995), a view held by many administrators and physical education teachers in Trinidad and Tobago.

The new principal I was appointed to work with had a vision for developing a kind of physical education programme that would sustain full participation of all students on one hand but, on the other, would be aimed at increasing student participation at our national secondary school competitions in various sporting disciplines. Within the first three months of the new academic year at that school, I was given the task of encouraging students (who had not done physical education in the previous academic year) to participate in physical education lessons by using a number of activities. These activities would be done to improve their fundamental motor skills, (running, jumping, throwing, catching), while simultaneously identifying talent in order to fulfil the principal's aspiration. Because a few of the students were already athletes competing at a national level, while others were actively involved in club sport outside the school, talent-spotting for the purposes of team formation was less stressful and distracting for me than it might otherwise have been. I was not too pleased that competition and performance began to take precedence at the school, however, but colluding with the business of elite sport represented for me a means by which to widen participation in physical education. My desire was to ensure the participation in and enjoyment of physical education by all students, even though the pressures I faced were to recycle elite engagement with the discipline.

This experience further confirmed how much the term 'sport' was, and still is, used interchangeably with physical education globally (Bailey, 2005) and in Trinidad and

Tobago. Although each culture invests its own interpretation of 'sport', the same interpretation is attributed to the term on a global level. Historically, physical education has had its 'ideal and material interests rooted in sport and games... to the point where a way of doing things may well become *the way*' (Lawson, 1988, p. 271). As a result, perspectives on physical education have remained highly contested internationally as policy developers, researchers and physical educationalists alike continue to struggle to define this seemingly problematic term, resulting in its nature, purpose and practise being fraught (Green, 2008). The term physical education is often 'defined by what is said, done and written in its name, as are all other school subjects' (Kirk, 2010, p. 1) and is dependent on the purpose which it serves as a school subject (Penney, et al., 2005; Siedentop, 1998; Talbot, 1998; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Crum, 1992; Crum, 1986). I have observed how school administrators who perpetuate particular interests in winning school titles influence how physical education is practised. A physical educator's ability to justify physical education's position and distinctive place within the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as globally, becomes difficult because the term is socially constructed and the perception remains that 'physical education and sport are inextricably linked' (Stothart, 1992, p. 8).

Although the principal agreed all students needed to be actively involved in physical education lessons, and to develop healthy lifestyle attitudes through participation, this individual unconsciously leaned strongly towards arguments put forward by theorists in favour of competitive sport and performance pedagogies (Tinning, 2010; Dodds, 2006; Tinning, 1992), and insisted that I concentrate on building teams for sporting competition. I was weary of seeing too many of my colleagues being challenged by their principals and compromising their philosophical positions by resorting to conducting physical education classes where lessons resembled a competition 'sport class' with the majority of time given to 'game-playing situations' (Tinning, 2010, p. 28). My greatest challenge, therefore, was to satisfy the principal's insistence on the development of sporting teams for competition without jeopardising my own inclusionary vision of fostering 100 per cent participation for the student population. I

had to convince my principal to have a competitive sports programme which was separate and apart from the physical education classes with which I would engage all students. I hired sports coaches to train and prepare élite students to represent the school at various competitions and to attend meetings on behalf of the school during regular school hours. I also had to convince the principal that we should solicit the involvement of parents as well as the sports coaches, to assist in supporting their children when needed. Getting the principal to agree to this was no easy task, but we reached an agreement which allowed for the efficient running of a well-structured physical education programme alongside a specialist sports programme for team and individual sports.

These experiences go towards showing that students' early knowledge and experiences of primary physical education and the perceptions and attitudes of parents and administrators, as well as the pedagogical practise of teachers, influence how students perceive the subject even before they move to secondary school. Understandings of physical education, and its practise, have become more skewed as a result of the overall presence of 'a privileging of performance discourses' which place more emphasis on success in sport (Tinning, 2010, p. 71). What physical education lessons look like to students within our context range from structured classes led by a qualified teacher to ad hoc unstructured casually supervised activities. In 2007 I conducted a study of students' perceptions of physical education at a particular secondary school in Trinidad (Neckles, 2007). The findings of the study revealed that students' perceptions of physical education varied based on previous experiences. Students described physical education as learning sports and team games; training for competition; a period for doing work for other subject areas; taking a break from regular school work; playing football or cricket; activities planned only for lower secondary and primary school students; and doing a sporting activity that the subject teacher was good at (Neckles, 2007, pp. 33-43). These understandings extended to administrators and other subject teachers who believed the role and function of physical education to be to produce teams that would represent the school successfully in school sport competitions. What I have observed and experienced

greatly concerns me, because it is my belief that what I describe above shows that physical education is failing to reach its potential as a subject which can impact effectively on the lives of all students and not only on those who participate and experience sport and games in the name of physical education.

Six years later, in 2006, having gone through the early career experiences described, my views and understanding of physical education was more dynamic, problematic, ambiguous, and contested. I was given the opportunity to apply for, and later accepted, the position of lecturer of physical education at the teachers' college which I attended, but which has, since 2006, been established as the primary, and to a lesser extent, secondary teacher education arm of our local university. My interaction in the post with pre-service as well as in-service teacher trainees revealed that the majority of them did not have pleasant school experiences of physical education. Their early school experiences of physical education are consistent with some of my observations and experiences drawn from primary and secondary school settings. Their experiences were also consistent with the results of a small-scale research project that I conducted in 2007 on students' perceptions of physical education. These trainee teachers' early school experiences of physical education ranged across the continuum of provision, as play, playing games, and sport and competition. Physical education was also perceived as undesirable because it did not cater for the less able; élitist or for professionals; a waste of time; and of no value to one's overall education. In addition to these shared experiences, the trainee teachers noted there was a drastic reduction in the curriculum time allocated for them to receive basic instruction in the teaching of physical education. This move further confirmed in the minds of teacher trainees the view that physical education was not important.

This is another concern of mine because, as I mentioned previously, physical education is a compulsory, examinable general education subject at the primary and secondary school. Many discussions were held on effective ways of teaching these students how to teach physical education lessons – about providing examples of pedagogical practices

that foster participation not competition, using pedagogies and practices that are more culturally relevant and appropriately defining such the complex term physical education, without much resolve.

My concern for the practice of physical education was and has been further heightened as students interested in becoming specialist physical education teachers at the secondary school are increasingly redirected to pursue their courses at our local university's academy of sports and leisure studies. This arm of the university offers certificate and bachelor degrees in sport studies and an executive master's degree in sports management. This reification of sport, to my mind, has increased the contested nature of physical education, threatens its value, and continues the practise of advancing experiences described as problematic by these same teacher trainees. Educators are directing trainees interested in physical education to a faculty that has built upon educational principles underpinning sport-science and sports management, with a focus on sport and performance pedagogies. This faculty is in the business of training trainees to 'coach' and not necessarily 'teach', to focus on 'performance' and not necessarily 'participation', to foster 'winning and competition' at the expense of 'enjoyment and fun'. This, to my mind, again contributes to the ongoing complexities surrounding the nature and perceived value of physical education versus competitive sport for us in Trinidad and Tobago. This process is not isolated to Trinidad and Tobago as physical education departments across universities worldwide offer more degrees focusing on sports science, exercise science, human movement and sport psychology, and youth sport development (Holt, 2008; Wuest & Bucher, 2002; Corbin, 1993), and fewer on physical education.

This overall complexity concerning physical education in schools, and wider cultural trends relating to competitive sport, is certainly not restricted to Trinidad and Tobago. In many countries around the world, policy and practise shifts have taken place regarding the way in which physical education is defined, conceptualised and perceived, and much of it has been documented (Hardman, 2008; Guedes, 2007; Wuest & Bucher,

2002; Crum, 1992; Kirk, 1992). Throughout the history of physical education, social, political, and cultural influences demanded shifts in policy and practise, and in name. This complexity confirms and demonstrates on a global scale physical education's potential to contribute to realising multiple political and economic agendas and that 'prospective curriculum change or development in national government settings will reflect multiple and diverse interests in and for physical education' (Penney, 2006, p. 569).

What also remained quite clear and unchanged is that, despite these political and economic agendas and name changes, physical education's essential aim and purpose remain the same. This aim and purpose being to ensure physical education, done through the medium of participation in physical activities and skills (Ross, 2001), provides opportunities for enjoyment, achievement and wide-ranging learning. Also, that as a subject, it contributes to students' acquiring knowledge, understanding and foundation skills to enable them to appreciate the benefits and importance of lifetime enjoyment of physical activity from regular participation. (Pangrazi & Beighle, 2012; Williams & Cliffe, 2011; Guedes, 2007; Nichols, 1994). There continues to be contradictory pressures between policy and practise. While the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago remains focussed on competitive sport, the educational philosophy underpinning the 1988 primary schools' physical education and dance curriculum, the secondary schools' 2008 Forms 1–3 (11–15 years) and the 2009 Forms 4–5 (15–18 years) health and physical education curriculum (HPEC) advocates a holistic, participatory approach to education (Ministry of Education, 1988; Ministry of Education, 1993). These policy documents highlight understandings of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), adopted in the 1978 international charter of physical education and sport, but the principles outlined in these documents have not created shifts in the practice of physical education.

The international charter is explicit in its pronouncements of three of its eleven fundamental statements about physical education. These include that the practice of

physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all; that physical education and sport is an essential element of lifelong education in the overall education system; and that physical education and sport programmes must meet individual and social needs (UNESCO, 1979). In spite of these declarations, the levels of students' regular participation in physical education continue to decrease throughout our primary and secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. The practise of teachers remain a fundamental issue that needs addressing, as physical education remains in a tenuous place within the education sector and remains under threat in all regions around the world (Hardman, 2008; Hardman & Marshall, 2000).

In this thesis, I contend that, although physical education is enshrined as a basic human right within the international charter of physical education and sport, this enactment has not guaranteed opportunities for school-wide participation in physical education. This charter has not increased physical activity levels amongst students of school age in Trinidad and Tobago. It has not encouraged lifelong physical activity engagement and, as a legal document, has not necessarily resolved heated debates about the ambiguity of the term physical education in relation to competitive sport. This issue of denying students the right to participate in structured physical education classes is not isolated to Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that in many countries, whether 'developed' and 'developing,' less than one third of school students are involved in enough physical activity to benefit their present and future health (World Health Organisation, 2003). The report also noted that there is an alarming trend worldwide of decreasing levels of physical activity and physical education programmes. Evans and Davies (1988) confirm my argument that physical education, without doubt, is a site of struggle in which definitions about what counts as worthwhile knowledge in physical education, both for the individual and society, remains unsettled and continues to compete for a place in the world. 'These values, assumptions, and definitions held by individuals both within the profession and outside it, influence, guide, facilitate and constrain the work of teachers and shape their pupils' identities and practices' (Evans & Davies, 1988, p. 2).

At this point in the thesis, I am arguing that, within my context as well as internationally, physical education is a political activity governed by political statements and practised politically by practitioners who have conflicting views, which shape what practitioners accept to deliver according to culturally embedded practices. The current social climate and context within any given society influences curriculum construction and developments, so that issues such as a rise in crime and anti-social behaviour, increased incidences of obesity and other life-style diseases, and Britain's 2012 Olympic Games hosting success, to name but a few, all have bearing on and tend to shape political thinking. When interests such as these draw media attention and gain popularity, 'inevitably, but also *quite deliberately*, political attention will be directed towards particular interests in line with current [these] political and economic priorities' (Penney, 2006, p. 659). Arguably, physical education teachers are critical agents of the state for processes of social transformation, and reproduction of social values. Our practise in Trinidad and Tobago however, in many ways, does not represent the kind of teaching which fosters the promotion of positive transformative values. In Trinidad and Tobago, teachers of physical education are poised to take a leading role in contributing to the goals of our nation in an era where the vision is to develop quality students and ultimately quality citizens through a holistic approach to education (Ministry of Education, 2002). Though we are positioned to take this process forward, our practise continues to be fraught with a contestation of evolving ideas about what does, and should, constitute physical education, including controversy and contention over its role and status, societal visions, political agendas and positions.

All of these issues of physical education are not only critical to Trinidad and Tobago as the focus of this thesis, but these issues continue to be debated in many countries worldwide (Hardman, 2008; Estes, 2003; Ross, 2001; Hardman & Marshall, 2000; Whitson & Macintosh, 1990; Evans & Davies, 1988; Le Maistre, 1945). In addition, the relationship of physical education to public health and well-being, physical activity, lifestyle, and sport, as well as the varying local and global conceptions among educators and policy makers of what physical education should achieve in schools, are issues

(World Health Organisation, 2003; Salter, 1999; Siedentop, 1998; Crum, 1992; Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) which deeply concern me.

In Trinidad and Tobago, physical education continues to be a negative and destructive experience for many students, because of some of the practices teachers carry out in the name of physical education (Gore, 1990, p. 104). These practices, which are representative of social attitudes, perceptions, and experiences, reflect our history. It is my intention therefore, to develop a critical history of physical education as I seek to develop deeper understandings of the pendulum swings, shifts in policy and practise, as well as the forces responsible for decisions made throughout the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, which are shaping policy, practise and experience today. Doing so will give me the opportunity to challenge some taken-for-granted perspectives in order that I may propose or build a new critical pedagogy for physical education with a focus on mass participation, using physical education to develop physical culture.

1.5. Outline of the Research

1.5.1. Purpose of the Research

In light of the issues identified regarding physical education, I decided to illuminate my understanding further through researching significant incidents that occurred in the lives of six physical educators and which influenced the historical development of policy and practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. My enquiry was to be concerned with the experiences of physical education for six mentors and how these experiences influenced professional judgements made during their career. I wanted the research to be concerned with teachers' reconceptualisation of their practice of physical education by implementing a critical approach. My own aspirations were to contribute towards evolution of an approach that provides more meaningful experiences in physical education than a narrow focus on competitive sport allows, and influence the

development of physical culture as part of Trinidad and Tobago's aspirational agenda.

1.5.2. Aim of the Research

The main aim of this thesis therefore is to gain critical insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. Drawing on the personal and professional lives of six physical educators, this thesis proposes the argument that there is merit in encouraging teachers to reflect critically upon their practice in order to facilitate reconceptualising the way physical education is understood and practised in the future. In particular, critical reflection will open up fresh possibilities for interrogating how we might use this subject to potentially transform society for the better. I argue that we might make this transformation possible by providing all children of school age with mandatory high quality and well-structured physical education classes. The thesis will examine how physical education as a vehicle of social transformation has the potential to develop the notion of 'physical culture' as a way of life that promotes lifelong physical activity engagement through students' mass participation in physical education at primary and secondary school. I evolved the following key research questions to further the stated aim:

1.5.3. Key Research Questions

1. How have the school and early career experiences of a small group of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago influenced their professional judgments as educators and administrators?
2. What can the analysis of the critical policy incidents of six physical educators tell us about the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago?
3. Can better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago be promoted through the development of a critical approach to practice? If so, how can such an aspirational agenda be achieved?

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced my topic and provided the context for, and significance of, the research. I have presented my main arguments relating to my own experiences and practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. The chapter has also provided an outline of the research, focusing on its purpose, the emergence of the research questions and the boundaries of the research.

In the following chapter, I will focus on presenting a professional standpoint, by critically engaging with my own experiences of physical education and the crucial ways in which they have shaped my enquiry. I aim to show how my experiences of physical education were shaped and how they ultimately informed my practise.

CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL BECOMES POLITICAL: DEVELOPING A REFLEXIVE STANDPOINT

2.1. Introduction

Chapter One gave an insight into how some of my early experiences as a physical educator, as well as how some of my initial teacher training in Trinidad and Tobago, were instrumental in the development of my career. Largely, these experiences also influenced the value judgements I made during my practise. As the thesis progresses, I will argue that encouragement for teachers to actively reflect critically and rethink the practice of physical education has the potential to benefit the society of Trinidad and Tobago through opening up wider appreciation of the benefits of mass participation and education through the physical. This argument was deeply rooted in my own lived experiences as a child and practitioner. I understood these experiences more as I shared them with my supervisors during the course of this study.

This chapter represents the development and interrogation of my understandings of physical education through my own experiences. It simultaneously develops a rationale for the role that personal experiences play in the development of this thesis and gives relevance to my theoretical chapter by showing the relevance of Dewey's work on experience to my research. I use stories as a way of drawing attention to the value of experiences and to argue that my personal history of physical education can be considered as reliable sources of knowledge, having been acquired through access to my real, subjective and socially constructed lived experience. I use storying to represent my reality, my own way of knowing, in order that by acknowledging the lens through which I gaze upon the experiences of others, I may gain further insight into the practice of physical education and into the importance of adopting a more critical approach to teaching physical education. I agree with Salman Rushdie (1991) who says that, 'those who do not have power of the story that dominates their lives – power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change – truly are

powerless because they cannot think new thoughts' (p. 432). I take Rushdie's idea to justify discussion on how specific incidents in my personal life history are central to this thesis, contributing to the development of research questions and the critical and reflexive approach adopted for my thesis.

In order to achieve the objectives of this chapter, I have produced a reflexive narrative showing how certain critical incidences have influenced my work. This includes showing how my relationship with my supervisors was established and maintained, as they allowed me opportunities to think through manifest issues of my personal history, as well as physical education experiences, that eventually flourished into critical insights needed to develop my research. In doing so, I foreground the notion of critical incidents (Tripp, 1993), as I take the reader on a reflexive journey that seeks not only to identify such incidents, but also to clarify and justify my position for adopting a critical approach throughout my thesis. In this chapter, I also begin to utilise a framework for analysis by analysing my own personal data. In particular, I found that Tripp's (1993) concept of critical incident analysis allowed me to construct knowledge from my own experiences, including experiences of physical education, and to draw conclusions from those experiences which later enabled me to make an analysis of the experiences of other key commentators.

2.2. Evolving Confidence for a Reflexive Professional

Standpoint

When I began to receive doctoral supervision as a new PhD student, I did so in the conventional manner by arranging office-based, tutorial-styled discussions with my supervisor. I found this formal experience hard, though quite useful, and feelings of anxiety in sessions did not easily evaporate. As my relationship with my supervisor developed, my supervisor, perhaps noticing my discomfort, proposed that we engage in supervision discussions through the mode of physical activity and we began to meet in

outdoor settings for walks and other exercises. After a while, my second supervisor joined us in these out-of-office supervision activities and so began a series of regular Saturday supervision walks.

Each Saturday, I looked forward to an adventure with the 'Walkings', as the group was called, since physical activity was slowly becoming a way of life for my research support group. I was excited about this. Saturdays also gave me the opportunity to build a relationship with my supervisors. The 'Walkings', comprising my two supervisors and, on occasion, a couple of other colleagues, would plan moderately intense nature walks for a duration of as little as two, to as long as five, hours at a time. At last, lifelong physical activity engagement and the development of a physical culture – a vision entrenched within my evolving research – was set in motion. Whether it was the precisely mapped out Sheffield Round Walk, or one invented out of curiosity using Google maps to explore other parts of Sheffield, the 'Steel City', I looked forward to them. I would, however, also be anxious and sometimes a bit fearful of the conversations and discussions that became an important part of the Saturday journey. The issues around my research progress, process and the use of my learning journal preoccupied my thoughts but my thoughts were fledgling, uncertain and far from confidently formed. Questions would at times make any student a bit uneasy, especially in the early stages of supervision when one has not quite worked out one's assumptions about oneself and how one views the world. 'What are your ontological and epistemological assumptions?' *'That there are multiple realities which are socially constructed?'* 'What is your contribution to knowledge?' *'My experience, of course?'* 'What is your position on this issue?' *'Physical education is an integral part of education and everyone should do it?'* *'Maybe today I will initiate a discussion of my own before the questions begin to cascade,'* I would think. *'I will then be able to express my views about physical education in a general way and tell some personal stories without the probing questions.'* Nevertheless, even in that scenario, more questions would be fielded in my direction.

One thing that I could not always anticipate, like the type of questions fielded to me, was the weather. For, no matter the route taken on a given Saturday, whether an uphill trek along a muddy trail, walking on stones across a stream in the countryside, or an urban walk, the weather in Sheffield is often ‘ambiguous’, a term coined by my second supervisor to describe most Saturdays. The ambiguity of the weather often reminded me that qualitative research involves an uncertain and messy process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and that my research topic might be the same. The group often knew how to dress based on the weather forecast, but decided that we should prepare for whatever the clouds would send and be ‘properly fibred’. These were notions I began to adapt to my research development and which began to shape evolving confidence in my own reflexive professional standpoint. Research, like physical activity, was adventurous and you could not be sure where it would take you. You begin with your ideas, a blueprint and a destination, but somewhere during the process, things do not go according to your plan and suddenly take a turn. There were times during our walks when we did not know exactly where we would end up, but we had a hunch. Sometimes we would get to a split along the path and, with no indication on our map, we would be required to make decisions about which route to take. On some occasions we had to take risks and took turnings we felt were wrong, feeling unsure and a little lost, but relieved some time later to recognize that the path taken, though longer or shorter, eventually led us to the trail shown on the map. This describes exactly how my research journey was. As we walked our way towards achieving a fit and healthy lifestyle, the only constant thing to occur on a Saturday for me was the experience of mental anxiety. I was not used to being challenged mentally in public, let alone consciously evaluating and responding critically to ‘academics’, as I referred to my learned supervisors and other peers.

2.3. Reflecting on Issues of Power and Learning

Two years later, I shared my story about the Saturday walks with a friend of mine, herself an educationalist, telling her all about how I achieved and experienced deeper learning as part of the ‘Walkings’ expedition. She was struck by the way in which the walks turned out to be a successful pedagogical tool, but she wondered about the power dynamics that this sort of supervisory relationship must have created for me. My friend wondered whether there might be a few underlying issues around power and learning for a doctoral student. Her curiosity sparked further reflection on my part and I began to reflect more deeply on this issue of power. Who had power in this process and how was this power being used? I saw myself as the student and my supervisors as my teachers, as the experts in the academy. My previous experience of pursuing postgraduate work in the Caribbean suggests that academics are gatekeepers who bring their position of authority to bear on their supervision. I engaged with many academics while there who professed to adopt a facilitative approach to learning but who instead brought to their supervision ‘their positions in the hierarchies that order the world, including those based on race, gender, class,’ (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, p. 389). Likewise, with my PhD, my thoughts were that as a mature student, I would not be regarded as equal and therefore I did not expect my ideas would generate enough interest to have constructive dialogue with my supervisors. I have been told that acquiring a PhD gives individuals the currency to speak; it gives you a proper voice. Therefore, until earning the PhD, I assumed that I would simply follow instructions in order to produce a thesis which would give me authority in the academy.

While reflecting on the Saturday walks, I discovered that, unlike situations where obvious tensions might exist between supervisors and students (Lee, 2008), the walks did not disarm me. Although I have described the initial anxieties that the walks created for me, the overall experience was quite rewarding and empowering. In hindsight, I realised that my supervisors, particularly my second one, was quite astute in his exploration of the research ideas that circled around in my head like a plane waiting for

clearance from the ground crew to land. I think he realised that my ideas were going through a period of incubation for quite a long time, but needed the appropriate stimulus in order to become fully exposed and conceptualised. The relationship that I established with both my supervisors developed over a period, but began almost a year before our walks did. By relationship, I mean the ‘situations created where [supervisor] and [student] can actively reflect upon the issues and material before them’ (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 5). As the Saturday walks progressed, the conditions for ‘critical reflective learning’ to take place were created and my supervisors worked along with me to ‘jointly construct meaning and knowledge with the ideas’ I shared (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 5). In my reflection, I considered this a pedagogical strategy used by my second supervisor to expose that which was incubating in my mind and further stimulate these ideas through reflective dialogue. Over time, these walking conversations gradually built my confidence and got me to be more open to sharing my ideas about my research and my life experiences within a non-threatening environment.

The environment was non-threatening for me because I enjoy participating in outdoor activities such as hiking on the nature trails. Additionally, as a P.E. teacher, I value physical activity engagement and I love participating in various forms of physical activity. I am an advocate for providing children with positive physical education experiences from an early age, so that physical activity engagement would become a lifelong practise in their lives when they step into adulthood. As such, I generally like encouraging everyone I meet to get involved in some form of physical activity. I honestly felt we could all benefit from the outdoor walk/exercise. I always shared the benefits of engaging in physical activity with my supervisors and other friends who occasionally joined us. More importantly, however, my second supervisor never let me forget the main task, which was successfully completing my PhD. He provided me with the opportunity to engage more deeply with my work and to develop a more critical perspective regarding the issues and debates around physical education. It was through these experiences, as well as others, that my process of learning and my thesis evolved. I began to adapt to ‘new ways of knowing, new ways of understanding, interpreting and

organising knowledge' (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158). Both my supervisors used the outdoor environment/space to help me adapt to becoming an academic. After all, this is the expectation of higher education institutions, namely that supervisors orientate students to learning and interpreting skills of the academy so that they can conceptualise the distinction between 'deep', 'surface' and 'strategic' approaches to learning (Marton & Booth, 1997).

My process of learning was therefore constantly challenged yet supported by my supervisors in the context of shared physical activity (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004). I would agree with Lea & Street (1998) that a supervisor's task is 'to induct [a student] into a new 'culture', that of the academy' (p. 159). Our Saturday walks helped this induction process as my approaches to learning, including confidence for critical reflection, evolved simultaneously as my thesis progressed. My process of learning evolved initially from organising my research to attain a PhD and reproducing information conforming to the rigour of scholarship at the highest level, to transforming my thinking through my previous knowledge and experience in order to understand ideas for myself (Entwistle, 2005). My thesis evolved from a cluster of ideas into the present study. This process, along with the constant reflective dialogue between me and my supervisors, assisted in moving me beyond taken-for-granted assumptions and paradigms (Brockbank & McGill, 2007) about physical education and toward adopting a more critical and reflexive position. Their objective of moving me toward independence through 'mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire' was achieved (Cousin & Deepwell, 2005, p. 59). What is interesting is that we took physical activity as the forum for involving ideas about the importance of critical reflection for physical educators.

My growth and development as an academic during the walks facilitated opportunities for my second supervisor to engage in a constant review of his own scholarship (Brockbank & McGill, 2007). My second supervisor often said that I forced him to reflect continuously on his teaching and supervisory role at the university. He saw how

much this pedagogical strategy of enabling personal development through physical activity empowered me to have greater autonomy in my work and in my life. I developed a deeper level of criticality, becoming ‘critical in relation to the domains of knowledge, self and the world, where [I am], not only to embrace knowledge but also to bring self, including emotion and action, into the learning process’ (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 4). My experience confirms to me that learning is truly a ‘social process’ which occurs when individuals create appropriate situations and circumstances for learning to occur and these elements are therefore ‘critical to the learning process itself’ (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 4). This pedagogical strategy moved me from relying on my supervisors and texts for knowledge to expand my level of consciousness through critical engagement and reflection. The strategy also involved enjoying and experiencing a form of physical activity that did not have anything to do with competitive sport.

In what follows, I discuss my positionality as it relates to my ‘relationship to the context and the potential research population’ (Burton, et al., 2008, p. 22). I also discuss how ‘my social background, likes, dislikes, preferences and predictions’, as well as my faith, affect the way in which I understand and interpret my research (Thomas, 2013, p. 76). I became able to do this through growing confidence in my own professional standpoint.

2.4. Issues of Positionality

The Saturday walks confirmed some of my firm beliefs and assumptions about physical education and about life in general, particularly how much I value experience and the general health and well-being of individuals. The walks also revealed that my interest in one’s quality of life and in confronting injustices of students’ experiences of physical education meant that my ways of thinking and knowing are positioned in the ‘interpretative, naturalistic, subjective, qualitative paradigm’ (Sikes, 2004, p. 18). I am constantly seeking to reflect upon, and come to deeper understandings of, my response and the actions of my teachers during my early schooling within a wider context. I have

therefore, positioned myself in a space where I believe knowledge claims are particular, local and situated and so I am very much interested in ‘subjective perceptions’ (Sikes & Piper, 2010, p. 36) of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago. I believe that I can gain critical insights into the history and practice of physical education by having conversations with individuals who have experienced and practised it, and by listening to them tell their own stories of these lived experiences. I believe that ‘I can actively construct interpretations of [my] experiences in the field (my personal history) and then question how these interpretations came about’ (Sparkes, 2002, p. 21). Thus, recognizing the need to be aware of the personal, social, cultural and political contexts in which I live and work and how all these contexts impact on the way in which I interpret the world becomes critical to my professional development and practise. I align myself with the ontological position that there are multiple social realities and ways of seeing and making sense of the world. The knowledge I have constructed thus far comes from my personal life stories and is based on my subjective interpretations of the situations and circumstances experienced in my early childhood, as well as in my early career as a teacher of physical education. Based on this construction, my epistemological assumption of the world is that knowledge is ‘experiential, personal and subjective’ (Sikes, 2004, p. 21). These assumptions have led me to value sound ethical and moral judgements as a principle of good educational practise, particularly as it relates to the assumption that the experience of physical education is an integral part of one’s overall educational experience.

Early on in the process of working out a sound theoretical framework, my primary supervisor reiterated the importance of stepping back from my passion and becoming more analytical. ‘This is about making the personal, political’, (Wright Mills, 1959) and ‘treating the familiar as strange’ (Becker, 1971) she remarked. I struggled to understand why this was necessary. I felt I was already being analytical and reflexive. I could not see the point of stepping back from the ideas that I had. Was I too familiar with my chosen interest? I felt this to be contradictory since prospective PhD candidates are

required to present their research proposal on a topic that might be of interest, that is relatively familiar to the candidate and that is worth researching.

During my first year of study, my first supervisor asked me to think of an area that I felt posed a set of challenges, whether personal or political and related directly to my professional practise as a physical educator. I felt confident that I knew what I wanted to research, where I was positioned, why such research was needed, how I would do it, when, where and with whom. I felt as if I had a proper plan, a blueprint to assist me in navigating my journey along the research process. I had the ‘ideal’ research sequence’ (Wellington, 2000, p. 47) and after many conversations my supervisors informed me that I was certainly reflecting on the set of challenges I identified, but I was not being reflexive. Being reflexive meant that I would become more involved with my experiences of physical education through critical self-reflection in order to discover different aspects of these experiences. I discuss this issue of reflexivity further in the section that follows my discussion of my position in this research as a person of faith.

2.4.1. My Faith-Based Position

As I reflect upon my experiences of engaging in academic work as a PhD student, I also began to question more deeply and to problematise the role that spirituality plays in my everyday life and my research. Spirituality and faith-based practices are central elements in the lives of Caribbean peoples (Lavia, et al., 2011, p. 112) because we often speak freely of and through our testimonies, share our experiences of the presence of God working in our lives. I had first-hand experiences as a former master’s student on the University of Sheffield’s Caribbean Distance Learning Programme, my experiences of pursuing a doctorate in the UK, and my experience as a member of the Caribbean teaching team. These experiences confirmed how much the elements of spirituality and faith-based practices of Caribbean people became infused into the programme to the point where members of the teaching team ‘developed the courage to admit publicly the place of spirituality in the programme’ (Lavia, et al., 2011, p. 113) . Research conducted

on spirituality in the lives of African American/Black people indicates that religion and spirituality influences and/or shapes every facet of their life (Mattis, 2000). The structure of the curriculum for the distance-learning programme therefore allowed opportunities for the teaching team to show their appreciation for and embrace elements of spirituality and faith-based practices that are ways of life for their Caribbean students. Thinking about my positionality in relation to my research has made me realise how much my particular unique spiritual experiences transformed my academic learning and my understanding of the notion of experience as discussed in Chapter Three.

Growing up as a child within this Trinbagonian society, there was an old woman living in my neighbourhood whom everyone, both young and old called 'Granny'. She was Catholic and as a ritual every Sunday morning she would send her grandchildren to collect all the children from every house on our street and the next so we could walk to church for Sunday service (Lavia, et al., 2011). After mass, we would attend either the first communion or confirmation classes to learn the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church and how to live a good Christian life. As I grew older, I attended church less frequently and eventually stopped altogether. I think this was because the experience of church for me felt like a routine; I *did* church but did not necessarily *feel* church. I wanted to feel what my godmother often spoke about whenever I visited her for the holidays. She spoke of experiencing the presence of God and the Holy Spirit. I wanted to have such an experience.

Coming to the UK to pursue my doctoral studies further concretized my godmother's words about experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit because, for the most part of three years, I did not attend a formal place of worship. Formal religion therefore does not define who I am. For me it is about having a spiritual relationship, although I do acknowledge that religion may be a form of spirituality. Though there are numerous definitions and conceptions of spirituality (Mattis, 2000), I refer to spirituality as the belief in and a particular attitude towards a 'non-observable and non-material life force [which] has governing powers in [my] everyday affairs... often expressed in God

concepts, this ongoing core spiritual sensitivity is not necessarily tied to formal church doctrine or participation... [but] goes beyond church affiliation' (Jagers & Mock, 1993, p. 394). This definition supports my belief that an active presence of the Holy Spirit exists in my life. This presence is not necessarily found in the church but built upon the relationship that I have with God and the fact that He (in the form of the Holy Spirit) lives inside me, never leaves me and 'leads me into all truth' (John 14- 16:18 New Living Translation).

I also discuss my positionality in terms of how my spirituality influences my understanding and interpretation of the research process as well as life for me in the academy. As I interrogate my understandings of what it means to engage in an academic life, I look at the dimensions of the secular and spiritual life. My academic life responds to and grows simultaneously with my spiritual life, and so, for me, this represents a unified dimension in which there is no separation. For me there is no reliance on the 'man mind'. When I use the term 'man mind' I refer to the intellectual mind of an individual, which depends on its own ability in order to function, as opposed to 'spirit mind', which relies on direction from the Spirit of God. Reading academic books and journals, and engaging in critical conversations with colleagues and my supervisors, is no comparison to the experiences and encounters that occur when I am alone in my quiet space engaging with my work. I have come to realize and I accept that my spirituality and my faith in God has significantly influenced how I approached my research, how I made sense of my entire doctoral journey and how I value one's lived experiences. I acknowledge the occurrence of this unified process as influencing the way I view, perceive, interpret, and respond to conditions of this world and my work as an academic (Mattis, 2000) as each new academic experience occurs simultaneously with a spiritual experience and vice versa. 'In essence spirituality served a form of capital, an item of value that allowed [me] to better navigate and negotiate [my] educational experiences (Wood & Hilton, 2012, p. 43).

I attest that my strength and inspiration on what I researched and how I approached it came from a deeper level of consciousness, a consciousness which became active through a process of completely surrendering my own intellectual abilities and understandings in order to be led by the Holy Spirit. At various stages of this PhD journey, I relied on my faith-based experiences. I petitioned God and prayed for ‘the pen of a ready writer’, as I recalled specific verses in the Book of Psalms of the Bible. I prayed for guidance as I wrote, thought, and reflected on the experiences I had had. I meditated on the word of God in the Book of Jeremiah (chapter 1, verse 9) which states, ‘Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth’ (Jeremiah. 1:9 New Living Translation).

Spirituality therefore has had a profound influence on my life and on my research journey and, at this very moment, it is a struggle to represent the presence of the spiritual reality of my academic life. I only became confident to assert this through learning afforded in the context of physical activity. How do I acknowledge these experiences and the assistance which I get through my writing? Do I represent my position of faith in my doctoral journey and, if so, how? How I engage in and value my research interest, how I value issues of positionality as it relates to my spirituality, and my beliefs and values as a researcher are all connected. Later in the thesis, I share a narrative told by one of my mentors in chapter six on how her faith sustained her through her career experiences as a physical educator.

I admit that all dimensions of my life grew through the Saturday walks and gave me greater confidence to become a reflexive academic. My spirituality enabled me to develop further insight into a different way of thinking about life and about people’s life experiences. I have a greater appreciation for qualitative research and the valuable experience I gained from engaging in life history research and being able to analyse events in the lives of individuals through critical incident analysis. Even the ability to participate in and accept such forms of research as valid, reflects a deeper understanding of life and its processes for me. As I reflect on this academic journey, I realize how

much I depend on the Spirit of God to guide my writing, my thinking and my expected outcomes. I do not rely solely on my intellectual ability although I am certain that my intellectual ability is expanded through all my experiences.

My spiritual journey and the relationship that I continue to build with God is how I understand and make sense of my development as an academic. As I reflect, I admit that I trust in a phenomenon which often cannot be understood by many and which has no evidence that can be seen. I draw upon Cavell's work on 'the senses of Walden', as he explains a simple life. Spirituality for me is like one of Cavell's (1972) processes, engaging in a simple life of living in the woods, relying on nature to provide your every need. I therefore yearn for the presence of spirituality and rely on it to fulfil my purpose in life. How do I operate and survive within a secular world, where as human beings we claim to be intellectually sound, desperately seeking to have evidence of truth in every facet of our lives? Each time I engage with my writing, I hear the question '*what evidence is there to support this argument or assumption you make?*' The response would be the voice of my supervisor saying, 'if there is none and you cannot substantiate this claim then remove it from your writing'. This dilemma goes deeper for me, since I often think about how to represent spirituality within my academic work knowing the consequence. How do I represent my claims when the only evidence I have is my faith? Can I confidently utter the words 'written biblical principles inform the position I adopt'?

I spoke to my counsellor who is also an academic and the university chaplain about these struggles and he reiterated that as a Christian my faith is the evidence and my life experiences substantiate the claims I make. Why do we try to use empiricism to attempt to justify that which the 'mind man' cannot understand? I cannot understand the things of God but, through faith, I believe and trust that everything works out for good to those who love and obey Him. I have had faith-based experiences for which there is no evidence and my experience of scholarship is 'incorporated into [my] broader spiritual development, rather than left outside it (Sullivan, 2003, p. 130). I base my life on more

than simply spiritual beliefs and emotions, but rather on my ability to enter into a reciprocal relationship by connecting the spiritual and the academic in order to have a richer more meaningful and purposeful life. I learned that each individual experiences spirituality differently, but their behaviour is often consistent with their beliefs and convictions.

'I reflected and I became confident to put this in.'

2.5. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process which I am sure I have been using unknowingly even before becoming a teacher some 16 years ago. I have had many opportunities to engage in a process of hermeneutic reflection (Finlay, 2003), that is, a process of interpreting experiences. Through reflexivity the familiar becomes strange because it is a process of continually reflecting on one's experiences in relation to the phenomenon being studied in order to move beyond any bias and previous understandings (Gadamer, 1975/2006). The Saturday walks encouraged me to recognize and embrace reflexivity as a powerful tool to be used in my growth and development as an individual, as well as in the entire production of this thesis. Etherington (2004) suggests that being reflexive requires us to have an awareness of our personal responses to experiences we have had, and to make decisions about how we use these experiences. Reflexivity not only requires me to have an awareness of and an appropriate response to events and situations that affect my life, but I must also be able to show an awareness for how my personal, social and cultural contexts influence how I understand and interpret my view of the world in which I exist. My engagement in this process of reflexivity provides me with the space to develop creative ways of exploring my personal experiences in the production of knowledge and to be able to distinguish it clearly from mere reflection. Reflection is the internal process which provides me with the opportunity to use what I already knew about myself in order to create and clarify meanings (Boyde & Fales, 1983) of my lived physical education experiences. Reflexivity, however, goes beyond this to pondering on

the premises for what I think and observe, and how I act in response to them (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2003).

Initially, as I explored my lived experiences of physical education, I was engaging in the process of reflection. However, when I began to engage in ‘a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference’ (Davies, 1999, p. 4), going deeper than simply examining and exploring, I began to be reflexive. Davies further suggests that within the social research environment, ‘reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research’ (p. 4). In essence, I believe that my supervisors were hinting to me that engaging in a reflexive process would allow me to gain critical insights into, and to illuminate, how I have come to understand what I know, how this knowledge is produced and how it impacts on how the social world operates (Pillow, 2003). They were probing me in order to develop a level of critical consciousness which denotes personal accounts of how my background, interests and position would influence the entire research process. This level of critical consciousness will be further explored at varying points in the later chapters of this thesis.

At first, my research interest was not a seemingly problematic or complex one to engage with, or so I thought. My second supervisor would also ask, ‘*Why do you see your idea as a research problem/issue?*’ ‘*Why is the practice of physical education a pertinent issue to you?*’ ‘*Okay, but what are the issues in the practice of physical education which make it worth considering?*’ Both supervisors spoke of being more critical, about using my ‘voice’, about the immersion of self into the research, making deeper connections and interrogating underlying social structures. Now I was even more confused, only to be told that being confused was a good place to be. How can one make the familiar strange, the personal political or public and draw oneself into the research? Maybe I was not reading enough, or maybe I should have chosen something else to research, was what I thought to myself. The frustration was quite evident, because I still had not

reached the point where I needed to be in order to make this a successful and meaningful research project.

During my tutorial sessions, discussions with my supervisors would be around terms I would use in conversation, such as ‘experience,’ ‘educational experiences,’ ‘society,’ ‘continuity in physical activity,’ ‘value judgements’ and ‘decision making’. This even sparked further curiosity about my research ideas. I would tell my supervisors stories about my childhood experiences as they related to physical education. I suppose these experiences or stories had some significance in order for me to remember or even use them as examples of educational and non-educational experiences that students could encounter in physical education. These stories brought out significant issues about those key terms mentioned above which kept resurfacing in my conversations and in my writing, but I seemed not to be able to deepen my thinking and thought processes to facilitate a more critical, political, emancipatory agenda for physical education. My second supervisor would reaffirm my confidence but placed emphasis on transition and theory-making, saying *‘your ideas are connectable but at the moment, not connecting’*. My research agenda definitely focused on a critical, aspirational agenda because I proposed to use my experiences as part of a dialectical view of society in which as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2003) have said, social phenomena are always viewed within their historical contexts. At the end of each formal or informal tutorial session, whether while walking in the woods or sitting in a supervisor’s office, I would ponder on the questions asked and discussions had. At times I felt defeated, having been asked all those questions and seeming to have no answers for them, but I knew I was being pushed by my supervisors into another dimension of this research journey.

The above section has sought to give an insight into the processes involved, as I attempted to clarify my purpose and motivations for embarking on this research, as well as the ways in which I could further develop its purpose. Thus far, I have presented personal accounts of my tutorial sessions which led me to establishing where I am paradigmatically and philosophically positioned in relation to my research and show

how reflexivity became a primary tool for developing my research. The following section engages the reader in a critical discussion of how I finally came to identify and understand the importance of using my personal life stories in the research process and leads me to share three stories which represent my motivation to engage in this research.

2.6. Writing the Self Critically: Unravelling Stories

C. Wright Mills wrote that the ‘sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society’ (Wright Mills, 1959, p. 241). This imagination refers to the insights gained from interrogating the way in which situations or circumstances are viewed socially, the interaction that occurs as a result of how these situations or circumstances are viewed, and the influences that these situations or circumstances have on each other. As I engaged with the concept of the sociological imagination, the idea of writing about past events in a biography appeared not only to be therapeutic and illuminating, but critical in justifying my theoretical argument. Issues of writing the ‘self’ into my research also occupied my quiet times as I sifted through my mental processes, trying to find a place for these stories from which I began to make connections with and gain deeper insights. In order to make sense of the stories which I often shared, I first had to interrogate what kind of stories they were and what they represented in my life and in my career as a physical educator. I was being asked by my supervisors to look more deeply into the incidents that occurred, what allowed them to occur and why they may have occurred. Why are these stories significant to my research?

This meant more than simply narrating them. It warranted me to shred each of these stories and delve into the deeper structures that produced them. I was also now beginning to see the concept of using ‘self’ as a major tool in this research process. This is a form of inquiry based on work developed by Moustakas (1990) whose philosophical assumptions validate using my personal experiences as a research method. He refers to a process of involving an internal search through which I discover the nature and meaning

of the experiences which I have had, and developing appropriate methods and procedures to further investigate and analyse them (Moustakas, 1990). He further suggests that this 'self' will ultimately be present throughout the research process and, while understanding my lived experiences with increasing depth, I begin to also encounter growth in self-awareness and self-knowledge. It was at this point that I began to play with words and tried to rename my stories saying that they are not merely stories but incidents in my life which are significant to me because I have ascribed a particular meaning to them that is critical. From here on, I began seeing things differently and suddenly had a moment of clarity. The term 'critical incident' emerged from engaging in this reflexive process.

2.7. 'Critical Incident' - A First Level of Analysis

The meaning ascribed to the importance of an experience may be referred to as a critical incident. According to Tripp (1993), a 'critical incident' is a historical term referring 'to some event or situation which marked a significant turning point or change in the life of a person or an institution (such as a political party) or in some social phenomenon.' (p. 24). Although a critical incident can be produced by the way in which we look at past and present experiences, we must be able to recognize whether these experiences have the potential to become critical. An experience therefore becomes a critical incident when we engage in the process of reflexivity in order to make a value judgement. What acts as a support to the judgement made is the importance which we attach to the meaning of the incident, knowing that it may highlight a significant change or turning point in one's biography (Tripp, 1993). Was this the level of criticality and deeper thinking my supervisors were trying to get me to bring to mind? Was this the stepping back process of using self-reference in order to make the personal political? Was this the exploration and interpretation of experiences which utilizes the self of the researcher while surrendering to the process? This being noted, Tripp also suggests that 'critical incidents are not 'things' that exist independently of an observer and are awaiting discovery like gold nuggets or desert islands but, like all data, critical incidents are

produced by the way we look at a situation' (Tripp, 1993, p. 8). My stories did not begin as critical incidents and were not critical things that happened, but by unravelling them and gazing into them with reflexive lenses, I was able to see the significance of each.

Now more than ever, the words of the renowned Caribbean writer George Lamming began to penetrate more deeply into my consciousness and also had new meaning: 'I want to know how [I] got there, I want to know what was the particular journey that took [me] from wherever [I] was to that point of perception and conviction and redemption' (Lamming, 1992, p. 24). These points of perception, conviction and redemption describe my beginning to critically examine my personal history. I began to inquire into my present circumstances by interrogating my past experiences, 'physical feelings, thoughts and emotions and [re]writ[ing] these experiences as [critical incidents], of life being explored, with the hope of understanding a way of life' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 737). It is that journey which I take, seeking wisdom by evaluating my experiences, using the kind of reflexivity and in-depth thinking that would reveal insights and new perspectives. It is that journey which will allow me to become connected with and see the hidden connections between myself and my practise. As I read Tripp's book, *Critical Incidents in Teaching*, I became more reflexive about why and how I came to feel the way I felt about my stories, which have now become many critical incidents, based on how I interpret them.

Like Tripp (1993), I find myself also embarking on an intuitive trial and error venture of seeing critical incidents as the starting point for my research, because 'I realized that I learned to improve and change my practise, not through the adoption of particular findings of 'educational' research, but through a close personal, informed and critical examination of particular instances of my [childhood experiences and my] own practice' (Tripp, 1993, p. xv). These critical incidents do have the ability to fill huge gaps in understanding my experiences and also assist in the production of what Erben (1998) views as vital entry points, which can answer important questions, give greater insights and develop key themes as I make inquiry into my practise. Secondly, through

discussions with my supervisors, I came to understand that my ‘knowledge can only exist by virtue of the past experiences which [I] have lived through, often with the most intense feelings ...’ (Rosen, 1998, p. 30).

2.8. The Stories

My childhood experiences have significantly contributed to the individual that I am today, and have also motivated me to engage with them more thoroughly as part of my research. Firstly, I could not initially come to terms with the fact that I never wanted to teach, but the process of reflexivity unearthed experiences which made me realise how much teaching was and is a part of my life. The production of this thesis therefore presents opportunities for putting things right. Secondly, turning my stories into critical incidents established a platform for me to interrogate my early school experiences, my professional career as a physical education teacher, and to begin to theorize my research. In this sense, I am attempting to construct knowledge from my direct human experiences, using my own internal frame of reference and by becoming one with these experiences. Each story has had a significant impact on and connects the entire thesis. Firstly, it provides a theoretical argument for the importance of providing meaningful physical education experiences to all children of school age in order to develop and maintain lifelong physical activity engagement by establishing physical culture. Secondly, ‘stories capture the richness and nuances of meaning in the everyday existence and give insight into the complexity of our experiences and understandings. They evoke an emotional response in the reader, which moves them beyond the literary experience to a more ‘lived’ and embodied experience’ (Garrett, 2006, p. 339). Finally, I recognise how these critical incidents which I develop from the stories told inform my professional practise and how they ‘are subsequently recovered by a process of introspection [in order]... to build up practice-specific aspects of a personal-professional history’ (Tripp, 1993, p. 107).

2.8.1. Story 1: Ashamed and Rejected

This story is important because it reflects how an individual's early experience of physical education can affect their self-esteem and create further anxiety about future participation in physical activity.

The scenario: I was about ten years old. My parents were divorced since I was aged 6, and I now lived with my mother and grandfather. I was a transfer student, whose only reason for transferring from one of the better schools in my community to this school was that my mother could not afford my transportation to and from my previous school, and it was too far away for me to walk. With this school being closer to my home, I could walk and since most of the children lived within the community, I would always have company, especially on my way home in the afternoons.

A friend of the family was a teacher at the school, and because of my traumatic experiences prior to being enrolled at that school, she and the other teachers took a special interest in me. On my first day at that school, she told everyone that I was her niece. The school population was relatively small and catered for the Adventist community which I was not part of. I was Catholic and previously went to a Catholic school. I was already not one of the popular students at this school. I was sort of an introvert.

Physical education was unstructured and was generally referred to as 'games'. Having not qualified in the heats for the track events, my teacher was asked if I wanted to try the high jump. With no other willing participants, I was automatically chosen to represent my school. I went on to qualify for my school district at the National Primary Schools Track and Field Games in the high jump event. I felt good to be a member of the district track and field team.

Two weeks before the competition, the team assembled at the savannah to engage in training as preparation to participate in their various upcoming events. Many of the students on the team belonged to athletic clubs, but I did not. My teacher always said that I should join a club, but I could not. The financial commitment needed for being part of an athletic club, though not exorbitant, was still tremendous for me. Barely being able to make ends meet in the home, my mother could not support and maintain me financially with such a venture. She would often say, '*I am so sorry but you will have to do your running around in the yard space that we had, because I cannot afford to pay for that.*'

Making the school team was my first experience of training with 'élite' athletes. Though I knew I could match their abilities, I felt a bit intimidated since most of them had fancy moves, proper running shoes (spikes) and wore proper running clothes (body suits), and had more experience than I had. They looked like professionals.

We had proper warm up and cool down sessions and received technical training for each of our specific events. I suppose it was easy for those who were used to participating in competition, but I was there simply because of my natural athletic talent and my ability to perform activities once they were demonstrated to me. Although my teacher was part of the team of coaches who would train the athletes, the zone coordinator, another teacher, was the head coach.

On the fourth day of training, the head coach began to pay particular attention to my technique and gave me some instructions, half of which I think I probably did not understand. He kept saying '*No! No!! Take 5 steps for your run-up. Take off and then turn your body in the air. When the bar is low you can do the scissors jump, but when the bar gets higher you will have to do the flop. Put the bar up and try that.*' As I said earlier, this was my first 'professional' training experience. Maybe the coach thought I was as experienced as the other athletes and knew what I was required to do. After all, I successfully competed twice before to get to this position of representing my school district at the national event. My teacher told me to try my best, but I did not understand how to do that 'flop' when the bar got higher; then, counting the steps was another issue. I had never practised that before, and I am not even sure I had seen it being done before. Each time I approached the bar I would stop suddenly. I was beginning to feel weird in my stomach. Maybe the height intimidated me. Over and over again, I ran up to the bar and stopped.

There were three other team mates training with me, but high jump was not a popular event for many educational districts since students were rarely entered for that event, either due to lack of experience or interest. At least, that's what 'sir' said! The running clubs, as they were fondly called, focused on just that – running (track events). I was tired, confused and beginning to get a bit scared. I probably began thinking that I was not as good as sir said, now that I was amongst the *crème de la crème*.

My teacher gave me simple instructions and said not to worry about counting the steps for the run-up and he tried his best, but none of the coaches could really demonstrate the proper technique. The high jump,

as I came to realize later on in life as a coach, is a highly technical event which many people could not perform nor demonstrate proficiently. *'Don't worry'*, my teacher said, *'just run up, and take off on your left foot. Jump higher than the bar, so as not to touch it, turn your body so that you could land on the mat on your back, okay? The way you were doing it before was fine.'* But by then it was too late. I could not do it. I just got a mental block. The feeling in my stomach was as if someone was tying a knot inside me.

By the fifth day, the coach, now noticeably frustrated, said to my teacher; *'Watch, watch. Look! This girl is not jumping! She's wasting our time! I thought she could jump? We will have to just take her out and put in the reserve, yes!?! Watch! Watch again!'* he muttered. *'I will put in the other girl! Can't you see she is not ever going to go over that bar? She is not even leaving the ground and the games is [sic] next Wednesday and we need to give the Port of Spain team some good competition! She is wasting our time, man!'* Though the coach spoke in a hushed tone, I was still able to hear him. He kept staring at me. I felt uncomfortable and began to feel the pain violently increasing in my stomach. I had never felt this before. I am finished, I thought, since I had so many other issues going on in my life and now this!

The day of the games came and I was told that I would be the reserve jumper and would only get to compete if something went wrong with the girl whom the coach selected to replace me. So, I sat with some of the other reserve athletes in the stadium while the team warmed up and the more popular school athletes got ready for their events. That was the end of me. I was hoping that the coach did not mean what he said that day, that he would not take me out, that he would talk to me or change his mind or show me what to do. But I was already sitting, not even being part of the warm up. I began to cry silently. Then with tears streaming down my face, I bowed my head in disgrace. I was a failure. What made things worse was that my replacement did not even gain a medal, and the height cleared for gold was much lower than what I had cleared to qualify for these games. I was devastated. I finally stopped thinking it and acknowledged that I was a total failure. I had let down my teacher, my school, my mother and my aunty who was a teacher at the school.

I was sure now that the other students would laugh if they heard the reason for me not participating in my event. Therefore, apart from being called 'long neck turkey' (because I was much taller than my classmates and very slender) and dynamite mouth (because my teeth were spaced out, making it seem that I had some missing), I would also be known as a coward, 'scaredy' cat at school.

What happened for the next 10 years of my life was that I would not feel comfortable enough to participate in individual activities for fear of disappointing those counting on me. I would train for different activities but find every excuse not to compete in the individual events. I could not follow through and could be described as a practise champion. I was not good at finishing. Though I participated in physical education and tried other competitions, I opted for team sports, team activities and playing in any role where I would not be responsible for the team losing.

My physical education experiences were more structured during my first two years of secondary school (age 11–12). I played table tennis for fun and I excelled yet again. I began to train for competition. I came quite close to competing once again at a national level, but the damage was already done, as I could still hear the voice of my high jump coach saying, *'She is wasting our time'*, so I willingly took myself out this time around.

Can this story be turned into a critical incident or many critical incidents? If it could, what would be required, which aspects of the story would I choose to interrogate and why? In these experiences I learned important lessons about the tyranny of competitive sport for some young athletes and I learned about the pain of exclusion for those who will not be élite amongst athletes.

2.8.2. A Simple Case of Reflection: What Is It Worth?

At the surface level, I could say that I remembered this incident because I felt embarrassed. I internalized the fact that I was a full-fledged failure, a total disappointment to myself and to those depending on me. This was a fact of which I had convinced myself. My family had just 'failed', as my parents had had a bitter divorce, my mother despised my father, and because I resembled him so much, I thought for a long while that she hated me as well. I had 'failed' my school and let my teachers down. Individuals had placed their confidence in me; they boasted about this student who was gifted and talented intellectually and physically and referred to me as a well-rounded student. This incident of demotion from the high jump team forever stood out in my theory-making about physical education in Trinidad and Tobago because of the way it

made me feel. I recognised there was conflict within me as a child during the activities, as I did not understand what was required of me. Maybe I did understand, but fear got the better of me. This incident stood out for me because it reflected the fact that my experience had been tainted by the decisions that my teacher and coach made during my period of crisis. I trusted my teacher and he did not even fight for me, he let me be dropped from the team; he let me down. I trusted myself but I could not even fight for myself. I suppose my letting the teacher down was what endured most. Yet, looking back, I know I was not prepared psychologically by the teachers responsible for us athletes and as a team we had little time to practise before the game. I was not a ‘proper’ athlete. I had natural talent and ability, but did not have the athletic kit, belong to an athletic club, or have a club coach. Nor did I have special clothing and shoes like most of the other children on my team. I had been successful before and that was good enough for everyone, but when I could not get it right this one time, I was suddenly wrong and not needed anymore. I felt like a piece of paper, tossed out and then battered by the wind. I was hurting so badly, but no one knew, no one saw. Or maybe they did and felt that, as a child, I would get over it one day soon. But I have not gotten over it, even at the time of writing this thesis, I still weep for myself. The experience therefore stands as a critical life incident that profoundly influenced my engagement with, and interpretations of, physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

The dynamics of the social context as well may have compounded the situation. I had never been involved in such a large-scale event – this was a national competition with many spectators from Trinidad and Tobago assembling yearly to witness this grand event. During the preparation period, although many different activities were taking place at the same time, track events were most popular, and the coaches focused more on athletes who qualified in these events. I was getting mixed messages and different instructions from the coach and from my teacher. My coach was very competitive and winning was most important to him. His desire to win infected my ability as a child to enjoy the experience, learn and fundamentally infused my future construction of how

children and young people should experience physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

I turn now to a second critical incident.

2.8.3. Story 2: Getting off the Ground: Recovering the Past to Justify the Present and Future

This story is important because it reflects the importance of ‘experience’ in physical education. This story illuminates how one’s lived experiences can be used as a vital tool for informing practise.

The scenario: Before being hired as a senior coach in 2001 on the *Right on Track Community Coaching Caravan*, I did a period of internship on the programme upon graduating from a Level One Athletic Coaching Course by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF). On most Saturdays, for the first six months of the year, I would get an opportunity to practise and further develop my coaching/teaching skills, depending on the age group, skill level and the activity required to be done. Although I chose throwing events as my area of specialization, as a Level One coach one is somewhat of a general practitioner and I was required to coach both track and field events. I would, however, visit the station for high jump less frequently since it made me feel uncomfortable and triggered some awful memories of failure, pain, rejection and shame, as recounted above. That was one of the reasons for me choosing to specialize in throws, as opposed to sprints and hurdles or jumps.

A successful internship in 2001 landed me a job as one of the senior coaches for the start of the programme the following year. To my horror, I was asked to be the high jump coach. I never really wanted to coach the high jump. I was sure from observations made during my internship, my feelings toward the high jump were obvious. I felt competent at doing everything else but always became a bit anxious even when observing the high jump sessions, for fear of being called upon to give a demonstration. I remembered all the lead up activities I learned and practised during the course as well as those I observed the high jump coach doing the previous year... and besides, she never demonstrated the high jump technique as a whole, so I felt a bit safer, but the sum of my confidence for being a high jump coach was inordinately low.

As I conducted my coaching session on the second Saturday on one of the caravans, I suddenly began to see things differently, but also quite

clearly. Maybe coaching high jump was not such a bad idea after all. Not only did I survive the first week, I did not have to demonstrate the whole skill once. High jump was one of the things that had crippled my life and I really wanted to stay as far away as possible from it, but it constantly haunted me, as I would sometimes get flashbacks of my trauma. After breaking down the skill and going through each part separately, it was time to demonstrate the skill as a whole. In my group of young learners, the athletes, whose ages ranged from 9 to 11, were looking at me all excited, ready to put together all the steps taught. Once I confirmed that everyone understood what they were being asked to do, I said *'All we do now is put all the steps which we have been practising together, and do a high jump from start to finish. Who wants to go first?'* Had we been on a different surface maybe I would have heard a pin drop, but we were on the savannah grass. The truth be told, I always did demonstrations for my students at school during any practical activity I taught. During my internship when called upon to teach or coach, I demonstrated as required. But please, do not ask me to demonstrate the high jump. Just the thought of it crippled me and I simply could not bring myself to perform it. I was drowning in these thoughts.

Then, from nowhere, one of the boys said *'Miss, can you show us? Can you show us how to do it?'* Then came a chorus *'Yeah, miss, do it! Do it!'* At that moment, I felt that pain I had felt in my stomach when I was ten all over again. It was actually sharper this time around. Those words felt like a huge arrow had just pierced my heart. This request began to conjure up a past experience that I despised. I had immediate flashbacks all in one go I remembered; it was a day I dreaded, I hated the moment, I hated the coach, and I hated myself. I began to visualize this ten-year-old girl again, sitting in the stadium with her head bent in shame. It was so vivid; I saw her doing her run-up and suddenly stopping in front the bar not being able to go over the bar. I heard her teacher saying, *'Just put in the other girl, yes!... She is not going to ever go over that bar, She is not even leaving the ground!'*

I was afraid of repeating that performance, afraid of failing and being seen as a failure by these eager youngsters. I was afraid of being laughed at by children. Not by my peers, but by these children who stood in front of me. *'Would they laugh?'* I wondered what they would say if their own *'miss'* could not even do what she was asking of them. I was fearful that I would fail a second time and lose the trust that these children placed in me – the same trust that my teacher had in me. Back then, he was proud until I was removed from my rightful position on the team and became the reserve. *'What would I do?'* If I failed to execute the high jump, then these children might think they would also. Maybe not. Maybe they

might just be brave enough to try it for themselves even if I failed. I was on the verge of tears as my eyes welled up.

I was alone, felt terrified and was hurting all at the same time, but they would never understand that. They were waiting on me to perform the skill I had just taught them in parts. I had no way out. I could not agree with my teacher and say ... *'Yes, put in the other girl'*, for there was no one else to put in. So, I began to make some excuses just in case I failed in my attempt. I told them that I had an old knee injury and that because I am much older than them, that I may not perform as well as I knew they could. I tried to compose myself. I was shaking with fear and they all kept looking at me intently. They stared at my every move. I tried to get rid of that ten-year-old that did not leave the ground some twenty odd years ago out of my head, but she would not leave me. My eyes became watery, but I got ready and slowly approached the high jump bar. In a split second it was over. My eyes were closed as I lay motionless on the mat, wondering what had happened and thanking God that I did not stop suddenly and praying that that bar did not fall. It felt like an eternity. I could then hear screams of joy mixed with laughter and great applause. We practised clapping as a way of encouraging each other's performance during the sessions. I was now on the other side of the bar on the landing mat and not too sure what had just happened. As I got off the mat, the boy who had asked me to demonstrate the technique for him rushed over and gave me a hug and said, 'You did it!' Did he know I was scared? Did he see the fear? I did it! Yes! I did it! I began to smile. I asked the group if they felt better about trying to clear the bar now, and there was a resounding 'Yes!' I heard confident youngsters and now everyone wanted to be first to do the high jump.

2.8.4. Reflections

I remembered this incident because it brought back memories of the physical education experience I had at the age of ten. This experience of coaching provided me with the opportunity to relive and recover from my past hurt and failure, but more importantly it showed the importance of facilitating students' desire to succeed by initially performing activities for them first. Demonstrations are appropriate for encouraging students to participate in physical activity. Students' confidence levels can be boosted from the way teachers respond to them during physical education lessons. Some students need a visual representation of what is being asked of them. Highly technical skills are taught by breaking them down in parts. Students believe that teachers and coaches know how

to perform activities and should show them first before attempting it themselves. Recognising and treating the anxieties of students is one way to help them achieve success. Asking for a demonstration is not a bad idea. As the coach I got an opportunity to confront and overcome my own fears and anxiety. Teachers, because of their past experiences, can be doubtful of their own abilities and competencies and can share this with their pupils to facilitate their learning. Again, can the events in this story be interrogated by identifying it as a critical incident and through further interrogation can it be analysed in order to inform one's practise? If it could, what would be required, which aspects of the story would I choose to interrogate and why?

Why are these stories significant to my research? I share these stories and initial reflections to re-emphasise the focus of this research and to begin to develop my argument of the importance of experience. These stories illuminate how one's lived experiences can be used as a vital tool for informing practise. Generating these accounts of experience, of 'what is seeable, hearable etc. shifts with the interactional space [I] inhabit, with the time and the purpose in telling, and with the discursive possibilities available (or brought to conscious awareness) at the time of each telling' (Davies, 1945).

2.9. Analysing Critical Incidents

Engaging in the process of analysis involves the breaking up of a complex structure into a less complicated element in order to better understand its nature and composition. Additionally, the kind of analysis one chooses to use in determining whether incidents can become critical depends on the aspects of the incidents one is seeking to understand, which is dependent on the reason for doing the analysis (Tripp, 1993). I must admit that incidents have been instrumental to my life and have contributed significantly to my professional development and judgement. By professional judgement, I refer to the opinions I form regarding my practise, which evolves from 'a scholarly analysis of [my] ideas of the meaning of the incidents rather than on [my] experience of the incidents

themselves' (Tripp, 1993, p. 28). An incident is created by thoroughly describing it, putting forward a possible explanation for its occurrence and proposing a meaning for it within its immediate context. In order for such an incident to be recognized as being critical, however, one is also required to unearth a more general meaning and significance of the incident within a wider social context and begin to challenge the judgements and values revealed by general reflection. How, then, do we analyze lived experiences to create critical incidents (Measor, 1985)?

Techniques used for analyzing incidents vary and can range from using simple, straightforward processes to using more insightful and challenging ones, and doing so may not always be an easy task. Critical incidents can be analyzed by using various thinking strategies – asking the question ‘why’; by identifying teachers’ dilemmas; by using personal theory (examining a set of beliefs which can inform one’s professional judgement); or by using ideology critique (how certain ideas represent the world to us, to make us think and behave in a certain way). More time will be spent on discussing these methods of analysis in Chapter Four. Tripp focuses on analyzing critical incidents in teaching and in teachers’ classroom practise. I would point out, however, that not all biographical incidents influencing one’s professional judgement occur during one’s teaching career. Elements of my early experiences of physical education as a student at the primary and secondary school have been critical to my professional career since these incidents generally affected my life and influenced judgements I made from the onset of becoming a physical education teacher. Thus, I am compelled to interrogate my life history in order to gain insights into value judgements I made. I do so by investigating the underlying structures within these experiences which contributed to such judgements being formed throughout my life and professional career.

These judgements constantly recur in my life and continue to elicit from me, particular kinds of responses which have implications for the development of who I am as a professional (Measor, 1985), as well as for the kinds of experiences which I in turn offer to my students. My argument for wanting to ensure that students have meaningful

physical education experiences that will perpetuate lifelong physical activity involvement stems from my own personal experiences and knowledge of the kinds of value judgements that teachers make as physical educators. Physical education continues to deliver negative and destructive experiences for many students (Gore, 1990) and often repels their desire to continue engaging in physical activity. Although challenging students' educational experiences and their personal desire to succeed are necessary for the development of human potential, fulfilling such potential is something which one must be given the opportunity to achieve (Corbin, 1976) and therefore should not be denied.

The stories which I told are biographical, and they make visible the significance of being able to learn and to make a contribution to knowledge through engaging with the process of critical biographical analysis. According to Tripp (1993), this sort of autobiography involves working back in time from an account of not only knowing where my values and convictions came from, but to be able to use the knowledge gained from these experiences to improve myself, my practise and the practise of others. Like Tripp, I am not seeking to produce complete holistic personal histories. What I seek to do is to interrogate the parts of my biography which directly relate to my practise and which represent my aspirations for physical education perpetuating lifelong engagement in physical activity. It is from this notion that the rationale exists for the use of a critical approach to conduct this research.

The following section presents a third critical incident, which does not make visible the origins of my theory-making on physical education but does make plain the nature of interpretation which I as a doctoral scholar am making.

2.9.1. Story 3: The Lost Jewellery

I tell this story because it gives the reader a deeper insight into why I chose to acknowledge issues of spirituality and faith-based practices.

It was Friday, 13 May 2005, and my friend, who had only two weeks ago

bought herself a new station wagon, offered to take me to the Adventist university to collect my graduation invitation during our lunch period. I was a part time P.E. lecturer there and the only jewellery allowed was a wedding ring and a watch. As soon as our school dismissed for lunch at 11:15 am, I got into the front passenger seat of my friend's white station wagon and we left the school's compound, and headed for the university. We continued west along all the back streets, avoiding all the major roads.

As we proceeded, we chatted about how excited I was attending my first graduation as a lecturer there. I began to remove all my gold jewellery (two pairs of earrings, two chains with two pendants, three rings and an ID band) from my person. As we approached one of the major intersections, I placed all my jewellery on the dashboard of the car. My friend stopped at the intersection and, being very cautious, we both looked left, then right and then left again before my friend proceeded slowly across the intersection. When I looked to my right initially, I noticed a man was standing outside a white van. This van was parked about 30m away from the intersection on the right side of the street facing south. There was a male passenger seated in the van as well. I looked right again as my friend proceeded across the intersection and saw that the man whom was standing on the outside of the van hurried into his van and sped off, remaining on the right side of the road instead of going over to the left hand side. Instinctively, I reached across my friend for the steering wheel so that she would not become scared and pull on it to avoid the collision. Within seconds the van smashed into the side of our vehicle, which was almost clear of the intersection.

There was a loud bang and then a big crash. The station wagon was tossed into the air almost toppling over. The force of the impact caused the station wagon to bump up and down and from side to side on the road a few times, like a rugby ball landing on the turf after receiving a high kick into the air. The station wagon eventually landed in an upright position in a huge drain facing north of the intersection a few metres from the initial impact. The glass on the driver's side as well as the front windscreen was shattered. The only way out of the vehicle was for my friend and me to crawl through the space left by the shattered windscreen and then climb out of the drain. There were spots of blood on my white T-shirt but I could not determine where the blood was coming from. The van that collided with us then careened into an iron stake not too far from where our station wagon landed.

Within minutes of the accident, the police arrived on the scene and one officer began to ascertain the number of people injured. My friend and I

were standing on the street, onlookers were gathering and my friend kept saying that she needed her eyeglasses. I walked back to the car and located them for her while observing the damage that had been done to her new car. One ambulance arrived shortly afterward and two attendants began to treat the seriously injured first. I felt a bit shaken up but managed to make a phone call to another friend of mine asking that he contact one of my father's sons and then my mother. I explained that we were involved in an accident and would be taken to the hospital but that I did not want my mother to become worried. Within minutes of making the call I felt dizzy. Another ambulance soon arrived and I walked over to a third attendant and muttered that I felt my head spinning before I began to lose my footing. The attendant grabbed hold of my arm and supported me. He managed to assist me to lie on a stretcher at the back of the second ambulance. He took some basic information from me and put an oxygen mask over my nose. Shortly afterward my friend and I were on our way to the hospital. My friend had no external injuries and appeared to be in good health, but traumatised by the events.

When we arrived at the hospital my mother, brother and some of my friends were already there, waiting anxiously to find out what had happened and how badly my friend and I were injured. As I lay on the stretcher in the accident and emergency section, waiting to be attended to, I suddenly saw a vision of me placing all my jewellery on the dashboard of the station wagon. 'Oh no!!' When the reality of what had occurred shot into my head, I realized that the collision would have caused all the jewellery to be either scattered all over the station wagon, onto the roadway or even in the drain. I began to panic and started crying. My heart was racing. I felt as though I was having an asthma attack (I am asthmatic). I knew my mother would be disappointed, perhaps even upset, that I would place the jewellery on the dashboard instead of in one of my pockets. I thought to myself that I should not have taken them off in the first instance, or that I should have placed them in my pocket. I was not going to teach, but I respected the university's values.

My mother stayed with me at the hospital until I was treated and sent to ward 21 later that evening. She was visibly distraught. With her only child injured in an accident and now in hospital, she was still grieving the loss of her father a year earlier; the tears flowed down her cheeks. I said, 'mummy I took the jewellery off and put it on the dashboard and then the van hit our car and the jewellery got scattered all over the place. But I am seeing them.' I told her that I was sorry for losing all the jewellery. I wept bitterly as I tried to describe where the accident took place so that she could go and look for them.

While I waited in the cubicle of the accident and emergency section to be treated, my mum was very sympathetic and kept saying to me, ‘forget about the jewellery, don’t worry about it and make myself feel worse, stop crying. Themesa, Themesa, stop worrying yourself!’ Nevertheless, I kept crying. I pleaded with her to go back to the car to look for the jewellery. She eventually promised that she would after I was admitted to the ward if this would make me feel better, but she was also insisting that I stopped worrying about it. I was so distraught that I began to have symptoms of an asthma attack again, my heart raced and my chest pained. I was stabilised by the nurses. As my mum was leaving the ward, I told her that I was seeing the jewellery in the car and that she should try to go and get them before someone else found them. She reiterated that I should not worry about anything, but should rather try to get some rest and promised that she would go look for the jewellery first thing next morning.

The following morning, Saturday, 14 May, my mum, along with the driver of the vehicle and another friend of mine went to the police station where the car was impounded to search for the jewellery that I kept insisting was somewhere in the car. The three of them looked for quite a long time but their attempt was unsuccessful. I was later informed that my mother received cuts on her right thumb and index finger as she tried separating the shattered glass on the floor of the car.

You must understand that there were many onlookers at the scene of the accident that afternoon; my friend’s vehicle had to be pulled out of the drain in which it was stuck and then towed to the nearest police station. This police station, like many others in Trinidad and Tobago, is notorious for vehicles being stripped and items being removed from them, especially if the vehicle being impounded is relatively new. So it was highly unlikely that any sort of jewellery would still be there. And the jewellery which I wore was large enough to be spotted from far off.

As I lay on the hospital bed that Saturday morning, I had a vision of Aunty Celeste. Now Aunty Celeste was an old lady whom I loved dearly. She took care of sick people and made some herbal medicine for me one time when I was very ill. She appeared to me, just outside my window, on the left side of my bed. She wore a white dress and looked as if she was suspended in the air. She said to me. ‘Your time has not come yet, God has need of you. Just trust and obey Him. Your time has not yet come.’ Then she disappeared. I began to cry and pray. I began to ask God the meaning of this? This was not my first encounter with having visions, with familiar people appearing to me or with me hearing the

voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me directly or to me through others. I was just thankful, even if it was me appearing to be hallucinating at the time because of the severe knock I got on the head. I was assured and thankful that I would not die that Saturday, my time had not yet come. I was grateful, scared, concerned and confused all at the same time, especially about the vision.

As a Christian, I know that I am led by the Spirit of God that dwells within me. I knew that I should pray steadfastly because I believe that nothing ever happens by accident, but that it is either initiated or allowed by God. I began to talk to God (as I was accustomed to)... I knew He had a plan for me, although I did not know what that plan was. I asked Him why this happened to me and why now, especially since my mum was still coming to terms with losing her father, my grandfather. But even as I prayed, the jewellery weighed heavily on my mind. I was overwhelmed about the mistake of taking them off and putting them on the dashboard of the car. The mistake was a costly one. However, each time I closed my eyes, I kept on seeing the pieces of jewellery in the car, but could not tell exactly where they were. It was like my mind would not let me forget what I had done. My head did not hurt except for when I tried to raise my head off the pillow. There was a bump on the right side of my forehead. If I did try to raise head, I felt as if the entire room was spinning.

When my doctors visited me on the ward that Saturday morning, I was told that I had suffered concussion and possibly whiplash, and that the CT scan which was ordered should show whether there had been any internal injuries to my head. My mother came to the hospital to see me around noon that Saturday. She told me that she, the owner of the vehicle and another friend of mine went to the police station to look for the jewellery. She said they kept looking because I said it was there but they did not find one single piece and that I should focus on feeling better and that I should keep praying to get better. She also said that I should not worry about the jewellery since getting better was more important.

I told her I felt sad because she and my aunt gave me those pieces of jewellery over the years. I also said to her that I kept seeing them and I know that they were somewhere in the car and that she should look again. She just looked at me with tears in her eyes and, as she shook her head, she said 'Themesa, just get better. Forget about the jewellery. Please, Themesa, you will make yourself sick.' While the tears streamed down both our faces, I told her about the vision of Aunty Celeste and what she had said to me. My mum just said 'Hmm!! Okay. Just keep praying, okay my child?' as she gently brushed my hair back with her the palm of her hand. She wiped my tear-filled face as hers remained wet

and said, 'Everything will be alright. Just get better, alright!'

At the end of visiting hours on Saturday evening, I was alone and I dozed off for a while. I heard a voice saying to me in a hushed tone, 'Why do you worry about things like your jewellery? I could replace those. I love you, I have need of you. Just trust me. I have need of you.' Don't worry about these little things.' I opened my eyes and glanced around the room. No one was close to my bed, the curtain around my bed was drawn and I was all alone. I heard the voice again saying, 'I have need of you, your time has not come. Why do you worry about your jewellery? I can replace them.' I immediately began to cry. While sobbing I said, 'Lord, I am sorry for thinking about my jewellery and for not focusing on you. It just hurts so much to know that my mum and aunty sacrificed to buy me these gifts and then I threw them away.' I cried myself to sleep.

The week went by and I still could not raise my head nor could I walk. The CT scan and X-ray results came back relatively normal. I had no internal injuries, but it was confirmed that I had a concussion and suffered from whiplash, an injury to my neck. My doctor decided that by Friday of that week I would be discharged from the hospital. Although I could not walk or raise my head, the doctor discharged me.

One week later, on the morning of Saturday, 21 May, my friend who was involved in the accident with me called my house and asked to speak with me. She said: 'Timmy, good morning. The police called and said that I could come for the car so I came up to the police station. I am calling to find out if you could remember the jewellery you were wearing.' She began: 'Was it two chains with your pendants, your three rings, your I.D. band and two pairs of earrings?' 'Yes,' I whispered softly. 'Well, I have everything here in my hand except a side of an earring. Timmy, what is interesting is that I picked these things up exactly where your mummy and friend were looking last week. I remembered because your mother got cuts on her fingers while searching through the broken glass. Anyway, I am at the police station now and I will pass by you on my way home.' I handed my mother the phone and told her that what my friend had said and that she would come to our house on her way from the police station. I was lying on a makeshift bed which my mum made up for me in the living room and yet again tears streamed down my face.

When my friend came to my house, she told us where and how she found the jewellery. She handed my mum a piece of tissue paper. When my mum opened the folded tissue, there was my jewellery, looking like they had just come out of the jewellery shop. They were shining and looked

like they had been polished. One pair and one side of earrings, two chains with two pendants, three rings and my I.D. band . My friend said they were all found in one place on the floor on the driver's side, among the broken glass. It was at this point that my mum showed me the cuts on her thumb and index finger which she sustained as she searched through the broken glass for my jewellery. My friend was crying and indicated that she was so sorry for what had happened to me. I remembered me saying to her not to worry and that the accident was not her fault because she did not see the van coming towards us. My mum's eyes welled up and she kept shaking her head from side to side, probably in disbelief, yet believing we just had a miracle.

When my friend left our house that day, my mum sat on the chair next to my makeshift bed and said that I should keep praying, that God loves me and I am truly a child of God, saved for a purpose. She then gave me a hug and said she had some sad news. With tears streaming down my face, I thought to myself 'God what are you up to? This is nothing but a miracle. I got my jewellery back, all but one side of an earring, oh my God!!I got my jewellery back. That which was lost was simply hidden from Friday 13 May, until Saturday, 21 May, from everyone until it was ready to be returned.'

Mum told me while on her way to the police station last Saturday morning to look for my jewellery, Joan called. Joan was one of Aunty Celeste's daughters. Silently I braced myself for the bad news. Mum continued, 'Joan called to say that Aunty Celeste died earlier that morning and that I should not tell you until you were discharged from the hospital.' My mind rushed back to the apparition I had of Aunty Celeste last Saturday morning. It was the same morning she appeared to me. I began crying even more. I was overcome with grief. I relived the memory of the apparition in which she spoke to me, of what the Holy Spirit placed on my heart and having need of me and of my jewellery being returned to me. 'There is nobody like Jesus. Thank you, Lord, for giving me back my jewellery. You love me, Lord.' I kept repeating these words as the tears streamed down my face. I also sang the words of this song. 'All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In his presence daily live. I surrender, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.'

It took me one full month to be able to walk again, and possibly another six to fully recover from the events of Friday 13 May 2015, but each morning I remembered God's favour upon my life and my faith in God grew even stronger.

This story gives the background to my research-making and an insight into why I value lived experiences and chose to acknowledge my position of faith. My academic identity, framed by this critical incident, taught me that at moments of abject difficulty I would nonetheless be able to go on. At the time when I needed to submit this thesis, the need to be able to continue through a period of almost total darkness descended upon me. As another critical incident threatened to paralyse the rest of my life, arrest my writing and impede completion of this work, I drew on the resources of the critical incident of the lost jewellery. As a critical incident most formative in the making of the scholar that I am, I could not leave it out of this thesis.

2.10. Conclusion

This chapter sought to produce a critical discussion to show the importance of using personal life stories to support adopting a critical approach to this research. Through the narratives presented, I have attempted to provide a rationale and justification for evolving a critical methodology in the development of this thesis and to show how my contribution to knowledge has grown out of direct human experience. Through using a critically reflexive approach in this chapter, I have sought to illustrate my journey of coming to understand the importance of using the self and personal life stories in the research process. During this process of storying my personal life history and building a relationship with my supervisors and with my academic self, I learned that theorizing personal history means taking straightforward accounts of situations or events which appear to be ‘typical’ rather than ‘critical’ at first sight, and rendering them as critical through in-depth analysis (Tripp, 1993, p. 25).

The Saturday walks which grew to comprise the principal forum for my supervision themselves evolved into stories, and thus demonstrate the potential to become critical incidents. The stories in this chapter were used to illustrate how experience embodies the reaction and interaction of individuals to and with their environment (Williams, 1951). The stories were presented to support one of the arguments to be built in Chapter

Three – that the notion of experience is linked directly to practise. The stories also show the importance of ensuring that experiences live fruitfully and serve creatively in understanding subsequent experiences (Dewey, 1939). Each story presented was specifically chosen because it represented, in one way or the other, the critical position put forward by Dewey, who argues that the experiences we have positively or negatively influence those attitudes which help us to decide the quality of our future experiences (Dewey, 1939). I feel the chapter also highlights a constant need to challenge the kinds of experiences we as educators provide for our students by inquiring into our practise through critical analysis. One could posit that the physical education experiences which I shared in my first story, apart from not having the effect of promoting desirable learning or future experiences, also had psychologically damaging consequences for me.

Applying a critical approach this early in the thesis not only provides a springboard for explaining the research process. It also clearly illustrates the motivation for me wanting to engage with a critical approach. Engaging in a reflexive process of data collection, and the use of critical incident analysis as a framework for analysing parts of my biography, allowed me the space to begin to critically analyze at a deeper level the extent to which my early physical education experiences influenced and shaped my present thoughts and actions.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORIZING EXPERIENCE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter One, I gave an insight into how some of my experiences as a physical educator at all levels of the education system, as well as of my initial teacher training, have been instrumental in the development of my career, and to a large extent, influenced decisions I made regarding my practise. In Chapter Two, I critically reflected on the initial phases of my research journey, and how elements of my personal history were used as a platform to initiate future discussions on the value of experience, as it relates to the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework that will assist me as I interrogate this practise and reconceptualise the way in which I have come to understand the meaning of physical education. I will provide arguments which not only support my understanding of practise, but which also challenge what I have come to understand as educational practise and what it means to truly engage in such. These discussions will be framed within a postcolonial context because such a lens allows me to interrogate ‘a set of circumstances which have produced a particular set of social ideas and social relationships (colonialism)’ (Wright, 2006, p. 59).

These initial sets of ideas are necessary since the main aim of the thesis is to develop a critical history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, a formerly colonized nation. Thus, it seeks to interrogate those elements of our colonial education which, within a colonial context, have become evident in shaping our educational practices and outcomes (Williamson, 1998). Additionally, postcolonial perspectives provide ‘a way of examining the influence of globalization and colonization on what counts in relation to physical education curriculum and pedagogies,’ (Wright, 2006, p. 61), and it is my intention to critically analyze some *taken-for-granted* perspectives of physical education which are situated within these contexts. As a kind of dislocating discourse,

postcolonial perspectives address theoretical questions about the extent to which dominant theories of physical education practices ‘have themselves been implicated in the long history of European colonialism and, above all, the extent to which these theories continue to determine both the institutional conditions of knowledge as well as the terms of contemporary institutional practices – practices which extend beyond the limits of the academic institution’ (Young, 1990, p. vii).

Discussions on the philosophy of experience as espoused by Dewey (1939), and the notion of practise (educational practise) and praxis by Carr (1995), will be presented. These ideas contribute individually and collectively to achieving the objectives of this research. In order to achieve the aim of this chapter, therefore, I will first present a discussion of postcolonial perspectives in relation to conducting educational research. Secondly, I will focus on discussing the notion of experience, articulated by Dewey (1939), as it relates to the principles of continuity and interaction. I will discuss how this notion of experience becomes important when interrogating issues involved in the decisions made in the practice of physical education.

The third part of the discussion presented in this chapter looks at understandings of ‘practise’ and how might the notion of educational practice be important to physical education debates. This will be addressed by drawing on the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Carr (1995; 2007), who advocate that educational practice is a socially constructed, culturally embedded, historically situated and morally informed action. The view that education is social and moral suggests, according to Carr (1998), that there is a reciprocal connection between education and society, each serving ‘to produce and transform the other’ (p. 326). Conceptualising physical education as a practice, places emphasis on physical educators adopting a more critical approach to their practice. I will argue that quality experiences in physical education can transform lives and contribute to developing and sustaining a physical culture as part of the cultural fabric of Trinidad and Tobago society. I will argue in this section that physical education is a vehicle through which the idea of mass participation successfully promotes building an

ideology of physical culture, not only as a part of the process of social transformation, but as an agent of this as well. Additionally, the notion of experience is linked directly to practise because the way in which we do what we do affects the kinds of experiences that we engage students in. Understanding our physical education practices are governed by a kind of practical knowledge, namely, the oral, the particular, the local and the timely, and that this knowledge is historically embedded in our educational traditions, encourages physical educators to see their subject as a practice. Finally, conceiving physical education as a form of praxis is important, as it gives me a set of ideas upon which I can begin to challenge and to reconceptualise some of the taken-for-granted notions about physical education which have been formulated not only through my own early educational experiences, training and continued professional development, but also through the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

3.2. Postcolonial Understandings of Physical Education

A central focus for me has been the challenge of using postcolonial perspectives to engage in physical education research. While physical education research drawing on poststructural and postmodern perspectives is relatively new, the use of a postcolonial approach seems scarce. I was able to identify one research conducted by the authors Hastie, et al., in 2006, of relevance. In addition, much postcolonial work within educational research focuses on discourses and practices relating to issues of social justice, decolonization struggles, knowledge and power, cultural subordination/domination, race and identity. These issues are most applicable to indigenous and minority communities within countries such as USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in countries which continue to struggle with the effects of colonization (Wright, 2006). Identified as a ‘set of debates’ postcolonialism seeks to challenge the failures of imagination that led to colonialism and its aftermath, by providing a vibrant space for the engagement in critical, even resistant, scholarship (Shohat, 1992).

‘The term ‘post’ suggests a temporal relationship with an ‘other’ that came before’ (Wright, 2006), denoting a disconnection, a disruption, a critical engagement with ‘a set of circumstances which have produced a particular set of social ideas and social relationships’ (p. 59). Trinidad and Tobago, a former colonized state, gained independence in 1962 and, since then, has been desperately seeking to cope with that temporal relationship in order to become master of its own destiny, struggling to shape a unique identity and a new vision for its people. Our postcolonial society represents a place of fusion, a place in which a colonial legacy remains entrenched within our culture and continues to influence many of our social and educational practices; a society which is increasingly becoming more complex, interlayered, and juxtaposed with other cultures around the world (Young, 2003). Postcolonial perspectives seek to examine how Western knowledge has become bound up with the construction of both colonial and postcolonial ways of knowing and acting (Briggs & Sharp, 2004).

Intellectual decolonization was an aspiration that the late Dr. Eric Williams had for the Trinidad and Tobago society, as he ushered us into independence. Palmer (2006) draws on the work of Williams, who argued that rejecting intellectual concepts and attitudes worked out by metropolitan scholars in the age of colonialism is necessary if we as a people are to break free from the shackles of colonialism. Since our colonial experience, there is a lingering assumption that physical education practices and ideologies of developed countries are still far superior or ‘that they are the norm – ‘knowledge’ in singular form – from which others deviate in their fallibility’ (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 622). The use of postcolonial perspectives assists in the process of deconstructing and unpacking ‘hidden colonial influences in the past and current beliefs and practices, those [which are Eurocentric and North American in nature] as well as those of our own’ (Kaomea, 2004, p. 32). Interrogating colonialism and that which came after, post colonialism, using postcolonial perspectives presents opportunities to also question any productive outcomes which may have occurred due to our colonial experience.

Engaging in this process of decolonizing and unpacking, supports Lavia’s (2006) description of postcolonialism as being an ‘aspirational project, intent on pursuing the

hopefulness that can be found in the imagination of [our society]' (p. 281). It is an aspirational project which echoes the work of Appadurai, who describes imagination as a 'social practice' deployed in our everyday lives, with the ability to influence, coerce and manipulate in order to refigure it (Appadurai, 1996). Postcolonialism is indeed an aspirational project in that it represents a kind of sociological imagination which sees postcolonialism not as the end of colonialism, but rather as an emancipatory project occurring after a certain kind of colonialism – a project which decolonizes the mind. Postcolonialism, in essence, is a discourse which desires to succeed at rewriting our histories, and re-representing our identity, 'by critically interrogating the colonialist ideologies structure western knowledge, texts, and social practices' (Giroux, 1992, p. 27). In light of this aspiration, the hopefulness of postcolonialism means:

more than rewriting and recovering suppressed stories and social memories of [a postcolonial society]; it means understanding and rendering visible the western knowledge encased in historical and institutional structures that both privilege and exclude particular readings, voices, aesthetics, authority, representations and forms of sociality (Giroux, 1992, p. 27).

Deconstructing, reconstructing, negotiating, recovering (Hall, 2001) past and present conceptions of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, though this might be problematic, is central to forging an emancipatory project which aspires to conceiving physical education as an educational practice. Being able to identify, establish and reconceptualise what constitutes legitimate educational experiences in physical education through an engagement in praxis is my aspirational project. It is a project which is based on my research, but the kind of research which allows me to engage with genuine lived physical activity experiences 'that have been played out (implemented) in the gymnasium, the playfield and the classroom ..., a research process which [takes us on a walk down memory lane taking] physical education knowledge from the absolute and eternal, to the specific and local' (Laker, 2003, p. 153).

Postcolonial perspectives can also be used to account for engaging in an analysis of the 'practices and traditions of physical education as they have evolved historically, and

continue to evolve, in concrete social, cultural and institutional contexts' (Reid, 1997, p. 10). Interrogating how our inherited colonial system continues to influence and perpetuate local policy development, as well as facilitating global policy shifts in education, as a new form of colonization, is critical. Wright (2006) discloses that countries that are struggling with the effects of colonization are more likely to have researchers like myself who are apt to use such perspectives because according to her it provides 'a way of examining the influence of globalization and colonization on what counts in relation to physical education curriculum and pedagogies' (p. 61). In agreeing with this view, I would further suggest that it also provides a way for me to interrogate my own practice as a physical educator, and to explore some taken-for-granted notions about the ways in which I have come to know various dimensions and conceptual views of physical education. There is also the potential of applying postcolonial perspectives to interrogate the ways in which the practice of physical education has been misrepresented by physical educators, and how the influence of imposed Eurocentric and North American values of physical education, as well as the influence of other international and transnational forces, have contributed to these taken-for-granted practices being perpetuated. As McCarthy, et al. (2003) suggest, postcolonial theory refers to the 'practice(s) of systematic reflection on dominate/subordinate relations produced in colonial and neo-colonial relations and encounters between metropolitan industrial and industrialized countries' (p. 45).

Postcolonial perspectives challenge what Wright (2006) identifies as 'the dominance of practices based on Eurocentric meanings about health and physical activity' (p. 61), and gives the space to critically examine physical education as an educational practice within a postcolonial setting. Again, the application of a postcolonial critique can demonstrate how these dominant practices of colonialism create and maintain power and control over the way in which physical education is practised and continues to be practised to a large extent. Challenging these Eurocentric meanings allow for the development of a sustainable practice for physical education which is aligned to the vision and objectives of an education within a democratic, participatory and

emancipatory society. This process of beginning to formulate new understandings of physical education which better serve our educational and societal needs involves a re-examination of past physical education practices, not only to discover where things went wrong and where they might have been set right, not necessarily to return to ways of the past, but to re-imagine better ways of engaging our practice in future (Brydon, 2006).

Finally, these perspectives emphasize elements of reflexivity, problematisation and moral deliberation about a set of situations and circumstances that have been conditioned by a colonial history, its continued legacy and by asymmetrical globalization. Postcolonial perspectives therefore allow me the leeway to trouble ways of thinking about physical education which are taken-for-granted. Physical education for us in Trinidad and Tobago cannot mean competitive sport, not least in my view because our nation, based on the size of our population, does not have the capacity and human capital to produce a significant number of world-class athletes. Additionally, because ‘chronic, noncommunicable diseases are collectively the leading cause of death and contribute to significant morbidity and health sector expenditures’ (Pan American Health Organization, 2012, p. 619) in our country, what physical education can mean, is an opportunity for schools to provide quality physical education lessons for all children. This kind of thinking about, and practise of physical education, has the potential to reduce the burden of chronic, non-communicable diseases (Pan American Health Organization, 2012). The results of the global school-based health survey conducted in 2007 revealed that 74.3% of our secondary school students who took part in the survey did not engage in physical activity in their leisure time (Pan American Health Organization, 2007). I argue, therefore, that we must begin to critically reflect and rethink the way in which physical education is understood and practised, so as to explore the possibilities of having a practise that facilitates successful engagement of all students in the kind of physical education that promotes lifelong physical activity engagement. Having such a practise will certainly be one of the comprehensive and integrated preventive and control strategies that can be used to increase physical activity

engagement among our school population (Pan American Health Organization, 2012).

So far, I have discussed why I have chosen to use postcolonial perspectives as one of my theoretical concepts to conduct my research. The main aim of the thesis is to develop a critical history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, a formerly colonized nation. In doing so, I seek to interrogate our physical education practices within colonial times, because these practices have inevitably shaped the practices which we now engage in as a postcolonial society. Because developing a historical account of physical education also means interrogating both policy documents and practise, the use of postcolonial perspectives enables me to examine how the influence of local, political and global economic forces dictate what counts in relation to the physical education knowledge of how physical education is conceived, understood, practised and valued.

Having selected postcolonial perspectives as the most appropriate frame within which to have these historically embedded discussions, I see pertinent issues emerging. As I reflect on the lived experiences of those individuals who have shared their stories with me, and which are presented later in the thesis, I am daunted by some of the issues that have emerged from the data. In Trinidad and Tobago we, as a nation, have indeed remained deeply scarred by the effects of colonization. The reigning colonial legacy, outlook, attitudes and philosophy seem to have seeped deep into the psyche of physical educators, creating an educational dependence on pedagogical practices. Some of the experiences shared in the life stories of these physical educators have been both educational and non-educational. This makes this next section on understanding experience another critical part of the overall development of the thesis.

3.3. Understanding Experience: What Counts?

My research seeks to gain critical insights into the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, by exploring the lived experiences of six physical

educators. The research process involves understanding how these physical educators have come to understand their practice through the experiences they have had, and critical interrogation of these experiences, in order to open up a dialogic space for new insights to be gained about the future practice of physical education. In this section, I discuss Dewey's (1939) notion of developing a philosophy of experience, with specific reference to his principles of continuity and interaction. Continuity refers to the experiences that an individual has which influence his/her future decisions for better or worse, and interaction refers to one's present situations being influenced by one's past as well as present experiences (Dewey, 1939).

Dewey (1939), in his seminal work on education and experience, argues that there exists a natural connection between education and experience, and that all genuine education comes about through experience, but this does not necessarily mean that all experiences genuinely or equally serve its purpose to educate. Experience in this context refers not only to what happens to individuals, but also refers to their being able to consciously understand and respond to whatever they encounter (Degenhardt, 1982). Contemporary physical education philosopher Arnold (1992) notes that 'no matter what else education may be concerned with, it is predominantly the development of knowledge and understanding' (p. 66). Consequently, if the purpose of education is primarily to develop knowledge and understanding and genuine education occurs through experience, then experiences that are non-educational according to Dewey (1939, p. 14) result in arresting or distorting further growth of experience; a lack of sensitivity and responsiveness; restricting the possibility of richer experiences in the future; promoting slack and careless attitudes; the inability to control future experiences; and a lack of connection to real life; as well as generating dispersive, disintegrated, centrifugal habits. Arguably, this confirms the idea of education being regarded as a practical activity (Carr, 2007; Carr, 1998; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Dewey, 1968). This practical activity, however, may not be considered as educational because the activity does not allow creative and fruitful future experiences; the existing practice is no longer satisfactory or successful; or because new conditions and forces begin to take place, with practice

being unable to respond appropriately (Langford, 1968). This in itself poses problems to those involved in the business of education and will be discussed later in this chapter.

I consider the notion of experience to be a complex concept. If experience represents a way of giving individuals opportunities to engage in activities or to expose them to events or people over a period of time, leading to the acquisition of some sort of knowledge, skill or understanding, then, contrary to Dewey's argument, all experiences are educational, since they achieve their primary objective. In trying to understand this notion of experience fully, however, I am simultaneously engaging in a process of reflexivity, as I question the extent to which my own educational experiences have influenced how I act presently and their connection with future experiences, as well as how I adapted, subdued or shaped the way others act based upon these experiences. Based on my initial reflection, I admit that, indeed, some of my own experiences did not prove to be beneficial at all. Additionally, from the perspective that one's practice is socially constructed and contextual, I agree with Salter (1999) that, although multiple realities, multiple approaches and pedagogies exist and are quite valid, not all educational practices can be considered equally valid and equally educational. It is therefore the quality of the experience which matters most, and not necessarily actually the act of having the experience (Dewey, 1939).

The quality of experience has two aspects ... an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and ... its influence upon later experiences ... The *effect* of an experience is not borne on its face. It sets a problem to the educator. It is his business to arrange for the kind of experiences which, while they do not repel the student, but rather engage his activities are, nevertheless, more than immediately enjoyable since they promote having desirable future experiences. Just as no man lives or dies to himself, so no experience lives and dies to itself (Dewey, 1939, p. 16).

As an advocate for inclusionary practices in physical education, I agree that there is a constant challenge to 'select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences' (Dewey, 1939, p. 17). I seek to accomplish this task by applying Dewey's philosophy of experience, to interrogate the experiences of

physical educators to show the kinds of quality experiences that would effectively promote future desirable experiences, and which will inspire the development of and maintenance of an appreciation for lifelong physical activity engagement.

The second part of this discussion considers Dewey's (1939) principles of continuity and interaction. These principles frame the theory of experience 'in order that education may be intelligently conducted upon the basis of experience' (p. 23). According to Trinidad and Tobago's health and physical education curriculum, a physically educated person must have the:

knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to incorporate physical activity into regular routines, leisure pursuits, and career requirements throughout life. Striving for an active, healthy lifestyle fosters personal growth, the enhancement of well being and the development of the individual's capacity to take a productive role in the society (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 26).

The tool that physical educators use to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and the capacity for individuals to be productive and enhance their development is experience – meaningful physical education experiences. Physical education is therefore dynamic by nature, immense in scope and fundamental to movement, expression and behaviour (Williams, 1998) and described by Bernstein (1967) as the ability of an individual to master his/her environment through interaction. Physical education in schools allow for education to be conducted based on experience, a process involving learning by doing, but as Dewey (1939) rightly suggests, not all experiences necessarily lead to education. At the moment, 'physical education is a negative and destructive experience for a significant number of students [and this] in itself [is] a condemnation of some practices we carry out in the name of physical education' (Gore, 1990, p. 104). This is one reason that the principles of continuity and interaction are being discussed, as it relates to experiences being genuinely educational. The other reason is that physical educators' interrogation of past experiences will assist in the development of new understandings about present situations facing physical education in schools, since these principles have implications for decisions about the future development of policy and practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dewey (1939) argues that adopting a theory of experience sets the stage for the selection and the organization of content, in a way that takes past experiences into account, and provides further quality, 'present experiences, that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences' (p. 17). Such experiences expand an individual's likely contribution to society in the future. Such a theory is genuinely needed if education is to be recognized and accepted as 'a development within, by and for experience, the more important it is that there shall be clear conceptions of what experience is' (Dewey, 1939, p. 17). Dewey further argues that experience must be purposeful, taking into consideration all elements involved in the teaching/learning situation. Every learning experience therefore, should not only be active, but each must depend on quality. 'Everything depends upon the quality of the experience to be had. The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences' (p. 16).

The principle of continuity of experience is recognized through habit and 'means that every experience both takes up something from [experiences] which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of [experiences] which come after' (p. 27). In essence, according to Dewey, 'just as no man lives or dies to himself, so no experience lives or dies to itself. Wholly dependent of desire or intent, every experience lives on in further experiences' (p. 16). This continuity principle reveals that each experience influences future decisions leading to the development of a pattern of behaviour that grows and becomes habitual. It must be noted, however, that though some kind of continuity must exist for experiences to qualify as having an educational effect, 'every experience affects for better or worse, the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences, by setting up certain preference and aversion, and making it easier or harder to act for this or that end' (p. 29).

Meaningful experiences must also be based on certain qualities if they are to qualify as genuinely educational. These qualities, namely values and habits, need to be interpreted

and understood clearly, since they are connected to educational experiences. In understanding educational outcomes, educational experiences viewed as intrinsically or instrumentally important (value) would result in the development of a tendency to act upon those experiences in the future (habit), exemplifying growth. Since growing is developing, only when such educational experiences contribute to continued growth can we say the principle of continuity is at work (Dewey, 1939). It is important therefore, that explicit connections be made between educational experiences that benefit individuals and the society as a whole presently, as well as those that can potentially perpetuate future educational experiences.

The second principle of the theory of experience is the principle of interaction. This principle takes into consideration that circumstances cannot be separated from experiences. Interaction refers to one's present situation serving a purpose of the interaction between one's past experience and present situation. What is interesting about this principle is that the inability to change or engineer the environment or conditions based on needs and abilities of individuals, as well as the inability of individuals themselves to adapt to a situation, may result in an experience being non-educational. Dewey (1939) argues that:

Individual life experiences are different, socially constructed and contextual, resulting in different effects at different points in time. One set of experiences may be beneficial for one, while for another there is no worth. An individual's ability to contribute effectively to a society, therefore, is critical and dependent on the judgements made on the effect of experiences on their past, their present and those they will have on future experiences. If, as Dewey suggests, education cannot necessarily be equated with experience and vice versa, then any education system which seeks to offer students true education for life must consider the crucial connection between education and experience.

To summarize, Dewey's theory of experience and his discussion of the principles of continuity and interaction prove useful to this research for more than one key reason. Firstly, education can be recognized as a practical activity because it seeks to discover possible solutions to educational problems. One such educational problem exists in the

area of physical education. Physical education is a term which is contested, ambiguous and fraught with issues related to the way in which it is understood and practised. In understanding such an issue, Dewey's theory of experience and principles can assist in helping to solve one of the basic problems that physical educators continue to encounter daily, that of making judgements about the kinds of experiences that would count as educational and valuable enough to encourage the mass population of students to make future positive decisions about engaging in lifelong physical activities.

Secondly, an interrogation of one's practice through reflection on all experiences, in my view is critical, because it takes account of past experiences and provides deeper insights into present experiences. This is of practical relevance because critical self-reflection reveals the kinds of experiences which had an educational function, as opposed to the kinds that did not. Once this process takes place, only then can educators begin to focus on rearranging future genuine and sincere experiences which are educational for students, which acknowledge their own past experiences and which give these students' opportunities that would propel, rather than restrict future growth. Such quality experiences will ensure the likelihood of them contributing as active members, toward the successful development of the society to which they belong.

Using Dewey's theory is also practically relevant to this research because it is perfect for scrutinizing life histories and narratives of physical educators. Through reflexive engagement with past and present experiences they are able to make sense of, and gain deeper understandings of, how they perceive the Eurocentric and other world views of physical education, and how varying conceptualizations of physical education have influenced their own development and the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, physical educators have a strong case for building an argument based on the theory of experience, suggesting that physical education in schools not only has an instrumental or extrinsic value, that is, where something outside the activity itself is qualified as having prime importance; but also as intrinsic as well, where the activity is seen as a good in itself. The theory of experience suggests that

physical education is indeed an integral part of the education process by virtue of the kinds of experiences afforded to its participants and because these experiences are sufficient in terms of the intrinsic value of knowledge and understanding offered, making them worthwhile, pursued for their own sake and not solely for some reason external to them.

3.4. Physical Education as an Educational Practice

The idea that physical education, like general education can be conceived as a practice, places emphasis on physical educators engaging in self-reflection in seeking to adopt a more critical approach to their practice. The continued shifts in the way physical education is conceptualized and practised, according to Salter (1999, p. 4), raises questions ‘about ‘how effective teaching’ and ‘quality physical education’ might now be regarded.’ Salter, as well as other advocates (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Gore, 1990; Tinning, 1991) like me, who argue for quality physical education in schools, continue to stress the fact that, as physical educators, it is our professional responsibility to engage in ongoing critique of our pedagogical practices. This process of critique is necessary since physical education in its present state is not homogenous in nature. It is dynamic, contested and perceived in many different ways. In order to even begin the process of unpacking and problematizing physical education, therefore, and in order to conceive it as a form of practice first and foremost, there is a need to understand more clearly this notion of educational practice in terms of the purposes of education for a democratic society such as ours.

Carr (1987) argues that education is a value-laden practical activity that is concerned with the promotion of human values and social ideals, which seek to address educational problems to which answers are not readily available (Langford, 1968). One of the major functions of education in a democracy is to prepare individuals with the opportunities to develop those intellectual and moral qualities of life (values) that are

necessary for them to willingly and meaningfully participate as productive citizens (social) in the future (Carr, 1991; Kelly, 1995). According to Carr (1995a):

What is unconsciously being acknowledged is that education in a democratic society always presupposes some purpose other than mere socialisation and that this presupposed purpose is to cultivate the capacity of future citizens to think for themselves: to deliberate, judge and choose on the basis of their own rational reflections (p. 75).

A democratic education therefore, engages individuals in acquiring the type of knowledge that 'deepen[s] their self-awareness, examines their existing desires, attitudes and beliefs, rid[s] themselves of ignorance, prejudice and superstition and so transform[s] themselves and the social context in which they live' (Carr, 1987, p. 30). Such educational experiences can only be facilitated by educators who are willing to engage in a process of critical self-reflection in order to gain forms of knowledge that are practically relevant and emancipatory to preserve this democratic state. This means more than simply engaging with technical and practical forms of knowledge. It means moving away from knowledge that regulates and controls students, and that which evaluates behaviours and interaction, to a more critical, emancipatory knowledge that seeks to create conditions for interrogation of social relationships with an aspiration to overcome and transform domination and oppression into collective action.

In light of the above discussion, education can be regarded as an educational practice that is socially constructed, culturally embedded, historically situated and morally informed action (Carr, 2007; Dewey, 1968; Carr, 2007; Carr, 1998; Carr, 1987; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The view that education is social and moral suggests, therefore, that there is a reciprocal connection between education and society, each serving 'to produce and transform the other' (Carr, 1998, p. 326). This view also concretizes not only this reciprocation, but it also makes explicit the relationship between education and experience, as mentioned in my earlier discussion on Dewey's theory of experience, as well as the relationship between experience and society.

These three concepts – education, society and experience – are interconnected and interrelated in very important ways. Only meaningful and sincere experiences can lead to valuable education and, as such, valuable educational experiences are gained by doing an activity. This practical activity, education, is facilitated through experiences delivered in the form of physical education and seeks to transform a society by perpetuating the attitudes, values and modes of behaviour which are appropriate for the active participation of individuals within such a setting. The belief that ‘all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race [and that] the process ... is continually shaping the individual’s powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habit, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions’ (Dewey, 1959, p. 19). It suggests that all education involves some doing (practical activity) and is acquired through some sort of valuable experience (interaction) done within a social setting (society) to promote future participation (continuity).

But what do we mean by practice in physical educational terms? Kemmis (1995) puts it simply – practice ‘is what we do. It is our work’ (p. 1). I extend this point of view further to say that practice can be likened to that of a concept. Practice refers to the general notion of the way in which I perceive how what I do is actually done and, for this reason, educational practice is therefore what I make it out to be. It is social, moral, socially constructed, based on educational traditions and past experiences, and it is ever-changing. Educational practice, as Kemmis (1995) rightly acknowledges, is ‘a form of power – a dynamic force both for social continuity and for social change which, though shared with and constrained by others, rests largely in the hands of teachers’ (p. 1).

As a physical educator, the concept of practice is just as ambiguous as the concept of physical education. As researchers from both schools of thought struggle with understanding these educational terms, I unapologetically express the view that one may never truly understand either concept, nor conclude that there ever be one ‘good practice’ or one ‘good physical education practice’. Even though I agree with Carr and

Kemmis (1986) that practice is socially constructed and that it is historically embedded and situated with a context, I would argue that, as physical educators, any form of practice, 'good' or otherwise, is dependent on the way in which individuals come to understand their own practice, as well as on their experience of the phenomenon. There are numerous discourses and pedagogies which advocate elements of 'good practice' in physical education, but, who is to say that these forms of practice are genuinely 'good' and that any one practice is better than the other, or even claim that there is a practice that has proven to be universally best, signifying the scenario of one practice fits all, for all purposes, in all situations and in all contexts? Agreeing that physical education is a practice which is socially constructed suggests that there is no universal practice for all students around the world and in all settings.

Lately, there are numerous physical education discourses with their advocates attempting to justify their particular discourse as a form of 'good practice.' Some of these physical education discourses include culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies; socially critically pedagogy (Kirk, 1986); performance and modest pedagogies (Tinning, 2002; Kirk, 1992; Tinning, 1991); sport pedagogies (Crum, 1986); (Siedentop, 1998; Haag, 1989); pedagogy for physical activity; P.E. pedagogy (Lee & Solmon, 2005); pedagogy for the body; pedagogy for health; pedagogical kinesiology (Hoffman, 1983) and participation pedagogies, all having some direct relationship to physical education. All of these can be considered to offer teachers a sense of 'good practice.' Imagining physical education as a practice encourages educators to adopt a more critical approach to their practice and ask questions in line with Tinning's (1987, p. 61) 'What are the implications of what I teach?' Asking such questions should engage physical educators in what Carr (1987) refers to as a critical educational practice, which seeks to encourage practitioners to treat their common sense knowledge as a subject of critical reappraisal.

What does this notion of critical educational practice mean for physical education as a practice? The very nature of physical activity seeks to challenge the hegemony of

modern rational assumptions about knowledge being viewed as written, universal, general and timeless, prevalent since the dualistic theory of mind and body to the extent that rationality excludes the oral, particular, local and timely lived experience of physicality (Estes, 2003). Estes argues that by viewing physical activity as something written, technical or prescriptive, an important aspect of physical education knowledge is eliminated. Secondly, human movement is best understood in the moment and is viewed as subjective. Each movement experience is meaningful, therefore, as it is lived out in its own case in nature and ought not to be represented as objective universalized numerical standards based on performance. Estes further argues that ‘physical activity is always local in the sense that it must occupy space when it occurs. Consequently, conceiving physical activity in this way suggests that ‘it is philosophically less valued in modern thought than theories that explain it’ (ibid, p. 5). Finally, all physical activity experiences are timely and are lived experiences in the moment. Attempts have been made to summarize these moments in timeless terms using social science techniques. Forcing timely movement experiences into the timeless world of modern thought, according to Estes (2003), would alter and even misrepresent the experience.

Critical self-reflection of such philosophical assumptions give physical educators a critical space to consider how their understandings of modern thought can distort and misrepresent not only decisions made regarding their practise, but also how these decisions affect how physical education is experienced when it is represented in ways other than in the oral, particular, local and timely lived experience of physicality. Conceiving physical education as a practice, gives physical educators opportunities to critically reflect not only on existing practices and pedagogies, and make critical decisions about the practices which would best facilitate genuine educational experiences. This notion also gives physical educators the opportunity to interrogate the moral commitment needed to make valuable judgements about what would count as an educationally sound and practically relevant practise. A practice that resonates within a participatory form of democracy whereby, from an early age, individuals become directly involved in the economic and social life of their country, contributing to

lifelong participation in physical activity to preserve the welfare of the society.

The theory of experience is linked directly to this notion of practise because the way in which physical educators carry out their practice affects the kinds of experiences that students have, and the kinds of experiences that physical educators engage their students in is influenced by their own experiences. It is apparent that engaging in self critique might eliminate some misconceptions about physical education and allow for deeper understandings and insights to emerge. Self-critique, according to Carr (1998), is:

a method which focuses on existing practices and which allows rational allegiance to be given only to those practices which can withstand critical confrontation with some shared understanding of educational values from this perspective, education would not be interpreted as a natural phenomena but as a historically- located culturally- embedded social practice which is vulnerable to ideological distortion, institutional pressures and other forms of non educational constraint. Critique is thus a method for evaluating the rationality of practice from a cogent and clearly articulated educational point of view. In this sense, it offers a method of self-evaluation which enables practitioners to reconstruct their practice as *educational practices* in a rational and reflective way (p. 35).

The way in which this method of critique offers opportunities for physical educators to engage in thinking about their own lived physical education and physical activity experiences, in light of Dewey's theory of experience and their practice, provides the theoretical background 'against which [physical educators can] explain and justify their actions, make decisions and solve problems' (Carr, 1995, p. 53). The teaching of physical education is a consciously performed social activity that relies on a way of thinking and acting. Coming into our own understandings of what we do and how we do what we do, is 'a way of thinking' that comes only through critical self reflection, thus making this process more than just a daily routine, or 'common-sense, 'craft knowledge'. It means more than 'what everybody knows' or the taken-for-granted assumptions about their practice (Carr, 1995). Engaging in a deeper level of criticality allows for the development of a kind of philosophy which Carr suggests 'is implicitly contained in the common-sense assumptions, values and beliefs underlying [our] everyday practical activities' (p. 53). The term philosophy refers to a set of beliefs, our

morals and values, which guides our conduct, gives direction to our personal and professional lives and which allows us to engage in a process of critical examination, reasoning, and speculation (Wuest & Bucher, 2002).

Educational philosophies that represent common-sense assumptions can also be challenged by engaging in praxis. Conceiving the teaching of physical education as a form of praxis engages physical educators in a personal dilemma of making decisions about their level of commitment ‘to their educational task ... to have the educational character of teaching as an ultimate professional concern ... [and to] maintain the right to make independent judgements free from external coercion and pressures’ (Carr, 1995, p. 59). In essence, ‘praxis is about philosophy viewing itself in the mirror of practice’ Balibar (1995) as quoted in Lather (1998, p. 497) an interrogation which taps into the moral responsibility and commitment of physical educators to speak and act in ways that reflect their own values (Bain, 1997) and the values of our democratic society.

3.5. The Nature of Physical Education as Praxis

Conceptualizing physical education as a form of praxis is key to understanding what it might look like in the future, as well as what values physical educators such as myself may attach to this contested term, based on our colonial and postcolonial experiences. Drawing on Carr’s (1989) argument that education is a practical process, I argue that physical education is a practical process and that when this notion of praxis is applied to the practice of physical education – one’s own practice – only then can one truly appreciate and engage reflexively to shape, change, re-imagine and gain new perspectives about notions of physical education which have been taken for granted. By definition, praxis, according to Freire (1970), is the reflection and action of individuals upon their practice world in order to transform it, while Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that ‘praxis remakes the conditions of informed action and constantly reviews action and the knowledge which informs it. Praxis is always guided by a moral disposition to act truly or justly’ (p. 33). Conceiving physical education as a form of

praxis therefore means that educators are in constant dialogue with themselves, as they attempt to deconstruct what they have come to know and accept as physical education practice, and act upon this dialogue by beginning to consider making morally informed and morally committed judgements based on their engagement in such a critical form of reflection.

In understanding the term praxis, it must be noted that it is different from the way we use the term 'practice' as we engage in our everyday practical activities as physical educators. Carr (1995) succinctly captures Aristotle's distinction between two forms of socially embedded human actions, namely praxis (practical) and poiesis (productive). Poiesis refers to a kind of making or instrumental action which has a specific result already in mind, prior to the action taking place. Poiesis therefore, has a beginning and end, and it is an activity that requires a kind of technical knowledge or expertise, referred to as *techne*. Praxis, on the other hand, although also directed at a specific end, aims not to produce a specific result, but to realize some morally worthwhile good, making it a cyclical process of reflection and action. Like von der Lippe (1997), I also believe in the capacity of human beings to engage in dialogue, reflect and act as we struggle for what is just and right. As physical educators, we are in a privileged position to bring about change and therefore must be able to act on that premise. Not being able to engage in and act on this premise suggests that our lives would be reduced to the past, and the meaning of our lives 'will be determined by the already-gone-by, unchangeable history, not by the possibility of a better future' (von der Lippe, 1997, p. 36).

This notion of praxis is important to my research process, as I seek to interrogate taken-for-granted perspectives of my mentors with the aim of reconceptualising ways of thinking about physical education. Praxis is a process of thought and morally informed action which, when acted upon, allows for histories to be re-written and stories to be retold, ultimately changing the knowledge base that informs it (Tierney & Sallee, 2008). New thoughts about how physical education should be taught in schools are created by

reflecting and acting on, for example, past and current experiences and practices of physical education as Sport, so that taken-for-granted perspectives such as this can inform new realities about how we might represent the subject so that perceptions and attitudes are changed. Viewing the practice of physical education as a form of praxis suggests, therefore, that physical education in schools seeks to shape the relationship between theory and practice in a way that allows for the production of a kind of emancipatory knowledge which has remained relatively untapped (von der Lippe, 1997).

What, therefore, is the value of praxis for me as a physical educator? Producing such emancipatory knowledge means engaging in praxis at a level whereby I begin to interrogate not only my practice but also my identity. An identity represented by my persona or social mask in which I conceal myself, and the shadow of that mask, or the ‘unconscious contents that are deemed unacceptable in whatever circumstances [I live]’ (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1997, p. 76). Being able to engage in praxis in order to produce this emancipatory knowledge or kind of freedom, I must therefore be able to objectively observe my projections, reflect back and engage in a self-critique of my actions as I interrogate my persona and shadow. Yandell, as quoted in (Neumann, 1997), argues that:

critical judgement is not necessarily shadow projection. But when the finger is pointed, it is useful to look not only at where it points, but also back at the finger pointer to see what motivation and benefit might reside there. Self-evaluation by denouncing others is so tempting and gratifying, and so universal, that no condemnation of apparent evil should be taken entirely at face value (p. 4).

Fahlberg & Fahlberg, (1997) suggest that accepting the role of the unconscious (shadow of the mask) allows us the freedom to engage in critical self-reflection.

3.6. Conclusion

In light of the discussion in Chapters One and Two, this Chapter examined the theoretical concepts to be used in the interrogation of the practice of physical education. From a philosophical standpoint, this chapter developed a theoretical framework for this research and showed how postcolonial perspectives, the theory of experience, and understandings of physical education as an educational practice are central to developing a more critical approach to the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. The fundamental assumption of this thesis is that physical education has the potential to successfully transform and reproduce a society. A central thrust of the thesis is the development of a more critical approach to the practice of physical education. A critical understanding of the development of physical education is therefore needed in order that physical educators begin to critically reflect on and rethink their practice in order to reconceptualise a more critical approach to their practice. This chapter has provided arguments which support my understandings of practice, but has also sought to challenge my assumptions about educational practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1. Introduction

Stories help to make sense of, evaluate, and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past with the present, the fictional with the ‘real’, the official with the unofficial, the personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected. Stories help transform the present and shape the future for our students and ourselves so that it will be richer or better than the past (Dyson & Genishi, 1994, pp. 242-243).

In Chapters One and Two, I shared excerpts of my personal life and my positionality respectively and have shown how these have influenced my practice. These stories were used firstly to illuminate how past and present experiences influence future experiences, as well as life and career choices, and secondly, to establish the use of ‘critical incidents’ as a methodological strategy for making sense of my life. Chapter Three developed a theoretical framework for my thesis. I identified and critically discussed a number of themes that are central to developing a more critical approach to the practice of physical education as an aspirational agenda for developing physical education in Trinidad and Tobago in the not-too-distant future. The following were the key research questions which I sought to address.

1. How have the experiences of a small group of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago drawn from childhood and career experience influenced their professional judgements as educators and administrators?
2. What can the analysis of the critical policy incidents of six physical educators tell us about the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago?
3. Can better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago be promoted through the development of a critical approach to practice? If so, how can such an aspirational agenda be achieved?

In this chapter, I continue to engage in a reflexive process as I describe and justify the methodology and methods used in this research. As mentioned above, I position myself

as being interested in subjective perceptions of human behaviour which offer multiple realities and interpretations of physical education. I am of the firm view that human behaviour is socially constructed and socially embedded within social contexts (Carr, 1987) and that ‘there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities of interpretation of a single event’ (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). Trinidad and Tobago, as a small state, relies heavily on oral forms of knowledge and practices as a means of articulating reality, and so this process of social construction sees human action as becoming more meaningful to members of our society in different ways. Before I describe and justify my methodology, I briefly discuss how my anxieties regarding the use of my personal history and those of physical educators for developing a research project about physical education were eased, through the work of sociologist C. Wright Mills.

I began this journey with a conceptual map and thoughts of wanting to know. I wanted to know how physical education evolved and thought the most appropriate way to do so would be through the lived experiences of physical educators. I was also encouraged by the views put forward by C. Wright Mills in his chapter on *Intellectual Craftsmanship*, in which he suggests that there be constant examination and interpretation of our life experiences during our engagement with intellectual work (Wright Mills, 1959). His work is fundamental to the development of my research, as it provides support for my decision to use qualitative approaches to gain critical insights into how one’s past interacted with and affected one’s present, and how they both assisted in situating my own, as well as six physical educators’ future experiences. Even while developing an appreciation for research and the complex processes involved in research, C. Wright Mills provided me with a foundation for understanding why the ideas of research from a positivist standpoint, designed for cause, effect and proof assumptions (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), is not appropriate and does not support my interest for this research.

I do acknowledge that quantitative approaches can provide me with statistical data related to students’ participation in physical education or physical activities. However,

in order for me to develop a critical historical account of physical education as well as understand and interpret people's experiences of physical education in order to influence a change in practice, qualitative approaches must be employed. My approach to this research is based on the assumption that research is a complex process, in which multiple realities of a phenomenon are explored and contribute to understandings of the ways in which human lives and the society to which they belong become interwoven. It is for these reasons I have chosen to use qualitative inquiry, adopted a critical life history approach and utilized life stories as my data source for this research.

4.2. Methodology

A paradigm refers to 'a set of basic beliefs' that represent a worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). My methodology is situated within the qualitative paradigm because critical, interpretive, and subjective beliefs are privileged most (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Sikes, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). My decision to use a qualitative methodology to conduct this research was based on my belief that those explanations of human behaviour which I am interested in can only be understood by referring to the subjective states of those acting in it and not through examining an observable being to produce objective knowledge (Wellington, 2000). My interest 'in uncovering the meaning of a particular phenomenon for those involved... in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences' (Merriam, 2009, p. 5) also influenced my decision to engage with a qualitative inquiry. I wanted to know if my own experiences of physical education are similar to other physical educators and whether there are commonalities in the meanings ascribed to the experiences had. Understanding how physical educators' early experiences of the subject influence their professional judgements, how these lived experiences contribute to the historical development of physical education, and how meaningful experiences of physical education can influence the development of a more critical approach to the practice of physical education, are three questions which generally support the use of a qualitative methodology.

A qualitative methodology was best suited as a means to produce knowledge from insider perspectives on the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I chose to use this form of inquiry, because it is useful in examining perspectives, shared meanings and developing insights (Wellington, 1996) into the practice of physical education in order to inform future practice. In the context of this research, qualitative inquiry has a number of features that are important to me. These features are that qualitative inquiry is based in ethnographic practices of fieldwork; it is interpretive; experiential; situational; personalistic; and has an orientation towards the practice of transformation (Stake, 2010; Creswell, 2007).

4.3. Adopting a Critical Approach

Critical educational research seeks to ‘challenge those conventional knowledge bases and methodologies that make claims of scientific objectivity... by attempting to reveal socio-cultural specificity of knowledge and to shed light on how particular knowledge’ of physical education is acquired and used in the future (Jupp, 2006, p. 52). Developing a critical historical account of physical education means interrogating how past experiences and conditions influence present and future experiences and conditions (Schensul, 2008). I am concerned with the way physical education in schools was and is experienced, understood and practised, and so chose to address these concerns by critically engaging with the life histories of the six mentors. It is my desire for my work to influence physical education teachers to begin to critically reflect on their current practices and to reconceptualise the way in which physical education is understood and practised by engaging in an authentic and critical dialogic process, thus making it critical (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This critical reflection develops a sense of critical consciousness and includes not only a critique of their present condition and practice of physical education, but also calls for action.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) refer to this process as having ‘emancipatory interests’. My interest in such an agenda has grown out of ‘the work of the imagination’ (Appadurai,

1996) and the ‘radical imagination’ (Cookson Jr, 1994) to do something positive, to make a difference, to become involved in a process of producing ‘some morally worthwhile ‘good’ for the future benefit of Trinidad and Tobago’s society (Carr, 1995, p. 68). The main argument of this thesis is that teachers begin to critically reflect and rethink their practice of physical education as having the potential to successfully transform and reproduce a society through mass participation. A critical approach is therefore central to the development of my empirical chapters.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that adopting a critical approach to educational research is human, social and political. Human, because it represents a practical activity which facilitates the social construction and development of deeper levels of critical consciousness through self-critique and reflection. Social, because the dynamic social processes of communication and interaction shape our practice; and it is political because ‘what is done depends on the way social processes of knowing and doing in particular situations are controlled’ (p. 146). These processes however, I argue, are based directly upon an individual’s experience and interaction with his/her environment. Critical educational research therefore, seeks not only to address the ways in which we interact with and interpret our experiences, but also seeks to show how such research can contribute to one’s liberation.

Liberation is a word which Caribbean author Lamming speaks of in his writing in relation to the task of the Caribbean intellectual (1992). Lamming recognizes liberation as a process that utilizes opportunities presented, to free the intellectual self and society from various forms of ideological imprisonment (Op cit). I adopt a critical approach to conducting this research on physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, to provide me with the space for challenging the concept of physical education I have come to know and understand. I consider my liberation as further freeing my thinking from the dominant ideologies and colonial legacies that continue to dictate the way in which physical education is conceptualised and perceived, and which remains a dilemma for the postcolonial subject.

My interpretation of this liberation of which Lamming speaks, is likened to that of ‘intellectual decolonization’ (Palmer, 2006, p. 18), a term used by Williams (2006, p. 18), referring to individuals’ pursuit of freedom from the way ‘colonial experience shaped the colonized, [postcolonial subject,] in psychologically and damaging ways’. Pursuing this line of argument, is in itself, a practice of freedom from the taken-for-granted forms of knowledge, which I have come to know and understand and which is based on our colonial experience. These forms of knowledge refer to those lingering colonial assumptions and influences that Eurocentric and North American practices of physical education are the ‘norm- knowledge’ (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 662).

This process of liberation, according to Lamming (1992), and that of intellectual decolonization, according to Eric Williams, are tasks requiring more than letting go of knowledge considered universal, familiar, or sometimes indoctrinated (that which discourages critical thought) knowledge that remains embedded in one’s life and one’s history. Liberation challenges us to create new forms of knowledge with the understanding that we could never be completely sure of the eventual product and how successful this new creation would be. This process sets our minds in motion to challenge how we come to know about something and where we got this knowledge from, as well as our ability to reconceptualise and construct future forms of knowledge. This concept was pertinent to my research because it allowed me to use the lived experiences of six physical educators to produce knowledge about the history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago as well as to rethink our practise. The nature of the inquiry provided a systematic way in which to claim ‘the right to research - to gain strategic knowledge -’ (Appadurai, 2006, p. 167) that would further advance the development of the subject.

Engaging with life histories of physical educators from Trinidad and Tobago, who possess an in-depth knowledge of the history of physical education, acts as a liberating force for me to illuminate the potential for this research to produce desired, situated and contextual forms of knowledge for the benefit of our society. Based on my

understanding of Lamming's argument, liberation, in this sense, requires self-interrogation or at least interrogation of connections between the life history and the wider political and social context (See Freire, 1970). I conclude, therefore, that in order to engage with these voices to produce varying forms of knowledge, it was important to understand these connections.

4.4. Adopting a Life History Approach

I adopted a life history approach (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Faraday & Plummer, 1979) for this research because I am interested in understanding the experiences of physical education through the lives of six physical educators, in order to produce a written historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. This process of understanding behaviour and actions, according to Benyon (1985, p. 164), is like fitting pieces of a puzzle together while making sense of the 'shifting sands of careers and professional lives.' I use the term 'life history' (Bertaux, 1981) as opposed to other terms offered by Bertaux (1981) such as 'life story', 'story' 'narrative', 'autobiography' and 'biography' because for me, life history represents a more 'collaborative venture, reviewing a wider range of evidence' (Goodson, 1992, p. 6) of one's life. For me life history refers to the 'life story located within its historical contexts' (Goodson, 1992, p. 6). It is a more specific term that describes 'an extensive autobiographical narrative' (Chase, 2005, p. 652) that locates a life story in conjunction with a broader contextual analysis. Using this approach provided me with the space to focus on the meanings attached to historical events and the insights that can be gained from exploring the lives of those who lived through these events (Thompson, 2000). This choice served the interests of my research and followed the principles of qualitative research. It allowed me 'to explore the subjective reality of teachers in a way that respects their uniqueness and allows them to speak for themselves [and this, to my mind,] is a major strength of life histories which cannot be ignored' (Sparkes & Templin, 1992, p. 121).

Life history work critically engages researchers in continuously scrutinizing and interpreting the lived experiences of individuals, in order to make meaning of these experiences (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). My mentors had varying life experiences that were socially constructed, and embedded within a particular historical context (Faraday & Plummer, 1979). Conducting life history interviews with them would therefore illuminate understandings of physical education at different points in time in their lives. Thus, a mirror of society exists in each biographical account of an individual's life. This biographical account is referred to as a life history and represents an account of a series of events that make up the life of an individual. Inquiring into such an account could be seen as a deliberate attempt to make theoretical sense of the development of this life within the context of his/her cultural environment (Dollard, 1935). Each event may represent different stories, created through the interaction of personal and social experiences, which, when critically examined, show how the self is socially constructed.

This intersection of the personal and socio-historical has the potential to produce more forms of knowledge, which could be recognized worldwide (Laslett & Thorne, 1997). When one's personal and social lived experiences are shared through the medium of a story, they become affirmed, modified and re-created (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) and could be used to transform lives. The life history approach gave me both access to oral accounts of my mentors' lives, and historical insights into, and subjective perspectives of, the practice of physical education. These oral accounts mirror one of the characteristics of Trinidad and Tobago's society. Storytelling is part of the culture and tradition of Trinidad and Tobago. Stories are used in my research as a form of producing knowledge and as a tool for sharing this knowledge about physical education. Individuals love to hear a good story because '[we] live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi). We also love to hear stories because Trinidad and Tobago does not have a rich culture of research and documentation, and so information is not always readily available in the form of written text on any imaginable issue. 'People shape their daily lives by stories

of who they are and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477).

With this understanding life history, I actively solicited the assistance of six physical educators who expressed their willingness to share stories about physical education which have not been officially documented or published. I attempted to interpret and make sense of physical education in schools through their lived experiences. I used the life history approach to construct the life histories of these physical educators by employing life history interviews and reflexivity to do so. I co-constructed these life histories with six physical educators because of my interest in understanding physical education, in critical policy incidents that facilitated its development and in developing a more critical approach to the practice of physical education. I wanted to critically reflect on and make sense of the practice of physical education in order to sustain my argument that physical educators need to critically reflect on and rethink the kinds of physical education experiences the subject provides.

In Chapter Two, using a process of reflexivity, I showed how some elements from my life history evolved through a process of interpretation and analysis in order to conceptualise critical incidents. I have also used the same process to interpret and analyse the life histories produced by six physical educators and myself. Each incident was conceptualised from their life histories and created opportunities to gain further insights into understanding and interpreting their past experiences. The incidents I conceptualised showed how life history research can assist in understanding and making meaning of one's experiences against a backdrop of 'wider socio-political and historical contexts and processes' (Biesta, et al., 2005, p. 4). I also illustrated how my own lived experiences of physical education shaped my research agenda, and how these experiences were pivotal to constructing authentic forms of knowledge within a situated context. The initial stories presented in Chapter Two served to establish this dialogic relationship between the past and present. Such 'retrospective shaping', as Laslett and Thorne (1997, p. 2) suggest, allowed me to use representations of the past to be

reconfigured as a conscious act of remembering and re-presenting. Though life histories allowed me to review the past in order to gain new perspectives, they did not exclusively focus on the past, but they also assisted in providing a greater self-awareness into present understandings and future considerations.

I continued to engage in this chapter reflexively, as I cannot isolate my thoughts, my assumptions and myself, from the research process. I view myself therefore as a ‘human instrument’ (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005), inquiring into my own lived experiences of physical education as well as those of other physical educators. This process of inquiry signals to me the importance of taking into account my own position, interpretation and cultural orientations of the social world of which I am examining. Not only am I a human instrument in this research process, but sharing my own biography and lived experiences of physical education as a participant in the field suggests that the life history approach also has a strong affinity with the principles of ethnographic research. This research followed some of the same features of ethnography as I immersed myself within a particular culture as an active participant. The difference, though, is that a life history approach added a certain ‘historical and subjective depth’ to the overall research process (Woods, 1985, p. 13).

How do physical educators view themselves in relation to the historical context of their work? What are these physical educators’ perceptions of their lived experiences? To what extent have these experiences shaped their identity as physical educators? The history of physical education is embedded within the lives of six physical educators and, in order to make sense of and retrieve this history, the life history approach proved to be most appropriate. The only way I could make sense of physical education was through the experiences of these physical educators, and the only way I could make sense of their lives was through the lenses of their own experiences. Listening to how individuals talk about the story of their life within their specific context of physical education in schools, and finding meaning from these stories as they are told, was more meaningful to me than the using of predetermined scientific measures and technical terms (Goodson

& Sikes, 2001). Unlike written works, spoken tales show ‘the autobiographical impulse to be a consequence of social being, of having a memory, of an unquenchable thirst for meaning’ and therefore cannot be differentiated from the way we live (Rosen, 1998, p. 4).

While Benyon (1985) argues that stories told have the ability to fill huge gaps in our understanding of human behaviour, and can assist in the production of knowledge, Erben (1998) views them as vital entry points. I used these entry points to answer important questions, give greater insights and develop key themes as I made further inquiries into various aspects of physical educators’ personal and social life. Rosen (1998) suggests that ‘all human beings are incorrigibly autobiographical’ (p. 1) and their lives, which are located within their culture in an exceptional way, do not only remain as part of the process of that culture’s reproduction and change. Being able to engage with such a life is priceless and can offer different perspectives from other forms of qualitative inquiry. Hatch & Wisniewski (1995) conducted a survey with a group of experts in the area of narrative and life history who were asked to reflect on the distinction between ‘life history’ and ‘narrative’ and the relationship of narrative and life history to other qualitative approaches. The sentiments expressed by one respondent resonated with me:

the ability of life history to focus upon central moments, critical incidents, or fateful moments that revolve around indecision, confusions, contradictions, and ironies, gives a greater sense of process to a life and gives a more ambiguous, complex, and chaotic view of reality. It also presents more “rounded” and believable characters than the “flat”, seemingly irrational, and linear characters from other forms of qualitative inquiry (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p. 116).

In what follows, I describe how I identified my sample for this research and introduce them.

4.5. My Mentors (The Sample)

The history of physical education in Trinidad Tobago is embedded within our culture and can only be appropriately represented and understood through engaging with lived experiences – my own and those of my former teachers, lecturers and supervisors. This research could not become a reality had it not been for the contribution of six individuals (two men and four women) whom I refer to as mentors. I refer to them as mentors because they have all motivated me in one way or another to pursue physical education as a career and they have contributed significantly to my personal and professional development as a physical educator. Their positions of authority over the years have also allowed me the opportunity to question decisions and professional judgements they have made in the interest of physical education. These mentors all possess a wealth of key knowledge about physical education, most of which cannot be found in written texts or documents. It is for these reasons that I view these individuals as more than research participants, informants or interviewees. I chose these individuals to be part of my research because of their experience and invaluable knowledge of physical education, as well as their extensive contribution to the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

In light of this, I found that purposive sampling was the most appropriate sample type to use for my study because each of my mentors met the specific criteria (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) of possessing the knowledge of how policy and practice of physical education evolved over time. As previously mentioned, there is no documentation of a thorough history of physical education, but an oral one exists. My inquiry into the lived experiences of these mentors, as well as how their lived experiences influenced their professional judgements as educators, allowed me to locate and represent as text, a detailed historical account of physical education. I was able to extract this historical account from within each life history as my mentors told the story of their lived experiences, from childhood to adulthood as students, teachers and administrators. I also inquired into the lived experiences of these educators in order to identify critical

policy incidents that contributed to this historical development of physical education in schools. An analysis of my mentors' life histories unearthed those critical policy incidents. My mentors were handpicked, a feature of purposive sampling, (Cohen, et al., 2007) for these reasons and because very few individuals in Trinidad and Tobago possess the kind of knowledge required to gain insights into the development of physical education. In this sense, those making up the sample were self-selecting.

All six mentors have common but unique experiences of physical education and have been in positions of power and authority throughout their professional lives. These positions allowed them to be directly involved in the process of developing and implementing policy, in experiencing shifts in policy and practice of physical education for many years. I was interested in hearing their stories, their experiences of and their perspectives on physical education throughout their lives and careers. Each of them held key positions of authority within the educational system of Trinidad and Tobago, and during the last five years, three have retired but have continued to hold positions of influence within our society. Finally, they all have been privy to much privileged information on physical education, having worked closely with earlier pioneers of physical education, some of whom have passed on.

4.6. Introducing Six Physical Educators

Four female and two male physical educators are the focus of this research. All individual names, university names, professional titles and other identifiable features are presented in pseudonym form for reasons which will become clear. While all of them have been recipients of prestigious academic and professional awards, four of them were able to pursue academic studies in physical education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as a result of these awards. Five have studied for MA and/or PhD degrees at overseas universities, while one acquired their qualifications through distance education programmes. As practitioners of physical education, they have had experience at various levels of the education system and have held several senior positions in

teacher education, administration and curriculum development for most of their professional lives. They have all lectured in higher education locally, regionally and internationally. One of them was elected to one of the highest positions in national office and represented the national body of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, while another is a diplomatic official. Three of them received professional teacher training at one of the local teachers' training colleges, with two becoming lecturers at one of them. The one who did not receive professional teacher training was promoted from being a secondary school teacher to lecturer, then to an administrative post at one of the colleges and subsequently administrator at one of the university campuses in Trinidad. Three of them have retired while three are currently working in highly recognized administrative positions in the area of education, physical education or sport. In this group, there were three athletes who gained international recognition and who also became professionally certified coaches in their respective fields. They are all familiar with each other and four of them have been colleagues at one point in time. Pseudonyms were adopted by the participants to reflect their own mentor's involvement in their lives, however, the dilemma of identification remained an issue to be dealt with. In my first draft of this chapter, I found myself giving many details about these individuals, particularly those which related to their qualifications and extensive experience. What follows is another incident, again drawn from my own experience, which assisted me at this point in my attempts to justify my initial decision to give very detailed introductions to each of my mentors:

I accepted a position as a lecturer in physical education at the university responsible for educating pre- and in-service teachers. The then campus coordinator indicated that all lecturers should explore opportunities for volunteering their expertise in other departments and developing transferable skills to support students and colleagues. Although I had a number of options, I chose a particular area since I felt that it was an area closely related to my specialized subject and the content areas were familiar to me. I approached Dr. D the head of the department I chose. He was a young man who had recently graduated with a PhD. I expressed my interest and willingness to sit through teaching sessions, departmental meetings and shadow colleagues intermittently, whenever I was free. I wanted to enhance my portfolio of experience, and to gain some insights into become a more effective teacher educator. His first

question to me was; 'What is your area of specialization?' Excitedly, I quickly replied; 'physical education'. 'Or that... PE... Oh I see (sigh).' he replied. 'Well what makes you think you could teach [this area]? Who sent you to me? I mean my department has veterans, so what makes the coordinator or anyone else even think that you, I mean someone with a Phys Ed. background could teach [in this area]?' He quickly dismissed himself, but promised me that he would speak with the coordinator before making a final decision and that he would get back to me. He also strongly suggested that I think about working with another department. Of course, he never got back to me and literally avoided direct or indirect contact with me until I left the university some one year later.

In my first draft of this thesis, I attempted to introduce my mentors explicitly and it was to my mind an emotional off-spill of a reaction to this (above) critical incident. I wanted my audience to know the status and qualifications of my mentors and to recognise their positions of authority in my research. However, in doing so, too many identifiable features were present within each of the introductions done. This above incident, which I conceptualise as critical, brings back memories and generates feelings of negative emotions in me. I use this incident to illuminate my feelings of not being valued and recognised as a professional from as early as 1995. When I began my teaching career I was referred to as the 'games teacher', 'sports mistress' or 'sports teacher'. These were titles which I felt uncomfortable with because, although I am aware that sport is an integral part of the physical education curriculum in schools, I believe that physical education is the foundation upon which sport is built, and I would have much preferred to be known as the 'physical education teacher' or 'P.E. teacher'. Maybe this was because this term sounded, to me, more professional, more valued, more academic. Maybe it was because, as a student and then as a teacher, I would hear other teachers and later colleagues commenting that 'sports teachers' get paid to play, go to sports meetings and never taught because they were always out of school.

The perception I had of this encounter with the department head was that he frowned on my position as a physical educator, and that I should not be taken seriously. These conjured up very uncomfortable feelings. I felt like I was being 'othered/branded as

inferior’, even though I held a lectureship position at a university. My identity seemed to be different from ‘other’ lecturers. I felt marginalized to some extent because of my career choice. In my view, the department head had a particular view about physical educators and based on this social construction decided that my contribution to knowledge was not valuable – at least not through the eyes of this specialist. I struggled to have my status approved and my credibility in the ‘education club’, an elusive goal that even as a university lecturer, seemed impossible to attain. Was I different from other lecturers on the campus who possessed their masters’ qualification and who were doctoral candidates like myself? Was I being marginalized or excluded because of my decision to become a lecturer of physical education? The emotions and questions that this encounter evoked were too numerous to mention. I turn now to my six mentors.

Cliff, at 66, is my oldest mentor and is a retired university administrator. He was an external examiner for physical education and supervised a number of student teachers. Before becoming an administrator, he was actively involved in teaching and supervising in-service teachers in physical education. The recipient of an athletic scholarship, he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in physical education from universities in the United States. Upon his return to Trinidad and Tobago, he was selected to function as a Carifta Games and Pan American Games athletics coach. He taught physical education at the secondary level for approximately three years before accepting a lectureship position in physical education at one of the local teachers’ colleges. He sat on numerous educational boards and had an interest in teacher education for student teachers interested in teaching physical education for both primary and secondary schools. He has prepared and presented a number of academic papers in physical education and other fields within Trinidad and Tobago’s education sector. He has also served on a number of cabinet-appointed and steering committees for the purpose of reform in education.

June is 65 years old and retired as a senior administrator at an all girls’ college in Trinidad. Prior to this, she taught physical education to female students 11-18 years for

28 years and coached athletics. She earned her bachelor of science degree in physical education and master's degree in educational administration from a Canadian university. She also spent some time as a visiting lecturer at one of our teacher training institutions. June earned a number of coaching qualifications from the international governing body for athletics. She accompanied a number of Trinidad and Tobago's junior and senior national athletic teams to various international athletic competitions. She continues to compete in various athletic competitions all around the world. She is president and head coach of an athletic club and remains actively involved in community coaching. She was one of the most senior athletics coaches on grassroots community development programmes.

Janice is a 65 years old lay-minister who retired from the ministry's curriculum division. Janice was part of the first pilot group of in-service teachers trained in physical education in order to take up teaching positions at newly built secondary schools, but began her physical education career as a lecturer. She obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in physical education in the United States. Her professional work over the years focused on the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as on aspirational projects related to restructuring compulsory physical education in schools in Trinidad and Tobago at all levels. Janice participated in numerous cabinet-appointed and steering committees organised for developing physical education both locally and regionally. Janice sought to develop a physical education and research culture among physical educators, and worked on major reform initiatives to increase the status and recognition of physical education and sport in our nation's schools. She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in physical education and is one of the pioneers responsible for obtaining approval for physical education to be examined by the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) examination body.

Denise, aged 60 is a reverend who currently holds a diplomatic post after working for over thirty years in the field of physical education and sport. She is the founder of one of the educational institutions responsible for physical education and sport in Trinidad

and Tobago and influenced the development of this area for the past nineteen years. She has been instrumental signing a memorandum of understanding with an international sports studies centre to undertake cooperative programmes in the areas of research, training, education and facilities development in sport management, education and administration. Denise has lectured on undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and supervised students doing internships and practicum in the field of physical education both locally and regionally. She earned her bachelor's and master's degree in physical education and PhD in physical education teacher development in the United States. Denise was also director of physical education and sport at a prestigious girls' college in the United States. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of a sport and physical education journal and magazine featuring issues related to physical education and sport from around the Caribbean. An accomplished field hockey athlete, she represented Trinidad and Tobago internationally for over ten years and has served as president of two of our sport associations.

Mary, 57, earned a PhD in education and subsequently took up an academic position at a university in the United Kingdom. Her first degree is in physical education and sociology, obtained at a Canadian university. Prior to taking up her an academic post, she taught physical education at one of the secondary schools in Trinidad for thirteen years.

There are two reasons for providing the bio-data above. In addition to the previous section where I reflected on my incident with the departmental head, physical education is perceived worldwide as a non-productive educational activity, as less important than other academic subjects and as occupying a low position at the bottom of the list of curriculum subject areas (see ICSSPE, 1999; Marshall & Hardman, 2000; Hardman, 2008). As a result of these perceptions, teachers of physical education are not necessarily perceived as intelligent, well-qualified professionals because of the way in which the subject itself has been socially constructed historically. Many physical education teachers in our education system

have notably been national athletes, international athletes or coaches or both, prior to or on becoming physical education teachers, as indicated as I introduced my mentors. It is still perceived today that mainly individuals with an élite sporting background or who played sport throughout their period of schooling become physical education teachers. A contentious issue therefore exists because of the misconception by many individuals of the relationship between physical education and sport. This, in my view, fuels the argument that physical education teachers, like the subject which they teach, are also educationally non-productive. However, it should be noted that a physical educator is a ‘highly trained, broad-based, experienced professional practitioner who can bring anatomical, physiological, mechanical, psychological and maturational aspects of human movement together, and combine an extensive activity base with sound philosophical and pedagogical principles’ (Connor, 2009, p. 6). The second reason is more developed in the next section where I discuss the dilemmas and opportunities of conducting research in small states where ‘everybody knows everybody’ and where positions of power are held for extended periods of time.

4.7. Researching Small States: Methodological Issues and Dilemma

This research was conducted in Trinidad, one of the islands in the twin island state of Trinidad and Tobago. It is one of the English-speaking countries located in the southernmost part of the Caribbean with an estimated population of 1.4 million (Central Statistical Office, 2010). As I sought to research a local issue within this small island state, and sought information from this particular group of physical educators, there were many questions to be considered and decisions to be made. Firstly, having the understanding that the quality of data obtained for research could be influenced by the kinds of relationships that a researcher develops (Skeggs, 1994), I knew that I had to ensure that my mentors felt comfortable, confident and open enough to share their experiences with me. Our society is a place in which individuals sometimes view the

knowledge they possess as sacred and, for a number of reasons, tend to withhold that knowledge, making the area under study quite difficult to penetrate.

Firstly, when an individual within a particular setting experiences an identity shift and begins to challenge their own practice and the practices of individuals within the setting to which he/she belongs, naturally a level of discomfort is sometimes created. There is also a tendency for participants of most research to feel a level of resistance in sharing their knowledge with insiders. As an insider researcher, I was mindful of this and gave careful thought to the dynamics of my interaction and involvement with my mentors. According to Sikes (2006), 'people considering embarking on insider research have to think very carefully about what taking on the role and identity of research can mean and involve in a setting where they are normally seen as someone else with particular responsibilities and powers' (p. 110).

Secondly, natives of small island states often tend to remain in positions of power and prestige, particularly within education, for lengthy periods. Each of my mentors, in significant ways, influenced generations of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, including me, by virtue of being in some of these key positions collectively for more than 70 years. Though three of them have retired, three still hold positions of lecturer, supervisor, administrator and external examiner at local and international universities and serve in multiple capacities within the education sector and within the physical education and sport fraternity. These individuals know each other very well. They are also known to a vast number of individuals within the teaching fraternity and, by extension, within our society. Each mentor in his or her own way has been instrumental in the planning and development of physical education curricula and has performed other distinguished roles within our society locally, regionally and internationally throughout their personal and professional lives. Their positions often required them to become involved more deeply in issues of policy and practice. Consequently, preserving the anonymity of these individuals, the treatment of each life history compiled for this research, and the process of representing their views, remained critical issues for me.

Researchers who conduct research in small island states encounter this limitation. The nature of this research did not allow for complete anonymity because my mentors agreed to share their life experiences of physical education for us to have an authentic and well-documented historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. My mentors understood the risks of being part of this research as we discussed this issue during our conversations. A few of them spoke about the possibility of publishing the history when my doctoral journey is completed. The very nature of this research suggests that they understood that they would be putting themselves 'out there' for public scrutiny.

Attempting to distance oneself from the research, and treating it as unfamiliar, is also a problematic issue for both researcher and participant in any research (Lavia, 2007). This research is situational, contextual and very 'close to home.' This research critically examined physical education within a small island state, within a particular setting in which 'everybody knows everybody' and within a population estimated at 1.4 million (Central Statistical Office, 2010). I am also a part of the physical education fraternity, having entered the profession in 1995. In recent times, I have been involved in teacher training and continuing professional development. How could I treat the familiar as strange in a sincere and honest way? How could I, an insider, represent my mentors' life histories and the story of physical education in a manner that would not betray the trust and confidence placed in me? Could I even trust myself to treat my personal troubles as unfamiliar, in order to make meaning of them and understand them as public issues?

An insider is 'someone whose biography (gender, race, sexual orientation and so on) gives her a lived familiarity with the group being researched' (Griffiths, 1998, p. 361). The level of familiarity I have as an insider researcher within a small state as it relates to 'the cultural, organizational and political terrain places me in an advantageous position' (Lavia, 2007, p. 112). Apart from being familiar with the structure of the education system and with the members of the physical education curriculum unit, I am familiar with the professional lives of my mentors. I am someone who has 'privileged' access to

certain kinds of knowledge (Merton, 1972) by virtue of being closely linked to the ‘P.E. fraternity.’ Having this initial understanding, and knowing the context and social setting within my country, gives me the opportunity to understand the implicit and explicit links between situations and events (Griffiths, 1998).

My mentors knew that I regarded their positions of authority highly and respected their values, attitudes on and perspectives about physical education. They knew that I fully endorsed and shared their aspirations for further developing physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, as I admitted to them during workshops and through the professional attitude I displayed in my own practice, which has always been very inclusionary. The purpose of this research also contributes to bringing some of our shared aspirations for physical education closer to fruition. The development of each relationship over time, though unique, made it easier for me to gain my mentors’ confidence and to gain access to privileged information on issues and concerns of physical education.

Three of my mentors became part of my life within the first three years of my teaching career in 1995, while the other three influenced me after I graduated from teachers’ college in 2000. They have all served multiple roles in advancing the development of my personal life as an individual and my professional career as a physical educator at all levels within our education system. I believe that I have developed relationships that are powerful, yet sincere enough to allow my mentors to share their experiences of physical education with me.

Being an insider, this level of familiarity does not always place me in an advantageous position, or necessarily make the research process and making sense of the data they provide any easier. There is a tendency for me to take things for granted by not asking seemingly obvious questions and by not interrogating similar experiences. Taking things for granted might be an issue that could prevent me from obtaining the rich data I seek. I made previous assumptions about the kinds of judgements made by some of my

mentors and even questioned some of these decisions during my teaching career at the primary and secondary school. I also questioned the significance of the kinds of examination questions I had to complete during my training at teachers' college. There were times when I felt that my mentors' decisions did not always align with what they said or with the experiences that I had of them. This led me to question my mentors' expectations of me as I sought to tell the story of physical education through their eyes. How would they expect me to represent them in this research? How would I represent my own perceptions and interpretations of them and of their experiences? How would I understand and make meaning of what they relate to me regarding their experiences of physical education throughout their career, even if some of those positions affected me negatively? Would my mentors expect me to uphold and agree with the views and positions they adopted during their career? Would I be empathetic with their positions? Would I have to discard my own views of physical education and my perceptions of their professional judgements? These questions arose as I reflected upon my role as an insider in this research. I am mindful that such issues could inevitably affect the research process, including the way in which I present my empirical chapters.

My position as a researcher and an insider also signifies a dual role. I chose to conduct this research on the country of my birth and with a particular group to which I am affiliated. In doing so, I initially felt intimidated by issues of power and authority I anticipated may exist between researcher and the researched. However, the reality was that there was a mutual respect for each other's position and level of authority. I respected each of them enough not to feel that, as a researcher, I needed to exercise power and authority over them to acquire information about their professional lives. Upon reflection, I believed our relationship regarding respect for authority was a balanced one from the beginning of my research. The student/teacher, student/supervisor relationship developed over a number of years prior to conducting this research in a non-contentious atmosphere. Although I am writing from within a different geographical space, I consider myself to be part of the process and have used the experiences encountered within this familiar setting to interrogate further the

experiences of individuals with similar backgrounds to me. As a researcher, I have found this to be somewhat problematic in the sense that the vantage points and lenses through which my mentors individually experienced physical education varied and to some degree have been different to mine. As I told my mentors' stories and analyzed their experiences, decisions and professional judgements made, I knew that my analysis and interpretations could be open to challenge. In order to prevent any forms of misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the information shared by my mentors I made every effort to clear usable versions (Kogan, 1994) of their history with them before officially signing off on my empirical chapters.

4.7.1. Issues around Ethics in Using Excerpts from my Auto/biography

I am aware when I share my life story, I implicate others, particularly in instances where the story I share impacts negatively on the other's character, or represents others in a particular way. There will always be characters in my story whom I represent in a particular way because of the way they affected my life. Excerpts of my stories are intended to situate my research, to provide a stimulus for further interrogation and to find out the extent to which my story resonates with not only my mentors, but also with those who might read my work. My stories are intended to connect the past to the present and offer new trajectories for future practice. In setting the stage for the research process by discussing some of my personal background in physical education, the reader is drawn into the issues and debates around physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. Nonetheless, the very public nature of reflecting on one's lived experience of an event or set of events conjures up a set of ethical dilemmas which must be discussed. It is obvious that tensions are created when one offers a narrative account of an event in one's life and renders others in a critical tone because of the way in which the account is subsequently interpreted. I realise I have rendered others in a critical light through my own stories in earlier chapters. This has certainly caused some concern for me as I attempt to recognise and observe good practice regarding research ethics, including principles which assert the importance of not demeaning or diminishing others. But the

problem remains of how do you tell a story about difficult incidents or relationships without casting negative attention on others? And, thereafter, ‘is it ethically desirable to render difficult incidents or relationships in one’s own life invisible in order to protect others?’ I cannot claim to have resolved the complexities of such questions in the telling of my own stories but wish to assert that the content of stories as I have told them maintains personal integrity. Of course the production of this kind of research account in the context of work within a ~~small group of people in a~~ small island state where confidentiality and anonymity are not possible is deeply mired in ethical conundrums such as I have identified here; this is why – as has already been discussed – all participants were made fully aware of the possibility that their stories may be identifiable even though pseudonyms have been agreed. Fleming (2013, p. 36) acknowledges the importance of careful reflection on the representation of others in research and suggests serious consideration of the matter of *‘from whom consent should properly be sought’*. I decided, for example, that I would not seek permission from a particular coach mentioned in my story, or from my mother although she appears in parts of my story – I am arguing that ‘characters’ in my stories are not research participants and the requirement for consent of *characters* embedded in my personal stories is different from the necessity of securing consent from *participants* in my enquiry.

4.8. Data Collection Strategies and Emerging Issues

4.8.1. Dimensions of an auto/biographical Approach

The study primarily utilises an auto/biographical approach as a data collection technique. The auto/biographical approach dimension provided opportunities for myself, and also for mentors, to recall significant episodes and experiences felt to be material to the study. Importantly including elements of an auto/biographical approach also provided a space for locating ourselves in broader social, political, cultural and historical contexts in which we live as Sikes (2007) recommends. Further, using an

auto/biographical approach added an important component of developmental value to the research process, aiding the development of self-awareness, self-training and the continued discovery of – and learning from - one’s innermost feelings about experience for all who took part.

4.8.2. Life History Interviews: A Conversation with a Purpose

The aim of this research is to gain critical insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago through the experiences of my six mentors. I utilised purposive sampling to identify the six participants of this research whom I refer to as my mentors. I chose to utilise life history interviews as my primary data source to conduct this research, but used the term ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Webb & Webb, 1975, p. 130) to describe these six initial formal interviews as well as a number of additional supplementary informal discussions. The six one hour individual interviews I conducted were more like informal conversations and focused on detailed and significant experiences of physical education. I invited each of my mentors to have these conversations with me and relied on their oral testimonies. I did so because my interaction with them over the years suggested to me that they knew the facts about physical education which I sought after to develop this critical historical account.

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, I needed to construct my mentors’ life history. I initially prepared a few possible ‘open-ended’ questions to conduct a semi-structured interview with each mentor. Some of these questions included: *what was your primary school experience of physical education like? what was your secondary school experience of physical education like? and, how did your experiences inform your decision to become a physical education teacher?* Upon reflection, I discarded these questions because I felt this strategy would not generate a very authentic discussion. I also remembered those Saturday walks described in Chapter Two where my supervisors asked me questions (open-ended and closed) that caused me to become uncomfortable, anxious and sometimes unresponsive. However, when they allowed me the freedom to initiate a discussion about my own experiences, my research, my beliefs

and assumptions in a less formal way and with little disruption, there was a tendency for me to articulate my ideas and interests more fluently, confidently and more naturally. This made me decide to use this technique; as it provided my mentors with the comfort and freedom to recall their life experiences the way in which they saw fit and to talk about those experiences freely in a relaxed, non-threatening, natural environment.

I audio-recorded these six individual conversations that lasted approximately 60 minutes each. The way in which each conversation developed did not allow me to take notes. In most cases, my mentors shared their experiences of physical education for several minutes without any interjection from me. I did not take notes because I felt that it would detract from the natural flow of their story telling and there might be a tendency for them to stop so that I could write information down. However, when I got home I wrote short memos after each conversation and then immediately transcribed these conversations verbatim. I did this so that I would have the opportunity to ‘pick up nuances, hesitations, pauses, emphasis and many other ways people add meaning to their words’ (Etherington, 2004, p. 78). Once I completed transcribing, I then returned the transcriptions to each mentor for the purposes of commenting, filling gaps, removing information they did not want to share with the public, and making additions in terms of memories that they would have liked to include. I wanted to get the historical account as accurate as possible and so the technique of ‘member-checking’ allowed me to establish the credibility of the historical account shared (Stake, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to these six 60-minute conversations, during each of my visits to Trinidad and Tobago between 2010 and 2012, I took the opportunity to meet with or telephone at least four of my mentors to update them on the progress I was making with my research. This encouraged further short discussions around issues that emerged as I wrote my empirical chapters. These updates were important to the research process as I sometimes obtained further clarification on data I already had or new data. This overall data collection process was a collaborative endeavour between my mentors and me. In my view, the stories shared intersected each other in very significant ways. I gained deeper insights, new perspectives and clarified issues, particularly in relation to

the historical account of physical education which I attempted to construct from their life histories. Both these 60 minute conversations as well as the informal discussions with my mentors sought ‘to provide accounts and analyses of how [they] made sense of their lived experiences in the construction of both individual and social identity’ (Gough, 2008, p. 484) from within the situated context of physical education.

It is for this reason that I initiated each audio-recorded conversation by conveying my reasons for engaging in this research and for soliciting their assistance. I wanted my mentors to share their lived experiences of physical education with me, and so, throughout each of the conversations, I would only continue to share and contrast my own experiences when invited to do so, or as a way of stimulating further conversation on a particular event. I wrote the experiences I shared with them into this research in Chapters One, Two and Four. Woods (1985) argues that this sharing and contrasting is useful in that it helps establish ‘the joint nature of the enterprise’ and provides ‘a point of reference and comparison’ (p. 20). Establishing these points of reference and comparisons guided the conversations with my mentors in a delicate way.

After the initial introduction, I invited my mentors to share their experiences of physical education starting from as early as they could remember. I felt this would ensure that they understood where I was going with this research; they were aware that I was inquiring into their lives and that I wanted to hear and record their life stories. I proceeded with a single question: *‘As I mentioned before, I am interested in understanding what physical education was like in the early days because I want to produce an historical account of physical education. I am interested in knowing about the kinds of experiences had, and whether those experiences influenced your life and or professional career in any way. Can I hear your physical education story? Feel free to begin wherever you like. I do not wish to interrupt you so I will save my questions until you are finished.’* As each mentor told their story, I listened intently and took mental notes. I was mindful that I would have to ask additional questions, if necessary, to ensure that I obtained the information needed to respond to each of my research

questions. Being an active listener created an atmosphere that encouraged my mentors to talk about their experiences freely and indicated to them that they would be clearly understood (Radnor, 2002) without direct interruption except when they asked me to share or contrast their experiences. I also facilitated the conversations through non-verbal expressions such as facial expressions, gestures and body language and posture. This showed my mentors that I was interested in what they were sharing and that they had my undivided attention.

Based on the progression of some of the conversations, I sometimes asked questions to clarify and verify the conversation. For instance, if they paused after describing their secondary school experiences of physical education and did not mention the years in which they were at secondary school I would ask; *'What period was this?'* Each personal conversation gave intricate details about the development of a life, of a subject, of an education system and proved valuable as an independent story. However, when I compiled and pieced together the details and events of each story chronologically, the picture became clearer and richer. Each mentor in his or her own unique way told stories about physical education that intrigued me. The stories showed the interweaving of their lives with the development of Education and physical education. As I listened to their life stories, the history of physical education unfolded, and the social, political, and economic factors influencing this history began to come alive.

During each conversation, I could hear my mentors' reflective voices beginning to question the shifts that occurred in physical education during the colonial era and through a lingering legacy within postcolonial times. I heard each of my mentors questioning and reviewing their experiences as well as their past judgements. Some of them in hindsight wondered whether they could have done things differently or could have made choices that were more appropriate during the course of their professional lives. I began to hear from the conversations, a level of critical engagement with and self-critique of the past events in their lives. They engaged in their own process of reflexivity, using the experiences shared by me at the start of our conversation as a

springboard for critical reflection. This was a significant process for me because this was exactly what I was proposing that teachers do in order to offer more meaningful physical education experiences to their students. My mentors' willingness to begin to engage in reflexivity and to conceptualise physical education as a form of praxis, informed me that developing a critical approach to the practice of physical education is definitely an aspirational project Trinidad and Tobago can achieve. My mentors' actions validated my third research question as they engaged in constant dialogue and applied this notion of praxis to their experiences of physical education to re-imagine new perspectives.

I am very close to and have a good relationship with each of my mentors. I initially assumed that the student/coach/teacher/administrator relationship could pose problems for me obtaining the detailed information needed for my research. In addition, because I was no longer operating from Trinidad and Tobago, having left in 2008 for the United Kingdom (UK) to pursue my doctoral studies, I felt that making contact and gaining access to them might have been difficult. My mother however, was very instrumental in making initial contact with five of these mentors on my behalf, and arranged for and confirmed meeting dates and times prior to my scheduled return home to Trinidad in 2009. One person resided in the UK and gaining access to her and sharing my research interest was not a problem. The contact and confirmation was successful, and upon my return home I informally shared my research interests and ideas and my interest in having them participate in my research. All my mentors appeared very interested in my research and verbally agreed to be part of it. Upon my return to the UK some three weeks later, I completed my research proposal, and applied for and obtained ethical clearance from the University of Sheffield to commence my research. I prepared an official letter of invitation along with a consent form for each participant. This letter explained in detail the nature, purpose and objectives of the research. My mother again became instrumental in delivering these letters, and arranged dates and times for these conversations well before my visit, in July 2009.

I had my first set of conversations with three of my mentors at their homes, and three at work offices, two at their offices and one where I previously worked. I had these conversations in settings that were familiar so my mentors could talk about themselves, their feelings, perceptions and experiences of physical education. For those who were retired, their homes were most natural and comfortable for them and for those still employed, their work sites were natural and most convenient. I was not convinced that the setting had much to do with the level of sharing that took place and their commitment to share. I believed my genuine concern for and desire to learn more about physical education through their life histories, as well as the long-standing relationship I had with them, made the experience more rewarding and definitely successful.

While I felt privileged to be able to meet with each of them and to share stories of physical education, I sensed that these educators were happy that someone else appeared to be interested in their lives, careers and struggles. Many sensitive issues emerged from our conversations, some of which brought back painful memories, while others we felt were personally satisfying. Of course, there were also disappointing moments for me during our conversations. On some occasions, my mentors asked me to stop recording and not to use any sensitive information that would probably incriminate certain individuals and or make situations identifiable. One mentor specifically asked not to be quoted on a particular matter. Some elements of our conversations offered information of an extremely sensitive nature and would have been exclusively invaluable to my research. However, the fact that they entrusted me enough to share this information revealed to me that they had confidence in me and expected that I would do the right thing and not disclose it suggested that, in their eyes, I was a person of integrity. I respected their wishes and never revealed this information in any of my empirical chapters. I also made every effort to have the raw data vetted by them before constructing their life histories.

Upon reflection, I realised the information could be damaging, not necessarily to my mentors, particularly those who had retired, but to those individuals who may for one

reason or the other, be innocently referred to or implicated when various events and situations were described. It was also at these junctures that I consciously acknowledged and reminded myself that I had ‘a responsibility to make interpretations and an obligation to take responsibility for those interpretations as conveyed through [my] representations’ of their life histories (Sikes, 2010, p. 16). As each of my mentors shared their life stories, I also felt a tension and uneasiness within. I deeply reflected on my position as a researcher in this research process and the fact that if they did not share their experiences with me, I would have nothing to write. I would have no research, or should I say, I would not have the information that I am interested in (the history) and which focuses on my aspirations (adopting a critical approach to practice). Without input from my mentors, I would not be able to develop a thorough history of physical education and account for its development, nor would I be able to gain the insights needed to present a way forward for the future of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Finally, during our conversations with a purpose, two of my mentors were explicit about being deeply saddened by some of the experiences they had, and articulated how much their faith sustained them during those trying and disappointing times. They also expressed the view that they had no regrets but enjoyed their journey. This issue of spirituality was and still is a major issue for me and has been an issue troubling me since the beginning of my academic journey. How do I acknowledge issues of spirituality in my academic work? How do I represent conversations about faith in this thesis? I acknowledge that it might be easier to relate to such an issue coming from a culture where individuals embrace oral expressions of one’s spirituality and where the spiritual life is seemingly an important element to one’s overall human experience (Tisdell, 2003); this may not be the case within academia. Even as this issue remained etched in my mind, two of my colleagues and I explored this issue in a recently published article, which discussed the role that spirituality has played in our lives as academics (see Lavia, Sikes and Neckles, 2011). This certainly was useful in alleviating

some concerns about accounting for ways in which my mentors described their faith as embedded within their lives.

As mentioned earlier, I transcribed (verbatim) each of the conversations immediately after I had them. I did this because each conversation was fresh in my mind and it gave me the opportunity to begin to reflect on and analyse the six conversations and begin to figure out how I would re-present the history. As I repeatedly listened to the audio recordings during the transcribing process, I was already analysing the stories and making decisions about constructing the life history so that I could then do further analysis to identify the elements necessary for responding to each of my research questions. Immediate transcription also allowed opportunities to have follow-up conversations during visits home or via telephone calls. I was able to give my mentors their own transcribed conversation to correct and clarify, to check for accuracy in transcription and to fill in gaps where necessary; (Woods, 1985). Most importantly, the quick turnover from audio to text gave mentors an opportunity to engage in their own reflections to determine whether in hindsight they would want to discard any information they no longer wished to make public. When I presented the transcripts to them, some could not believe what their conversation looked like as an unedited text. One even commented: *those are definitely not my words I do not speak that way*. This was a very insightful experience as I learned an invaluable lesson about how people, particularly teachers, react when they see their spoken words are translated verbatim. Many of my mentors used words and phrases as emphasis or to bridge their sentences, so words such as ‘Ahm, Ah, Right,’ and phrases such as: ‘You see what I am saying,’ and ‘You understand’ were some other stuttering tones used as they gathered their thoughts together before continuing their speech.

As I engaged in a process of recollecting, sharing, describing, reflecting upon, and transcribing the mentors’ experiences, I realized that both data collection and data analysis stages of inquiry prompted some form of transformation to occur. Therefore, after completing the chapter on critical policy incidents, I forwarded this to the mentors,

asking that they provide feedback on the accuracy of the history produced, whether they were pleased with the way in which this history was constructed and presented and whether my re-interpretation and re-presentation of the history of physical education through their personal life stories was authentic and accessible. Additionally, the inserts used to interpret dilemmas of practice and to explore opportunities for a critical approach to practice, were also cross-checked and validated when individual transcripts were returned to my mentors. Because of these transformative processes, representations of stories are never identical to the actual experience at the moment as lived. I chose therefore to interpret the shifts in narrative as a way of mentors verifying their accounts and thus as strengthening internal validity and rigour of the data collected.

The process of presenting these experiences in the thesis has been reflexive for both me as a researcher and for the mentors, and so I was deeply attentive to the ways in which I needed to constantly engage with my mentors as I selected and represented their experiences throughout the thesis. I was rigorous in my efforts to connect conclusions I was drawing to the experiences they chose to share. These experiences of physical education created a dialogic space for deep critical reflection on what the experiences of mentors had been as students, as teachers, as educators, as administrators and as policy makers. We utilised this space in order to engage in a form of praxis that would allow re-visioning of practice. Ultimately, the debates materialised through these spaces enabled the emergence of new ideas concerning physical education in Trinidad and Tobago as having the potential for transformative social action to widening participation building on fresh cross-cultural perspectives. This is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

4.8.3. Reflexivity

I used reflexivity as a method in this research process. Developing a reflexive attitude as a researcher is paramount when doing life history work. In Chapter Two, I briefly discussed the term ‘reflexivity’ and acknowledged that I used it as a tool in my research

to make sense of situations under study and to respond appropriately to them. I engaged in a process of being reflexive from the onset of this research and continued to do so until the end. I believe that as individuals our lived experiences shape who we are and who we can become because of the experiences had. Being a researcher, the process of reflexivity creates a space to interact with lived experiences to construct and produce the kind of knowledge that reflects one's reality (Lincoln, et al., 2011). This method was therefore best suited for this research, as it allowed me to create forms of knowledge needed for responding to each of my research questions and because I am an inevitable part of the phenomenon which I sought to investigate. Unlike reflection, where individuals internally create and clarify their experience of an event in order to make sense of the experience in a way that changes their perspective about the experience had (Boyde & Fales, 1983), reflexivity goes a bit deeper than simply creating and exploring.

Accomplishing the objectives of reflexivity required me to 'make use of an internal dialogue that repeatedly examines *what the researcher knows and how the researcher came to know this*' (original emphasis) (Berg, 2009, p. 198). As a method, reflexivity complimented the critical life history approach I adopted. It allowed me to have ongoing conversations with myself to construct and interpret the experiences of six physical educators to construct life histories and an historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I also had ongoing conversations with myself about my own experiences as I tried to make sense of them. I chose to use this method because the nature of this research requires reflexivity and because the production of this research required me to be constantly engaged in a cyclical process of reflecting critically on my life, my fieldwork, the life stories collected, and on my own involvement in the entire research process. Through a reflexive process, I embrace the opportunity to concentrate on showing the subjective mapping of my mentors' lived experiences in relation to the social world in which they exist.

Possibilities for developing creative ways to generate new ideas and improve my self-expression in this research were two challenges I encountered as I became consciously involved in the reflexive process. The greatest challenge for me, however, was being able to develop an ability to be truly reflexive in the presentation of my empirical chapters so that my audience would be motivated to read my work and the information being presented to them would make sense.

4.8.4. Learning Journal

I used my learning journal as a data collection instrument to provide me with information about my life, accumulated over the course of this research journey through a process of reflection. I included some of this written reflection in Chapters One, Two, and Four. I used the journal entries firstly to begin constructing my own life history. I began making jottings of significant events. Keeping a journal was difficult for me at the beginning of this research journey because I was never in the habit of writing about my experiences and myself as record in text form. Beginning to write these experiences in text form then facilitated the process of reflexivity which, according to Davies (1999) involved ‘turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference’ (p. 4). This reflexive process eventually made an invaluable and insightful contribution to my research. Although I initially recorded my experiences of physical education and reflected on these experiences at a superficial level, I could not identify, give meaning to, or make meaning from them. Some of what I had written made me angry and sometimes made me cry. The only thing that was clear from my writing was that I wanted to do this research because I did not ever want anyone to experience what I experienced as a child and to feel the way I felt. I also reminded myself that being confused, according to my supervisors, was a good place to be.

The use of a learning journal assisted me in reflecting through writing on how my childhood experiences and those as a physical educator shaped my understandings, values, and beliefs not only about physical education, but also about my life. It was

more like a process of deconstructing fragments of my life, making meaning from the bits and pieces in order to recreate, re-present and reconstruct a new one. A liberated life, found through the process of critically examining my experiences. It was time for me to know and understand the journey I took, how I got here, my ‘point of perception and conviction and redemption’ (Lamming, 1992, p. 24). This process of intellectual decolonization began when I agreed to share with and have my life story recorded by a critical friend. I felt that such a process would help me to gain the confidence to write myself into the research and maybe to discover why I valued experiences the way I do and how I could turn my weakness into strengths. During early supervision sessions in 2009, my primary supervisor always encouraged me to write my autobiography, but I could not get it down on paper. Expressing my life in writing seemed quite difficult. It was in planning for my research that I thought about finding someone to do a life history interview on me. After all, I was getting ready to have conversations with my mentors about their lives, so why not have a conversation about my own life with someone whom I could trust. I transcribed my life story into my learning journal and began to reflect deeply on what I had said and done in my life thus far.

I began to appreciate the value of writing things down and of reflecting on my experiences, because it is through reflection that more learning is derived (Posner, 1996). This experience of journaling not only gave me the space to record personal accounts of my experiences, but it also enabled me to recognize that understanding is developed through experiences. I could not know or come to know one thing without having known something else. The use of my learning journal developed in me, what Dewey (1939) refers to as a ‘disciplined mind’, a level of consciousness. This consciousness enabled me to see how my background, interests and position influenced my life and this entire research. Reflecting through the process of journaling allowed me ‘to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock of intelligent dealing with further experiences’ (Dewey, 1939, pp. 86-87). This process of looking back also assisted me to identify exactly how I analysed and interpreted the data collected.

4.9. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Like other forms of qualitative data, life history interviews produce a vast amount of data and there is no one, single, correct way to interpret and analyze it, ‘but there are general principles and guidelines which can be followed in doing it systematically and reflectively’ (Wellington, 2000, p. 134). Analysis is about being able to make sense of or interpret data, fitting it into some kind of framework that may be in the form of classifications, categories, models, typologies or concepts (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 134). Miles and Huberman (1994) provides a three-stage practical guide to qualitative data analysis: data reduction (select, sort, collate, summarise and code according to themes or categories), data display (organise, assemble, display in visual, picture or diagram form) and data drawing (interpreting and giving meaning to data through themes and patterns). However, Wellington (2000) suggests stages of immersion, reflecting, taking apart/analysing data, and recombining/synthesizing data.

I used Wellington’s (2000) strategy to analyse my data because it utilized Miles and Huberman’s three-stage guide for analysis, and included the process of immersion and reflection which was particularly significant for me to identify and interpret commonalities, critical incidents, other important moments and turning points in the lives of my mentors. Secondly, as I revisited each life history, including my own (see excerpts in Chapter 2), I adopted Tripp’s (1993) Critical Incident Analysis to examine the physical education experiences of six physical educators in an attempt to interpret the significance of these experiences to their lives. Specific experiences shared by my mentors during our conversations were analysed, in order ‘to confirm (verify) something [I] already suspected (hypothesised)... [and to] ‘reveal something entirely new’ (Tripp, 1993, p. 43). I also examined their life histories to identify specific experiences, which produced either positive or negative results and which influenced the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The first step of the data analysis process was to transcribe the conversations that I had with my mentors. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I transcribed conversations verbatim because I wanted to have an exact replication of the verbal conversations in order to respond. In order to make sense of and interpret my mentors' experiences of physical education, I needed to have a very detailed script. After the transcriptions were completed, I returned transcripts to mentors for verification, I began the second step of my analysis. I took each conversation and began to reconstruct the stories in order to develop a chronological life history. I did this because I was interested in my mentors' experiences of physical education while attempting to piece together a history of physical education and I used their various experiences to do so. I used a timeline and a few specific categories to assist me to do so. Although I did not delineate a specific period for developing this history of physical education, I used the conversation with my eldest mentor as a starting point in order to tell the story of physical education. Though most of my mentors began telling their story from their days in primary school, some began with information pertaining to their family background. For instance, immediately after my introduction to them, two disclosed that they came from a family of teachers, so it was easy for them to figure out their career path. Two others said that they came from a family that was always involved in some form of physical activity and so, from an early age, they were involved in sport. As the conversations continued, my mentors recalled different things about their lived experiences but not necessarily in a chronological sequence. My task therefore, as previously mentioned, was to rearrange the stories told in a chronological order. My mentors' sharing did not always maintain a linear process and so the stories moved back and forth in time. I rearranged their stories so I could accurately record in a sequential order the historical order of past events.

I began the third step of the process of my analysis by extracting specific dates and events related to issues around the development of physical education from the life histories constructed. I did this in the form of a table and used it as a database to store, in chronological order, the development of physical education from as early as 1498. After formulating the database, I began a search for relevant literature, reports and

documents mentioned during the conversations with my mentors to support the extractions made. The earliest date officially mentioned to me was 1933 but my mentors also spoke of periods and events that occurred earlier than this. I used the leads given to me by my mentors to acquire more details about some of the events which took place to produce as accurate an account as possible, a historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. This process included going to the archives and reading key policy documents. My mentors themselves also made some documents available to me. I was able to use these documents to verify issues regarding policy and practice of physical education, as well as specific dates of events mentioned during our conversations. These documents also assisted me in making sense of and interpreting the process of how Education and physical education in Trinidad and Tobago evolved over time. Having created this database, I then matched the information obtained from the available documents to the data.

Excerpts from my mentors' life histories along with the database created were then used to produce the historical account of physical education I present in Chapter Five. Some of the policy documents and reports collated included the Lord Harris Report of 1851; the 1898 Lumb Report of Jamaica; the 1933 Marriot Mayhew Report; the 1971 junior secondary school syllabus; the 1988 primary physical education syllabus; the 1978 international charter of physical education and sport; and the 1999, 2003 and 2009 secondary schools health and physical education syllabi; and the 2005 international year of sport and physical education report. I also obtained a relevant curriculum document from my godmother. As a 13-year-old pupil in her final year at primary school (Standard 7), she was officially appointed as a pupil teacher. This was in 1947. She had in her possession a copy of the 1953 primary physical education programme given to her when she attended the government training college in 1960. She taught at the primary and secondary school for over 40 years and though she was not a physical education teacher, she was able to share vital information about her experiences of school education between 1930 and her teacher training experience in 1960. This information was very useful, as it assisted me with filling in information on my

database. For instance, during one of my many informal conversations with her about what school was like during the 1940s, she described how each morning the entire school did drills and were taught to walk properly, and that was what physical education was back then.

Critical incidents are a fundamental methodological feature of my research. After I constructed the life histories, extracted the dates and events and gathered literature to produce a chronological account of the history of physical education, I employed the final step of my analysis. I used critical incident analysis as my framework. In Chapter Two, I briefly discussed how I created incidents by thoroughly describing them and attempting to explain them within its context (Tripp, 1993). I also described experiences and showed how, by applying simple analysis, I could create and render these experiences as critical in order to learn from them. This framework for analysis supported how I came to understand and make sense of my own experiences.

With the life histories as text, I identified any event within the life histories of my mentors that I felt were highly charged moments and episodes that [had] enormous consequences for personal [and professional] change and development' (Sikes, et al., 1985, p. 280). I identified these by focussing on the cues given to me by my mentors during our conversations. They all recalled a number of events and identified some of these as memorable or significant for different reasons. Some of them influenced or contributed to the development of physical education, while others focused more specifically, on how their early experiences and beliefs about, and perceptions of, physical education shaped their choices and practice later on in their career. I took each of the memorable or significant events identified by my mentors and attempted firstly to describe them. After this process, I attempted to interpret these events by adopting some of Tripp's (1993) approaches to the analysis of incidents. The approaches chosen depended on the particular experience itself and included the use of thinking strategies, the why? challenge, dilemma identification, personal theory analysis, and ideology critique (Tripp, 1993).

I used critical incident analysis because critical incidents identified opportunities for me to learn about myself, to diagnose and analyse my experiences, as well as the experiences of six physical educators. This analysis was the most appropriate form of analysis because my research involved reflecting on experience in order to make sense of and learn of ways I could improve my practice and to contribute to reconceptualising the practice of physical education in the future. It was also most appropriate because I sought to develop understandings of, and provide a historical critical account as text of, the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I also believe that all individuals, not only teachers, have the ability to generate new forms of knowing through a process of deliberately reflecting on their actions. It is for these reasons that I chose to use this framework of analysis.

4.10. Criteria for Assessing Life History Work

Given the innovative and unique structure and use of a critical life history approach in my research, there are five criteria I have applied to guide judgement of the work (Dollard, 1935; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995):

- I recognise my challenge is to ensure that the lives of the six physical educators are a distinguishing features of this work, and to show how the stories they share fit into the larger socio-political context of our Trinbagonian society
- in any life history work there should be a balance between the individual stories told and the social context
- the construction of my thesis should demonstrate the power and forces that shape my experience and those of my mentors
- the empirical chapters must have credibility and reliability conferred through allowing stories to be re-interpreted, re-presented, and validated
- the complexity of life stories shared must not be reduced to a simplified coherent text.

These criteria are further addressed on p.252-253 in the concluding chapter.

4.11. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methodological approach used to gain insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago through the life histories of six physical educators. I situated this research within the qualitative paradigm and adopted a critical life history approach to engage in the research process. I employed the use of life history interviews, reflexivity and my learning journal to generate the data interpreted and presented in Chapters Five to Seven. My own personal experiences and the way in which these experiences affected my life influenced this research as well as the fact that small island states such as ours rely on oral accounts of storying as a means of producing new forms of knowledge. I have utilised Wellington's (2000) framework for data analysis and Tripp's (1993) critical incident analysis to guide my own analysis, which I present in the three empirical chapters that follow. These chapters that follow describe my interpretation and understanding of the life histories. The methodology I outlined in this chapter guides my understandings and interpretations.

The chapters that follow focus on responding to each of my three research questions. Chapter Five examines critical policy incidents in the development physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, thereby providing a critical historical account. Chapter Six introduces the cases and discusses how physical education was experienced and understood by six physical educators at different points in their lives. Chapter Seven seeks to reconceptualise the way in which physical education is practised, by building a case for a democratic process towards mass participation in order to establish a physical culture. Chapter Eight will summarize and revisit the main arguments of the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETING CRITICAL POLICY INCIDENTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is about the history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. It is important because there is no other existing written or published documentation that captures this history to date. This first part of the chapter focuses on literary sources and policy documents that reveal the history of education in Trinidad and Tobago with reference to physical activity engagement wherever this was embedded in such sources. In the second part of the chapter, I am able to draw on the voices of the mentors who talk about their experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. This discussion is based on my mentors' personal accounts of physical education in their childhood from as early as they could remember and from their experience as practitioners. Their voices combine to produce the first post-1950s official documentation of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago and provide professional insights about physical education for future reference. The chapter offers a response to my second research question: *What can the analysis of the critical policy incidents of six physical educators tell us about the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago?* This question attempts to use critical incidents as an analytical lens with which to map the historical periods and issues related to the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.2. The Trinbagonian¹ Experience: Introducing the Account

I make available in this thesis through critical policy incidents the opportunity to account historically for the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. As discussed earlier, a small state such as Trinidad and Tobago relies heavily on oral stories to give accounts of the past, and as such, the opportunity to sift through each of

¹ This is a local term in our country used to merge Trinidadian and Tobagonian

my mentors' stories has unearthed knowledge about physical education that I never knew existed. This knowledge only became evident after my mentors shared their own experiences of physical education with me. Each of their stories revealed 'a number of responses to perceived problems' in physical education and the processes involved in understanding the subject both at the primary and secondary level (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 6). Their stories also revealed the existence of a number of written and enacted policies that have been consequential to the development of physical education in our twin island state.

In this chapter, I identify from the mentors, a number of critical policies that have made significant contributions to, and influenced the development of, physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I do this by specifically identifying and interrogating incidents drawn from the life histories of my mentors that are specific to policy, to develop a critical historical account of physical education. The historical perspective that follows charts a summary of early society and identifies the presence of physical activity in the culture. I then move into a discussion that accounts for the existence of a rich culture of dance within our society during early developments in physical education to show how this component was a gateway activity that allowed for mass participation in the early days of formal physical education in Trinidad and Tobago.

5.3. A Critical Historical Perspective

During my conversation with Janice, she indicated that the history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago is located within our history of education and that it was necessary to understand this history so that I might be able to trace the origins of traditions, attitudes and perceptions of the subject. Goodson's work considers subject and curriculum development using a life history approach and is of relevance in relation to Janice's point. According to Goodson, 'studies undertaken of life histories and curriculum histories point to the importance of aspects of the structure of the educational system in understanding the actions at individual, collective, and relational

levels' (Goodson, 2005, p. 83). As the story of the history told by these mentors comes alive, I hear voices mixed with interpretations of policy. This mixture of interwoven voices enabled me to develop an insightful and powerful, critical, historical account of our colonial and postcolonial experiences of physical education. Before exploring accounts of policy incidents, I therefore present a background of the early inhabitants of our island to depict forms of physical activity engagement that precede taught physical education in schools in Trinidad and Tobago. What follows is a brief summary of our early society before our British encounter, and describes the early forms of physical activity and the purpose it served during that time.

Before our colonial encounter, archaeological studies traced the first inhabitants of Trinidad to as far back as the Neolithic era.² They were known as the Amerindians³ (Williams, 1942), and they engaged in various forms of physical activity and indigenous dances as a necessary part of their community and culture. Engaging in physical activity was a way of life for these indigenous people. They used it as a means of daily survival, as preparation for war and as criteria for selecting military leadership. Activities needed for both overseas battle and inter-island trading included hand-to-hand combat, wrestling, running, fishing, hunting and canoeing. These were the first noted forms of physical activity I could identify. Interestingly, these activities also appeared to be very prominent within early English society from as early as the time of Henry II (1133-1189) (Wuest & Bucher, 2002). As the society evolved during this period and as life became more established for the Amerindians, unstructured recreational activities in the form of ball games began to develop in Trinidad. In spite of this development, there was no evidence of facilities such as ball courts or dance plazas like those found in other islands like in the Greater Antilles where the Táinos⁴ played a ceremonial ball game called 'batey' (Bullrock, 1927). In addition to these activities and as part of their

² The Neolithic era was a period in the development of human technology also known as the New Stone Age.

³ The Amerindians were made up of two civilisation: the Caribs and Arawaks.

⁴ The Táinos are relatives of the Arawak tribe.

culture, these indigenous people also practised various dances, whether they were victorious in or faced defeat in battles, for communication with the spirits, at funerals and for relaxation.

5.4. The Emergence of Colonisation and the Influence of Dance on Physical Education

Christopher Columbus interrupted the life of these indigenous communities when he landed in Trinidad, on July 31st 1498, as part of his conquest on behalf of Spain. The Spaniards eventually settled there from 1592. This Spanish colonization resulted in the Amerindians being enslaved, labouring in the mission fields the first four days of the week and in their own the following two days. The Amerindians became weary of the labour endured and they revolted. The response of the Spanish colonialists was eventually to annihilate the Amerindian population. With this annihilation in progress, yet another group of settlers found their way to our shores, bringing with them our second wave of colonisation, and influencing a societal shift (Campbell, 1997; Williams, 1942).

The French settled on the shores of Trinidad in 1777, and a gradual shift began to occur in the social, and to some extent the cultural, climate of Trinidad. This shift was apparently motivated by an increased access to leisure activities. In pursuit of pleasure, various celebrations (parties) were held, so dancing, singing and fashionable dress became popular (Ottley, 1971). In addition to having these parties, the French spent a great deal of time fishing, hunting and having picnics. The French planters brought with them Africans who they had enslaved mainly from West Africa. These slaves, the Ashanti-Fanti people of the Gold Coast and the Ibo from Nigeria, had their own cultural traditions and various forms of dances that they themselves continued to practice while being enslaved in their new setting.

5.5. Colonizers Threatened Emerging Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Trinidadian Dance

During British colonial rule, the development of dance as an essential component of the primary school physical education curriculum of Trinidad and Tobago could be traced from the 1933 and 1956 physical education syllabi issued by the British Board of Education. The focus of dance was built on qualities of movement, expression of space, performing English dances and national dances of other countries. Some of the dances performed included English country-dances, popularised by English educationists, such as ‘The Rufty Tufty,’ ‘The Long Eight,’ ‘Durham Reel’ and ‘Galopede’. The 1956 syllabus (Parts One and Two) was given to, and used by, teachers at the Government Teachers’ College in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Mary, one of my mentors, attended an intermediate Roman Catholic girls’ school (catering for students between 6-18 years old) and revealed that dance was done in her school during the 1960s and 1970s. She sets the scene for the first major critical policy incident in which she shares her experiences and admitted that dance was her first love and that she longed to be a dancer:

Dance was part of P.E... and at primary school I would be the first to volunteer to participate in any dance related activities.... We did English, Irish, German, Polish folk dances and other dances which were taught by experts and other guests who would visit my school on a regular basis. We also did Caribbean Folk dance. A lot of emphasis was placed on teaching folk dances.... using old records with all kinds of music, we learned to dance, and I really enjoyed it. Our school was always selected to do dance or to do public performances for the Head of the State... I danced at the Queens Park Oval when the Queen came to visit our country in 1966.

Dance pioneers like the late Beryl McBurnie and Boscoe Holder were responsible for bringing village folk dances to the stage as dance began to take an interesting turn in the schools in Trinidad and Tobago during the 1940s and 1950s. Beryl returned to Trinidad in 1945 from studying dance at Columbia University in New York and became a dance instructor with the Department of Education. During this time, Beryl began

experimenting with, introducing and teaching Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Trinidadian dance forms at a number of schools (Campbell, 1997). She was the first individual to officially introduce local folk dance to schools and the popularity of this form of dance grew like wildfire. She believed that folk dance was a way of preserving the history and way of life of ordinary people. In 1948, she also launched her dance company, 'The Little Carib Theatre', which was dubbed the 'cradle of Caribbean dance' (Ahye, 1983, p. 135). This idea was frowned upon by the white expatriate directors of education who were present on our island. Why would our colonial masters appreciate the growing popularity of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Trinidadian folk dance? Historically, our status as colonial subjects did not carry with it the authority to own anything, to be innovative or to preserve our identity. We were born to serve, not to lead.

Beryl continued to promote folk dance in schools throughout Trinidad and at various Caribbean festivals. She did so until the Legislative Council created a new post in the Department of Education and appointed her director of dance in 1950. To my mind, this promotion could be viewed as a clever attempt by the displeased white expatriate directors of education, to hold back the progress of folk dance, ultimately short-circuiting any chance for Trinidad and Tobago to retain some of its history and way of life. Folk dance was flourishing and gaining great popularity among ordinary people and their children. It was all the ordinary *folk* had to hold onto. Why was creating this new post necessary? What were our colonizers afraid of? Why would our colonizers even want us to preserve our heritage and promote our own dance culture? If to colonise means to dominate, then allowing us to have our own way and preserving our own identity through the medium of dance did not represent domination.

Beryl's promotion, I would argue, proved to be a subtle form of manipulation on the part of the expatriates, to move her attention away from promoting folk dance. The white expatriates in the board of education were indeed successful in their plot to silence the work of Beryl since having a directorship offered certain privileges. Shortly after being appointed director, Beryl was awarded a scholarship by the British Council

for a familiarisation tour of Europe, and a course in physical training methods (Ahye, 1983). From its inception, Afro-Trinidadian Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean dance was not trusted by the more conservative middle class section of our society. The cultural value of dance was burgeoning, and it inevitably ‘threatened to be a powerful art form expressive of a desire for an independent cultural movement and for political self-determination’ (Campbell, 1997, p. 174). I emphasize yet again that awarding Beryl a scholarship, was a deliberate move to break the growing popularity of folk dance. Her absence from the island resulted in the termination of folk dance on the curriculum at the teachers’ college. The immediate termination of her classes saw the increased promotion of conventional (European) dance courses. In a short time, these conventional dances became a distinct part of the Government Teachers’ College (GTC) curriculum (Campbell, 1997).

Prior to the 1960s, the teaching of dance, particularly folk dance, occurred mainly at Roman Catholic girls’ schools. Mary’s experiences opened up a critical space in which to account for and reflect on how dance influenced the physical education curriculum in school. As mentioned earlier, I reflected on Mary’s first experience of dance at the primary school and considered this a critical policy incident that assisted me in understanding how dance became a noticeable fixture within the physical education curriculum at the primary school.

In the 1970s, our twin-island state was no longer under colonial rule, but grappled with lingering colonial legacies. Mary was now attending secondary school and weekly modern dance workshops took place in various parts of Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago. This decade saw the emergence of the work of modern dance pioneer Astor Johnson, who established a new contemporary style of dance, and founded the ‘Repertory Dance Theatre’ in 1972. Mary shared another experience with me when she attended secondary. Again, as I reflected on this experience I saw how it created a critical incident. This experience showed how students’ appreciation for dance at the secondary level gained a boost through this dance theatre. It also showed how

some aspects of our history were preserved. She recounted how the experience of being part of the workshop conducted by this dance theatre deepened her love for dance and encouraged her to continue to practise her dance routines at home and perform for school events:

At the age of 15 a very important thing happened for me in terms of physical activity. As I said, I always had this passion for dance, to be a dancer... but I never had any formal training in dance... and could not see how I might bridge my passion for dance and love for teaching... A man called Astor Johnson, who had just returned to Trinidad after studying in the United States... this would have been in the early 1970s, formed the Repertory Dance Company.

The Repertory dance company brought a modernized version of folk and African ethnic dance and movement to Trinidad. It was very appealing and very modern. It was based on his signature piece 'Fusion', in which he applied varying movements from contemporary and jazz with traditional African steps....so that our ethnic dance traditions were fused into conventional movements from modern dance. It was similar to the live work of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in the United States... I went to some of their shows, and whenever I went away, I dreamt of being on stage dancing with this company.

Part of their project involved going around to schools to perform and conduct workshops. They came to our secondary school while I was in my final year and did this performance. I was blown away! ... And then they did the workshop with us and I got to talk to him... He actually identified me as someone whom he wanted to train with the public group. I started to train with the Astor Johnson Repertory Dance Theatre in their general recruitment group... and it was the greatest time in my life. After the first session, he came to me, and he said: 'So where did you train before?' I said 'I never trained... I used to make up my own choreography at home... I had never one day gone to a formal dance class or anything....' Within a relatively short space of time, he asked me to join the theatre to perform.

Mary was one of the many students who benefitted from the initiatives of Beryl McBernie and Astor Johnson. Mary's experience revealed the contribution of dance as an essential component of physical education. Not only was folk dance recognized as a prominent cultural feature in our society during the 1970s, but tributes were paid to three of our outstanding pioneers in the field of Black dance. When the Alvin Ailey

Dance Company celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a Grand Dance Gala at the city centre in New York in 1978 (Ahye, 1983), Beryl McBernie was one of these three people awarded for her outstanding contribution to the world of folk dance.

The dance component of the 1988 physical education syllabus was reprinted in 2005, and was classified in two primary categories. There was communal dance, which included indigenous dance; folk dance, social dances of the European and North American society performed by members of a community; and theatre dance, done by trained dancers for an audience (Ministry of Education, 1988). This syllabus also stressed that dance at the primary level, should constitute basic movements fundamental to dance rhythms, traditional dance steps, and basic skills in techniques useful for performing folk, social, modern and contemporary dances (Ministry of Education, 1988). Some of the indigenous, ethnic and social dances identified and practised at the primary school were: ‘Calypso,’ ‘Heel and Toe,’ ‘Reel and Jig,’ ‘The Maypole,’ ‘Waltz,’ ‘The Fox Trot,’ ‘The Minuet’ as well as other folk forms and religious festival dances which are celebrated in our twin-island state. At the secondary school, the 1972 physical education syllabus of work for junior secondary schools identified local folk, foreign folk, interpretive and creative dance, as well as modern educational dances, as the categories of dances to be taught (Ministry of Education, 1971).

Dance remains a significant element of the primary school curriculum today, although not all schools teach it. At the secondary level, however, as we ushered in the 21st century, the government of Trinidad and Tobago remained committed to comprehensive reform, modernization and expansion of the secondary school system. Although dance remains a component on the new health and physical education curriculum, physical education teachers do not teach it. Dance is one of the components of the visual and performing arts curriculum, one of the eight core compulsory curriculum subjects on the national curriculum. The inter-development bank (IDB) approved funding for the secondary education modernization programme (SEMP) to modernize education in Trinidad and Tobago. This modernization initiative adopted from the *National Task*

Force on Education, Education Policy Paper 1993-2003, attempted to meet the curriculum goal of offering students an all-round educational development.

So far, I have given an account of the early developments of physical education, whether formally or informally, by showing the kinds of activities that the early inhabitants of our society did. I have also shown how the heritage of the Amerindians, the Europeans, and the Africans have all contributed to and influenced the development of the life of dance in Trinidad and Tobago. The heritage of the East Indians, who were brought to Trinidad as indentured labourers from 1845 until around 1917, has also contributed to the development of dance. After the abolition of the slave trade in 1834, these indentured labourers came to work on the plantations. They brought with them their traditional dances practised for religious customs and festivals such as ‘Divali’, ‘Eid-ul-Fitr’, ‘Phagwa’ and ‘Hoosay. Throughout this discussion, I have also shown how dance became established as a significant part of the cultural fabric of our society and of physical education.

As colonialism became more established and dance continued to evolve, our education system was officially transformed by the British who ruled us for 165 years after taking over from the French in 1797 (Williams, 1946). In what follows, I engage in a critical discussion that accounts for physical education as it begins to take shape during its first century under British rule.

5.6. The First Century of Physical Education: 1834-1939

The French settlers surrendered Trinidad to the British in 1797, and Tobago in 1802. By virtue of becoming a British colony, we inherited British educational policies and practices and benefitted from their provision of mass education. Janice recalled that the British were well known for their participation in outdoor sports, some of which we also inherited. Sport was a common feature of English life and, unlike other countries like the Soviet Union, which used a system of gymnastics, the British embraced a program

of organized games and sports. Wrestling, throwing, shooting, fishing, hunting, swimming, rowing, skating, hockey, golf, cricket, tennis and football were part of their repertoire of activities. Ralph explained that, back then, a concept of physical education known as ‘physical training’ was a specific system of gymnastic exercises designed for the British army. Wuest and Bucher (2002) confirmed that Archibald Maclaren, an early Oxford physical education specialist, developed this system in 1860. Apart from devising this system, Maclaren made significant contributions to the development of physical education worldwide. He argued that physical and mental training are inseparable, that in human beings the mind and body support each other, representing a condition of ‘oneness’, that it is not enough for growing children to participate in sports and games as recreative exercise, and that physical education should be an essential part of any school curriculum (Wuest & Bucher, 2002).

5.7. Mass Education Provision as Slavery is Abolished

The British government decided that Trinidad would not have a self-governing constitution and instead imposed a Crown Colony government, that is, ‘with all essential powers reserved to the British government through the governor’ (Williams, 1942, p. 69). This Crown Colony government, established in 1810, remained enforced until 1925, with some modification in 1831 with the establishment of a Legislature (Council of Government). The abolition of slavery in 1834 saw the beginning of an era of major developments for the provision of a mass education programme especially for the lingering indigenous peoples, the black masses, and the ‘coloureds’ (mix of blacks with coloureds and or blacks with Europeans) in Trinidad and Tobago. The British government and protestant missionary societies influenced this provision of mass education. The British government made funds available through the Negro Education Grant to build schools and pay teachers’ salaries (Campbell, 1992). By 1851, Governor Lord Harris established the first board of education and wrote the first policy statement on education for Trinidad. In this policy statement, Lord Harris commented on the role of the state in education and about the difference between instruction and education. He

argued that a person's physical capacity should be an important element of education and that this capacity should continue as long as life continues. Education for him had to do with the 'whole constitution of man [*sic*]' (Wood, 1968). This statement began the process of any formal documentation that the physical dimension of an individual is a relevant part of the educational process. Governor Harris' statement, and this point, suggests that he saw the need to have an education system that catered to one's physical well-being or competencies. His report, however, made no recommendations for physical education being part of the school curriculum. Although I could find no specific statements about the value of physical education to our education system or of implementing physical education as a formal component of the school's curriculum, Jamaica's Lumb Report of 1898 made mention of the subject and influenced the development of the discipline throughout the entire Caribbean region. This 1898 report specifically recommended that 'physical drill' be included as a compulsory element of the curriculum for girls and boys at the elementary schools as well as at the training colleges for teacher trainees (Gordon, 1968).

Between 1889 and 1901, physical education, known as 'physical training', was done in the form of 'square drills' taken from a military drill book. Soldiers were responsible for conducting the military drill activities, specifically geared towards preparing the boys for an eventual war (World War 1) which occurred during 1914 to 1918. Ralph interjected again. He indicated:

Even though these 'physical drills' continued after the war, they were not considered to be important and therefore were not taken seriously by schools. Many forms of *play* replaced the time previously allotted for doing these drills and the 'physical drills' period was now called *play* by some.

According to Ralph, teachers seldom used the time allocated for drills to teach drills but would do other subjects. When the time was used for its intended purpose, only a few privileged students were able to enjoy this *play* experience as a reward for their good behaviour. Many students, therefore, from as early as the 1920s, were being deprived of engaging in physical activities and developing their physical skills. The

country's preparation for war heavily influenced the nature of activities that students engaged in, but did not focus on the concept of developing the whole child (body and mind) through regular and structured physical activities, as proposed by Lord Harris.

This situation resulted in harsh criticisms meted out by the commissioner of education, Major Bain Gray, in 1924. His report heavily criticised a system of education in the British Caribbean, Guyana, formerly known as British Guiana. The fact that education systems within all the British colonies were similar, Gray's statement could be viewed as applicable to the system of education that existed in Trinidad and Tobago. Gray (1924), quoted in Gordon (1968), argued that the education system pays no attention to the fact that the child has a body as well as a mind. Gray also revealed that the system did not provide for regular and organized physical activity engagement and that there was a lack of adequate space both indoors and outdoors to facilitate this process of education.

British law reigned prior to World War 1 (1914-1918), and with no established way of formulating education policies for colonies such as ours, the British government imposed their own ideas of colonial educational development on us. Although a local legislative council existed under the authority of the governor, the council had no effective control over policy decisions, but could advise the British government. One such idea was to promote agricultural education (Campbell, 1997) which would ensure that the process of education remained aligned to the life of the community and the experience of children. The British government promoted this type of education because it was likely that the majority of children, whose parents were wage labourers, would receive no more than an elementary education (Williams, 1946). The promotion of this idea, I would argue, has been concretized in the minds of inspectors of schools and further perpetuated by past attitudes of the upper classes and officials. In 1898, one retired inspector commented: 'How often have sugar planters and others said to me, 'What do you want to educate little niggers for? Put hoes in their hands and send them to the cane pieces' (Brereton, 1979, p. 77). With manual labourers still needed to work

on the sugar and cacao plantations, why would you educate children other than to serve the interest of the British colonisers?

The English model of education was what the Crown Colony (the governor and legislative council) was familiar with, and so, a mirrored version of this model was imposed on us. This English model of education had a profound influence on education in Trinidad and Tobago (Campbell, 1997) during this time, and still does to some extent today. It was inevitable that the type of physical activity and sport which students would engage in during this time would also be based on the British concept of physical education – ‘physical training’.

Greater attempts were made to fulfil the physical needs of students in schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago in the 1930s. The British concept of physical education during this period was still physical training and involved a combination of drills and competitive games. Protestants established schools within the urban areas of our twin-island and adopted this concept of education. Cliff was one mentor who pointed out that historically (1834-1939), the first set of single-sexed church secondary schools, in addition to doing physical training, were heavily involved in competitive team sports. He described these schools and physical education as being ‘very élitist’, and he was right. The nature of our secondary school system during this time was élitist, as only few schools existed, they were private with the only non-denominational college and educational opportunities did not expand greatly, even when the dual system started in 1870. Even during the late colonial period, these schools maintained their élitist character and lived up to their élitist status. The élitist status of these schools continued even when public school education began in 1925 (Burnham, 1992) and education became free and compulsory.

Following on the heels of the recommendations made by Jamaica’s Lumb report of 1898, the Board of Education’s initiative to specifically attend to the needs of children saw the implementation of the British syllabus for primary schools, ‘Physical Training

for Schools', issued by the Department of Education in 1933. This syllabus also supported recommendations made by the Marriot/Mayhew report of 1931/1932. The report stressed that teachers should place their emphasis on teaching students' about the simple laws of health and giving them frequent opportunities to develop their hand-eye co-ordination. One of the timetabled curriculum subjects implemented at primary schools was Physical Training. This curriculum was to be delivered on a weekly basis by army personnel as well as teachers but Department of Education, in practice, the curriculum was not delivered regularly. It was also expected that lessons would be observed during school inspections. It was discovered, however, that teachers did not take the subject seriously and were not teaching it to their children as recommended. As a result, the subject was used as a form of punishment by school inspectors and headmasters who intended to reprimand teachers. They would ask teachers to teach physical training lessons for school inspections, even though the inspectors and headmasters knew that teachers were not in the habit of teaching this subject.

In addition to the physical training curriculum being implemented in primary schools, a physical training curriculum with specific emphasis on gymnastics/movement education was offered at the teachers' college in 1938. This specific curriculum emphasis was made clear as the Lumb report of 1898 questioned the relevance of the teachers' training colleges in the development of physical training in schools. The report criticised the teachers' colleges for producing teachers 'imbued with false ideas of their duties and occupation' (Gordon, 1968, p. 126). The report contended that not enough time was being spent on the more relevant and practical areas of the curriculum that would enable teachers to effectively deliver the physical training curriculum.

5.7. One Step Behind: Moving towards Movement Education

As the education system continued to expand during the 1940s and early 1950s, so too did party politics. The emphasis on agricultural education began to dwindle and the economic policy of the Crown Colony government began to focus on industrialization

(Campbell, 1997). After the colonial office and legislative council agreed that Trinidad and Tobago could have a cabinet government, the first cabinet government was formed in 1952. During this time, the late Dr Eric Williams formed a political party, the People's National Movement (PNM), and in 1956 won 13 of the 24 seats on the legislative council. This first cabinet was formed with Dr Eric Williams, serving as premier (leader).

The cabinet government, formed in 1956, showed immense dissatisfaction with the colonial authorities, because prior to 1956, authorities selected few individuals from our twin-island state to receive professional training. This show of dissatisfaction led to the newly established cabinet government giving Hamilton Maurice the opportunity to review the education system of Trinidad and Tobago. Maurice was the first person to be given such an opportunity. His 1959 Education Report confirmed the cabinet's dissatisfaction with the education system, as it revealed that the education system run by the British colony operated under a state of neglect. With immediate effect, Maurice's recommendations were put forward for a unitary and secularised system of education that would be established, financed and controlled by the new national government. This dissatisfaction and subsequent report led to a massive drive by the national government to rectify this situation, and to prepare for the major education reform exercise expected to take place after Trinidad and Tobago gained political independence in 1962.

Between 1956 and 1961, many recommendations made on the Maurice report were approved and implemented. This recently formed cabinet government now had some authority to act on behalf of our twin-island state and began to grant island and development scholarships mainly to civil servants and teachers. This move sought to expand opportunities for professional and/or advanced training particularly in education. Janice saw the awarding of these scholarships as one of the significant periods for the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. She recalled:

A number of teachers received professional training in physical

education from abroad, and upon their return, served the education system in various capacities. These individuals serviced the roles of Physical Training Instructors (PTI) or athletic coaches, under the Ministry of Education, formerly called the Ministry of Education and Culture (1956-1985). Some accepted appointments as lecturers at state-run teachers' colleges. Physical Training Instructors were responsible for the administration of physical education throughout the twin-island state.

In 1959, the government sent one of our greatest pioneers of physical education, the late James (Freddy) Townsend, to England to observe what was happening in the area of physical education and sport. Townsend visited various schools, colleges, teachers' colleges and universities and observed that English schools were no longer focusing on physical training. The curriculum's emphasis focused on the principles of movement and the term 'physical training' changed to 'movement education'. Movement education was thought to be a more appropriate term, and it was based on the principles of a more student-centred teaching approach. There was a greater focus on the use of philosophies of Montessori (1870-1952), Piaget (1996-1980) and Dewey (1859-1952) to explore understandings of education and instruction. These philosophies all stressed the educational value of physical education and the value of having quality movement experiences. Freddy, as he was fondly called, returned to Trinidad in 1960. He reported on this new 'personalist movement education concept' of physical education being done in England (Crum, 1992) and recommended a curriculum shift towards this concept, thus endorsing the point made by Wuest & Bucher (2002) that movement education was one of the major contributions made by England to world physical education and sport.

Janice, Ralph, June, and Cliff were resolute in their belief that quality movement education experiences allow students, particularly those in the primary schools, to experience enjoyment while achieving varying levels of success regardless of their ability. June's voice echoed above the rest when she strongly stated:

I believe that every child must have the opportunity to experience physical education as a school subject. Every child... has a body and so they need to know and understand what their body could do, how far they could take their body, and their physical limitations... Having

movement experiences is therefore important. PE lessons should be designed to... give children the kinds of physical experiences that... they can build on for the rest of your lives, whether it may be to nurture a career or to promote lifelong physical activity engagement. physical education should also provide every child with opportunities to understand how physical activity could influence their health, their way of life, and the choices they make, as they grow older... I think having opportunities to engage in and experience physical activity through meaningful and well-structured physical education classes is important. I mean if students are not fit and healthy they will not be able to function at their optimum. I believe in the principle of a healthy mind in a healthy body... so the way in which we could encourage children and youth to remain physically well and healthy is by engaging in physical activity through well-organized physical education.

Four of my mentors agreed that the effect of the experience facilitated through movement education increased the likelihood of promoting 'desirable future experiences' (Dewey, 1939). Some of my past lecturers at teachers' college also supported this view. When I pursued my Certificate in physical education at the open university, between 2000 and 2003, lecturers delved deeply into the work of Hungarian Rudolph Laban (1879-1958), who studied human being's movement relationship with the environment around them. Wuest and Bucher (2002) described movement as 'the keystone of physical education and sport' because an awareness of movement concepts helps us as physical educators to 'construct meaningful movement experiences [for students] that allow students to understand the capabilities of their body' (p. 97). There was a feeling among my mentors that focus on such experiences will contribute to widening participation in physical education among students. Each mentor agreed with the idea that using purposeful motor activity will not only develop students' motor skills and motor competencies but it will also develop students' ability to make decisions about their physical and social environment (Peneva & Bonacin, 2011). These mentors further extend this idea to include purposeful activity that also encourages lifelong participation in physical activity.

While interest in movement education grew among some physical educators in the primary school, 'the conformist sport socialization concept' of physical education

(Crum, 1992) grew simultaneously both at the primary and secondary levels. The practice of recruiting highly skilled and naturally talented students from among the school population to form school teams was becoming more popular than the practice of school-wide participation in regular physical education lessons for all. This practice used to serve the needs of a burgeoning élite sport culture supported the élitist education system that continued to exist. This culture grew among schools that took part mainly in athletics, football, cricket and hockey competitions at the district and national levels. The formulation of a National Sports Council in 1960, and the development of sport programmes fuelled interest in this ‘conformist sport socialization concept’.

The sports council of Trinidad and Tobago propelled a growing interest in the sports of cricket, football (soccer) and netball, all inherited from our colonizers. The executive members of the council were charged with the responsibility for developing sport programmes and for hiring coaches to conduct coaching clinics. These clinics and programmes took place at various locations within our eight educational districts in the areas identified, as well as in athletics and tennis. The presence of sport coaches became a firmly rooted component within our educational institutions and within our culture. The cadre of coaches recruited, comprised both past and present national athletes, as well as parents and ex-students with experience in sport who volunteered. Though the shift in the focus of physical education from ‘physical training’ to ‘movement education’ enhanced the overall development of the subject, the domination of competitive sports and budget cuts in education imposed by a now independent government, presented a major setback for schools in 1962.

These budget cuts, the government’s unwillingness to expand the scope of training and professional development for primary school teachers and in-service teachers at the teachers’ colleges heavily influenced the decrease in the status of physical education. Ralph and Cliff described this unfortunate occurrence as a ‘one step forward, two steps back’ process. The fact that the sport council sourced external coaches to conduct coaching clinics and workshops in sport could have been a reason for the budget cuts.

Janice also noted:

People's perception of physical education and sport remained unchanged even after receiving specialist training in the teaching of physical education. Many of those people who received training in physical education during that era (1960s) returned home and opted to continue concentrating on sport. So they basically picked up where they left off.

If perceptions of education officials continued to be that physical education and sport are the same, then funding cuts for physical education in schools made sense to them. What began to develop during this period were two parallel, yet distinct systems of physical activity engagement that required two different sets of personnel. These were trained physical education teachers to deliver physical education in schools and coaches in specialized areas of sport to develop sport programmes and conduct coaching clinics.

For the rest of the 1960s, however, individuals disregarded physical education in the primary school and viewed it as an underdeveloped curriculum area. Physical education pioneer Roy Senford cited four major reasons for this. In a paper he presented at a physical education conference held on the Trinidad campus at our regional university in 1976, Senford (1976) argued that the lack of teacher training; trained supervision, suitable, or in many cases any facilities, and appropriate apparatus/equipment, curtailed the development of primary physical education during the 1960s. He made several recommendations regarding the development of physical education. Senford recommended there be qualified physical education officers advising the Ministry of Education on P.E. matters and coordinating the work of P.E. teachers and coaches in schools. He recommended there be one male and one female officer in charge in each educational district; that compulsory P.E. should be a subject at all teachers' colleges; that there be increased grants for P.E.; that school buildings be equipped with adequate P.E. and sports facilities; and that an institution to train P.E. personnel in Trinidad be established (Senford, 1976). According to Cliff:

Senford was a visionary thinker who also understood things from an administrative viewpoint. He understood what it would take to develop physical education in schools. Nevertheless, as you can see, many of these recommendations struggled and continue to struggle to become a reality.

So far, I have shown the transition of physical education from physical training towards movement education as a new conception of the subject, adopted from the British prior to our twin-island state gaining political independence in 1962. The Maurice Report was one policy document that bolstered the development of physical education, in terms of the adoption of recommendations made for the provision of international training and further professional development for physical education teachers. Although significant, these two features were not enough to sustain or influence the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. The subject suffered from government-imposed funding cuts, and from the increased domination of competitive sports and games. In what follows, I present a discussion on the first major educational policy reform document implemented after our political independence in 1962. This document proposed greater access to education for all.

5.8. The Rise and Fall of Physical Education at the Secondary School

1963 to 1973 saw significant policy developments and transition periods for our Trinbagonian society. 1962 was the beginning of our independence and our educational policy planning as a nation. Taylor, et al. (1997) contend that policy ‘involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice’ (pp. 24-25). Here, I refer to policy as the collection of stated and implicit rules as well as regular practices that govern the behaviour of individuals responsible for the delivery of physical education. Our new status as a politically independent nation meant that we would begin to restructure our education policies in such a way so as not to rely on external assumptions for our existence and growth, hence the development of a *Fifteen Year Draft Education Plan 1968-1983*. This *Fifteen Year Plan* stated that the curriculum of the primary school needed revising, in light of the changing philosophical underpinnings about education, teaching methods, the content of syllabi, the needs of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and the proposed

expansion of secondary education. This plan declared that within the curriculum of the primary school, there was a 'need for a proper physical education programme' (Ministry of Education, 1974, p. 9). As we struggled to gain regional and global recognition as a new nation, our education system expanded and this need for a proper programme needed fulfilling. Providing greater access to education was a requirement within this new nation state and this meant further expansion of the education system.

This gave rise to the government establishing a model of secondary education which called for an increased number of physical education teachers. In 1964, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Mission recommended that the junior secondary school system be adopted (these however have been dissolved as they were de-shifted and converted into whole-day five year secondary schools between 2000 and 2008). A proposal for a three-year secondary school double-shift system (morning and evening), which catered for students of ages 12 to 14, was written into the *Fifteen Year Draft Plan*. The plan presented specific objectives for each curriculum area and proposed that the physical education curriculum would:

prepare the pupils for a programme of heavier physical activity at a later stage of life and to develop specific physical skills and co-ordination, to promote the ideals of sport and competition in games, to acquaint pupils with the importance of physical care and discipline and to provide facilities (Ministry of Education, 1974, p. 20)

The problem with this proposal was that the two-year senior level curriculum catered for physical education, not as a main academic component but as a non-academic area (Ministry of Education, 1974). This scenario created a situation in which physical education would begin to lose its significance, status and value within our education system at the secondary level. Any policy document which implicitly describes a subject as not being compulsory, but as a subject which would be offered to students because there was 'the need for a non-academic Exposure' (Ministry of Education, 1974, p. 35) conveys particular messages about the nature and value of such a subject. This statement also caused further problems for physical education, even in the midst of

its significant development.

Parliament accepted a project proposal to build these new schools and sought financing from the World Bank during 1968 to 1974. 1972 marked the beginning of the junior secondary school system (Campbell, 1997). According to Janice, the perception and value of physical education became evident, when the government began building these new schools without proper facilities for physical education, without playing fields and other infrastructure, without resources and equipment. The World Bank subsequently threatened to withhold funds from this massive expansion project if contractors continued to be build schools without proper infrastructure and equipment needed for teaching physical education. The demands of the World Bank concurrently initiated a massive drive by the Ministry of Education to recruit physical education teachers; to provide the necessary training for them to teach physical education at the secondary level; and to meet the demands for appropriate teaching facilities. Yet another personal experience shared, this time by Janice, allowed me to understand the establishment of the junior secondary school system, as well as how physical education developed through this major educational reform initiative. As Janice recalled:

We [other teachers] got involved in P.E. in the early '70s, when the government of the day built junior secondary schools. They [the government] were looking for teachers who were interested in teaching [P.E. and other subjects] at those new schools, and so I had that option, with Spanish being my elective, I could have done Spanish. I... decided that I wanted to *do something different*. Having been involved in sports, I opted to do the in-service junior secondary course in physical education. The Ministry of Education and Culture offered this course in 1971, in order to appoint teachers of physical education to junior secondary schools. This was my first authentic, intensive experience of, and programme in, physical education. This was between 1972 and '73. The duration of training on the programme was 6 months to a year.

Physical education continued to be transformed alongside major developments that occurred in education. The professional development of teachers continued through locally run in-service programmes, until around the early 1990s. There was also greater access to full scholarships, and swimming became established as a component of the

physical education curriculum. A Canadian consultant in physical education developed this swimming programme in 1966. This consultant worked in the department of community development and was very instrumental in developing swimming programmes as part of the school curriculum. Because of his work, the government constructed public/community swimming pools in Port-of-Spain and Chaguaramas in the west of the island, Couva in the centre and Sangre Grande in the north. Prior to this time, students mainly of 'élite' schools had access to a few swimming pools that existed. This consultant was also instrumental in introducing the fitness test as a component of physical education programme. The initiative to provide professional development for teachers locally began to challenge teachers' perceptions and ideas about physical education and sport as being the same. Even though we continued to rely on the influence of global understandings of physical education, as a nation, we welcomed opportunities for such professional development initiatives from individuals returning from their training abroad. This initiative began to penetrate the legacy of élitism that existed, particularly among secondary schools. Additionally, organised workshops presented a different perspective of physical education that challenged existing views. According to Janice:

With limited experience and particular perceptions of physical education, I attended one of those professional development P.E. workshops. I attended this course confident with my school experiences of physical education. In reality I was visualising and thinking about sport because that is what I knew P.E. to be. I was surprised that the course provided insights into a world history of physical education, movement education and principles of anatomy and physiology. We also learned a variety of sport skills, educational gymnastics and movement education. There was so much more to the subject than I knew. It was here I began to understand that sport was an element of physical education but they were not the same.

Between 1961 and 1981, the government continued to offer one and two year physical education scholarships to teachers. Male teachers trained at the Carnegie college of physical education in England, while the females attended the Chelsea college of physical education in Wales. These teachers completed certificate and diploma courses

in physical education. Other agencies such as the National Sports Council of Trinidad and Tobago, the United States Information Services (USIS) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) also offered scholarships to our nationals to pursue degrees.

This British concept of physical education continued to be practised, but not without the emerging influence of the United States' interscholastic athletic programmes, which from its inception in the 1930s grew extensively, dominating physical education and causing educational problems since physical education no longer catered for participation of all physical education programmes no longer focused on the formal type approach of teaching skills (mass participation) but headed towards an informal games-sports approach, where playing team sports and teaching the skills (élitist) for competition became more important (Wuest & Bucher, 2002). During this time, many of our young teachers (untrained and teachers' colleges' graduates) as well as young athletes received athletic scholarships, and many pursued degree programmes in physical education and other specialized degrees in the field of sport. Many of these individuals, particularly those who were offered government scholarships, returned to serve either as physical education teachers in the Ministry of Education and Culture or as coaches in their specialized field of sport. Regrettably, some of these teachers began to adopt the games-sport approach and focused on the development of students to participate in team sports instead of offering activities that represented the development of both pleasure and healthy lifestyle choices as a lifetime option.

Two possible factors may have contributed to the overall upsurge in and accessibility of these scholarships. Firstly, after becoming an independent nation in 1962, Trinidad and Tobago sought desperately to become master of its own destiny, struggling to shape a unique identity, a new vision, but with a continued British model of education. Access to higher education became possible when the government of the day attempted to build capacity in the area of physical education and sport by releasing teachers of physical education to go abroad on scholarship. In 1970, the late Dr Eric Williams, the first

Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and leader of the political party the People's National Movement (PNM), addressed a special convention on 'The Chaguaramas Declaration- Perspectives for the New Society'. He stated that:

it is also more than obvious that the promotion and development of all forms of sporting activity must receive greater emphasis in the New Society. Our people have long excelled in many forms of international sport; people abroad who had never before heard of Trinidad and Tobago, now know of us through some of our great sportsmen... The New Society must carry further recent initiatives by the government such as coaching programmes and playing fields throughout the country and so develop the latent talents of our people and give them greater avenues for expression (Williams, 1970, pp. 309-310).

Secondly, Denise and Cliff were two physical educators who benefitted from the commercialization of university sport. They both revealed that sport was and remains today, an important part of the American culture. As a result, sporting competitions among universities and colleges in the US, particularly in the area of athletics, was fierce during the '60s and '70s. Due to the commercialization of university sport, many U.S. universities sought to recruit international student-athletes from the Caribbean territories, more so from Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, to boost their teams and the thriving intercollegiate business. Many of our young teachers and élite athletes just out of high school were therefore able to benefit from full scholarships, successfully becoming student-athletes. They benefitted from a perceived world-class education, state of the arts training and invaluable knowledge of physical education and sport as students at élite universities and colleges in the United States. These scholarships offered specialized training and further professional development in physical education and sport necessary to produce the human capacity for future development. This was a step in the right direction since schooling abroad would prepare a cadre of individuals who could return to our twin-island state to develop physical education at all levels of the education system. Building capacity was a recommendation made by another one of our previously mentioned pioneers, Roy Hollingsworth.

In 1976, at the physical education conference held at our regional university to which I

referred earlier, the late Roy Hollingsworth, another pioneer of physical education, presented a paper and made several recommendations that focused on the development of physical education at the tertiary level. His recommendations included establishing a physical education department, as well as providing sports and intramural programmes; offering a three year bachelor of arts in education with a concentration in P.E.; and a one year diploma course with a concentration in P.E. (Hollingsworth, 1976). Many of these recommendations, along with those regarding primary physical education made by Senford at the same conference, particularly offering local certificates, diplomas and degrees in physical education, came to fruition more than a decade later. It appeared that the government considered some of the recommendations made by these two men in 1976, as provisions were made for specialist teacher training in physical education on a full-time basis for individuals entering the newly built teachers' college in 1979. The commercialization of university sport referred to previously was instrumental in supporting this teacher college's programme. Cliff, who left our island on scholarship as a young athlete, and Janice as a young teacher, both got appointments as full-time lecturers of physical education when they returned to Trinidad and Tobago with their postgraduate degrees. This commercialization of sport, built capacity for physical education at all levels of the education system.

Sport commercialization provided individuals with professional skills and competencies, access to higher education, undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in the area of physical education, specialized training in a number of sporting disciplines particularly in athletics as well as with the opportunity to showcase our island's natural sporting talent worldwide. Those individuals who returned home received appointments as physical education teachers at secondary schools and were instrumental in establishing physical education departments to provide students with access to different types of programmes within the confines of the school, to encourage school-wide participation in various activities. These scholarships also provided individuals who already possessed initial teacher qualifications with the opportunity to complete their first degrees within a shorter period of time and advance to postgraduate

studies. Cliff and Janice were able to use their appointed positions as lecturers in physical education at the teachers' college to build further capacity for physical education by developing teachers' professional knowledge and practice of the subject. Thousands of in-service primary school teachers were educated about the theory and practice of physical education, and as graduands, some of them developed physical education programmes at their appointed schools. Those who chose to specialize in the subject pursued the elective component, and had the opportunity to apply for vacant positions as physical education teachers at a number of secondary schools after teaching for one year at a primary school.

5.9. The Shifting Sands of Physical Education

Physical education got a significant boost in 1979, when the government merged three of its former teachers' colleges (Mausica, Port of Spain (POSTC) and Government Teachers' College (GTC)). The government built a more centralised college to accommodate more students in one location (from each of the three colleges) and because it was better equipped to cope with the growing needs of our education system. Cliff shared his experiences of being at the centre stage of this particular transition when, about six months prior to the merger, he was appointed to Mausica Teachers' College on a full-time basis. Mausica had a small population of 110 students. In 1977, the Teaching Service Commission recommended that Cliff be appointed to the Mausica Teachers' College on a full-time basis as a lecturer of physical education, where he could train teachers in physical education at the compulsory (basic) and optional (elective) levels. The teaching of physical education occurred on a part-time basis on Saturdays, at two of the three existing teachers' colleges, by some of our pioneers who shared the responsibility of training teachers in physical education. Cliff's appointment however, materialised almost two years after this recommendation was made and some six months prior to the merging of the three colleges.

Cliff spoke of the experience of the merging of colleges as being initially chaotic,

because he would now be the only one responsible for approximately 600 students (teachers in training) with varying experiences of physical education. This experience however, according to him, was also ultimately a rewarding one, because he saw himself in a better position to effect change in perceptions and attitudes about physical education that were held by a vast number of students. He hoped that this policy implementation would significantly reduce the mixed messages and varying conceptions of physical education which existed. Cliff's revelation identified yet another critical policy incident, which contributed to this historical account of physical education. As Cliff recalled:

It was a rewarding time indeed... I had a concern though... because of my experiences of physical education over the years as a student and as a teacher. I wanted to develop the kind of physical education teacher who would have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject; who would be able to teach it in the proper way; who would conduct themselves in a professional manner; and who would dress a particular way.

I wanted to raise the level of consciousness of in-service teachers as well as those graduate P.E. teachers in the system. My vision was to alter their perceptions of physical education. As a lecturer at the training college, I visited different schools and observed the attitude and behaviour of teachers who called themselves P.E. teachers. I observed the way they dressed and acted. These teachers did not look nor did they act as if they were P.E. teachers. This gave me some insight into why physical education may be in its current state, and why staff and students viewed it as not important. Maybe physical education is where it is, not because of the subject itself per se, but because of how the people who were teaching it contributed to its low status, by virtue of how they conducted themselves and their practice.

As an educator, my roles included field visits to primary schools throughout the country and supervising student teachers' P.E. lessons. I observed P.E. teachers in action and I saw what they were doing in the name of physical education. In many instances, what teachers did resembled my childhood experiences. It was obvious that teachers were still not providing students with sustainable experiences. What I saw disturbed me. Whether or not these primary school teachers specialised in physical education many of them often sat on a chair under a tree while children played with a ball or other pieces of equipment. It was time to change the way in which teachers carry out their practise of as

well as the perceptions of how parents, children, and school administrators' perceived the subject. I wanted to develop teachers who would teach the subject in the proper way, and who understood that it was not simply about sports and playing games. This was the second thing I tried to stress on my programme; that as teachers of physical education they are professionals and that were not games/sports masters and mistresses. Therefore, there was a kind of expectation when it came to teaching P.E.

The intellectual perspectives to my mind were clearly non-existent. I wanted to change teachers' mind-set; I wanted to show that physical education is as important as, and even on par with, other academic subjects. I felt that it was time to change the perceptions that have been become embedded in our culture and in the minds of parents, children, other teachers, school administrators and even the P.E. teachers themselves. The merging of colleges gave me this opportunity because I could capture a wider audience and perpetuate a particular ideology about physical education to all.

The government made a decision to merge the three colleges because the smaller colleges were not equipped to cope with the increasing demands of our new education system and overall expansion that was taking place in education. It was also one of the proposed objectives of the *Fifteen Year Draft Plan 1968-1983*. Improving schools meant improving the teachers' colleges (Ministry of Education, 1974). With the introduction of new curriculum components such as school libraries, physical education, and scientific, technical and cultural orientation, more trained teachers were inevitably needed for a variety of new areas. physical education found its place as one of the compulsory subjects offered under the general school curricular studies, as well as one of the optional elective studies at this new two-year full-time teachers' training college (Ministry of Education, 1974).

Janice returned to Trinidad towards the end of 1980 after completing her studies abroad and having acquired her master's degree in physical education. This was at a time when the elected government was in the process of opening up a division of physical education in a newly created Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts. The physical education and sport unit moved out of the Ministry of Education and into this

new Ministry. The entire structure of the physical education unit was established with one director, three Physical Education and Sport Officer IIs (PESO IIs) and sixteen PESO Is, two for each of our eight educational districts. Her first appointment saw her joining Cliff as a physical education lecturer at the newly built teachers' college for two years before moving to the curriculum division of physical education and sport at the Ministry of Youth, Sport Culture and Creative Arts.

The creation of the new curriculum division of physical education in the Ministry of Youth Sports Culture and Creative Arts created opportunities for physical education to thrive but also created many challenges. After two years at the teachers' college Janice received a promotion to this division in 1983. I reflected on this experience and felt that it was significant enough to be one of the critical policy incidents in the development of physical education. Janice recounted:

We (physical education officers) had various portfolios and roles to perform within this Ministry, but being under the umbrella of the Sport Ministry and being responsible for physical education was a challenge in itself. Although we were responsible for both physical education and Sport, we met with much resistance (from administrators and teachers) when it came to physical education. For instance, as a physical education Officer you had to go into to the schools; both primary and secondary, to oversee the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers, however, were of the view that as personnel within the Ministry of Sport you did not have any authority over them. So you see, that was a major challenge right there. There was conflict, because one could easily recognize that there really should be a distinction between physical education and sports. Physical education and sport though similar, yet distinctly different when it came to matters in education. We were part of an education ministry, trying to operate within the sport ministry.

After a 30-year rule, the People's National Movement (PNM) lost the general elections, and the government changed hands in 1986. With a newly formed government, political shifts occurred and the new cabinet revisited policy decisions made previously. The cabinet formulated a new *Five Year Education Plan* for the period 1985-1990 and attempted to pursue some of the unmet goals of the *Fifteen Year Draft Plan 1968-1983*. One decision was to reconsider having the operations of the physical education

curriculum under the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts.

There was an intense struggle to overcome the challenges that physical education faced by virtue of being under the purview of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Creative Arts. However, cabinet eventually granted approval for the physical education curriculum unit to return to the Ministry of Education. Janice disclosed that the presence of the unit under the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Creative Arts was successful to some extent, because the relationship created an established link between both ministries and the formulation of a major policy. Before the transfer, the head of the physical education division received an invitation to attend curriculum department meetings hosted by the Ministry of Education. Consultants from the Ministry of Education, as well as primary and secondary teachers, made themselves available for curriculum development meetings. A team has always been involved in the development of physical education, and this collaboration saw the formulation of a *Primary School Syllabus for Physical Education and Dance* in 1988. This was refreshing for me to note, since many of our teachers often perceived that they never had any form of representation when it came to curriculum reform.

This 1988 syllabus, focused on the policy goals of primary education established by the *Five Year Education Plan 1985-1990*. The objectives pertaining to physical education and dance indicated that by the end of students' primary school education, they should demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of dance and put into practice the principles of healthy living including good eating habits, exercise and sport (Ministry of Education, 1988). The components of this syllabus included: movement education/educational gymnastics; games training; outdoor pursuits; health education; and dance. The programme was to be conducted over at least five days. It comprised 20-minute periods per week for infants (5-7 years), at least two 30-minute periods for juniors (7-9 years), and at least two 40-minute periods per week for seniors (9+-11 years) (Ministry of Education, 1988). The majority of our primary schools did not follow through on the requirements of this syllabus, while other schools continued with the old (colonial) practice of confining activities to their Friday afternoon games period.

It was perceived that the new cabinet's decision to transfer the physical education Unit to the Ministry of Education appeared to be a political strategy, as many changes are expected when a shift in governance occurs. One of its main justifications for this move was that physical education is a subject on the schools' curriculum and therefore the authority to oversee the implementation of the curriculum and the supervision of teachers should be vested in the Ministry of Education and not the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Creative Arts. Cabinet eventually approved the transfer in December 1989 but the physical move did not occur until around April of 1990. Janice again made the point:

Again, I think people's perception of physical education and Sport being the same continued. The initial changeover had nothing to do with not having a physical education division... There was a time when a Ministry of Education and Culture existed and there were a number of sports coaches... working out of this Ministry. These coaches set up coaching programmes in educational districts to which they were appointed... There was also a School Supervisor II for physical education in the Ministry of Education and Culture at that time in the person of Mr. Freddie Townsend who eventually died... but his post went out with him.... when he retired.

The transfer of the physical education unit after seven years of operating under the sport ministry brought not only a heightened level of anxiety for the future of physical education but also a renewed vision to continue to improve the status of physical education with the introduction of formal examinations at the secondary level. In addition to establishing formal examinations, this transfer facilitated further attempts to distinguish physical education from sport at a ministerial level. All matters that pertained to physical education were directed to the Minister in the Ministry of Education and the curriculum unit, while issues related to sport outside school were directed to the minister in the Ministry of Sport. What happened next for physical education would prove challenging yet fruitful. Formal examinations were officially introduced, heightening teacher resistance.

5.10. A Milestone Achievement with Limited Capacity

While sixteen physical education and Sport Officer Is (PESO Is) operated from the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Creative Arts, only half transferred back to the Ministry of Education in 1990. Those who returned to Education were responsible for physical education and sport in schools. The unit now operated with half its original capacity and this put a strain on those that stayed. Those officers who remained in the Ministry of Sport worked under the director of physical education and sport in the Ministry of Sport, but they had no authority to go into schools even though physical education remained part of the title for the head of their unit. These officers only had responsibility and authority for developing and promoting sport in the community.

Janice revealed that:

This previous relationship of working together under the Ministry of Sport in early days worked to our advantage. We (physical education unit) never encountered any problems with organizing physical education workshops or programmes for teachers. There was a ready clientele available at the schools. However, the biggest challenge we faced was when it came once again to the issue of who had authority over teachers. Amidst these challenges encountered in physical education, the first notable action taken was when the physical education unit moved back to the Ministry of Education in 1990 was having a formal physical education exam at the junior secondary level.

Now that physical education took up its rightful position under the Ministry of Education, the subject appeared to be a step closer to gaining recognition as having an intrinsic value in education. Ensuring that the subject was taken seriously appeared to be of greatest concern for those responsible for the development of physical education. Before 1991, physical education was one of the few subjects not examined at the secondary level and the introduction of an examination would be one of the major goals attained before the retirement of another one of our physical education pioneers. The justifications and recommendations put forward by the physical education unit gained cabinet approval and work began towards its implementation in 1991.

Janice described how a vast number of teachers strongly resisted the implementation of this examination and rejected the initiative in its first pilot year. While many teachers cited reasons such as not being adequately prepared for such a task and that the process was too demanding, a few understood that the examination would increase the value and status of the subject. These teachers, though few in number, felt that an examination would make physical education more favourable in being accepted as an academic subject. By the second year, 1992, the NCSE (National Secondary School Education) examination for physical education was approved as a compulsory subject at the junior secondary level and was eventually implemented at the other government secondary and government assisted denominational secondary schools. The unit also obtained approval for the inclusion of a greater practical weighting of 70% because it was felt that the subject was practical in nature and therefore the theoretical weighting (30%) should not take precedence. There was still some resistance by teachers and due to the lack of human resources, the level of supervision required to ensure that teachers supported the policy decision by implementing the examination could not be guaranteed.

Additionally, while some school administrators did not internally sanction the examination some teachers did not do the relevant preparation for students to attempt the examination successfully. In fact, teachers carried on their practice as they normally would have done prior to the implementation of an examination. There were some teachers doing structured practical activities only, while others simply continued to allow students to engage in unstructured forms of physical activity with or without their supervision. This was a huge drawback for the development of physical education, as Janice noted:

The scales never balanced and tipped heavily in favour of teachers who had the autonomy to deprive students of a quality physical education programme through their continued practice. Many teachers disregarded the curriculum, but the exam continued.

In spite of teachers' disregard, the successful implementation of physical education as a compulsory timetabled examinable subject on the national curriculum was a significant

milestone achievement within the education system. Janice and Ralph both agreed that having physical education recognized nationally as an examinable subject would certainly have significant consequences for the way in which the subject is perceived, practised and supervised. Or so they assumed. This decision, according to them, seemed to suggest that the nature and purpose of physical education as well as its future direction would be more positive once teachers begin to rethink their practice. Some teachers however, according to Cliff did not necessarily believe this to be true, as they were not convinced that the subject would be better off with the implementation of this examination. Macdonald (2003) summarizes the perception of these teachers quite succinctly as he likens curriculum innovations to a stone or tree branch hitting the iron roof of a house that houses chickens. It causes a great flurry of activity from the chickens but is short-lived as they soon settle down once again. This has led to the inevitable conclusion made by four of my mentors that although policy mandates are implemented, there is a subsequent need to ensure that proper systems are put in place to monitor the practice of teachers on a regular basis. While plans were set in motion to deal with this issue of non-compliance by teachers, a system-wide facilitator programme was established in 1995 but was set up mainly to support physical education at the primary level. Upon reflection, the event that Ralph experienced proved significant to become yet another critical policy incident.

When this facilitator programme was introduced in 1995, Ralph was appointed a facilitator for physical education. This was the first time that primary school facilitators were recruited for all curriculum areas since ten years prior to this, there were facilitators for maths and reading only. Ralph was one of the practising physical education teachers recruited into the physical education unit to function as a facilitator.

He related:

From 1995-1998, I visited different primary schools to assist teachers with the planning and delivery of their physical education programmes. I conducted P.E. workshops, did demonstration lessons and monitored the overall delivery of PE programmes in schools. There was a 1988 P.E. syllabus which was being used even though many people claimed that

none existed. Maybe it was dated, but the teachers and I sat and developed programmes based on the availability of facilities and resources at their particular school.

5.11. Further Reforms and Modernization

Not only was attention given to reforming curriculum at the primary level, the next wave of reform focused on the secondary education system and would have major impact. Trinidad and Tobago's *National Taskforce on Education Policy Paper 1993-2003*, identified one of its formal goals of education as endeavouring to develop a spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and emotionally sound individual (Ministry of Education, 1993). As a result, the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP) secondary school curriculum was formulated in keeping with the philosophy, goals and learning outcomes as outlined in the *Education Policy Paper 1993-2003*.

This SEMP curriculum was designed to 'ensure that all children of Trinidad and Tobago get quality secondary education' (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 2) by attempting to correct the existing deficiencies of the education system. This programme reflected the government's policy on education and made the provision for the 'development of a coherent and relevant education system' (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 2). This SEMP initiative was the second major educational policy to influence the development of secondary physical education. This programme has definitely generated more interest among educators, educational planners and other stakeholders in education than any other policy. Though the main SEMP document does not address key issues regarding the practice of physical education, it identified the subject as an important part of the development of students of the lower forms within the secondary school.

However, while physical education was becoming a more integral part of the school curriculum, according to Janice, the emphasis on sport was given a fillip with consequences that would still work in favour of further developing physical education.

In 1999, cabinet appointed a national task force on sport to develop a sport policy for the development of sport in Trinidad and Tobago which would facilitate total participation in sport (TPS) and high performance sport (HPS). After a couple of revisions it was finally approved in 2002. Ideas for this policy were drawn out of the Council of Europe's approval of the Sport for All Charter in 1975. One of the objectives of the sport policy was:

to actively encourage the establishment of a Health & physical education Curriculum at all educational levels and to foster the sport development phase of these programmes through the provision of sport coaching programmes throughout the education system (Ministry of Sport, 2002, p. 5).

The policy on sport sought to have physical education established as the medium through which sport would develop. Ralph, Janice, Denise and Cliff agreed that the development of sport must be built on a solid foundation of quality physical education programmes. According to them, the foundation for sport should be based on understanding fundamental movement principles and knowing that the basis of all movement used in sport can and should be developed through the delivery of well structured physical education programmes. Ralph argued that:

P.E. is like building a foundation for a house. If the foundation is not solid then the structure of the house will be weak. That's why we find many elite athletes suffering from injury quite early on in their career. I think we as physical educators have failed them in that sense because we neglect well-structured quality physical education programmes for short-lived glory. If you observe closely you will see professional athletes who could only use one foot or hand properly, they are one sided. You have professional athletes who do not understand space and these are people who are supposed to be our best! It tells us we are failing our students at school, where the fundamentals should be learnt.

5.12. Physical Education Launches into the Deep as Crisis

Looms: 21st Century Kicks Off

The period between 2001 and 2011 saw the development of physical education propelled into another dimension as it took leaps and bounds. The subject received

unprecedented support from government officials, the kind of support that was needed to affect massive change from a political level particularly from 2000-2007. It was the first time that physical education received such ministerial prominence and our country was being represented at a regional level. Keen interest was also being shown in the recognition of societal benefits that could be derived from having physical education as a core subject on the national curriculum. The Minister of Education assumed the responsibility for and ensured that efforts were made to improve the role and status of physical education for the benefit of society. According to Janice:

... it is not that government officials prior to my time were not doing a whole lot for Phys Ed, but they were not being supported at the highest level where policy decisions had to be made. There was never any direct political support and involvement in a positive way. We now had an individual who was well respected and influential and who supported our aspirations for physical education...

But I sincerely think that the level of enthusiasm and commitment by the individuals of the physical education Unit made a huge impact as well. We had strong convictions, fought strongly for physical education, and got the Minister of Education's support. We were a very progressive group and progress we did. This also led to a number of other things happening after that initial foundation was built. That level of political support created history as well.... as we now have introduced CXC physical education.

Political input and support allowed physical education to achieve yet another major milestone when our country joined forces with other Caribbean territories and the former director of the Australian Commonwealth Community Sport Development Programme (ACCSDP) to lobby for and seek approval to have physical education examined at the CXC level. In 1999 Trinidad and Tobago established links with the Australian director of ACCSDP. This individual assisted in coordinating a number of regional programmes in the form of workshops which facilitated the training of teachers at all levels of the education system from early childhood to the tertiary level in the development of inclusive physical education and sport in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2001, the ACCSDP was also instrumental in convening the first set of meetings with

other regional bodies such as Caricom and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to discuss the possibility of developing a Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) physical education curriculum and to mobilize these efforts. At our national level, cabinet also agreed to add CXC physical education to the subjects already being offered to our students locally once it has been approved regionally. Janice and Ralph admitted that they believed this to be one of the fastest syllabi to be developed. It was developed in 2001, approved and implemented by 2003 with the first examination being conducted in 2005. They both acknowledged that prior to this success attempts were made by members of various territories in the Caribbean to have physical education examined through Cambridge's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), formerly called General Certificate Examination (GCE) O'Levels. The Chief Education Officer (CEO) at that time was instrumental in assisting the curriculum division in this process but it was an unsuccessful venture because teachers of physical education were not ready for the task. As Janice recollected:

A very small group of us (Janice and individuals from the region) got together in 2001 and began to discuss a way forward for this CXC Phys Ed syllabus. A Caricom representative came to our meetings and so we forwarded our proposal to Caricom through the representative... the representative took it to the COHSOD (Council for Human and Social Development) meeting, and from the COHSOD meeting the proposal moved forward to the Heads of Government meeting. It was here that the mandate was given.

We had to have a syllabus ready by a certain time; we actually got two years... and we got it done. A lot of planning, meetings and late nights went into getting this syllabus ready. I am making it sound easy you know, I tend to be flippant, but there are so many issues; from getting the actual proposal ready and approved to the end result of having a syllabus in hand within two years. It would take a long time to review those details but in the end we got it done. The feeling was that if the subject was assessed it would increase its level of recognition and I can safely say, to date, that is happening.

The fact that CSEC physical education was approved meant that teachers would have to obtain further professional development and training since one of the basic requirements for teaching CSEC subjects was that teachers must possess a first degree in the subject.

And so, in 2007, Trinidad and Tobago created history this time at a regional level, with the introduction of its first ever three year part time bachelor of education degree in secondary physical education within another academic setting. This programme has been offered to seventy-seven in-service secondary physical education teachers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to teach the recently introduced CSEC physical education curriculum. Denise was very instrumental in this development. The government launched a drive, through its secondary modernizing programme, to upgrade secondary physical education teachers who were in possession of a teacher's diploma but who did not possess a first degree. Denise revealed that:

In 2007 after tendering to deliver the programme to upgrade our PE teachers, we (regional university) won the bid and were awarded the multi-million dollar grant from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)/Ministry of Education. This was in response to a proposal by the SEMP for the training of seventy-seven local secondary physical education teachers. These teachers were recruited from every geographic area in Trinidad & Tobago and were the first ever cohort of physical education teachers to receive a bachelor of education physical education-secondary degree locally in 2010.

It must be noted that this development took place almost thirty years after Mary had returned to Trinidad with a degree in physical education. Because there was no opportunity to do this degree locally in the 1970s when she completed secondary school, she had to undertake her undergraduate studies abroad. Denise, Janice and Ralph were fully convinced that the value of physical education has been enhanced to some extent. Ralph shared that:

...the curriculum team conducted a survey in 2003 because we (other officers) at the unit were eager to commence C.X.C. PE... We found that only 35% of our PE teachers at secondary schools had a first degree... the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) procured a loan to upgrade physical education teachers in possession of a teachers' diploma at our secondary schools... Now just over 70% of our physical education teachers at the secondary school possess a first degree in physical education.

While Janice added:

I think trying to improve the qualifications of secondary physical education teachers so that they feel on par with teachers of other subject areas, is another step in the right direction. I think the fact that the subject is now examinable has opened the eyes of a number of people in schools. Other teachers will begin to respect the subject a little bit more when they see what is involved in the teaching of physical education. This would certainly change perceptions of many who saw the subject just as a **Friday evening syndrome**, where students go to the hall to play. I think it will improve the role and status of physical education in our country and Phys Ed teachers will be seen in a different light.

As I discussed at the beginning of this section, the government's commitment to modernize and expand our education system through the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP) began in 1999. Physical education was recognized as one of the core curriculum subjects on the national curriculum and was offered a minimum time allocation of two 45 minute periods per week. As this modernization of secondary education continued through further curriculum development, Janice and Ralph revealed that the secondary school *Health and Physical Education* curriculum for forms 1-3 was finally approved in 2008 following two drafts, in 1999 and 2003, while the forms 4-5 curriculum gained approval in 2009. At the end of form three, it was agreed that students will be assessed for the National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) Level 1, and for the National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) Level 2 at the end of form 5. Janice recalled:

This idea of NCSE started back in the early 1990s when we attempted to adopt the Canadian model of education. NCSE level 1 and NCSE level 2 was a process which attempt to ensure that all the activities which students were involved in at school would form part of their transcript. If you were in 4H, if you were in soccer, if you played cricket you will get credits for all that you participated in... We (curriculum writing team) have tried to include a number of areas in the forms 1-3 curriculum so that students could get that exposure and experience of engaging in a variety of physical activities.

We hoped that the forms 4 and 5 national curriculum could be a bit more flexible than the optional CXC curriculum. Our national compulsory 4 and 5 curriculum seeks to offer students.... a variety of physical activities that they can choose from and become involved in. So that if they want

to do dance, they do dance; if they want to do aerobics, then they do aerobics... that kind of thing. The curriculum aims to provide some transfer value that students could take with them when they leave school. It (physical activity) must be something that they would enjoy and that they would enjoy it so much that they would do it habitually as part of a healthy lifestyle.

What has been interesting about the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago since the beginning of the 21st century is that it appears to be responding to the global crises that Hardman (2008) describes. Reports and surveys done since 1999 indicate that globally physical education was on the decline. This final section attempts to place our recent historical development in perspective in light of our response to global confirmation that the perceived status of physical education is on the decline.

5.13. Global Meets Local

As the history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago evolved and achieved a number of successes particularly during the first ten years of the 21st century, we cannot neglect the events of the world around us. There has been a perceived decline and/or marginalization of physical education around many countries worldwide. This has been confirmed at the Berlin physical education World Summit in 1999 in spite of the fact that ‘overwhelming medical and other scientific evidence has provided a *prima facie* case for the inclusion of physical education as an essential school curriculum subject, which lays down the foundation for the ‘physically educated’ person and lifelong engagement in regular physical activity’ (Marshall & Hardman, 2000, p. 203). Mounting evidence of this deteriorating situation of physical education has also been revealed at a number of conference themes, reports, journal articles, national and international surveys as well as on-going analyses. International agencies, national and regional organizations also issued position papers, policy and advocacy and agreed declaration statements in support of physical education. This resulted in the International Olympic Committee supporting a proposal to conduct a worldwide survey on the state and status of physical education in 1999 because of this perceived perilous

situation (Marshall & Hardman, 2000).

Though the data in the form of survey questionnaires, follow-up responses and literature survey were collected from 126 countries and autonomous provinces and states, it represented several global and continental regional concerns and issues, regarding the state and status of physical education. Janice, Ralph and Denise referred to the issues that the worldwide survey addressed and were quick to point out that Trinidad and Tobago was attempting to take responsibility for its own situation through the many policy decisions which were being implemented. They agreed, however, that it may take a longer time to persuade teachers to change their practice and perceptions of physical education. They all admitted that problems still exist but were hopeful that collectively we could address our circumstances with our innovations even though they may appear late in coming. Janice was quick to note:

I think Phys Ed has made some strides, I think coming from where it was to where it is now, and being recognized as a subject like any other on the curriculum is a good thing. We have to keep emphasizing that teachers must feel strongly enough about their subject so that when somebody says '*well is just Phys Ed so I could take the class*' they (teachers) could stand up and fight for their time, their status and their subject, but this desire must also come from within us.

The findings of the 1999 worldwide survey revealed that while physical education is legally required in '92% of the 126 countries sampled, few of them actually implement their statutory requirements [and] globally around 30% of physical education is dropped to make way for other subjects' (ICSSPE, 1999, p. n.p). The figures of the 2005-2007 indicated that although 89% primary and 87% secondary schools have legal requirements for physical education and that it is 'a compulsory subject in a large number of educational systems globally,' there are still disparities between the legal requirements and the implementation of physical education (Hardman, 2008, p. 7).

Cliff agreed that even though the historical development of physical education shows that the subject is now legally required at the primary and secondary level, there still exists a major issue of the disparity between policy and practice. He argued that in the Trinidad and Tobago context, some primary schools were fortunate to have specialist physical education teachers and for those that did not, the responsibility for teaching physical education rests on the shoulders of the general practitioner. Additionally, drawing on issues revealed from the worldwide surveys conducted in 1999 and 2005, Cliff and Ralph cited the fact that in spite of our significant gains we continue to be plagued with the issues revealed by the surveys. They supported Hardman's (2008) indicators that such gains will also be affected by failing fitness standards of young people, and high dropout rates from physical/sporting activity engagement.

Ralph also made his view known as he too agreed with the findings of the worldwide surveys and commented that, historically, physical education was perceived as a non-productive low status educational activity and that today, it still appears to some extent to be less important than other academic subjects. Trinidad and Tobago has legalized physical education and its status is similar to other subjects but, like the findings of the surveys, it is not matched in practice. It remains the perception of many teachers as well as administrators that the subject and subject teacher is not as valuable as other subject teachers. The findings of the 2005-2007 'reality check' survey supported Ralph's viewpoint as it revealed that the 'legal and perceived actual status of PE and its teachers in relation to other subjects and their teachers is a contentious issue' (Hardman, 2008, p. 13). From his experience as a facilitator, Ralph noted that in some schools, particularly in denominational primary schools that often participate in sporting competitions, the physical education teacher becomes the 'sports teacher,' and his/her time-tabled physical education classes are suspended so that the school could be represented at these meetings and competitions. This scenario was an example which Janice and Cliff also noted. They both argued that despite the fact that physical education is made compulsory and is

timetabled both at the primary and secondary levels, mass participation in physical education lessons is still not guaranteed. There is still an overall commitment among teachers toward sports and building teams for competition, instead of toward participation in quality movement experiences which physical education should allow. Finally, as the students move through our education system and toward national and regional examinations, deliberate provisions are made by administrators to suspend timetabled physical education classes for revision purposes.

Another major success occurring globally not necessarily for physical education per se, but in the name of Sport and physical education, was the adoption of resolution 58/5, proclaiming the year 2005 as the International Year of Sport and physical education (UNESCO, 2008). The general assembly of the United Nations adopted this resolution at the fourth international conference of ministers and senior officials responsible for physical education and sport in December 2004. This proclamation sought to recognize the important role Sport and physical education could play at the individual, community, national and global levels in the promotion of education, health, development and peace (UNESCO, 2006). Over 100 countries from all continents participated in countless physical activity initiatives, with some even forming partnerships to ensure ‘that a growing network of Governments, groups and individuals around the world were made aware of the vital contribution that sport and physical education can make with regards to education, health development and peace (UNESCO, 2006, pp. 22-23).

As I listened to Janice, she shared her knowledge of Trinidad and Tobago’s involvement and contribution to making the international year of sport and physical education (IYSPE) 2005 a success. She recalled:

To commemorate the start of IYSPE 2005 we planned a number of activities at country level for the year though one might say that we did not specifically target physical education except to successfully introduce a Bachelor of Education in Secondary physical education. The activities planned did involve mass participation of primary and

secondary school children. The curriculum unit of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Sport, the Australian Caribbean Community Sport Development Programme (ACCSA), the Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sport and physical education (TTASPE), the university of the West Indies, the Australian Sports Commission, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) collaborated in one way or another to facilitate projects that contributed to the success of IYSPE 2005. The collaboration also fostered increase participation in physical activity among our nation's youth.

Firstly, the curriculum unit organized a *Torch Run* in Olympic fashion. This lasted several days as students carried a torch throughout all the educational districts in Trinidad and Tobago. After this official launch, we initiated the Jump Rope for Heart Project. This school project involved students participating at the school and district levels in activities using a skipping rope. We were also able to produce a Jump Rope music video to promote health, peace and harmony. Over 200 teachers received training to facilitate this Jump Rope activity. This project concluded with a National Jump Rope Festival broadcasted live on radio with more than 500 students participating.

Another project organised was the Youth Empowerment through Sport (YES) programme. This programme was set up as a means to reach underprivileged youth, particularly girls to encourage positive behaviour and to teach them personal responsibility through participation in sport. YES was introduced at one of living-in youth camps located in Trinidad.

We hosted the international sport and physical education convention (ISPEC) at the university of the West Indies Trinidad between September and October 2005. We had over 200 participants in attendance with presenters from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and from within the Caribbean region. This convention presented a tremendous opportunity for participants to get involved in the issues and debates influencing the policy and practice of physical education and Sport locally, regionally and internationally. The convention targeted school administrators, physical education teachers at the primary and secondary level, coaches, physical educators and sport specialists at universities as well as university students.

I think the greatest achievement for us as a country that year was the launch of the bachelor of physical education degree. The first cohort of approximately 77 secondary school teachers from Trinidad and Tobago began their course of study at the university of the West Indies. This was a significant contribution to the development of physical education from

the Caribbean region. Denise was instrumental in setting up this programme. Her institution won the tender to develop the programme and negotiated with consultants from the Ministry of Education, the secondary education modernization programme (SEMP), and the International Development Bank (IDB). She also worked alongside the business development office at the university and with some of her international colleagues in the field to develop and teach on the programme. This was indeed an historical moment in the history of physical education for Trinidad and Tobago.

Designing this degree programme meant that as a nation, Trinidad and Tobago had to critically examine the effect of our inherited colonial system and the influence of globalisation on our evolving education system (Reid, 1997). It was the first time that a space was created to interrogate the current national curriculum in physical education and the practice of teachers in light of the dominant pedagogies that underpinned both. What counts as knowledge and what physical educators value most about physical education in relation to the influence of globalisation and colonization (Wright, 2006) became critical to developing culturally relevant content for the degree.

5.14. Conclusion

This chapter sought to provide a critical account of the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago by identifying critical policy incidents from historical texts and significant events and experiences that my mentors shared. The history of physical education, as Janice so rightly conveyed, is embedded in the general history of education and, as such, significant periods of physical education were influenced by some kind of educational reform initiative. Each reform initiative as we have seen throughout this account has been influenced by previous colonial conditions, its continued legacy and by global influences which may not necessarily have served the interest of Trinidad and Tobago. Interrogating the history of physical education provided me to with an opportunity to critically reflect on and rethink my practice, while giving my mentors an opportunity to locate their physical education experiences in critical policy incidents.

I have argued elsewhere in this thesis that our colonial experiences of physical education have shaped our postcolonial practices. In order to explore the possibilities of rethinking the way in which we conceptualise physical education to facilitate a kind of practice that is culturally relevant and inclusive we must interrogate our past. The interrogation of policy and practice of physical education provided by the mentors has given a critical yet insightful narrative showing how local and global economic forces dictate every reform initiative that we as a postcolonial society undertook.

The opportunity to reflect on the physical experiences of my mentors provided insights into how much our practice remains deeply scarred by the effects of colonization. The reigning colonial legacy of the British model of education, attitudes towards physical education and embedded dominant ideologies about distinctions between physical education and sport, have seeped deep into the psyche of physical educators as the mentors have shown, and has created an educational dependence on international pedagogical practices despite attempts to reform and modernize the education system of Trinidad and Tobago. My intention to formulate new understandings of physical education which better serve our educational and societal needs through a re-examination of past physical education policy incidents and practice was undertaken not only to discover where things went wrong and where they might have been set right, not necessarily to return to ways of the past, but to re-imagine better ways of engaging our practice of physical education for future (Brydon, 2006).

CHAPTER SIX: INTERPRETING DILEMMAS OF PRACTICE

6.1. Introduction

This chapter describes and analyses the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago, again from the perspective of the mentors. I specifically draw on their experiences as students, as teachers and as educators, from as early as 1946 in order to respond to the research question; how have the school and early career experiences of a small group of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago influenced their professional judgements as educators and administrators? The experiences presented relate to recollections of and reflections on a range of events that refer to political processes that shaped the way physical education was and is conceptualised, defined and understood. The data in this chapter links to material concerning the historical development of physical education presented in the previous chapter, and relevant literature to build a sense of empirical support. This chapter assists me in gaining further insight into and understanding the early educational messages communicated quite implicitly, about physical education, its role in a person's life, its function, status and its perceived value as a school subject over time. There is also scope to consider how individuals represent these messages at different levels of the education system and at different points in time. By referring to these experiences, I again use reflexivity and critical incident analysis to identify and explore the kinds of practices that will illuminate and extend understandings of some of the key policy incidents identified in the previous chapter.

As I explained in chapter four, data analysis occurred concurrently with the data collection process and each conversation was transcribed immediately and returned to each mentor for clarification and verification of the details shared (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Additionally, unlike developed countries where great emphasis on documentary evidence is common, within small states such as ours, we often struggle with issues of archiving and officially documenting information (Hall, 2001). Our stories therefore,

are what we often privilege as one of the most appropriate ways of producing knowledge.

In what follows, I explore my mentors' experience of the subject from different entry points in their lives. These entry points include primary and secondary school, university, as beginning teachers, as lecturers and administrators of physical education. First, I introduce my overall school experience as a platform with which to build the discussions at the heart of the chapter.

6.2. Conversations about Physical Education: Early Socialization Experiences

Before each conversation with my mentors, as a stimulus to shape these conversations, I made use of my overall primary and secondary experience of the subject. Depending on how the conversations developed, I also made use of my initial introduction to physical education as a newly unqualified teacher. I shared this with you on page nineteen as I discussed the context for my research. I used the first story as a stimulus to open a critical dialogic space, and viewed the story through multiple lenses in order to further reflect on and interrogate that particular experience. In doing so, the experience became a significant entry point for critical reflection and further interrogation. This experience sparked discussions on just how much experiences could influence an individual's present and future decisions about engaging in physical activity, as well as their teaching careers. During each conversation, I also presented opportunities for my mentors and me to interrogate Dewey's (1939) philosophical argument on the theory of experience, in which he argues that the quality of the experience had, is critical to ensuring desirable future experience. Each mentor agreed with me that it is important that teachers constantly engage in critical reflection about the kinds of physical education experiences they offer to children of school age. My mentors concurred that Dewey's philosophical position about the nature of experience, is a crucial ingredient

for making sense of teachers' early experiences of physical education, understanding current practices and for reconceptualising the way in which physical education is practised in the future.

According to Williams & Cliffe (2011) physical education in the primary school is an essential vehicle for promoting an appreciation for engaging in physical activity. It is therefore necessary that the practice of educators provide meaningful experiences throughout students' primary years. Primary school is the ideal place for students to form sustainable attitudes regarding physical education and physical activity engagement (Pieron, et al., 1997). My mentors suggested that establishing an aspiration for lifelong physical activity engagement must begin at the primary school through engaging children regularly in well-structured physical education lessons. At this point in my analysis, I recognised that I was learning about the experiences of my mentors not only to produce a critical historical account of physical education for Trinidad and Tobago, nor even to simply reconceptualise a future for the subject. I came to understand that I was inquiring more specifically into my primary school experience to identify the extent to which these experiences were similar to those of my mentors. My inquiry therefore allowed for critical reflection on the significance that such an early experience had on future decisions I made. I was also interested in exploring whether collectively our early socialization experiences of the subject could provide information and ideas necessary to develop future understandings about the kinds of experiences contemporary students need to ensure positive beliefs about and experiences of physical education are established and maintained.

During our conversations, I further interrogated that first bad experience in greater depth with four of my mentors. I recognised that I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to gain other experiences that redefined my concept of and attitude towards physical education. This occurred when I began teaching and then later during my career as a coach. One of my mentors further probed me about my first story by asking: *'What would have happened had your response to the high jump experience been*

different? Would you have still felt rejected or ashamed if perhaps your response was different?’ I continued to reflect on the action taken, [none] and the emotions, which carried through from the experience [withdrawal, fear, doubt and rejection]. From the probing, I realized that if there was a stronger resolve on my part, maybe I might have been able to challenge the teacher’s action or turn his negative comments into positive energy in an attempt to prove the teacher wrong [that I was not ‘a waste of time’ and that I could actually perform the high-jump successfully]. That particular experience arrested or distorted the immediate growth of further future experiences for me (Dewey, 1939) and there was no room to think of anything else or to find a stronger response or better my performance. The experience sapped my confidence, self-concept, and my ability as a child to respond effectively in such a situation, or any other for that matter, for years to come.

I remembered how during the day of competition, all I could think about was how I would protect myself from similar situations in the future. I mentally prepared myself not to allow such a situation to occur again and so my resolve was to protect myself from hurt by not engaging in physical activity or individual sport, which carried a significant amount of responsibility on me. I attached a particular set of feelings toward this experience and ultimately stored these as rather significant or memorable (Cardinal, et al., 2013). My critical engagement with this experience led me to appreciate and draw attention to ‘the way personal and cultural realities are constructed through narrative and storytelling’ (Smith & Sparkes, 2012, p. 80). It was not about narrating my story, but also about engaging in praxis. With the help of my mentors, I critically reflected on ‘*how* and *why*’ I narrated the story (op cit, p. 81) and in doing so, together with my mentors, offered suggestions as to ways in which the practise of teachers and the experiences students’ might be improved. I felt that this experience was important enough to share as it could provide policy makers and educators alike, with lessons and further insights about how the practise of teachers might influence future participation in physical activity. I also wanted to obtain a reaction from my mentors to see whether they would agree that this could be one example of an experience which Dewey (1939)

identifies as mis-educative.

Perhaps if my coach had a broader understanding of my developmental needs as a child he might have been less likely to foster undue anguish within me and not commented that my non-performance during the training session was ‘wasting his time’. My coach also kept speaking about wanting to ‘dethrone’ the defending national champions. Ultimately, his focus was on winning the championships. Miller (2012) suggests that adults (parents and coaches) usually ‘rely on youth sports to feed an array of [their own] emotional needs’ ...and that they ‘have a strong psychological investment in seeing their children succeed on sports fields – even if it comes at the expense of their child’s enjoyment and pure play’ (p. 109). In my view, my coach’s inability to detach himself emotionally from his emphasis on winning was to my detriment. He was evidently displeased because I was not displaying a winning attitude by executing a proficient performance and I appeared not to be able to contribute to his gain.

In what follows, I share my overall school experiences of physical education. This provides an account of the practice of physical education during the 1980s and 90s. It allows the reader the opportunity to make sense of the historical shifts in policy as discussed in the previous chapter. This section is relevant because my mentors’ early school experiences exclude an account of the 1980s and 90s.

6.2.1. My Experiences of Physical Education

During my early years at primary school, (1980-1987) students and teachers alike referred to physical education as *games* and we called the teacher responsible for these ‘games’, the ‘games teacher’ or ‘sports teacher’. We wore our ‘games’ uniform on Fridays and went outside to play modified versions of sports that were familiar to us. While the boys played football or cricket, the girls played netball, cricket, or rounders (a game similar to baseball). Some of the girls and a few boys also played singing and clapping games together like, ‘In a Fine Castle’, and ‘Who Stole the Cookie from the

Cookie Jar?’ These activities were usually unstructured and based on our own interpretations of the activities. We (students) participated in those activities that we figured we were good at and enjoyed most. Though the timetable posted on the teachers’ board read ‘GAMES’, many students were not keen and failed to make it to the playing field as we also had the option to either stay in the classroom or sit under a tree and observe the activities taking place. In many instances, the observers were those who did not have a games uniform or who brought a written note from their parents indicating that they be excluded from the activity. We also had a bi-annual sport meet. This was usually a big event. Teachers grouped students from among the school’s population into four main house groups and while some students would practise military marching in preparation to represent their house in the march-past competition, others practised for the various athletic events. On the day of the event, house groups competed against each other in specific age group categories. We ran relay races, participated in novelty events (egg and spoon race, three-legged race, etc.) to see which house would accumulate the most points and be victorious.

At secondary school (years 7-9), I had mixed experiences of physical education. For two of my three years at a junior secondary school (1987-1990) [now de-shifted and converted, see chapter five]. I had theory and practical lessons in physical education twice weekly (three 45-minute periods) and these were highly structured and engaging. Our lessons were mainly around learning about the body, doing fitness tests aimed at improving our fitness levels and learning various skills required for team sport participation. We did theory and practical examinations at the end of each term and had bi-annual sports meetings. Although the school was co-ed, our lessons were in single-sex groups. My teacher had just returned to Trinidad with a first degree in physical education after studying in the United States. Students who did not wish to participate in the practical lessons or who were ill would get their parents to write notes to the teacher requesting that they be excluded from taking part in practical lessons. Students were also encouraged to become more involved in popular individual and team sports and even take part in competitions such as netball, football, cricket, and athletics

organized for secondary schools. Both male and female teachers resigned after two and a half years, and their posts remained vacant until I left that school. Physical education was considered a 'free' period then with students having a choice of either sitting in the sports hall and engaging in other work or playing one of the sports they learned previously.

In my fourth (year 10) and fifth (year 11) year of high school (1990-1992) I attended a five year co-educational government secondary school which did not timetable any form of structured physical education lessons for students after form three (year 9). This school was a more academically oriented institution, with only a small percentage of the student population involved in club sport outside the school community. The lower forms did not do national examinations in physical education while I was a student there. With the option to continue my education, I enrolled in sixth form at a co-educational senior secondary comprehensive school (1992-1994) [now a converted to seven-year school].

In those days, this school catered for students of forms four to six only (year 10, 11 and sixth form). A percentage of students would normally be assigned to this school after completing their three years at a junior secondary school. It was highly academic, and unlike the other comprehensive schools that focused mainly on technical vocational subject groupings, this school also offered a combination of grammar school type subjects as well. The school participated in intercollegiate football, cricket, hockey and track and field and basketball competitions. Students were encouraged to join sport teams and participate in various extra-curricular school activities. Physical education however, was not a timetabled subject and so participating in various organized forms of physical activity was optional and did not necessarily cater for school wide participation. The students who participated in these sporting activities would be those who were involved in club sports or sports at schools they previously attended.

Next, I describe my mentors' experiences of physical education during their time as

students at the primary and secondary school. These accounts of practice took place during the periods 1950s to early 1970s.

6.2.2. What my Mentors said?

In summary, each of my mentors described their experiences of physical education as having an element of exclusivity and with sport being the dominant practice. The idea of what physical education in school was like and what it represented was explicit in each of their accounts. Cliff was the first mentor to introduce me to the terms ‘elitist’ and ‘exclusive,’ as he described his childhood experiences. What he remembered about the subject during that time was similar to the experiences he later describes when he becomes a teacher. Firstly, Cliff described his primary school experiences as quite memorable not necessarily because a well-structured physical education programme existed, but because he enjoyed the freedom of running around the schoolyard, playing football, and cricket:

During my years at primary school [mid-1950s early 1960s], I do not recall hearing teachers talk about teaching physical education as a subject or about taking children outside for a PE lesson. I did not see any formal lessons taking place nor did I experience any. I remember children running about freely, being happy, and cheerful. It was ‘games’, we played ‘games’ ... The girls came out and played netball while the boys played football or cricket. That is what we knew physical education to be back then, and we did these activities mainly on Friday afternoons. At secondary school, we did quite a lot of team sports, but only those students who were good at sport or had the experience participated.

June described how her overall early education at two all girls’ Roman Catholic schools and one Anglican school, as well rounded, but she too could not recall anything significant that related to formal experiences of physical education other than going outside to *play* on Friday afternoons. She confessed:

I especially looked forward to the last day of the term when the teachers would take us outside for ‘last day races’. We would run up the street and down to the schoolyard. I also looked forward to participating in those zonal track and field championships held in those days [1950s]... To participate in these competitions the teachers would group us according to our height. All the children who were of a particular height

would compete against each other; your age did not matter then. You could be six and find yourself in a race with eight and nine year olds. My teacher took us to the recreation ground nearby the school to compete in one of those competitions. I had to be 4 ft 6” in order to qualify to run in the race. The officials measured and selected me for the race. I barely measured this height. I ran my heart out, and won too. I got two glasses for that successful performance, which I still have today.

June’s secondary school experience from 1960 onwards, was a bit more formal and very exclusive according to her. She attended one of the most prestigious seven year all girls’ Roman Catholic high schools in the country. This school was and still is today élitist in every way with many established and highly competitive sporting teams. June recalled how her French teacher who was originally from France, introduced students to her idea of physical education, which was playing netball. June indicated that it was during this time that she began to appreciate sport and physical activity. She became heavily involved in athletics during her years at secondary school and eventually joined an athletic club of which she is still a member today. June shared that during the 1960s, it was not common for a female to be attending school while competing in athletic events outside of school. As a result, any time her club competed in other Caribbean islands, her mother would have to write a ‘proper’ excuse for her absence from school. She would not dare write that her daughter was going to compete in some ‘athletic meet’. Although her mother was not too pleased about June missing school and having to write these excuses, June disclosed that during these years at school, her mother always supported her engagement in physical activity. During her final year at high school [sixth form], June qualified to compete in an athletic meet within the Caribbean region. At the time, she was preparing for one of her oral examinations. The examiners did not arrive on the day scheduled for the examination so that afternoon June travelled to a neighbouring Caribbean island to compete. Unfortunately for June, the orals took place the day after she returned home and needless to say she did not perform well. It was at this point that her mother decided June must stop competing and focus on her studies. She recalled how this decision distressed her. June recounted:

This upset me a great deal and I decided that I would stop studying altogether if my mother was not going to allow me to do athletics

anymore. This caused some panic at the school and everyone [teachers, club managers and coach], expressed their concern about my actions. They all met with my mother and after a lengthy discussion, persuaded her to let me resume training and convinced her that I could manage both athletics and academic work. My mother eventually conceded. I resumed my studies and months later I did my A' level examinations and was very successful in all the subjects I wrote.

By contrast, Janice distinctly remembers how her family background had a lot to do with her lack of experience in and non-participation in physical activity during her primary years. Janice attended an all girls' Roman Catholic primary school and confessed that her early experiences of physical education did not consist of much physical activity or sport. Her engagement in physical activity and sport commenced when she entered secondary school. Janice attended one of the most elite seven-year Presbyterian high schools in the country during the 1950s. From its inception, this school's academic, sport and extracurricular excellence was outstanding. Janice explained how her aunt encouraged her to become involved in the sporting activities at this school. Because of her aunt's input, Janice excelled at netball and hockey and represented her school for a number of years at these competitions. She indicated that these experiences were quite rewarding even though she did not engage in these activities at the club or national level. She noted that her not being able to compete outside of school might have been a cultural issue coming from a family of teachers. Although Janice excelled enough to play hockey at the club or maybe even at the national level, and was selected, no one would take her to training sessions.

Ralph described himself as being very fortunate in that his father, a lifelong participant in physical activity, was resolute in having all his children engage in various forms of physical activity throughout their primary and secondary school years. Even if physical activities were not available for his children within the school, Ralph's father ensured they participated in extra-curricular activities. He commented:

My father always emphasized two things in our home, academics, and sports. The only person in our house never to play a sport was my mother. I have two brothers and a sister. My father was a police officer,

who played football, cricket, tennis and hockey for the police force. During our formative years, he always took us to the grounds [the Police Academy grounds formerly called the Police Barracks]. We would often imitate one of the sports that the adults were playing on the day. I credit my father with giving us the opportunity to these experiences... there are many children who from a young age never had such opportunities. Although I had successful surgery at the age of seven to remove a tumour on my left tibia... my father banned me from participating in football but allowed me to become involved in others sports. I attended an all boys' intermediate Roman Catholic secondary school and participated competitively in cricket, table tennis, and tennis. I was also involved in many other sports.

Like Ralph, Denise is a self-confessed 'sport shark', always being involved in some form of physical activity. Her mother was always involved in some form of physical activity, whilst her father was a footballer. Her earliest memories of experiencing physical activity was not participating but was sitting with her father looking at English football on television in the day time and listening to cricket on the radio late at nights and into the early morning when Australia and the West Indies or England played against each other. She explained:

...my sisters and I were always involved in sport from primary school... We played netball, rounders (similar to baseball) and I was involved in anything related to physical activity. We played games at school on Friday afternoons.

Denise continued onto secondary school and shared how much she wanted to play football but because of the stereotypical views people held of women footballers, her parents declined her request. This was the first time that her parents would do this and so she opted to play hockey instead. Although Denise attended a five year co-educational government secondary school from 1965-1971, she described it as the junior secondary school of the day. According to her, schools such as these were different from the more prestigious seven-year high schools. She considered herself fortunate to have had a physical education teacher who received training at a specialist physical education college in England. She recalled:

I think in those days [1960s] the Ministry of Education sent teachers to that famous PE college in England, I think it was Loughborough for

professional development training in physical education. When my teacher returned from her training, she received an appointment to teach at the school I was attending. We had highly structured physical education classes on a weekly basis and our school was involved in a number of sporting competitions.

During her early years at secondary school, Denise was a member of the national women's hockey team. She described herself as a good student who was not overly concerned with being excellent academically. She admitted that she was more concerned with playing hockey as her love for sport thrived on the influence and support of her family and physical education teacher. After spending five years at that school, Denise enrolled at another institution to pursue her A' Levels but continued playing hockey at the national level. During this two-year period, she recalled on two occasions when her parents were invited to a meeting to discuss her academic performance:

The school tried to persuade my parents to stop me from playing hockey. The teachers agreed that as a student I had tremendous academic ability but needed to refocus my energies in the classroom instead of on the hockey field. On both occasions my parents said NO!!! My dad explained: "Even if my daughter was just an average student I want her to be involved in sport." My father felt involvement in sport was an excellent thing and so I continued to play hockey at the club and national levels in sixth form.

Unlike Denise, who had full support from her parents, Mary was not as fortunate. Mary provided some insight into her school experiences of physical education from the late 1950s into the early 1970s. She attended an intermediate all girls' Roman Catholic school where students attended primary school and then continued onto the secondary school located on same compound. Mary particularly enjoyed the dance aspect of her school's physical education programme as evidenced by her commentary in chapter five. However, in terms of her general experience of physical education and physical activity she indicated:

I cannot say that my early school experiences of physical education were anything other than inspiring. We had a hectic time outdoors during our primary and secondary school years. In those days, this school catered for very 'bright' black children. We did a bit of informal netball, table

tennis, football, cricket, hockey and rounders, but had a vibrant number of successful school teams. An essential ingredient to maintaining the pride of the school was through the existence of school teams. These teams and activities were well organized and teachers used a progressive approach to deliver the physical education curriculum. Yes! We called it physical education. The only team I was able to play for though was the table tennis team. My parents were not very flexible when it came to extra-curricular activities and so I did not join other school teams. As I reflect further on these experiences, I remember... it seemed 'very colonial' really. We were conforming to the cultures and traditions of the colonizers. There was great emphasis on teaching English folk dances. The teachers played these old records... with all kinds of folk music... But I enjoyed it, I really enjoyed the lessons.

The early experiences of physical education shared by my mentors' revealed how historically, teachers and schools offered students various forms of sport for competition, dance and free play, all in the name of physical education. Their experiences also provided insight into how the British government was able to use the education to continue to maintain control over our people during postcolonial times after our country gained independence in 1962. The British continued to extend their foreign domination by offering professional development training to our physical education teachers. This initiative kept the colonizing agenda alive, even though we were now an independent nation. With our indigenous learning structures stripped, Trinidad and Tobago struggled to locate and recreate its own identity but continued to rely on the British for professional development and training of teachers. This resulted in British learning structures continuing to thrive. Our colonial legacy and postcolonial circumstances continued to produce a set of social ideas (Wright, 2006) in the minds of students about the practice of physical education and about what counts as a physical education lesson.

The conversations I had with my mentors also revealed that a familiar possibility exists that children's early attitudes, perceptions and conceptions of physical education are formed and shaped through the varying interpretations and priorities that adults in their lives place on the subject (James, et al., 2005). The formation of these attitudes and

perceptions according to Pieron, et al. (1997), usually occur during students' formative years. Kjønniksen, et al. (2009) argues that the process by which these attitudes form and develop during these years 'is a complex psychological one, which continuously changed as my mentors acquired varied experiences of physical activity' (p. 140). In addition to acquiring varied experiences of physical activity, my mentors also suggested that as a subject physical education has the 'potential to generate a number of varied and contextualised reactions' (Medcalf, et al., 2011, p. 194). This poses a dilemma for individuals like me, who might have one or more negative experience and then go on later to become physical education teachers. Strand and Bender (2011) suggest that these individuals often repeat the same kinds of instructional experiences they had as children because they tend to rely on the large amounts of information received about the subject from their childhood. This is something Cliff addressed later in this chapter, as he reflected on his experience of teaching in-service teachers interested in specialising in the teaching of physical education at the secondary school. Insights into Cliff's experience are necessary because individuals enter the teaching profession with perceptions of physical education that are based on their early socialisation (Morgan, et al., 2001).

Cliff, Ralph and Janice agreed that prior perceptions of physical education formed throughout one's schooling can influence prevalent teaching ideologies and philosophies that individuals hold, and adopt for future engagement in physical activity if they decided to choose teaching as a career. I had conversations with my mentors that captured this 'balance between continuity and change' (Dunning, 1996, p. 186) that occurred over time. Students who become involved in and continue to engage in sport specific forms of physical activity throughout their life at school, tend to leave school with limited experiences of what physical education is and should represent. These sport experiences tend not to perpetuate future participation in physical activity to establish physical culture that can transform our society. My mentors agreed that experiences such as these might account for the distorted views the wider population hold regarding the practice of physical education in schools. Although physical education was always

and remains part of the national curriculum, experiences of engaging in high quality physical education lessons appeared to be almost non-existent at primary school and very limited at secondary school. My mentors, with the exception of Mary, went through these years with the perception that physical education and sport meant the same thing. Our discussions therefore confirm Dewey's (1939) argument that experience and education are not identical because some of our school experiences might be un-educative as it 'cripples the powers to meet, understand, and possibly control the inescapable flow of future experiences' (Hook, 2008, p. x).

Within a more philosophical context, my mentors' experiences of sports, games, dance and free play also confirmed that physical education as a school subject failed to deliver the kinds of experiences, that promote mass participation and foster the development of a clearer concept of physical education (Kirk, 2010). My mentors' parents and or significant others, who were not necessarily their teachers, influenced their participation in and attitude towards physical activity and sport during their years at school. The literature suggests that factors such as parental influence and support (Raudsepp & Viira, 2000) as well as early socialisation into sport in (MacPhail & Kirk, 2006) and out of school (MacPhail, et al., 2008) might be responsible for the attitudes towards and perceptions of physical education and sport they initially formed. While Denise had the support of her teacher and parents, Ralph had the support of his father, Janice had her aunt's support, June had her mother's and Cliff's coach influenced his involvement in sport. Analysis of my mentors' stories also suggest that the transmission of family cultures generated during childhood tend to determine an individual's enduring tendency to continue engaging in sport (Birchwood, et al., 2008) or other forms of physical activity during and after leaving school. The data clearly showed that this tendency to continue activity into adulthood might not necessarily be because of their experience of having quality physical education lessons at school. Four of my mentors viewed themselves as 'sporty' because they were all involved in some form of competitive sport in and out of school. They all agreed that parental influence or the influence of significant others was 'exerted through a combination of direct or indirect,

intentional or unintentional ‘strategies’ or ‘practices’ (Wheeler, 2012, p. 240).

Literature commonly suggests that social dynamics such as social class, gender, race (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005), family culture (Wheeler, 2012), physical appearance or even parental influence may influence students’ attitudes towards the subject and toward participation in sport (Sport Scotland, 2008; Sport England, 2009). However, because my research focussed on inquiring into the experiences that physical education offered to me and to my mentors I would argue that the actual experience of physical education is what influences attitudes and perceptions in a significant way. Additionally, when it comes to future participation in physical activity, upon reflection, my mentors all agreed that it was indeed the kind of experiences offered to them that was most important. Like Dewey (1939), we all believe that experiences absorb something from those that have gone before and transform the quality of those experiences that come after it. The findings of the conversations I had confirmed that personal experiences play an important role in developing and affecting beliefs about, attitudes towards and conceptions of physical education throughout one’s primary and secondary school.

Research indicates that ‘participation in varying forms of physical activity as a young person influences participation in physical activity as an adult’ (Lee, et al., 2007, p. 436). However, as children progress through school there appears to be a decline in their activity levels as well as in positive attitudes toward physical education and physical activity engagement (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Although this was not the case for any of my mentors, my physical activity levels decreased to a certain degree because I was afraid of having a repeat of this negative experience I had at age ten. Such experiences of this might affect children’s identity construction, their beliefs about physical education as well as their future participation in physical activity (Dismore & Bailey, 2010; Streaun, 2009; Brooks & Magnusson, 2006; Sheppard & Trudeau, 2000). Though my mentors did not have such a similar experience as the one shared in chapter two, they all agreed that they are aware of and know of many

individuals who had and who shared similar experiences to mine. Janice, Cliff and Ralph also shared that when they became teacher educators and administrators they interacted with a number of in-service and pre-service teachers who had the exception of otherwise positive experiences of physical education. This evidence confirms the importance of understanding and making use of Dewey's (1939) theory on experience where he argues that it is the quality of the experience had, which promotes future desirable experiences. This evidence also underscores the importance of ensuring children's perceptions of and attitudes towards physical activity engagement are positive from early childhood. This can be achieved through 'a high-quality physical education curriculum' (Department of Education, 2013). This cannot be accomplished in the first instance without challenging the thinking and current practice of physical education teachers.

In the next section, I engage in presenting and analysing my mentors' early career experiences of physical education.

6.3. Conversations about Physical Education: Early Career Experiences

All my mentors established that their adult education experiences assisted them in understanding and appreciating the nature, purpose, and scope of physical education. From my conversations with them, physical education meant playing sports and games. They all acknowledged that their perceptions of the subject gradually began to shift when they enrolled onto physical education degree programmes at universities either abroad or onto locally designed professional development courses in physical education. Janice and Cliff also indicated that they received further inspiration to pursue a career in physical education from individuals whom they identified as mentors in their own lives. Janice enrolled onto one of the local programmes organised for teachers interested in teaching physical education at secondary school. One of our pioneers of physical

education, who later became Janice's mentor, facilitated this in-service workshop. Janice had a relatively short teaching career, but spent approximately 30 years as a ministry official and so most of her experiences were shared at varying entry points in the previous chapter. However, her first authentic experience of physical education as a primary school teacher was at this workshop between 1972 and 1973. It is during this experience that she became aware that her understanding of physical education as sport was inaccurate:

Immediately after my secondary schooling in 1968, I gained entry into one of the teachers' colleges and enrolled as a pre-service teacher for two years. There was no physical education programme at college and so I chose Spanish as my elective. However, because of my experience of playing sports at high school, I decided to enrol onto this six to nine month in-service programme for teachers interested in teaching physical education at newly built junior secondary schools (See chapter five). As the weeks progressed, I realised that my experience of the subject was limited and my perception of what it constituted distorted. This course was therefore my first authentic and extensive experience of a physical education programme.

Cliff described how a man named Mr. B (pseudonym used) inspired him to become a physical education teacher. Cliff knew he wanted to become a teacher but Mr. B's life influenced him to become a physical education teacher. As he recalled:

It was easy for me to become a physical education teacher. My inspiration came from my mentor Mr. B. He was a former athlete, teacher and coach. He was one of the athletes who received a four-year athletic scholarship to a university in the U.S. during the early 1960s. When he returned home, he began his teaching career at a secondary school and sometime later established an athletic club in the community where I lived. He then went on to become a lecturer at one of our teachers colleges. I wanted to take on that same kind of progression as him and as faith would have it, I did. I too received an athletic scholarship to the US... I graduated with a first degree in physical education, pursued a master's in physical education and acquired some work experience before returning home to Trinidad.

Prior to my university experience, my perception was that physical education is sport; this is what I came to know and understood physical education to be. However, my university experience taught me that sport was merely a component of the total physical education programme and

not physical education itself. I learned about the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of physical education. This new knowledge intrigued me and I wanted desperately to teach my students about the true meaning of physical education when I returned home.

When Cliff returned home, he received an appointment to teach physical education at a seven-year single sex government-assisted high school and recalled one of his early teaching experiences:

My early experience as a PE teacher at this school was interesting and rewarding. It was a different kind of school. It was small; almost like a primary school. I was surprised to see that the school population comprised of mainly white affluent male students who were chauffeur driven to school each morning. In those days [1970s], everyone called me the 'games' teacher. This is how the administration, other teachers and students addressed me and viewed my role. I was not worried about what anyone called me because I understood my role and function. I was aware that there would be obvious tension and resistance because of people's perception of and attitude toward the subject. I knew I would have to negotiate for structured classes because a structured teaching programme was not part of the school's culture and both teachers and students alike resisted my efforts to change their perception of the subject. Students had the experience of collecting pieces of equipment from the storeroom and going out to the field to play a game of cricket or football sometimes with supervision. In those days, Trinidad and Tobago mainly focussed on netball, cricket, football and track and field, so when I attempted to introduce more structured lessons that included teaching warm-up activities, main activities, and cool down activities, students were not pleased with that and they resisted.

The concept of physical education that I learned about at university was something new to staff and students. As my lessons gradually became more popular, both staff and students showed a greater level of tolerance and appreciation for what I was doing. Nevertheless, not everyone accepted the idea of structured physical education classes. What existed at the school was a highly structured sport programme that concentrated on coaching in three main activities, cricket, football and field hockey. Students were not keen on learning about physical education per se. I suppose everyone knew that children needed to be engaged in some form of physical activity, but individuals were not particularly interested in experiencing physical education and understanding its role and function as an organized school subject.

What everyone had an interest in was having sporting teams to represent

the school at competitions. Historically, this school won consecutive national championships in cricket, football and hockey and wanted to continue this feat. The school population had become accustomed to the concept of physical education being sport and the administration was not in favour of me disrupting this idea. I spent three years at this school and had two good years that allowed me to gain a good perspective on teachers', administration, students' and parents' perception of and attitudes towards the subject. Apart from establishing a physical education programme, I introduced basketball and athletics to the school's sport programme. Although this advanced the school's opportunity to compete in two new sporting events, physical education did not get the kind of support and recognition needed to make a difference and to change perceptions. It certainly provided a different kind of experience for students, particularly the less able, but I am not sure that I spent enough time at that school to see perceptions and attitudes changed.

One critical incident that stood out for Cliff occurred during the first year of his appointment as a physical education teacher when some foreigners visited his school to do a video production. Cliff recalled:

During the early 1970s and mid 1980s the West Indies Cricket Team [a multi-national cricket team made up of mainly British and non-British dependent English speaking Caribbean countries] was dominating the world in test cricket. During colonial times, the British imposed the game of cricket on us, but overtime we became so good at the game that we began to beat our '**Masters**' (said with emphasis) at their own game. I can remember this experience quite well because I was astonished by their request. These English visitors wanted to do a video recording of my class engaging in a cricket lesson. They however did not want my students to use the proper batting equipment. They wanted to record my students playing cricket using coconut bats. I think they perceived that children in the Caribbean used coconut bats and pieces of wood to play cricket and that we did not use or even had proper equipment.

This was disturbing to me and I found their request to be quite strange. They were at my school seeing us using the most up-to-date equipment. We had professional cricket bats, wickets, pads, and even gloves, (chuckles). We had everything yet these '**ENGLISH PEOPLE**' (said with emphasis) insisted on video recording students using improvised equipment. I felt as they were taking us back to a particular time. It was '**PRIMITIVE**'! (said with emphasis) and I challenged them on this. Why did they feel it necessary to portrait us as an underdeveloped, colonial island? Why? Maybe they were right in some cases, but this

was not how we taught a proper cricket lesson in schools or even for school competitions. Maybe at home or at the beach, children and even some adults would use anything they could put their hands on at the time to use as a ball and a bat. They might use an orange or lime, and a piece of wood but not in a physical education lesson. However, we had proper equipment in schools. I was incensed. I challenged them but then I gave in to their request.

June's first appointment was at a primary school in East Trinidad. In those days, in order to become a primary school teacher you needed to have five O' level qualifications inclusive of Math, English Language and a Science subject. You also needed to acquire a Teacher's Registration Number first before you could apply to teach. There was also the option to apply through a Board, if you were Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian or of another denomination that provided an education for its members. June revealed that there was not much opportunity for engaging in physical activities at her school but she saw an opening and took it. She recounted:

I decided that I would take my class outside on Fridays; depending on the weather conditions, to do exercises and some minor games. This is what I remembered my teachers doing. After a while of doing this, I eventually became the unofficial physical education teacher at the school.

Within the first few months into her teaching career, June participated in a six-week in-service professional development workshop in physical education for interested teachers. One of our pioneers of physical education conducted this practical workshop. He was a former teacher and curriculum officer named Roy Senford, now deceased. Roy had just returned from pursuing a professional development training course in physical education in England in 1965. June also revealed that this was her first official exposure to physical education and enjoyed the experience so much that she decided she wanted to become a physical education teacher. Roy introduced her to a structured version of the practical components of a physical education programme, which she had not experienced before.

One year later, in 1966, June accepted a four-year scholarship from the Canadian

government under their CIDA programme (Canadian International Development Agency Programme) to study physical education. She developed a comprehensive understanding of the subject and recalled experiencing almost all sporting disciplines except cricket because it was not popular in Canada at the time. When June returned home in 1970 she was appointed to teach physical education at an all girls' government high school. She recounted:

I was the first ever PE teacher to be appointed to the school. I taught there from in 1970 until 1999 and then went on to become the vice principal until my retirement in 2007. I was not aware of a syllabus as such. I think there was a little booklet that one could describe as the physical education syllabus. There was none at the school so I developed my own comprehensive six-year curriculum, based on the knowledge and experience I had. I introduced students to movement education and the skills needed to perform a variety of sporting disciplines including dance, which was quite popular at the time. I also did theory because in order to move the body efficiently, students needed to know and understand their body parts initially without using scientific terms in the first instance, so a bit of anatomy was important. The curriculum was progressive, as each year I would build on concepts taught the previous year. The students also had assessments on the areas taught. The seasons were instrumental in determining what sporting activities were taught. So for instance, netball competitions began during term two of the three terms. This was between January to March or very early in April.

By the time the girls got to fifth form they did not want to do PE anymore. I think it was because in form four, they had to choose subjects to prepare for final examinations at the end of the fifth year and there was no official PE exam at that time so they were not interested. I changed the emphasis for these older girls and developed intramural team activities alongside the regular PE programme. The girls played cricket, badminton, and a bit of volleyball but we had to make adjustments because our lack of physical space and proper facilities. I think I might have worked as a PE teacher under three or four administrations and a change in administrations often meant a change within the culture of the school.

Our first principal approved of students being involved in physical activity. She was educated in England and I think she understood and appreciated the subject and so from 1970 PE was compulsory from forms one-six. There was another principal when she left, a locally educated one and she did not think PE was important. Only a few sixth formers

would turn up for classes because it was no longer mandatory. There was no reinforcement or encouragement from the administration about the importance of participating in PE lessons.

There were students who understood how PE contributed to their physical and sporting development and so some students went out to specialise in different sporting areas for school competitions and some even competing at the club level. We dominated in badminton and hockey and I facilitated the coaches by making sure that the girls had all the equipment and the skills needed to compete, and so they perfected the games they played. I attended some of the competitions to show my support to the students. Our PE programme developed champions in table tennis, judo, hockey, and cricket ...we had students past and present representing our country in athletics and other sporting disciplines regionally and internationally. Our school produced national sporting personalities and West Indies cricket players and captains.

I was always eager to see how far the skills taught in the PE programme would take the girls. One of the things I constantly thought of was if they continued participating in sport, they might be able to fund their tertiary education in the form of an athletic or sport scholarship. Maybe this was my motivation for wanting students to become involved in sport. I saw it as an avenue to obtaining further education. I recommended that they joined clubs and I coached students in athletics who later received athletic scholarships to top universities in the United States.

I am still not sure that all students and their parents fully understood how beneficial PE was then and still is today. I found that students who excelled in sport often had the support of their parents and this certainly made things easier for these students. I also had experiences whereby able students were eager to engage in some form of activity outside the school but their parents would often deny them the opportunity.

My mentors' early career experiences, particularly those of the late 1960s and 1970s illuminates and gives insight into significant ways in which the government of Trinidad and Tobago began to advance their educational policy. It was evident that our educational practice was reactionary to the policy conditions of external agents as discussed in chapter five. There was also a significant shift from the professional development training for teachers of physical education through the diploma programmes offered by the British, to a more North American sporting approach

offered by the United States and Canada. This shift certainly influenced the practice of physical education, within the junior secondary and government secondary schools as shown in my account of physical education during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In what follows, I describe the experiences of my mentors during their time as teacher educators and administrators. This section begins to challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about physical education that my mentors had and helps me to gain insights into how their early career experiences helped them in shaping their career and decisions they made as teacher educators and administrators.

6.4. Challenging the Sporting Practice: Teacher Education and Administration

Denise, Cliff, Ralph and Janice expressed the view that they began to challenge early understandings of physical education. Cliff was eager to describe how his experience as a physical education lecturer at teachers' college from 1979 to 1998 gave him the opportunity to challenge what many teachers had come to know and understand physical education to be. Cliff began his quest to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about the subject, as well as teachers' practice throughout the education system. Like Talbot (1993), Cliff spoke of his attempts to ensure that physical education teachers could and were prepared to 'marshal arguments' and 'to fight for the curriculum time and resources they needed' (p. 37). He recalled:

My appointment to the college was certainly a rewarding experience. I was now in a position to make thorough use of the knowledge, skills and experiences I acquired at university. My childhood and early career experiences as a teacher further motivated me to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with a better understanding of physical education. I wanted my students, particularly those who choose to specialise in the area to recognize the subject's educational value, which I felt, was non-existent. I did not want my teachers to leave college with a view that physical education means sports and games. This is what I tried to accomplish on both the basic and elective programme (See chapter five). ...It was obvious that people did not know the worth of physical education.

The other thing I emphasised early in my classes was that my intention was not to produce an athlete, a football player, or a basketball player... However, I felt part of my responsibility was to provide teachers with appropriate practical experiences that would assist them when they went out to schools on teaching practice or even when they returned to the education system to teach after they graduated. When children in our care have trouble performing activities or find things difficult... should they ever say, "Miss or Sir I can't do it!" or "Miss I am feeling a particular way," teachers must be able to identify with some of those feelings and emotions. If a teacher never experiences the practical activities they are to teach, then they are likely to have problems identifying what students experience. If students express fear over doing an activity in educational gymnastics, can the teacher identify with this? The child performs an activity and feels a little dizzy, could the teacher identify with effect a particular performance has on the child?

For me, the idea was to ensure that these teachers were strong in both the practical activities and theoretical areas because I was also preparing them to teach at the secondary level if they decided to apply for a transfer to a secondary school. Although I placed a great deal of emphasis on teaching practical skills, I also had theory sessions on lesson planning, the philosophical, anatomical and physiological underpinnings of the subject. The nature of the national curriculum for secondary schools requires that teachers be proficient in at least 13 practical areas, many of which were new to teachers. Many of these in-service teachers were mainly familiar with football, netball and cricket. Very few did track and field, but areas like hockey, tennis and volleyball were new.

All Denise ever wanted to do was teaching; not necessarily teaching physical education. Her mother was a teacher who taught from aged 13 until she retired at age 60. In those days (1930s and 1940s), Trinidad and Tobago had a monitor system where excellent students whose parents could not afford to send them to high school would begin teaching at their primary school from age 13. From 1974-1979, Denise was a classroom teacher but was also known as netball teacher in the three schools that she was appointed to during this period. Denise later accepted a scholarship to pursue a physical education degree in the United States shortly after completing her teacher training in 1982. She completed her bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees before returning home in May 1991 where she created a position for herself at the regional university. Denise recounted:

My plan was always to return home and work at the university. I wanted to develop a programme here on the field where I played hockey. I agreed to do an interview with a sports journalist. I told her I wanted to build a facility to offer programmes in physical education and sport at the regional university. She asked if the university advertised a position for this. I explained that there was no position, but that this was my aspiration. The journalist was able to organise an appointment for me to meet with the principal of the university. I met with the principal who reinforced what I already knew, there was no such position, but he was willing to convene a meeting with the top stakeholders of the university so I could present my vision. The stakeholders were impressed with my ideas and agreed to create a one-year contract for me to design a physical education programme for the university.

I previously designed a programme for the university at which I worked in the U.S., so within three months, I had achieved my objective. I presented the proposal at the end of the year and the committee was again impressed. I received a further contract to implement the proposal. There was still no job description and no budget to work with, but I was determined to implement the programmes that I had designed. I began by offering intramural programmes on the campus, but as an administrator, I was ineffective because I was operating from a little room across the way with one staff member. I formed a partnership with the education faculty and began offering a certificate in the art and science of coaching. As this programme became more established, I soon realised I needed a building. I got it into my head that I would build this facility. Everyone thought I was crazy, but I had this vision of and a design for the building, which I stuck on one of the walls in my little office. One day, our 1976 Olympic gold medalist came into my office and inquired about my drawing. I explained that it represented the facility I was going to construct out on the field. He laughed hysterically and said, 'Denise you are a crazy woman' (Both Laughing!). He retells this story all the time.

I prepared the proposal for the building, but getting approval for it was another issue, as no one took me seriously. I tried to convince the hierarchy of the university why they should invest in the construction of this facility but they still rejected the idea. I was disheartened. I could recall sitting in my little office some time after my second unsuccessful attempt when the estates manager came to see me. He was one of the members sitting on the committee when I presented the proposal. I enquired from him why they kept rejecting the proposal. He blurted out, 'why should we build a facility for sport?' How would this benefit the university?' I remember explaining to him, that every year during the rainy season, the university hosts an outdoor graduation and each year

rain falls on the day. Staff are always wiping chairs and relocating parents causing delays with the ceremony. If we build this centre we could hold graduation ceremonies there. The man leaned backward in astonishment and exclaimed 'What!' He left my office and I am sure he must have told the other committee members about our conversation and my idea because shortly afterward the committee summoned me to a meeting. They asked me to present my ideas about this facility I was interested in constructing.

Previously, my main argument was developing physical education and sport, but on this occasion, I argued for its construction based on the other purposes that this facility might serve the university, with graduation being the main purpose. I now had the support and attention of the head of planning, who was also the deputy principal at the time. The committee allocated a two million dollar budget for the project and an architect who would work alongside me to design the facility based on my specifications.

Unlike structures in England or in America that were mostly enclosed without an outside view, I wanted this facility built with large amounts of clear glass so that I could stay indoors and see the **FIELD** (said with emphasis), which is my business, the bright sunshine and the clouds. I wanted the indoor area to be fully air-conditioned and with teaching rooms. In Trinidad and Tobago, nobody had the concept of what an academic facility for the development of physical education and sport looked like. I was trying to get the committee to understand that the facility was not to be an open plan stadium, but rather a multipurpose academic indoor facility. When the architect was finished, we presented it to the committee knowing what we produced was a ten million dollar design. The committee's focus was on the indoor area, because it was in this area that they would have graduations. The estimated cost of constructing the indoor section alone and without air conditioning was two million dollars. Graduation is a very important time for the university and so the principal agreed to provide us with an additional million dollars to include air-conditioning. The architect was still worried because only he and I knew the full cost of making my design a reality. I explained to him that we would need to be strategic and construct it in phases.

Construction began shortly after, but it was a very stressful period for me. I attended committee meetings and met with the building contractors, and I soon recognised that people who knew nothing about physical education and sport were the ones making the decisions. They were not taking my advice and the fact that I was a woman did not make

things any easier. I also did not have the authority to and I could not make final decisions about what was going on. The contractors were not pleased with me and the university agreed to construct a scaled down version of the facility. I could not contain myself any longer so I went back to one of the professors on the committee inquiring into why the facility was being constructed without rooms for classes and office spaces. He asked me why I wanted classrooms. It was clear that this individual did not understand my vision to develop physical education and sport. The head of the university's projects unit visited me one day and asked, 'how did you do this?' He was impressed with the designs but made suggestions on how we could downgrade them. I challenged him because I had worked hard at getting the designs approved and construction was already on the way. I kept challenging the committee, pushing the boundaries and making new demands each time I had the opportunity. Eventually, I got a few classrooms, an office, and a small gym. There were cost overruns and when the cost of the facility reached 20 million dollars... the principal said 'NO MORE!'

During the construction phase, I kept a low profile, as I did not want anyone to know what I was doing. I did not want people to interfere with the vision and so I kept quiet about the facility's construction for two years. I worked alongside the contractors, sat with them and insisted on things being done a certain way. I wore my hard hat and I was there every day. I knew what I wanted and I would settle for nothing less. Despite having a blueprint, the contractors wanted to construct the centre in the middle of the field... they could not conceptualise my vision and they constantly tried to do their own thing.

I also continued to design new academic programmes in the art and science of coaching, in sports management, and sport science. I had to design all these programmes in conjunction with other faculties around the university because the centre could not obtain faculty status. I was under tremendous pressure and had to continue fighting because I had a vision, I created a job for myself as director of this centre and built the centre from the ground up. I cannot even begin to describe to you the battles I faced. People were mean toward me, their actions and words were daunting, but I was not phased. Through it all ... the only thing that kept me was God... You see I was rooted in Christ ... and that is how I made it... Because the Holy Spirit was with me and I had such favour ... you know ... People were doing all kinds of things for me ... The right people came at the right time. I kept praying and kept God at the centre of it all. I think we should never be afraid to acknowledge our faith as Christians. We must dare to be different. The only thing that keeps you going is your faith.

When the scaffolding and boarding came down from around the site it was like pandemonium throughout the campus... Because no one could have imagined what had been going on with the building ... There was excitement! Before the facility officially opened in 2003, an audit was carried out and the report came back as impeccable. This is the only sport and physical education centre in our country.

Janice shared her views on the school and adult experiences of physical education that shaped her career and the development of national curriculum policy documents over the years. Having received an appointment as a physical education and sport officer from 1980 until 2010 Janice was able to give further insight into what the future of the subject could be like. She indicated:

I think the subject has made some strides during my time. I think from where it was to where it is now, physical education more than ever before is being valued like other subjects on both the primary and secondary schools curriculum and this is a good thing. As educators we need to keep emphasizing the importance of teachers being competent to teach physical education so that when they are challenged to give up their classes or are told: *'well is just Phys Ed so I could take the class for...'* they could stand up and fight for their teaching time. I believe a teacher's philosophy and desire to represent the subject must also come from within. Individuals who chose teaching physical education as a career must have particular standards and values and must begin to rethink the way in which they practise. Continuing professional development workshops and frequent consultations becomes very useful in ensuring that physical education's status continues to improve.

I felt my mentors' responses about in-service teacher trainees having similar bad experiences of physical education during their years at school contributed significantly to strengthening the main argument of my thesis. Teachers reconceptualising their practice of physical education so that physical activity engagement becomes a way of life means interrogating their own school experiences, the type of teacher training they received and the way in which they currently practice. Establishing and maintaining a culture of lifelong physical activity within our society, means that physical educators must address this perceived conflict, arising between students' participation in competitive sport in the name of physical education, the kinds of experiences offered to students and the national educational agenda for physical education in schools

throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, a comprehensive approach to enhancing and expanding physical education at all levels of the education system is also necessary because developing physical activity as a way of life within a nation depends on the level and quality of physical activity engagement taking place within the population (Yang, et al., 1999). Ensuring that physical activity engagement ‘continues from childhood to adolescence into adulthood’, suggests that our policy reforms for and practices of physical education in schools must be reconceptualised (op cit, p. 120). Attention must also be paid to providing ongoing continuing professional development education for teachers of both primary and secondary schools. Our practice of physical education must be consistently geared towards ensuring that all children of school age acquire meaningful movement experiences so that they have ‘a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation’ when they become adults (ACARA, 2012, p. 1). This means explicitly highlighting the long-term physical, cognitive, social, and affective benefits of participation in the subject (Bailey, 2006).

6.5. Conclusion

I have now presented and analysed data collected in response to my first research question: *How have the school and early career experiences of a small group of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago influenced their professional judgments as educators and administrators?* This chapter provided critical insights into the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago at different educational entry points and showed how those practices shaped decision-making processes and judgements about physical education over time. Gaining insights into the practice of physical education also assisted me in understanding more clearly the critical policy incidents identified and analysed in my previous chapter. In presenting this chapter, I further interrogated and analysed my own experiences of practice with my mentors. I further reflected on the high jump experience shared in chapter two with one of my mentors as a platform to inform some of the judgments my mentors and I made about how physical education in schools might be understood and practised. The data collected also provided insights

into some of the challenges encountered when attempts were made to secure funding for building adequate facilities to provide professional development training and further educational opportunities for in-service, pre-service teachers to build capacity and to sustain the development of physical education and sport in Trinidad and Tobago.

CHAPTER SEVEN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR A CRITICAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE

7.1. Introduction

Physical education is a key ingredient within our education sector, which has the capacity to foster Aristotle's claim of 'the good life' to all members of our society. Provisions for such a life can be accessed through an education system that recognises that children and youth should have a kind of education that allows for experiencing the good life. Physical education teachers are in a poised position to provide opportunities for all children of school age to experience, enjoy, and develop physical qualities needed to establish and maintain a good quality of life. A quality education that shows a commitment toward promoting lifelong participation in physical activity is one to which we as physical educators should aspire. Conversations with my mentors confirm this desire for having physical education in all schools, which focus on 'mass participation' in order to, establish 'physical culture'. By mass participation, I refer to an education system whose practices are inclusionary and geared toward increasing the total number of students involved in physical education in order to develop physical culture which I refer to as a way of life. My mentors agree with me that as a nation Trinidad and Tobago can aspire towards making this notion of physical culture a reality, where physical activity becomes ingrained within our culture, through quality physical education lessons. Like me, my mentors also feel that such an aspirational agenda of developing physical culture ought to have global consideration.

It has been argued that the programme which has the potential to reach a vast majority of children and youth, far more than any other programme structure, is that of physical education (Hellison, 2003). The success of such a programme, however, relies heavily on teachers ensuring that children and youth are prepared with the competencies needed to cope not only with the mental struggle before them, but also to make them physically

fit to bear the excessive wear and tear of life. In this regard ‘in this life of ours, the physical underlies the mental, the mental must not be developed at the expense of the physical’ (Spencer, 1860, p. 219). It is safe to suggest, based on the above statement, that physical education like education should be viewed as a vehicle for social change and as a force to be used to further acquire and enhance the qualities needed for ‘meaningful participation in democratic life’ (Carr, 1991, p. 185).

This chapter attempts to show through a process of application, how physical education teachers can adopt a critical approach to carrying out their practice. The chapter seeks to respond to my third research question: Can better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago be promoted through the development of a critical approach to practice of physical education? If so, how can such an aspirational agenda be achieved? In responding in the affirmative to this question, in the first part of this chapter, I will discuss how physical education as a key ingredient in the overall education of children of school age is necessary for establishing and sustaining physical culture in Trinidad and Tobago. My intention is to engage critically with the way in which a group of physical educators have come to understand the practice of physical education through the experiences had. The chapter shows how the views of these educators contribute to the creation of a critical dialogic space for reconceptualising physical education through reflection and action in order to adopt a more critical, yet practical approach to our practice. To do so, I use a programme I have been involved in for many years to provide a practical example of how the practice of physical education can be reconceptualised and how physical culture in our society can be develop and sustained.

The main reason for using this particular programme is to show how physical culture can be established and maintained through physical education lessons that could provide a long-term commitment towards mass participation of children and youth in physical activity engagement. By ‘physical culture’, I mean the methods of educating all children and youth (the masses) through a standard form of physical education and health

activities (Pettavino & Pye, 1994; Riordan, 1977). A description and analysis of this particular programme will show how such an approach to the practice of physical education can be sustained through the education system. In this discussion, I argue that physical qualities, a main feature of physical education programmes, support the democratic principles and social values, which as a nation we strive to achieve. Next, I then discuss how through praxis, the concept of ‘mass participation’ and ‘physical culture’ emerged as key ideas needed for reconceptualising the way in which physical education is practised.

The second part of this chapter draws on the Cuban system of physical education and sport to discuss the process by which physical culture as an aspirational project can be achieved within a democratic society such as Trinidad and Tobago. I illustrate how a local programme model that I have been involved with captures the essence of what I see physical education in schools aspiring towards in the not too distant future. To me, conceptualising this programme model represents the goal of education and by extension, the goal of physical education in and for a democracy, which is the continuous enhancement of human beings through a participatory approach. Like other forms of education, physical education seeks to initiate individuals into the values, attitudes, and modes of behaviour appropriate to full and active participation in democratic institutions. This continuous enhancement is Dewey's (1939) idea of growth, which he considers to be a life-long process for perfection. Since the ultimate goal of education for our country according to policy documents, is to ensure sustainable growth of quality citizens (Ministry of Education, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2002), then as physical educators, regarding physical education as a valuable tool for developing and achieving such growth and quality is an imperative. This final section of this chapter will demonstrate how mass participation, as a feature of physical education, is one of the key ingredients for developing physical culture. The section that follows foregrounds the notion of the development of physical qualities as one of the essential aspects of a society through which all future members make some meaningful contribution to democratic life.

7.2. Physical Education: Supporting Democracy through Mass Participation

7.2.1. Physical Qualities Support a Democratic Life

Both Dewey (1939) and Carr (1991) argue that education and democracy are reciprocal. They believe that education in and for democracy seek to cultivate a critical disposition among all students by means of engaging and encouraging them to participate in planned activities which over time ultimately affects their quality of life. Participating in planned activities suggest to me a process in which the combination of the body and mind contributes to and affects this quality. Carr asserts that ‘the primary role of education in a democracy is to provide all its future members with the opportunities to develop those intellectual and moral qualities which meaningful participation in democratic life requires’ (1991, p. 185). Certainly, this suggests that a society cannot be truly democratic if the basic principles of democracy are not reflected in every facet of its social institutions (Kelly, 1995). In my view, one cannot achieve intellectual and moral qualities alone if physical qualities are absent. In extending Carr’s argument, I believe that providing opportunities for developing the physical qualities such as one’s weight, strength, agility and fundamental motor skills, which are necessary for meaningful participation in democratic life, is necessary. In order for future members of such a society as ours to fulfil their responsibility of having the necessary training and skills to confidently enter the workforce and lead productive lives, we should underscore the value of physical education as a core compulsory curriculum area and its ability to promote mass participation in sufficient levels of physical activity.

It is not entirely accurate for one to suggest that the development of physical qualities, as a necessity or requirement, should be for societies under dictatorial regimes only, where fitness becomes an ‘ideological duty’ (Reet, 1975). It is important that we also consider the value of physical qualities to democratic nations, noting that it should [not] be left more to the desire for balance and be undertaken for its own sake’ (Mangan,

1973, p. 165) but should be viewed as a necessity or requirement as well. The contribution that such physical qualities make to the needs, satisfaction and capacities of members of a society is invaluable, while maintaining the autonomy and vitality of a nation. It is a fact that organic fitness is a part of society's health and varying forms of physical recreation help to promote it. The main objective of Trinidad and Tobago's education sector is to focus on ensuring that as a people, we can produce graduates who are able to adapt to a rapidly changing world in which the pervasive forces of globalization and advances in technology take shape. In order to produce graduates who can support such rapid changes and demands, a socially and culturally relevant curriculum, as well as suitable teaching practices that ensure successful entry into the increasingly dynamic and demanding world of work must be developed (Ministry of Education, 2002).

So far, I have argued that physical qualities such as one's weight, strength, agility and fundamental motor skills can in fact successfully support members of a democratic society. These physical qualities, I have come to recognize, exist within the ideological roots of Soviet physical education and sport and the Cuban government adopted these qualities to develop the Cuban system of physical culture (Riordan, 1977). I therefore argue that the democratic principles, which Trinidad and Tobago strives to achieve through their education system, are similar to the principles which socialist societies practice. Trinidad and Tobago's initiatives in education aims to create a modern education system whose content and methods reflect its social and cultural realities, by focusing on providing education, skills, values and training which are relevant to the developmental needs of the country (Ministry of Education, 2002). The United Nations International year of sport and physical education (IYSPE) 2005 report argues that '...physical education provide[s] a forum to learn skills such as discipline and leadership, and convey core principles that are important in a democracy, such as tolerance, solidarity, cooperation and respect' (UNESCO, 2006, p. 29). These skills and core principles represent a number of social functions essential for engaging in life within a democracy. In what follows, I identify some of the social functions which our

Health and physical education as well as sport policies address.

7.2.2. Social Functions of Physical Education

Many of the social functions of physical education, represented in our own national sport policy as well as in our health and physical education policy, serve our society in various ways. They serve in: developing harmonious personalities; socialisation and integration; total education; health protection; developing physical capabilities; acquiring and transmitting knowledge; experiencing motor activity; and using free time wisely to name a few (Ponomaryov, 1973, as cited in Riordan, 1977). These social functions are embedded within our nation's watchwords, Discipline (referring to individual and national); Production (producing to enjoy); and Tolerance (learning to live together in peace). These watchwords represent the social values written in our Health and physical education curriculum, and in our sport policy objectives. These objectives include: a healthy, disciplined, united and productive society; independent, responsible, contributing members of society; greater participation in sport, physical recreation and physical fitness activities that promote health and wellness by all members of the society; establishing physical education programmes at all educational levels; fullest participation of women and girls in all areas of sport; opportunities for fulfilling social, psychological, emotional and physiological needs through sport and physical recreation; developing and improving the knowledge and practice of sport by the public at large; attaining excellence at the highest level of sporting competition, develop national pride, patriotism and enhance goodwill among nations; developing sport as an industry that will contribute to the earning capacity individuals and to the national economy; facilitating lifelong learning; and developing positive attitudes to function effectively in a culturally diverse society (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 22; Ministry of Sport, 2002, p. 5).

7.2.3. Reconceptualising Physical Education through Praxis

It seems appropriate to argue for physical education being a vital tool for preserving our democratic principles and for developing physical culture in Trinidad and Tobago. This idea of physical education in schools as a vital tool should encourage physical educators not only to conceive physical education merely as a subject which is taught as part of the overall core curriculum, but as an educational practice which can contribute significantly to furthering the development of our society. Conceptualising physical education as a practice creates opportunities for physical educators to engage in a process of critical self-reflection and action (praxis) (Freire, 1970), in order to adopt a more critical approach to their practice. And in doing so, extend their thinking toward reconceptualising physical education as a practice which utilises the medium of selected physical activities to improve not only human performance but also to enhance human development (Wuest & Bucher, 2002). The creation of such a space for physical educators allows for them to critically examine their own practice in order to reconceptualise more appropriate ways to improve physical education in schools while simultaneously contributing to and providing for, the individual within the collective (Johnson & Reed, 2007). I engaged in this process with my mentors. As they relived their experiences, we began to critically reflect on previous actions as a way of considering what was done and how what was done could have been done better, while sharing hopes of what they each envisioned for the future of physical education. Additionally, we reflected on how their experiences influenced further experiences of and decisions about physical education in schools. We also reflected on my own early experiences of the subject and it was evident that engaging in this process altered the way in which I began to think about my research journey and what I was attempting to achieve. At this time, I acknowledge that in analysing the conversations with my mentors, I was simultaneously analysing and interpreting my own school experiences of physical education, and in doing so, I was challenging my assumptions and understandings of the decisions I made thus far in my career as a result of those experiences.

Janice and Ralph identified some of the education policy documents that they assisted in developing. According to them, these documents largely, emphasized education as an agent of social transformation. My mentors noted that as educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that children and young people are adequately prepared to take on roles and responsibilities for effectively participating in socioeconomic activities at the local, regional, and international levels when they reach maturity (Ministry of Education, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2002). Critical reflection on their collective contribution, also confirmed in their minds the valuable contribution that the education sector makes to the transformation of a society. Ralph and Janice agreed with Carr's idea that education is indeed a practical activity (Carr, 2007) to reflect upon constantly. These reflections also confirmed this idea and concluded that we ought to embrace the practice of physical education as a valuable tool for utilizing approaches that are more critical in order to sustain our society's democracy.

Secondly, Cliff, Janice and Ralph agreed that critical reflection on one's practice is necessary. According to them, this encourages educators to become more actively involved in the process of empowering children and youth, with the skills necessary to successfully contribute to life within a democracy, to make more informed decisions and to act freely on information provided in the future. Finally, this level of reflexivity places Dewey's (1939) argument at the forefront of empowerment through education. Because the practice of physical education is socially constructed and offers multiple realities and interpretations of physical education, choices made must be based on preserving the democratic principles of our society. The kinds of experiences offered to children and youth must therefore contribute to nurturing future creative and fruitful experiences. Dewey (1939) argues that it is the quality of the experiences which educators provide that count. As each conversation was analysed I began to ask the question: as physical educators how do we reconceptualise educational processes and or practices, which are desirable or favoured over others?; and what kinds of practice allows for the continuity of such experiences to which Dewey refers?

Cliff's reiteration, further endorses my argument that physical education, can be recognized as a practical activity that is to be constantly reflected upon. He was even more critical as he reflected on the progress made in practice of physical education in schools over the last 40-50 years. He argued that as a nation, Trinidad and Tobago should not continue to focus only on multi-activity, competitive sport-based forms of physical education, a feature that has dominated school programmes worldwide since the mid twentieth century, particularly within British society (Hastie, 2012; Kirk, 2010). Cliff was adamant that the practice of physical education should not continue in the way that it has for the last 50 years because he felt that its orientation toward sport, distorted the long term vision of physical education. He reiterated:

physical education teachers should aim to provide opportunities for children to acquire meaningful experiences by allowing them to participate in a range of physical activities and experience enjoyment while doing so. I am not saying sports and major games should not be among the range of activities offered to students. What I am saying is that our nations' children and youth must not leave school perceiving that physical education and sport is identical and they must not leave school without having enough positive school experiences of physical activity engagement to perpetuate lifelong participation.

Cliff suggested that the level of competition that exists within our education system today perpetuates a dominant ideology of elitism and the idea of physical education as 'sport techniques' (Kirk, 2010). My other mentors also agreed that current practices inform such an ideology and confirms in the minds of students, their parents and the wider society that physical education is sport and that it involves either supervised free play or the development of skills and techniques for sport competition. Denise, Janice and Ralph's views were similar to Cliff's as they suggested that this way of thinking about and doing physical education in schools will do very little to effect change in the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, particularly those students' who might want pursue a career in teaching physical education. They agreed that this form of practice would not encourage mass participation nor would students continue engaging in some form of physical activity when they leave school. This converges with Dewey's (1939) argument that because 'every experience lives on further experiences' it is the

responsibility of educators to arrange experiences for students that are enjoyable since such experiences tend to promote them 'having desirable future experiences' (p. 16).

Janice and Ralph also agreed with Cliff's view that physical education was élitist and further extended his point based on their experience of physical education as educators, that in the majority of instances, physical education did not necessarily cater for mass participation, but for unnecessary early specialisation for some students and disenchantment for others. Their view concurs with Riordan's (1977) argument that the idea of physical education being competitive sport has 'led to narrow specialisation and was detrimental to health; it encouraged commercialisation, demoralisation and professionalism. Competitive sport, it was alleged, diverted attention from the basic aim of providing recreation for the masses; it turned them into passive spectators' (p. 83). What was interesting to me was that as Cliff continued to reflect on his own thoughts on the practice of physical education, he acknowledged and confirmed the importance and usefulness of engaging in critical reflection. He continued his commentary:

I agree that our physical education programme should consider what occurs globally, those international perspectives. However, we must also look inwardly, and even challenge those global perspectives. We must begin to make decisions about physical education that are socially and culturally relevant for us. What should our [Trinidad and Tobago's] physical education in schools look like? What should its structure look like? What do physical educators want for the nation's children? Is it culturally relevant to our needs? What are those needs? What do we expect from our teachers? How should the practice of our teachers look? How do we begin to develop the kind of teachers that will sustain this practice? ... We have an increased number of physical education teachers with specialist degrees in physical education, exercise physiology, and even sports management. However, how do they practice and what kinds of attitudes and behaviours do they encourage in schools? Is the practice of primary and secondary school teachers focused on the idea of physical education being sport, associated with competition; or being school wide participation in a range of physical activities and associated with lifelong physical activity and enjoyment? Are teachers really providing children with the kind of physical education experiences that benefits society? As we reflect on all this I cannot say affirmatively; YES!!! IT IS happening; I cannot say that practice is different from what I experienced as a youngster and witnessed as a teacher. I think we need to take a step back

and really reflect on and analyze what we have done and make some critical decisions in the interest of children, the education sector, and our society.

Throughout my conversations with my mentors, and after analysing their views on the practice of physical education, I concluded and they agreed, that asking teachers to reconceptualise their varying views of physical education would indeed be challenging but it would be a way forward in improving the kinds of experience that the subject offers. Three of my mentors described this process of reflexivity, and the level of consciousness required, as a ‘hard sell’. Firstly, Janice reminded me that historically, the majority of our early socialisation experiences were oriented towards sport. Such experiences according to Ralph, Denise, Janice and Cliff, have been due to the influence of a British education system and by a sport commercialization era perpetuated by the American system of sport. These early experiences were certainly not inclusive and did not necessarily encourage lifelong physical activity engagement. My mentors admitted that early socialisation experiences have not only shaped the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of individuals who end up becoming physical education teachers, but have also informed, justified and sustained the nature of their practice today. The commercialization of sport as well as the dominant ideology retained from our colonial legacy, as discussed in the chapter five, significantly contributed to the current practices of physical education teachers in throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

After gaining Independence in 1962, though the structure of our education system has been based on democratic, the practice of physical education, remains largely in keeping with a dominant élitst model of sport and embedded within a lingering colonial legacy. I see this structure however, not as a negative feature of our society, but as a challenge to overcome, in order that we might achieve this aspirational agenda of mass participation in physical education, for which I argue. Our health and physical education policy documents as well as our national sport policy stress the importance of having active and productive citizens, and are in keeping with the common feature of democratic societies. By way of example, the mission statement of our national sport policy

indicates that we seek to ‘enrich our lives through total participation, quality training and excellence in sport’ (Ministry of Sport, 2002, p. 2). This policy, which is based the democratic principles of equality of opportunity also proposes to cater to all citizens, irrespective of race, colour, class, age gender, creed, physical or mental condition and area of residence.

So far, I have critically discussed how physical qualities and the social functions of physical education are important to and can support an individual’s successful contribution to a democratic life. This discussion supports my overall argument that becoming critically aware of the value of physical education, and by acting on their reflections, physical educators can begin to reconceptualise the practice of physical education and assist in establishing the idea of physical culture through the ways in which they actively engage with their practice. Using the views presented by my mentors on the practice of physical education, I have shown how conceptualising physical education as an educational practice can offer educators an opportunity to not only reflect on, but also to act on their understandings of physical education in order to transform the way in which it is perceived and practised. In what follows, I reflect on how I further interrogated the ideas presented by my mentors; those of mass participation and physical culture.

7.2.4. Reflections

As I reflected on the idea of mass participation and physical culture, I thought about how these two ideas can support our democratic principles. I began to recognize how much theorizing emerged naturally from my own experiences of physical education as well as from those experiences shared by my mentors. These experiences acted as a catalyst for the process of critical self-reflection, for judging my practice, values and understandings of physical education. This occurred as I searched for new vantage points from which to examine “what was; what is; and what is to come” in physical education. Reflecting on my own stories (see chapter two) transformed my

understanding of the importance of not merely continuing to acquire knowledge, but of also continuously developing new lenses with which to further interrogate the knowledge that I have gained and that I continue to seek after. It is at this point, I attempted to find the appropriate language to represent my own interpretation and understandings of and to make sense of my thoughts on terms such as; physical education, sport, mass participation and democracy. The use of the concept ‘discourse’, as a recurring pattern of language (Tinning, 1997) was used to describe the way I have come to understand what I think physical education is and should represent. I see this ‘discourse’ as one, which embraces the term physical culture. Physical culture to me represents in many ways a process, a philosophical perspective of a country’s way of life. Below, I discuss how my mentors made sense of what they felt physical education might look like and how it might be represented in the not too distant future.

7.3. Understanding Physical Culture: The Elements

As my conversations about physical education continued with my mentors and as I shared my own thoughts on what physical education should look like, a number of perspectives were noted based on their past experiences and observations. Our process of engaging in praxis was critical and I was able to develop further, my theoretical chapter. My third research question also evolved from; how can the practice of physical education develop a physical culture that is participatory, to; can better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago be promoted through the development of a critical approach to practice? If so, how can such an aspirational agenda be achieved?

Interestingly, my first encounter with the term ‘physical culture’ was when a couple of my mentors mentioned the term during our conversations. Ralph was actually the first person to speak of this idea of ‘physical culture’. He was referring to one of Cuba’s degree programmes and recalled:

Between 2003 and 2008, the Trinidad and Tobago government granted

scholarships to a number of young professional athletes (Trinbagonians) to pursue a first degree in physical education in Cuba. You know what I found amazing... The Cubans offer a degree in physical education and Culture. I was trying to understand where and how the Cuban government's perspective of culture fits into the programme for becoming a Phys Ed teacher or pursuing studies in this field. What is this physical culture and how does it fit into the programme? I sat down and had a discussion with a couple of those students when they returned home from Cuba having spent five years there. I... made some module comparisons with our curriculum and theirs... and was able to come up with an analogy. When I compared our course content with Cuba's... it was the same practical and the same theory. Do you know what was different? Students had to do a comprehensive history of Cuba and of physical culture. The degree is more than just physical education...

The Cuban government ...understands the importance of physical education and physical activity engagement to a society... because they all (students)... Listen!.. In Cuba..., all people from pre-school to... retiree... **EVERYONE** is involved in some kind of physical activity. This ideology of mass participation in physical activity is rooted in and remains a distinct part of their culture... It is their way of life... However, this is what I see as the first layer of a well-planned physical education foundation.... The Cuban government is **very** instrumental its structured development of lifelong physical activity engagement for the masses. Cuba has found a way to ensure that the vast majority of its population participate in sports and experience physical activity at some stage in their lives particularly while attending school (from pre-school all the way to university).

What Ralph shared, fascinated me and it was from here, I began my quest to find out more about Cuba's former President, Fidel Castro's idea of physical culture. The structure of the Cuban system according to one of my colleagues who shared his experience of pursuing his bachelor's degree there, is one in which individuals attend school for the first half of the day and for the second half, they all (students and teachers alike) go outdoors to engage in practical work. Pettavino & Pye (1994) supports Ralph's restorying of the students' Cuban experience and confirms that Cuba reached its goal of mass participation in and democratization of sports. This goal was achieved through the development of a variety of planned physical activity programmes to encourage the young and adults in becoming physically active. This meant the removal of legal and

socioeconomic barriers to participation in physical culture, and placing emphasis on ‘increasing participation and on improving access to physical culture, for health and recreational purposes...’ (Pettavino & Pye, 1994, p. 18).

This made me more interested in the perpetuation of these two ideas of mass participation and physical culture within a country whose economic and domestic resources were limited. Solidifying and maintaining support for a revolution as well as assuring the security of the regime from outside powers was of most importance to Fidel Castro since 1959 (Riordan, 1977). Cuba’s 1976 constitution is based on a socialist ideology and founded upon solid principles of Marxist-Leninism (Pettavino & Pye, 1994). Ralph figured that despite Cuba’s ideology, their practice as it relates to physical education and physical activity engagement must be of significant value and was convinced that we could learn some lessons from this country. I also began to engage my other mentors with this idea by firstly exploring what it would take to develop a physical education ‘culture’ in schools. This use of the term ‘culture’ was something my mentors conceptualised as an idea representing their thoughts about and aspirations for how physical education in schools should be. This idea of having physical education embedded within our ‘culture’ was described to me in various ways, through examples as one that can preserve the principles of our democratic society.

In my view, physical culture is a ‘discourse’ which encompasses structured physical education; recreational and leisure pursuits, lifetime activities and sport. I discovered that this discourse is not only the overarching theme described by my mentors, but it is a discourse underpinned by common philosophical views of education and sport as espoused by Marx and Lenin. Further investigation also revealed the term being associated with early European systems of gymnastics of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and with ‘pop mobility’ and ‘aerobic dance’ (women doing keep fit exercises to music), naturalist and body building in the 1970s (Kirk, 1999). Physical culture is a broad term that encompasses mass participation in physical education and sport, as well as lifelong physical activity engagement. These are the features of my

reality of what a discourse around physical education should be about. This concept describes a phenomenon, which conjures up my present understanding of what the elements of physical culture should represent. By applying my understanding of the theoretical basis of the socialist approach to sport which the Cuban model of physical education and sport was built upon, I can show through engaging in a form of praxis, how the local programme model can be viewed as a model to be used for achieving our own aspirations of promoting lifelong physical activity engagement or physical culture. The model presented is distinctly Cuban but its origins are rooted in socialist systems of physical culture.

As I reflected on my mentors' thoughts on physical education as well as on my own, I realized that our aspirations were in sync with the 1978 international charter of physical education and sport, adopted by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) general conference. Reflections of three proclamations stood out in our conversations; the practice of physical education and sport being a fundamental right to all; physical education and sport being an essential element of lifelong education in the overall education system; and that physical education and sport programmes must meet individual and social needs (UNESCO, 1979). How then is physical culture to become a reality? How can we ensure that our teachers adopt more critical approaches to practice? How do we ensure that physical education makes a valuable contribution to the education sector and by extension to the society? My response to these questions is to become more critical in our thinking and challenge the way in which we have come to understand physical education. My response is for physical educators to begin to reconceptualise the way in which physical education is perceived and practised by engaging in some form of praxis (critical reflection and action).

7.3.1. Physical Culture: The Ultimate Goal

Conversations with my mentors revealed that they all reflected on the process of what physical education should look like and the aspirations they have for our society. Cliff, Janice and Ralph in their different ways described a system of physical education and a society which valued one's involvement in lifestyle activities and life-long participation in physical activity (Green, 2004; Green, 2002). My mentors spoke of creating equal opportunities for all students to experience meaningful physical activity through high quality or well-structured physical education programmes. They spoke of finding ways to change attitudes and perceptions that individuals hold about physical education; of envisioning all members of society engaging in various forms of physical activity; and of providing opportunities for every human being to access physical education. They recognised that as a starting point to affecting the societal transformation desired, access for every human being could be achieved using physical education as the main vehicle. My mentors were quick, through various examples given, to imply that in order for sport to be effectively developed nationally, a broad base of mass participation in physical education must exist, thereby enabling physical culture to thrive (Riordan, 1977). Denise commented:

physical education is like the “arithmetic” (numerical calculations; addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) in Mathematics – the basics. Sport and competition is the “Algebra” - the “Geometry”- the complex (a more complex branch of Mathematics). Physical education is about the fundamental rudiments of movement and the teaching of basic skills upon which sport and competition is built.

Like Denise, Ralph used another analogy with a similar meaning:

Physical education is like the foundation for a house... it is like building a foundation. If the foundation for the house is not solid then the integrity of the house is ultimately affected. ...we find many elite athletes suffering from injury quite early on in their career... I believe we are failing our students... because we neglect to have well-structured physical education programmes for all, at the expense of a short-lived glory for a few. We have professional athletes who are one-sided. They are right hand so the left side of their body is not developed. We have footballer unable to pass with their non- dominant foot, and professional basketball players unable to perform a proficient lay-up with their right hand because they are left-handed. We have professional athletes who do

not understand space relationships and these are individuals are recognised as our nation's best! These are practical examples that tell us we are failing our students at school. We need to focus on developing the fundamentals first; that is physical education.

In what follows, I present a discussion on the nature of participation as a theoretical concept in the process of reconceptualising the practice of physical education in which mass participation takes precedence and physical culture begins to be established.

7.3.2. The Nature of Participation

Participation discourses are referred to by Tinning (1997, pp. 102-103) as 'the discourses which underpin the focus or orientation of physical education teachers in schools and recreation workers with the aged, the disabled, or other "special" populations.' He further suggests, that when reference is made such to discourses, the language used is about 'inclusion, equity, involvement, enjoyment, social justice, caring, cooperation, movement and so forth' (1997, p. 103). 'Participation' as a theoretical concept for understanding what physical education should represent, favours the sort of practices geared toward increasing student participation. Based on my understanding of Tinning's argument, achieving mass participation involves arranging the kinds of meaningful movement experiences that are enjoyable, inclusive and shows the contribution of lifelong physical activity engagement to the society. Participation discourses engage with notions of health, social responsibility and citizenship to name a few and have their roots within the social sciences as well as in education (Tinning, 1997). Each of these notions has an organic connection to Dewey's (1939) discussion of the principles of experience of continuity and interaction, whereby habits are formed and modified based on past and present experiences in order to propel rather than restrict future habits.

One can apply participation as a theoretical concept to writings on education put forward by Marx and Lenin, who are both authors of socialist and communist ideologies. Critical discussions regarding the importance of participation particularly

mass participation in physical activity, to a society's success are evident and deeply rooted in Soviet sports and the Cuban model of physical education and sport. I draw on participation discourses as a theoretical resource firstly to help me understand how an aspirational agenda such as developing physical culture can be achieved through mass participation in physical education. Secondly, my mentors' emphasis on using physical education as a vehicle to perpetuate lifelong physical activity engagement, means finding ways to increase the levels of participation among children and youth in physical activity through physical education. Such discourses are participatory and emancipatory in nature and align to socially critical and democratic pedagogies. Advocates of these discourses argue that attempts should not be made to promote and maximise long-term participation in physical activity through physical education, by engaging students in performance and sport pedagogies (Tinning, 2010; Hellison, 2003; Tinning, 1997). That is to say, concentration should not be placed on producing winning teams in few sporting disciplines or encourage early sport specialization (Roberts & Brodie, 1992). Our task therefore is to encourage physical educators to focus more on developing lifelong participants in physical activity through their physical education programmes. Providing successful experiences for students that will produce further future experiences that not only benefits themselves in the long run but also the society as a whole, is what I perceive we should aspire towards. Physical educationalists who adopt and practice participation discourses, do not concentrate on 'team sport at the expense of individual and partner sports or indeed performance sports per se at the expense of so-called 'lifestyle activities' or recreationally oriented sports' (Roberts & Brodie, 1992, p. 74). They concentrate on developing participative physical education which emphasises notions of health, social responsibility and citizenship, all necessary elements for sustaining a democratic society.

An in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of my mentors and my experiences as a coach on the local programme referred to as the 'right on track coaching caravan' in this chapter provides evidence to support a practice of physical education which is both emancipatory and participatory. Critical self-reflection of these lived experiences seeks

to improve educational practice by using participation discourses to favour certain valued knowledge which as a nation we aspire to achieve. Using the concept of participation as a tool to reconceptualise physical education shows how physical educators can contribute to their own way of thinking about, shape their attitudes toward, and begin to contribute in a more critical way to sustaining democratic life by using their subject as the vehicle to do so. This challenges physical educators to aspire towards establishing physical culture. It becomes an aspirational project which is situational, contextual and socially constructed based on our interpretations and understanding of what physical education should look like. In essence, physical education has the potential to develop and perpetuate lifelong physical activity engagement, through mass participation in well-structured physical education lessons. This consistently occurring overtime produces physical culture, an ideology which represents a way of life and which encompasses four components (a) organised physical education; (b) playful activities or games; (c) all forms of (socially approved) active leisure-pursuits; and, (d) organised sport (Novikov and Matveyev, 1959 cited in Riordan, 1977, p. 2-3).

I now present a description of the right on track programme model which I use to show how physical education in schools can successfully achieve our aspiration for a more meaningful approach to practice that focuses on mass participation.

7.4. Right on Track Programme- The Background and The Challenge

The Right on Track programme serves to provide a practical illustration of how physical education lessons can be done to achieve mass participation establish and develop physical culture. What is this programme about and how does it work in practice?

The small twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago, then a British colony, began its Olympic journey in at the 1948 games in London aiming to attain glory in athletics

among other sporting disciplines. Our penetration at this level indicates that our country possess the potential to produce the standards necessary to qualify for these prestigious games with a certain degree of frequency and consistency. Though our contingent of approximately 30 athletes qualifying for major international games for a population of approximately 1.3 million might be significantly small, over time, many have advanced to semi-final and final rounds in their specific events. In spite of our incremental achievements since our debut at the Summer Olympics in 1948, our best sporting moment ever in Trinidad and Tobago's history of athletics, before the London 2012 Olympics, was Hasely Crawford's gold medal-winning feat in the men's 100m final of the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. He was named the athlete of the 20th Century.

As I noted in chapter five, many individuals continue to receive international athletic scholarships but the quality of athletes we produce continues to deteriorate. Additionally, development programmes in athletics, set up by various agencies over the years, have not been sustained. Some of the critical factors contributing to our current state of track and field in Trinidad and Tobago include: a lack of well qualified coaches at the school and community level; lack of appropriate equipment at the school and club level; issues of mass programme funding versus elite sports funding; an over-emphasis on top-performance athletes; the absence of an appropriate structure for athlete development; and a lack of management. These issues mentioned above are not uncommon to our nation, but can be identified in many other developing and developed nations.

7.4.1. Business Context: The Journey

Having highlighted these observations, the National Gas Company (NGC) of Trinidad and Tobago proposed a business plan, which sought to address some if not all of the issues identified above. The company directors and public relations officers recognized that sport can be used as a powerful tool to affect change and effectively contribute to shaping our country's national and cultural identity. This company was interested in the

impact the development of a well-structured track and field programme can have on shaping lives, developing communities and changing the attitudes, values, beliefs about track and field and by extension, about physical activity engagement. The company's executive also believed that track and field has the capacity to develop the fundamental motor skills needed for participation in any other sporting disciplines that exist in our society. After much consultation, it was agreed that a well-structured and implemented track and field development programme would have the greatest impact on the overall development of sports in Trinidad and Tobago. As a result of this, world renowned Olympic athlete Hasely Crawford, conceptualized, fashioned and proposed a long term model for the development of Track and Field in Trinidad and Tobago. This model was officially introduced and implemented by the National Gas Company in 1999 and was known as the '*NGC Right on Track*' *Development Programme*. In 2002, after a programme evaluation was conducted, it was reintroduced and is now known as the '*NGC Right on Track Coaching Caravan*'. This new programme sought to achieve two main objectives in the development of track and field. Firstly, the programme sought to teach the basic skills of running, jumping and throwing and secondly, to develop a cadre of coaches to sustain the development of athletes in Trinidad and Tobago.

7.4.2. Programme Description

The company's right on track model is considered to be a two-tiered 'grassroots' athletic programme operating on weekends for 6 months each the year. The first tier of the programme known as the '*NGC Coaching Caravan*' was introduced in 2002. A programme was introduced in 1999 but not in the form of a caravan. In 1999, coaches were sourced and a number of schools were selected to be used as centres to provide training for interested athletes. After two years the programme was evaluated and restructured to focus more on sustainability, maximize resources and enhance the programme's efficiency as this initial programme was proving to be unsuccessful for a number of reasons.

After the initial programme evaluation in 2000, another business plan was proposed in 2001 this time with a goal to promote greater national interest in and support for track and field by improving the performance of our athletes at the local, regional and international levels. This programme after much consultation was developed in an attempt to foster the overall development of our nation's youth through engaging the education sector, the community and athletic coaches throughout Trinidad and Tobago. This programme sought to bridge what the company found to be a significant gap between our talented children and youth and the progress being made in the area of track and field. The company's prime targets were children and youth between the ages of 7 to 19 from schools, youth institutions and members of the community.

The caravan consists of seven carefully selected senior qualified coaches, an administrative staff with a fully stocked vehicle which transports all equipment needed. These seven coaches are responsible for teaching the basic skills needed to participate in running, hurdling, javelin, shot put, discus, long jump and high jump. Seven stations are set up at selected community venues. The team collaborates with various stakeholders to select the communities which would be visited on the weekend. Each community chosen for that particular period is visited twice. The first tier responds to the objective of teaching basic skills needed for participating in running, jumping and throwing events.

The second tier of the programme focuses on developing a cadre of coaches to increase in order to create sustainable growth. The gas company capitalized on the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAAF) recognition that many countries do not possess the resources necessary for developing national education programmes. IAAF offers a Coaches Education and Certification System (CECS) available as a service to member Federations which would like to make use of it. NGC's commitment to the development of track and field in Trinidad and Tobago saw them sponsoring the training and certification of primary school teachers, and a few uncertified community coaches through the IAAF programme. More than 90 individuals have received training and

acquired certification between 1999 and 2008. After these individuals graduate, as part of their continued development, they are invited to participate in a “post-graduate” venture giving them an opportunity to put into practice what they have learned. These individuals engage in shadowing senior coaches for a period of six-months and are also given the responsibility for teaching sessions during the caravan under the supervision of senior coaches. This initiative is also supplemented by several workshops and seminars which are usually conducted upon request, during the duration of first tier of the programme.

The caravan usually commences its cycle from October in one year to March of the following year, with two or three selected community visits. These visits take place on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a one hour lunch period. Weeks leading up to each visit, radio, television public announcements as well as flyer distribution are some of the way in which the programme is advertised. Children and youth from ages seven to nineteen are invited to come along and have some fun. Parents and community members are invited to spend the day observing the various activities. Whenever a community is visited, especially those in the rural areas, where children and youth have no access to physical activity programmes and where there is no formal athletic club structure, every effort is made by the gas company to assist the community in establishing one. This serves the purpose of sustaining the development of interested individuals, as well as to harness any natural talent found. There is usually no disruption expect for unfavourable weather conditions which at times hinder the progress of the programme as it is held outdoors.

7.4.3. Reflections on the Programme

As I reflect on how my experiences of being part of this programme mirrors my aspiration for physical education in schools, I acknowledge the convergence in sport policies occurring in Trinidad and Tobago and internationally. Governments in many countries have become more involved in developing and promoting sport policy and

sports-development-related activities (Houlihan & Green, 2006). There is also evidence to suggest the use of ‘sport and physical activities as vehicles of social policy designed to achieve a range of other non-sport goals (e.g. reducing youth crime and drug use, enhancing social inclusion, the promotion of health, and community recreation)’ (Bloyce & Smith, 2010, p. 1). I recall during the 1990s and 2000s, there being a massive drive to restructure the delivery of sport in a number of developed countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Swiss Academy for Development, 2010; Levermore, 2008; Carter, 2005). In Trinidad and Tobago, a number of reform initiatives and partnership programmes were established to focus on developing community and national sport programmes, funding elite athletes and the developing multipurpose sporting facilities. Part of this drive also saw a number of revisions to physical education curriculum documents (see chapter five). However, despite these revisions, the practice of physical education teachers in Trinidad and Tobago remained focussed on elite sport and competitive team games and not on mass participation.

From my experience of being both a junior and senior coach on the right on track programme between 2001 and 2008, I gained first hand insights into how we as physical education teachers and specialist coaches engage in well-planned and executed activities to empower future adults. From my analysis, the main features of this programme are that it is developmental and seeks to establish mass participation. The programme utilises a range of physical activities to develop among its participants enquiry and decision-making skills, problem-solving skills as well as fundamental motor skills required to participate in track and field events. To do so, the programme taps into the readily available resources within the community (children, parents, schools and its facilities) and provides opportunities for participants to experience enjoyment and varying levels of success. This programme fosters the growth of a kind of practice among coaches, which over time has the effect of reproducing and sustaining a way of life among its participants. The company’s practice brings to bear on Dewey’s (1939) principles of continuity and interaction, whereby, when applied, describes meaningful

and sustainable future experiences. This is an important feature which schools appear unable to accomplish even though physical education at the primary and secondary school is compulsory.

More importantly, the features of the programme are organised around a participatory approach to track and field development that will ultimately prepare children and youth to make better choices about their future involvement in physical activity as well as to prepare them for living within a society that encourages self-directed citizens. Though the physical education curriculum division of the Ministry of Education recruited me to this programme, I later found out that the national gas company initiated and sponsored the course. I see such an initiative as an excellent way for the Ministry of Education to collaborate with private companies to train and provide further development and support for physical education teachers and the schools' curriculum. I had the opportunity to learn, develop and further refine my teaching skills through coaching track and field. After receiving my coaching qualification, during my internship period, I taught sessions on a rotational basis as students experienced different skills. The philosophy behind the rotations was so that all participants got the opportunity to participate in each of the seven practical areas offered. I soon realised that this programme did not necessarily focus on coaching, but rather on teaching the fundamental motor skills needed for students whether they wanted to continue down the path of participating for enjoyment or of competing for their school or athletic club.

This philosophy of exposing its participants to a wide variety of activities within the field of athletics so they could experience them discourages early specialisation into sport. This notion of 'sampling' (MacPhail & Kirk, 2006) a range of activities seeks to promote physical activity engagement through track and field so that participants are encouraged to continue engaging in physical activity even after they leave school. This idea of providing students with such opportunities can encourage future participation and is a feature which all physical education lessons in schools should strive to develop. My mentors agreed with me that offering a range of well-structured quality physical

education lessons could influence lifelong physical activity engagement. This programme therefore models the expectation that exposing participants to a variety of skills could empower them to make choices about what they participate in when they enter into adulthood. This is what one of my mentors alluded to in chapter five. The opportunity for all to participate for fun and enjoyment in a range of activities as well as for the more talented to compete if they so desired. Although the programme focuses primarily on mass participation, I must admit that it also serves as a way of identifying those talented participants who might be able to represent their school at competitions or perhaps go further in a particular discipline. What is most interesting is that the programme offers solid support for developing physical education in schools, grassroots community programmes and parents' of participants. The participants are mainly children of school age, the coaches are mainly teachers and the facilities used are mainly school playing fields or community grounds that are often located near to a school. Participants learn skills and gain experience which they can take back to their school as well as for teachers to build on during their physical education classes.

The national gas company took the initiative to establish new attitudes and standards in athletics and in doing so developed a model which brought various stakeholders together in an effort to focus on mass participation in developmentally appropriate activities designed for all children of school age particularly those within the primary school. The model provides opportunities for its participants to develop the fundamental motor skills needed to participate in a number of track and field activities without the competitive component. This developmental model is similar to the way in which the Cuban model for physical education and sport is organized. The primary concern of physical culture in Cuba is mass participation among its population (Pettavino & Pye, 1994, p. 97) and this is what coaches on our local development programme attempt to foster during the weekend caravans. Although it was hoped that this feature of mass participation would have been encouraged particularly by primary school teachers of physical education, the programme did not necessarily have this effect because many teachers like me who experienced this programme soon transferred from the primary

school to the secondary school. This is one drawback of the education system as primary school teachers who are trained to teach physical education as a specialist subject often transfer to secondary schools one or two years after graduating from their teacher training.

Unlike the Cuban system of physical culture, where conflicting goals of ‘mass participation’ and possibly ‘detecting champions’ (Pettavino & Pye, 1994, p. 97) are sometimes encountered, the coaches of the right on track programme attempt to consistently foster ‘mass participation’. If during the sessions participants are observed to be at higher performance levels, the coaches would make every effort to make contact with these participants during the intermission or at the end of the day to offer advice and or to make recommendation to their parents about next steps for them. The focus however is never on paying special attention to the more talented or gifted participants. The sessions are structured to ensure that participants do not feel excluded or privileged because of their particular skill level. To ensure that the programme remains inclusive and participatory, the caravan also visits youth institutions and correctional facilities to ensure that the principles of mass participation are maintained and the national gas company’s commitment to introduce the programme nationwide is sustained. I do acknowledge that my argument for establishing physical culture might not be accepted because there would always be ‘conflicts over the role of sport in the system of physical culture, over the proper balance between collectivism and competition’ (Keys, 2003). My intention though is to argue for the promotion of mass participation among the school population through the medium of meaningful physical education lessons.

One of the lessons learnt here is that the coaches on the programme recognise that a broad base of mass participation must exist before the skill of individual athletes can be fully developed on a national basis (Washburn, 1956, p. 494). This is a recognised feature of the Cuban model as its first objective is ‘to make sport available to everyone and to actively promote its development’ (Pettavino & Pye, 1994, p. 13). Although

Trinidad and Tobago might not have the capacity and financial resources to make sport available to everyone, we do have the resources to make regular quality physical education lessons available to all children of school age. This is one way of beginning to create a greater sense of awareness among the nation's youth about physical activity engagement so that this practice has the potential for becoming a way of life. Over time, our economy might experience enough growth to be able to create sporting opportunities for the entire population and to promote the development of lifelong physical activity engagement through other mediums.

Although this concept of physical culture might still be an aspiration for the people of Cuba, they consistently move slowly towards that goal. Like the Cuban model of physical education and sport, the right on track programme is a programme that attempts to reach out to the wider community. The programme takes place within communities and seeks to generate general awareness of physical activity engagement through track and field activities by inviting parents, community leaders and sometimes club coaches to be spectators. This initiative has also encouraged an increase in cross community participation. It has been our experience that many parents, who recognise the valuable opportunity being provided to their children, would follow the caravan around to different communities. This has increased the number of children who become actively involved in some degree of physical activity on a regular basis particularly if they attend schools that did not have structured physical education lessons. This community approach is one method which we can use to begin to establish and develop physical culture in our society. Moving towards such an aspiration would mean developing habits and customs that make physical activity engagement a way of life for all its citizens so that it becomes an integral part of our culture.

7.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I theorised what physical education in schools might look like in the future. I used the understandings developed from critically engaging with the models

identified as well as ideas about physical culture and mass participation to show how quality physical education can contribute to achieving mass participation and establish physical culture over time. I presented a case study of the right on track programme, examined and applied the features of the Cuban model of physical education and sport to develop further understandings about mass participation and physical culture. In my opinion, teachers of physical education can offer better quality experiences to their students by ensuring that lessons are developmental, encouraging mass participation so that physical education can be viewed as a vehicle to establish and sustain lifelong physical activity engagement. This chapter provided the reader with insights into how a critical approach to the practise of physical education could be negotiated and achieved. It also showed how physical culture can be established in Trinidad and Tobago through the provision of more meaningful experiences of physical education for all children of school age.

CHAPTER EIGHT: REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

8.1. Introduction

In this thesis, I sought to gain insights into the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago through the life histories of six physical educators by addressing three key research questions. I used a critical life history approach to achieve my aim by collecting life histories and constructing stories so that I could make sense of and learn lessons from the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I also wanted to learn lessons from my mentors' experiences of physical education at varying entry points in their lives so that I could argue for a more critical way of reconceptualising the way the subject might be understood and practised in schools in the future. The life history approach helped me in gaining insight into how my mentors constructed their knowledge about physical education and how this knowledge influenced their careers.

Each life history was analysed in order to retrieve critical policy incidents. I constructed a critical historical account of physical education by collecting and analysing policy documents and archival material to support my mentors' accounts of this development. I also utilised my learning journal to record autobiographical accounts of my own life story as well as to illuminate significant critical incidents from these accounts that influenced my life and career as a physical educator. I identified these experiences of physical education and argued that meaningful experiences of physical education can establish and influence the development of life-long physical activity engagement within our society by offering all children of school age the opportunity to engage in meaningful physical education lessons. The school and career experiences of my mentors, policy documents, archival materials, the right on track programme and the Cuban model for physical education and sport were used to explore how physical education teachers can engage in a more critical approach to the practice

of physical education so that physical activity engagement is developed and sustained as a way of life.

In this final chapter, I reflect on my research journey in order to discuss how the process has influenced my thinking and developed my understandings about the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. I also discuss the contributions this research has made to knowledge and will provide what I think could be ideas for further research. As I engage in this exercise, I review the theoretical and methodological framework used for engaging in this critical life history research and address each research question as outlined in the introduction.

The following introspection is intended to highlight the issues I believe were essential to my research.

8.2. Developing Critical Understandings of Physical Education

My third chapter sought to reconceptualise the way in which physical education is experienced and practised by exploring philosophical perspectives on (1) postcolonial understandings of practice; (2) understanding experience; (3) understanding physical education as an educational practice; and (4) understanding physical education as praxis. An analysis of these four perspectives showed how I have come to understand and interpret what physical education means, how it is practised, and how it can be used in accomplishing physical culture in Trinidad and Tobago. I have come to understand that physical education teachers could provide experiences to our students that are uneducational and that education and experience are not the same (Hook, 2008; Dewey, 1939). Engaging with Dewey's work on education and experience, I realise there is a crucial distinction existing between the two because some school experiences which we provide for students in the name of education have the potential to cripple students'

‘powers to meet, understand, and possibly control the inescapable flow of future experiences’ (Hook, 2008, p. x). Education therefore should be regarded as ‘the process by which on the basis of present experiences we make future experiences more accessible, meaningful, or controllable’ (Hook, 2008, p. x). These perspectives assisted in strengthening my argument that physical education can be seen as a vehicle for providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop those physical qualities and competencies that are necessary for lifelong physical activity engagement, thereby achieving an aspirational agenda for establishing and maintaining physical culture within a small island state.

The methodological features of this thesis showed how I conceptualised life history work and used particular techniques to encourage a small group of physical educators to share their life stories of physical education with me by reflecting critically on their experience and on their practice during their career. My main reason for deciding to use a critical life history approach for this research was that ways of knowing about and understanding the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago could be identified and described appropriately through oral accounts. There were limited written texts exploring understandings of the subject’s historical development and none available on teachers’ practice. My initial thoughts were therefore about ‘what form of research will allow me to form and transform *both* myself as a practitioner *and* the collectivity of people...?’ (Kemmis, 2012, p. 890) As the research was twofold, it seemed inappropriate to consider action research although this way of knowing is initiated by practitioners ‘to transform their practice, their understandings how their practice is carried out.’ (Kemmis, 2012, p. 890).

The use of a life history approach provided me and my mentors with the opportunity to critically reflect on experiences had which influenced the development of physical education in schools as well as judgements made during their career as teachers, educators and administrators. Engaging in life history work provided me with the opportunity to gain insights into how physical education was and is perceived through

the lived experiences of six physical educators, and it provided a space for me to interrogate my own life and my development as a physical educator. My choice of method showed my interest in and commitment to understanding human behaviour and how lives might be affected or influenced by social situations and experiences. I embraced the opportunity to use a more relevant form of research methodology to engage in an inquiry that contributed to building knowledge to help Trinidad and Tobago make sense of its past in order to make propose a way forward for physical education in the future.

This thesis was about making the research process a focus of enquiry that relied on reflexivity as an essential methodological feature. Thus, from the first chapter I was engaged in a reflexive process of ongoing analysis, stepping back and introspection. This required a ‘high degree of self-consciousness’ (Anderson, 2005, p. 184) whereby I would be interpreting and re-interpreting (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2003) experiences. I actively engaged in ‘co-constructing meaning’ related to how and why physical education experiences can become distorted enough to disrupt further engagement in physical activity, while maintaining a ‘conscious professional distance’ (Anderson, 2008, p. 184). The process of reflexivity allowed a space for me to see my own weakness, and for my mentors to see how our collective experience of physical education can be an opportunity to gain deeper understandings about the practise of physical education. From a research perspective, I was engaged in a process of revising my questions, reframing the research, constructing critical incidents and producing knowledge.

8.3. Reconceptualising the Practice of Physical Education

When I was asked to develop a physical education programme for the infant department at the school which I taught in some 18 years ago, I made a conscious decision that I would make a difference in the lives of my students. I vowed to ensure that they did not have bad experiences of physical education that would arrest their future participation in

physical activity. I began this research expecting that I could argue for a different physical education experience for our nation's children and youth. I wanted my research to contribute to the process of intellectual decolonization (Palmer, 2006), but in order to do so I had to understand past events and practices. For me, reconceptualising a future for the practice of physical education was not an easy task because of the level of critical engagement required to be able to reflect and act on that which you have reflected upon. This research has set the scene and has argued that physical educators must begin to make 'wise and prudent practical judgement about how to act' (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) in situations related to their practice. This form of praxis or reflection and action is essential if mass participation in physical education lessons and lifelong physical activity engagement is to be established and sustained in Trinidad and Tobago.

My research aim and questions evolved significantly. My initial thoughts were to critically analyse the social and cultural factors influencing the development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. In my attempts to deconstruct understandings of physical education in schools from the life histories shared with me, I soon realised that my own experiences could be used as a stimulus to have conversations about policy and practice. I sought to analyse how understandings of the subject were developed and perceived through the engagement with my mentors' lives and they also assisted me in identifying key policy documents that supported their stories. During the initial phase of thinking about this research I told my story to those who had the time to listen, but I found myself venting, as I was angry about a particular experience. I read about autoethnography and narrative approaches to research. I believe this provided me with a perspective to situate my stories and to interrogate the practice of physical education at different entry points in my own life.

As I began to make sense of what I needed to do with the data I collected, I thought about the events in my life that were significant. In order to reflect further on these

events I had to identify the events which I felt were important enough to be deemed critical and then question myself as to why they were significant, and then identify the effect that some of these events had on me as an individual and on my career as a physical education teachers and educator. This is how using ‘critical incident analysis’ as an analytical tool became present in my research.

It was the experiences had that I was concerned about but as fate would have it I found David Tripp’s text while assisting a friend locate a text in the library. I was able to use the perspectives in this text to describe stories and to analyse each using critical incident analysis. I was also able to find a way to derive policy incidents that would assist me to develop a comprehensive historical account of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago. Before undertaking this research and although I had mixed experiences of the subject, I made certain generalisations about the subject. I saw it as being exclusive and I saw physical education teachers and to some extent physical educators as the problem because I blamed one of them for the bad experience that I had at primary school.

One of the things I did not see clearly was that despite the negative experience I had, I made a deliberate attempt when I became a physical education teacher to ensure that none of my students had bad experiences of participating in any form of physical activity I provided for them. During my practice, I attempted to challenge those dominant discourses in physical education that privileged sport as the be all and end all of a physical education programme. I was always mindful that I did not want any student in my care to experience what I experienced at ten years old. The other thing I did not initially consider was the structural adjustments and transitions that would have taken place throughout the years, particularly when junior secondary schools were built. I did not have an understanding of why different school types had different teachers and offered different practices of physical education. I did not consider that teachers experienced and received different kinds of training and as global shifts occurred, so too did our influences and our positioning of the subject. My mentors also alerted me to the fact that the history of physical education was embedded within the history of

education and I needed to understand education and our education system before I could make sense of physical education. I soon realised that I could not make sense of the shifts in policy and practice if I did not understand the philosophical underpinnings that built our education system.

Through this research I learned that teachers are not able to and will not challenge something they do not know of or do not understand. They cannot challenge their practice if they do not understand how and why their perceptions are skewed. What also became clear to me, was that I was arguing for developing new understandings around thinking about and doing physical education but I could not identify exactly what those would be. As I shared my ideas as an aspiration with my mentors, one of them shared that they understood exactly what I was arguing for when I said I wanted to change people's attitudes towards and perceptions of physical education by getting them to reconceptualise the way they carry out their practise. I lamented about wanting physical education to be based on participatory discourses as espoused by Tinning (1997) so that it offered all children of school age meaningful and enjoyable opportunities to engage in physical activities that can contribute to establishing a way of life and not as something designed for only those who are good at sport. It was at this point that one of my mentors shared his knowledge about the Cuban model of physical education and sport. I thought this would be a very interesting direction to pursue for my research since I was already trying to visualise what physical education in schools might look like in the future. My research then evolved into a new dimension, and its focus became clearer. I soon realised that I was attempting to do two main things. Firstly, I was seeking to develop a history of physical education by examining policy and practice incidents occurring in physical education. Secondly, I was attempting to use understandings shared about the practice of physical education to see whether a more critical approach could be adopted by teachers to teach physical education in a way that promotes mass participation and establishes lifelong physical activity engages a way of life through quality physical education lessons. With the help of my mentors, I began to reflect critically on the kinds of experience that were needed to be offered to students to ensure

that students would experience immediate enjoyment while promoting ‘desirable future experiences’ (Dewey, 1939, p. 16)

I did a number of literature searches to find out more about the Cuban system of physical education and sport that one of my mentors spoke of but my attempts were initially unsuccessful. I was interested in finding out exactly how this idea of physical culture was conceptualised and represented within their model of physical education and sport as well as its features. I also wanted to know how the Cuban government achieved mass participation for its citizens. Although Cuba’s society is based on a socialist ideology and Trinidad and Tobago’s on a democratic ideology, I felt that I could learn some valuable lessons from the underlying principles of a socialist system to support my aspiration for mass participation and lifelong physical activity engagement. These ideas about establishing physical culture were similar to the ideas that I shared with my mentors and they with me, particularly when Ralph explained what he knew about the way physical education was structured. Again, one day as fate would have it I visited the library to look for any material to do with the Cuban society and as I browsed the shelves, I came across the book ‘A Diamond in the Rough’. This find represented the beginning of the second part of my thesis which focussed on the aspirational agenda of using physical education to establish and perpetuate physical culture. The literature I read on critical incidents, mass participation and physical culture helped to illuminate further, my understandings of what physical education might look like in the future by showing the importance of providing all children of school age with the kinds of experiences that would perpetuate further positive experiences.

It was here that Dewey’s (1939) theory of interaction and continuity began to make sense. Conversations with my supervisors and mentors assisted in developing critical thought about how physical education is perceived, understood and practised and how these critical thoughts influence students’ future participation in physical activity. In addition to this, as I reflected on my experience of physical education, the work of John

Dewey emerged as crucial in theorising my main argument. The theoretical basis for my thesis was based on understanding the theory of experience. I was arguing that bad physical education experiences have the effect of potentially ‘arresting’ or ‘distorting’ future experiences. I was on to something but had no idea what, until I further examined Dewey’s (1939) principles of interaction and continuity. It was through engaging with these principles that I understood further the ways in which they are connected. It is important as physical educators to ensure that we take into account the kinds of experiences we offer to students during every stage of the educational process because present experiences influence future experiences.

In order for physical education teachers to make sense of their current practice and begin to rethink or reconceptualise what that practice might look in the not-too-distant future they must probe into their past experiences of the subject. I think critical incident analysis becomes useful here because critical incidents can help teachers to elicit, interpret and develop their understandings of the nature of physical education and how it might be practiced in order to avoid engaging students in lessons that are uneducational. This sort of probing will certainly ‘evoke responses’ which could provide insights into why teachers currently practice the way they do and possible what they might do to make students’ experiences more meaningful through ‘critical incidents’ (Nott & Wellington, 1998, p. 581).

In what follows, I return to my research questions.

8.4. My Research Questions

Research question one:

How have the school and early career experiences of a small group of physical educators in Trinidad and Tobago influenced their professional judgments as educators and administrators?

I identified primary and secondary school experiences of physical education to show

what physical education looked like then and now, how it was and is understood, and how those experiences identified assisted in shaping individuals' professional judgements about the subject. My mentors' early experiences of physical education led them to perceive the subject as being sport. This was also confirmed as in practice, the dominant pedagogy underpinning the health and physical education curriculum was sport and performance discourses. Physical education lessons were not necessarily highly structured and these lessons were mainly known as games. Students engaged in major games and team sports and those who participated were students who were good at sport. My mentors indicated that had it not been for their further education or professional development experiences of physical education, they would probably have taught physical education based on those early school experiences they had. I discussed this in chapter six where June described her experience of taking her students outside on a Friday afternoon or Denise who became the netball teacher at the schools where she taught. All my mentors agreed that their further education, professional development as well as for some, their career experiences assisted them to make different kinds of decisions about what and how they carried out their practice.

Research question two:

What can the analysis of the critical policy incidents of six physical educators tell us about the historical development of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago?

I compiled the historical development of physical education by carefully selecting a number of events in the lives of my mentors, which I rendered critical by analysing each event critically. These events were identified as my mentors shared their life stories with me about their school and career experiences of the subject. I engaged in both dialogic and critical reflection with my mentors as they told their physical education stories. Only one aspect of the history relied on one of my mentors' school experience as a student. I did this deliberately to ensure that important shifts in policy and practice in dance was concerned was accounted for and that I did not leave out any important details about the history of physical education as I reconstructed events chronologically

and in a comprehensive manner. The data analysed showed how the range of physical activities done in the name of physical education evolved from drills, to health and physical education during the pre-colonial to postcolonial era. The data also showed how the beginning of our independence gave rise to the expansion of the education system. This expansion saw attempts to shift from a British system of physical education that focused mainly on movement education and educational gymnastics to a more North American influence of physical fitness. It was obvious that this shift caused tensions in the way in which physical education was understood and practised by teachers who were returning home after studying either in England or in the United States and Canada. It would have been extremely difficult for me to make sense of how physical education is understood and practised if I did not have my mentors share their stories of physical education. I had policy documents in my possession that made no mention of possible tensions nor indicated why revisions were considered. Analysing these on their own would not have allowed me to identify and interrogate those deeper underlying issues that influence changes that took place within our education system and which specifically related to the development of physical education. Each of my six mentors contributed to constructing this authentic documentation of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago that illuminates how physical education in schools is understood and practised.

Research question three:

Can better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago be promoted through the development of a critical approach to practice? If so, how can such an aspirational agenda be achieved?

Through critical reflection, my mentors agreed with me that a better quality and more meaningful experiences of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago could be achieved through a critical approach to practice. Developing a more critical approach means getting physical education teachers involved in critically reflecting on their experiences and understandings of what physical education is and how it is understood in order that they might suggest ways to improve their practice. In essence, teachers

must be willing to engage reflection and action in order to transform their ways of thinking and doing. We discussed what the practice of physical education might look like if we were to strive to establish physical culture as an aspirational agenda. To do this we explored the Cuban model of physical education and sport as well as one of our local coaching programmes that ideally mirrors that of the Cuban model. My interpretation of these models suggest that physical culture can be established and maintained once physical education teachers collectively begin to rethink their practice and provide the kinds of quality physical education experiences that would encourage mass participation and ensure that lifelong physical activity engagement is established and maintained.

As detailed in chapter four, I set out five criteria by which my engagement with these research questions, and the production of my work, might be judged. It is my view that the criteria I set out have been successfully achieved. First, the life stories of six physical educators make up the distinctiveness of this work and I have sought to establish how the stories shared fit into the larger socio-political context of our Trinbagonian society. Second, the distribution of authentic quotes throughout the thesis demonstrates the balance between the individual stories and historical, social and political context of our postcolonial society. Third, by paying attention to the construction of the thesis I have endeavoured to vividly demonstrate the power and forces at work in shaping the experiences shared. Fourth, my mentors gave me the authority to re-interpret and re-construct the historical development of a subject and to make sense of significant entry points in their early childhood and career experiences. Their historical accounts provide ‘a systematic analysis of [the] on-going social constructions and selections that form the school curriculum pointing out continuities and discontinuities of social purpose over time’ (Goodson, 1997, pp. 55-56). Fifth, my authority also extended to reconceptualising the practice of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago as an aspirational project. My mentors acted as collaborators in this research in order to construct the major elements of my empirical chapters. Finally I hope it is clear that my work has not been reductive in its treatment of the life-stories

shared. As life history research my work was intended to be scholarly. My work ‘has both a clear *intellectual* purpose and *moral* purpose’ that offers sound theoretical, practical and transformative contributions to the academy (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 127) with direct relevance for developing physical culture within Trinbagonian society.

I now provide a discussion of how this research has contributed to producing knowledge and my ideas for dissemination.

8.5. My Contribution and Ideas for Future Research

My first suggestion for future research is to conduct a comprehensive review of the state and status of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago and then perhaps within the Caribbean region. One of the things I noted while searching for literature for this research was that during a 46-year period 1965-2011, there were approximately 38 papers, master’s and advance diploma dissertations lodged at our regional university that focussed on different aspects on physical education and sport in the Caribbean. Of those 38 papers, only eleven dealt specifically with issues in Trinidad and Tobago. The other thing I noticed was that at the regional level the Caribbean was not represented in the report completed by Hardman and Green in 2008, which provided an international update on the state and status of physical education. Latin/Central American (see appendix 2) was the closest the report came to representing the Caribbean region. Although it is unfortunate that the Caribbean region does not have a strong culture of research and documentation within the field of physical education, I believe that my research could be a stimulus for motivating the physical education curriculum division in the Ministry of Education or even the National Gas Company to consider funding a project which will contribute to international perspectives. This reality further establishes my rationale for wanting to engage in a study of this nature. There is not much to be obtained from my local context other than the voices of those that went before me. This research journey for me therefore is pioneering research in the area of policy and practice in physical education.

Secondly, I am of the view that I have compiled enough information about the history of physical education to work with my mentors in order to publish a short history of physical education for Trinidad and Tobago. This history can be used by secondary school teachers and as well as by adult learners enrolled in physical education and sport programmes at our local and regional university's physical education and sport centre. I feel that physical educators can use the information I compiled in chapter five to teach our pre-service and in-service teachers of physical education about our history of physical education. For too long we have been asked to celebrate and to study other peoples history. I think this research showed my mentors' dedication in assisting me to record our own history as an authentic form of knowledge to be used to help teachers and educators alike understand more about physical education in our country. This for us is indeed a step in the right direction.

My third suggestion is exploring critical incidents at professional development and training workshops for primary and secondary school teachers and teacher trainees in order to assist and encourage teachers reflect on and share how they have come to understand and interpret the nature and purpose of physical education in schools. I believe such forums can assist participants by providing theme with a dialogic space in which to carefully reflect on and consider their experiences and practice by identifying and describing critical incidents. Lecturers and facilitators of these sessions can also benefit in gaining insights into how physical education is understood and how it is currently practised throughout the education system. This type of forum can assist us in changing the attitudes towards and perceptions of how physical education should be practised to ensure that teachers' practices are aligned to the vision of achieving physical culture through mass participation. If used in this way, data collected from these teachers, can be used by educators, and facilitators to provide further research on the state and status of physical education in schools. This would certainly generate large amounts of data which can be analysed and included in the future worldwide surveys on physical education.

My fourth and final suggestion is to have conversations with officials of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sport as well as members of the curriculum unit for physical education. These conversations would highlight the ways in which I have come to understand what physical education is and how it should be practised in order to ensure that we can achieve the aspirational agenda of establishing and maintaining physical culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Conversations with these officials will also include suggestions of how as a nation we could ensure that all physical education teachers are properly trained and competent at all levels of the education system.

8.6. Final Reflections on the Research Experience

This research was a process of conscientization about who I am, where I come from, my faith position, the interest I serve, and the power I possess. This research was about how all these elements assisted in shaping my identity and purpose as an educator, and my positionality as a researcher. I embraced this doctoral process as a journey of *intellectual decolonization*. A journey of being able to command my future because I now understand my past and to engage in a constant examination and re-interpretation of these life experiences while engaging with my intellectual work. I adopted a critical life history approach to inquire into individuals' experience of physical education and utilise critical incident analysis, policy documents and other relevant literature to interpret these experiences. I did this to develop an official documented history of physical education in Trinidad and Tobago in a way that proved more meaningful and insightful. I also did this to reconceptualise the way in which physical education is understood, and practised in the future. The way in which this research was carried out assisted me in contributing to a more succinct documented form of knowledge and also in developing new perspectives about my own practice as a physical educator.

This journey helped me to realise how much of what I experienced as a child had a profound impact on my life as an adult. Things I felt, heard, saw and even those which I did not feel or think about immediately, were examined more deeply throughout this

journey.

Epilogue

A pearl always starts out as a piece of dirt
But it turns into beauty
And a diamond is the same as the coal in your fire
But I gave it beauty

So no matter how you feel
No matter what you say...
I have made you to be who you are

Like a diamond held in your hand
Reflecting all the rays of the sunlight around

Coz I made you to be who you are
Beautiful to me

G. Robinson 2005

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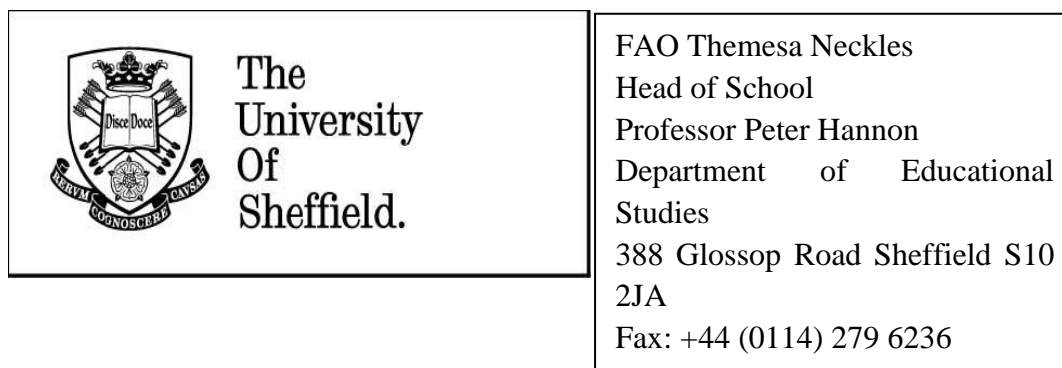
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Appendix 1



3 July 2009

Dear Themesa

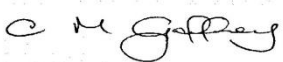
Phd Research Proposal:

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. The reviewers have now considered this and have agreed that you can go ahead with your research project, with the following conditions:

.....None

This is subject to receipt of a signed hard copy of Part B (Declaration) of the School of Education Research Ethics application form which is available at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/ethics>. This hard copy is then held on file and ensures that we comply with university requirements for signatures.

Yours sincerely



Chris Gaffney Taught and research programmes manager

Appendix 2

Table 1 Implementation in accordance with regulations (% rounded)

Region/country	Implemented	Not implemented
Africa	25	75
North America	72	28
United States	74	26
Canada	57	43
Latin/Central America	50	50
Asia	33	67
Europe	87	13
Western Europe	93	7
Northern Europe	73	27
Southern Europe	50	50
Central/Eastern Europe	100	–
Middle East	82	18
Oceania	70	30

Source: Hardman, K. (2008) Physical education in schools: a global perspective, *Kinesiology*, 40(1), 15-28.

Table 2 Legal/actual status of physical education (% rounded)

Region/country	Legal	Actual
Global	86	43
Africa	50	14
North America	86	36
United States	84	37
Canada	100	29
Latin/Central America	89	13
Asia	73	20
Europe	94	67
Western Europe	100	71
Northern Europe	92	58
Southern Europe	78	67
Central/Eastern Europe	95	67
Middle East	91	70
Oceania	91	11

Source: Hardman, K. (2008) Physical education in schools: a global perspective, *Kinesiology*, 40(1), 15-28.

Table 3 Attitudes of head teachers (HT), other teachers (OT) and parents (P) towards physical education (% rounded)

	Supportive			Indifferent			Non-supportive		
	HT	OT	P	HT	OT	P	HT	OT	P
Global	44	23	44	29	46	29	27	31	27
Africa	27	9	28	36	55	36	37	36	36
North America	42	21	42	25	47	25	33	32	33
Canada	15	–	50	35	60	–	50	40	50
USA	46	24	46	23	45	23	31	31	31
Central & Latin America	33	12	33	33	50	33	34	38	34
Asia	31	8	31	39	42	39	30	50	30
Europe	48	32	48	34	44	34	18	24	18
Western Europe	47	35	47	37	52	37	16	13	16
Scandinavia	33	14	33	67	71	–	–	15	67
Southern Europe	38	37	38	50	25	50	12	38	12
Central & Eastern Europe	64	33	64	–	25	–	36	42	36
Middle East	60	22	60	10	33	10	30	45	30
Oceania	67	25	67	22	63	22	11	12	11

Source: Hardman, K. (2008) Physical education in schools: a global perspective, *Kinesiology*, 40(1), 15-28.