

# ENGAGING INNOVATIVE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH APPLIED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

MCAST 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS



## Flexibility and unpredictability in participatory research with students as co-researchers

- Anna Maria Gatt – Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Dr. Kyriaki Makopoulou – School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham
- Prof. Jennifer Cumming – School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



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## Aims of study PE4W

1. To **explore** whether and how **PE provision within schools can be reimagined to promote wellbeing for all students – PE4W (PE for Wellbeing)**

2. To **examine the feasibility of a novel participatory research approach**, where students co-construct their educational experience with their teachers

## Background to study

- **Schools** are important sites to promote students' wellbeing (OECD, 2018)
- There are ongoing debates about the **potential of PE** to bring benefits in a range of domains of children's development, (e.g. physical, mental and social)
- **But despite this > there is still a general lack of programmes and innovations that target specifically the wellbeing of students through PE.**

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## The Study Phases

|      | Phase 1                                                                                                                                        | Phase 2                                                                                                                                     | Phase 3                                                                                             | Phase 4                                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WHO  | A group of student-as-researchers, one from each class of the Year 10 cohort in a local state, senior school                                   | (i) Same group of student-researchers<br>(ii) Whole Year 10 cohort                                                                          | (i) Same group of student-researchers<br>(ii) One Year 10 class chosen conveniently by a PE teacher | (i) Same group of student-researchers<br>(ii) PE teacher         |
| WHAT | i. Trained as researchers<br>ii. Explore the meaning of wellbeing<br>iii. A consensual definition – How do 14–15-year-olds define ‘wellbeing’? | <i>Designing, distribution and analysis of a survey to explore perception of wellbeing and PE experiences of all Year 10 students (tbc)</i> | Co-constructing a set of 6 PE lessons based on the survey analysis                                  | Feedback through focus groups<br><br>Dissemination decision      |
| HOW  | <b>ENGAGEMENT</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>EMPOWERMENT (i) +<br/>ENGAGEMENT (ii)</b>                                                                                                | <b>EMPOWERMENT (i) +<br/>ENGAGEMENT (ii)</b>                                                        | <b>EMPOWERMENT<br/>(i) +<br/>ENGAGEMENT (ii)<br/>= OWNERSHIP</b> |

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## Further explanation of Phase 3

Co-construction of PE lessons and feedback sheets

The content and practices included in the lesson are based on the data collected from the survey.

Lesson delivery by class PE teacher and feedback collected

The students who participate in the lessons (a whole class) will fill in a feedback sheet at the end of each lesson (tbc). Primary researcher just as an observer.

Evaluation of lessons and modifications if necessary

Feedback collected might result in the need for modifications. Another co-construction episode.



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| Levels of Participation                | PE4W Intervention                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Students as <b>Informants</b>          | The students answering the survey (Phase 2)                                                                                                              |
| Students as <b>Respondents</b>         | The student-as-researchers during introductory sessions and evaluation sessions. (Phase 1 and 4)<br>The students taking part in the PE lessons (Phase 3) |
| Students as <b>Co-researchers</b>      | The students-as-researchers during the construction of the survey, the data analysis and the construction of the lessons. (Phase 2 and 3)                |
| <b>Students as Co-Owners (Phase 4)</b> |                                                                                                                                                          |

***Framework of Student-as-Researchers Level of Participation (SaRLP) linked to Smit et al's (2020) Matrix of Research Stages***

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## The Researcher's Positionality

- To what extent will **unexpected discoveries and insights** affect my positionality?
- How ready will I be for this unpredictability especially regarding **content and practices**?
- How flexible will I be, as the primary researcher, to **amend** the research **focus** and the research **tools** accordingly?

## The Students' Degree of Participation

Reluctant students  
Non-committed students  
Students who take long to develop trust  
Slow evolving of relationships

What if I end up with few student-researchers and I won't have representatives from all classes?

What made them withdraw – lack of commitment and / or interest, or maybe the approach implemented did not allow them to feel fully participative?

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**POWER ISSUES**

How will I as the primary researcher strike a **balance** amongst the students?

Value of **ALL** participants

**CONTEXTUAL ISSUES**

Disruptions

Time-Tabling issues

Outings

Meetings

**Flexibility** – Task Issues / Organizational Issues / Emotional Issues / Relationship Issues

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Participatory Research contributes to **VALIDITY** and **RELEVANCE** of research

Participatory Research contributes to the general **WELLBEING** and **ENLIGHTENMENT** of participants

Participatory Research is a **FLOURISHING EXPERIENCE** for all involved and their communities

**What's unpredictable can become an enriching learning experience**



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## THANK YOU

