“Changing it up:” Children’s lived experiences of a reverse integration wheelchair sport Intervention in the East of England

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Presentation Outline

- Disability sport in schools
- Theoretical Concepts
- Background: The ‘Wheelchair Sports Intervention’
- Study Methods
- Results and Discussion
- Conclusions
Disability Sport in School Sport

‘All pupils should have access to physical education and disability should not be a barrier to inclusion in sport programmes.’

(DCMS, 2000, p.30)

• Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)
Disability Sport in School Sport

• Current PE delivery does not cater for disability (Brown, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2005; Howe, 2009)

• Traditional team games (Hay & MacDonald, 2010)

• Disabled children viewed as incapable of participating due to their disability. Disabled children frequently left out of activities (Hunter, 2004)

‘It’s like I feel like he’s looking down on me and he doesn’t care and he sees my chair and all things I can’t do.’

(Fitzgerald, 2005, p.53)
Disability Sport in School Sport

• Reverse Integration (Brasile, 1990; Stephenson, 2007)
Theoretical Concepts

  - Field
  - Capital
  - Habitus

- Chris Shilling (1993)
  - Physical Capital
The Intervention

• Lincolnshire Sports Partnership (LSP)

• LSP supplied wheelchairs to schools for a 12 week period

• Qualified coaches delivered Wheelchair Basketball sessions during normal P.E sessions

• ‘Raise awareness’ of disability sport among non-disabled pupils
Aim

• **Attitudes** individuals held **prior to participation** in the intervention regarding disabled individuals and disability sport.

• Actual **physical sensations** of participating in the intervention.

• The **emotive and social lived experiences** participants encountered during the intervention

• Based on participant’s experiences, the **attitudes** individuals held **following the intervention** regarding disabled individuals and disability sport.
The Study

**Initial Sample**
- 100 children
  - (97 offered consent)

**Randomisation**
- ‘Intervention’ Group
  - (48 Children)
- ‘Comparison’ Group
  - (49 Children)

**Research Methods**
- Interviews (pre and post intervention)
- Participant Observations
- Interviews (pre and post intervention)
Measures

- Interviews: Completed with 24 (IG) and 20 (CG) participants
- Deductive approach, using the principles of Bourdieu and Shilling to guide the interview schedules
- Observations: Coded, and informed elements of the post-intervention interview schedules
- Data was thematically analysed
Study Structure

Social Theory

- Pre-Intervention Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Post-Intervention Interviews
Results

Pre Intervention
- Limitation
- Sympathy
- Contrived Respect

The Intervention
- Lived Experiences

Post Intervention
- Commonality
- Empathy
- Genuine Respect
Pre-Intervention Results

• **Limitation**
  – Focus upon physical disability

  ‘*My dad says I’m not allowed to watch [the Paralympics] it because if I did it would *freak me out* and it wasn’t like the *real Olympics*’

• **Sympathy**
  – The tragedy of disability

  ‘*I feel quite sorry* for them, because it *couldn’t have been their fault*, but someone else could have done it and then they’re *stuck* with it for the *rest of their life*’
Pre-Intervention Results

- Contrived Respect

‘I think, I don’t know, like good for them, because they’re just getting on with it [life]’
Participant Observations

• Frustration
  – Complexity of the game

• Physicality
  – The demands of participating

• Dis-engagement
  – Cheating to complete tasks
Post-Intervention Results

- **Commonality**
  - Instead of limitation and segregation

  ‘No offence, but I used to like look at them and think, they’re not one of us. And now, they are like us, they’re us just....’
  ‘We’re still human beings like them.’

- **Empathy**
  - Understanding rather than pity

  ‘I understand more like how they feel and how annoying it is to be in a wheelchair, even though I was only in it for a little bit and I could get out and walk.’
Post-Intervention Results

- Genuine Respect
  - Built upon lived experience

‘You think oh, its easy, just wheeling chairs about, but when you actually get in the wheelchair it’s really tough...you have to be proper good’
Comparison Group

- Displayed similar pre-intervention perceptions

- No change in post-intervention perceptions

- Interest
Conclusion

• Experiences during the intervention were key to affecting change

• Experiences challenged perceptions based on potential new habitus and attribution of physical capital

• Suggests reverse-integration as a possible vehicle to aid integration with PE
‘Sometimes you think disabled people can’t do this, and can’t do this but actually they can.’

Thank you for your time....

Any questions?