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Unpacking the Joy of Movement - 'It's almost never the same'

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Abstract

Researchers, politicians, physical educators, and children— all advocate the significance of joy of movement. Children desire movement because they find it joyful and meaningful, while politicians and physical educators are often interested in the associations between joy of movement and participation in physical activity. Researchers have different perspectives both on what joy of movement is and what it means for human beings. Our aim in this article is to try to understand how joy of movement emerges and evolves, and how children express it. We ask: when and where do children experience movement as enjoyable, and how can the children's descriptions and our observations contribute to unpacking the joy of movement? We have chosen an affect theoretical perspective, which allows us to explore and analyse intensities and atmospheres and how children are affected by and 'taken with' activities and situations in which movement takes place. The analysis builds on qualitative material from four primary schools in Western Norway. Through in-depth analysis of writings, interviews and observations with 10- to 11-year-old children, we demonstrate that the joy of movement is both a pleasant state to which children are attracted and a force that provides them with feelings of belongingness as well as confidence and the courage to engage in new situations and interactions with others. We show how joy of movement grows, emerges, fades, and stays latent. In addition, how the intensities and forms of joy fluctuate across situations, environments, individuals and over time. The findings extend the knowledge base of what joy of movement can be and provide a basis to discuss the educational values of joy of movement and pedagogical implications. We suggest that considering situational and relational aspects of joy of movement is important both when legitimating the educational value of movement and when facilitating joy of movement in PE.

Keywords: joy of movement, physical education, affect theoretical perspective, qualitative research, children

Background

Researchers, politicians, physical educators, children, and young people all advocate the significance of the joy of movement. For children and young people, 'fun' and enjoyable movement experiences are a source of meaning (Beni et al., 2017). Many researchers, physical educators and other actors, meanwhile, have proposed that joy is important for children and young people's engagement in physical education (PE) and, further, for children's continued participation in physical activity (PA) beyond school and across their life span (Griffin et al., 1993; MacPhail et al., 2008; Wellard, 2012; Barker et al., 2019). In many cases, the hope of inspiring children and young people to move is related to concerns for their health (Kretchmar, 2006). In addition, many actors relate the motivational value of joy to learning movement skills and improving athletic performance (Pringle, 2009; Stevens, 2017). Recently, researchers and politicians have suggested that inspiring children to move could be important for their academic learning, as well (Resaland et al., 2015). These perspectives emphasise the joy of movement as an instrumental value. In PE, the instrumental perspective on joy is often associated with emphasis on keeping children happy and physically active (Nyberg & Larsson, 2014).

Another perspective is that joy of movement is valuable for existential reasons (Ronkainen et al., 2020). Stevens (2017) has emphasised that movement is a child's first expression and that discovering one's movement capabilities provides young children with delight and joy. She has further associated joy of movement with a 'human being's ability to flourish' (p. 59), indicating that joy of movement is important for human beings throughout their lives. Further, Kretchmar (2006) has argued that joy of movement is a source of personal meaning and thus important for developing one's identity as well as culture. People choose, repeat, and gather around activities they find meaningful. Similarly, Winther (2014) has argued that joy of movement feels good, can bring people together and is liberating. These perspectives

emphasise the intrinsic values of joy of movement. Within the school institution, the intrinsic values of joy of movement are subordinate to the instrumental values. However, several researchers (Wright, 2004; Kretchmar, 2006; Booth, 2009; Pringle, 2009; Wellard 2012) have argued that giving greater attention to intrinsic values of joy of movement in PE could help strengthen the educational role of the subject. These researchers relate joy of movement to social and emotional aspects of learning processes.

In addition to multiple understandings of the value of joy of movement, interpretations of the concept itself vary in the research and literature. Within the sport psychological tradition, researchers have related joy of movement to Mihail Csikszentmihalyi's *flow*-model and the '*sport enjoyment model*'. Based on the *flow*-model, joy of movement is a state of optimal balance between skill and challenge. The '*sport enjoyment model*', meanwhile, draws attention to intrinsic-extrinsic and achievement-nonachievement factors that predict joy (Griffin et al., 1993; Garn & Cothran, 2006; MacPhail et al., 2008).

From a socio-cultural perspective, joy of movement is an intertwining of a subjective and individual experience and a social construction. Joy of movement evolves in a certain place and at a certain time. It is negotiated, understood, and managed, which allows multiple interpretations (Pringle, 2009). Researchers have stressed the meaning of social understandings and expectations related to gender, sexuality, age and ability, as well as parental factors and politics (Booth, 2009; Wellard, 2012; Stevens, 2017).

From an existential perspective, joy of movement is both an experience and a force (Winther, 2014). Joy of movement is an embodied (Jensen, 2020) or enfolded (Stevens, 2017) experience. This means that it is personally meaningful and related to certain situations and circumstances. According Stevens (2017), joyful movement experiences involve both physiological and psychological elements and are shaped by space, time, context, social and political factors. Jensen (2020), meanwhile, has suggested that joy of movement can be a

bodily sensation as well as an experience of meaning, or an experience of living up to one's own expectations or social norms and rules. Rintala (2009) has argued that experiences of creativity, wonder, harmony, friendship, a sense of fulfillment, challenge, risk, empathy, and competition are all potential sources of joy of movement. Kretchmar (2005a) has also suggested that finding solutions and answers as well as improvement and balance can be joyful experiences.

Another contribution of the existential perspectives is insight into different intensities and aspects of joy. Kretchmar (2005b; 2006) has made a distinction between fun and delight. With 'fun', he refers to entertainment and pleasures of the moment; 'delight' meanwhile, refers to more durable and intense experiences of being carried away, enthralled and captivated. Stevens (2017) has suggested that joy of movement can evolve in combination with other feelings, even contradicting ones. She has provided the example of the pleasure of accomplishing a physically demanding exercise.

The phenomenon joy of movement has certainly inspired researchers, and the literature illuminates different perspectives both on what joy of movement is and what it means for human beings. However, we notice that there is little research on how joy emerges and evolves when children move and how children express joy of movement. Hence, our research questions are as follows:

1. When and where do children experience movement as enjoyable?
2. How can the children's descriptions and our observations contribute to unpacking the phenomenon joy of movement?

To answer the research questions, we have analysed writings, interviews, and observations with 10- to 11-year-old children. The material concentrates on children's movement in school, including PE, physical active educational lessons (PAE lessons) and physical active

classroom breaks (PA breaks). As indicated in the research we have referred to, joy of movement cannot be reduced to either its individual or situational aspects. Thus, we have adopted an affect theoretical perspective. We use the insight from our analysis to discuss the meaning of joy in PE and pedagogical implications that might follow.

Affect Theoretical Perspective

The bodily dimensions of human life as well as the relationships between human beings and non-human bodies such as atmospheres, events and institutions are the core interest of an affect theoretical perspective. In our understanding, this means paying attention to sensations and intensities that emerge when children move, interactions between children and between children and their teachers, and the structures of situations and environments in which children move. The interactions are characterised through the intertwined concepts ‘to be affected’ and to ‘affect’.

Our inspiration is the work of the 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza (2011), as well as Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg’s introduction to (2010) and Ben Anderson’s (2016) discussion of affect theories. According to Spinoza (2011), affects are pre-conscious and not identifiable with human senses. Thus, central questions include the role affects have in human life and what affects do. Seigworth and Gregg (2010) have identified affects with force or sensation, suggesting that affects can push bodies toward or away from one another and ‘suspend us’ or ‘leave us overwhelmed’ (p. 54). Affects concern tensions and tractions, shunning and rejection in human and non-human relationships and interactions. A central aspect of affective relationships and interactions is that they are reciprocal. Bodies have a capacity to become affected and to affect other bodies (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010; Spinoza, 2011).

When affected, human beings are drawn to feel, think and act in certain ways due to forceful, bodily sensations, intensities, and resonances. Accordingly, non-human bodies such as events and environments evolve and are formed in certain ways. Anderson (2016) has suggested that affects form bodies and that 'spaces and places are made through affect' (p 7). Affects infuse emotions, ideas, actions, events and environments. They may not be identifiable with human senses, but affects are a fundamental part of human experiences and expressions, as well as events and environments. A central research interest from an affect theoretical perspective is the structures of life.

Anderson (2016) emphasizes that feelings, emotions ideas, actions, events and environments are structured temporarily. He has exemplified that, a feeling such as hope can involve a sense of possibility and become actionable. This is to say, feeling of hope is an active state where a body is about to move in a certain direction. The direction is not predetermined but takes shape in the moment. Anderson has suggested that 'affective life happens' (p. 4). Seigworth and Gregg (2010), meanwhile, have reasoned that bodies and the world are always about to 'become', and there is always a possibility that something new or different will emerge (Seigworth and Gergg, 2010). Neither a child nor a researcher can be certain about what will happen next. Such a perspective insists that one 'partake' or continually engage in environments and events to experience them and to acquire knowledge (Hurley in Deleuze, 1988).

Another element of uncertainty that characterises affective aspects of life is ambiguity. According to Spinoza (2011), '[t]he human body is composed of very many individual parts of different natures, each of which is extremely complex' (p. 76). Thus, a human being can become affected in many ways at the same time. Numerous ideas, thoughts, feelings and acts might emerge in each moment. Anderson (2016) has suggested that one example of the ambiguity of affects is when a person experiences a flash of hope that infiltrates a landscape

of misery. Affects always involve a tension between a promise and threat: a promise in terms of potential joy or pleasure and a threat in terms of potential pain or misery (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010). Like human beings, also events and environments are multifaceted and may involve harmony, disruptions, discontinuity, and contrasts.

However, while temporality and ambiguity are central elements of life in an affect theoretical perspective, they do not define any individual body or the world. Watkins (2010) has emphasised that affects can also accumulate and form permanent patterns or dispositions. She has noted that if a teacher continuously singles out a child for a bad behaviour or poor academic performance, over time, this will affect the child's self-worth and desire to learn negatively. Thus, the affect theoretical perspective draws a researcher's attention toward fluctuations, ambivalences, and opposites, as well as consistencies and patterns.

Attraction, rejections, opposites, ambivalences, consistencies, fluctuations or patterns emerges in encounters between bodies and is a matter of the relationships. From an affect theoretical perspective, the individual is always part of a collective, and a collective consists of individuals. Each part can affect and be affected by the other. Individuals can affect one another, individuals can affect collectives, and collectives can affect individuals. One consequence of this intertwining of individual and collectives is that affects and thus also actions, feelings and moods can spread. Anderson (2016) has given an example of how a sense of hope spreads among a group of people and suggested that affects can facilitate the emergence of 'collective moods' and 'affective atmospheres' (p. 4).

Another central aspect of affective relationships is bodies' capacity to act, which Spinoza (2011) identifies with 'passions' and 'adequate knowledge'. Passions bring confusion and misinterpretations and tempt human beings to act upon what feels good in the moment. Passions can be both internal, such as impulses, emotions and imagination, and external, such as abstract rules, norms and regulations. 'Adequate knowledge' implies that a body

understands its own affections and knows what is best for itself and other bodies. Thus, a body can respond appropriately to the current situation. According to Spinoza, a body can adopt adequate knowledge through experience from encounters with others and otherness. Spinoza's account of passions and adequate knowledge provides a framework to understand human growth.

The affect theoretical perspective allows us to explore how children express movement in different ways, how movement emerges and evolves in different situations, and what joy of movement does. This involves disclosing discrepancies and fluctuations as well as patterns and moments of harmony. The affect theoretical perspective provides us the basis to analyse our material and to explore when and where children experience joy of movement.

Design and Methods

We combine material from qualitative fieldwork consisting of 27 group interviews, 56 individual interviews, 91 writings and 76 observational units with 10- to 11-year-old (5th grade) children.¹ In the age of 10-11-year, children are either about to enter or have newly entered puberty and their interests for PE and movement activities are often in transition and change. To understand how joy of movement evolves and emerges among 10-11-year-old children may provide insight into how to facilitate meaningful and engaging PE experiences during a sensitive phase of life.

The fieldwork took place in the 2014-2015 academic year, when we visited four schools in western Norway six times each between August and June. The four schools varied in geographical location (different parts of the county, rural and urban), school and class size (15

¹ The material is from the first author's doctoral dissertation project, which aimed to explore children's movements in school. See Ingulfsvann (2018)

to over 20 children per grade), the teacher's education (formal or no formal education in PE) and his or her teaching experience (one to over 15 years). In total, 98 children and their parents or guardians provided written informed consent to participate in the study. Since we did not have the resources to work closely with all the children, we chose 32 (seven to nine children per school) to participate in in-depth observations and interviews. During the selection process, we relied on material from the initial phase of fieldwork, where we observed one PE lesson in each school, invited all children to take part in a drawing and writing task and group interviews, and talked with children's teachers. We included children who expressed a variety of movement preferences, interests, genders and levels of engagement in PE. In this article, we introduce Maja, Anna, Thea, Emilie, Daniel, Elias, Tobias, Petter, Edward and Sander. The names are pseudonyms, and the selection criteria are the same as above. A more detailed description of the selection process and the children can be found in Ingulfsvann (2018).

We deliberately chose multiple methods to provide children with opportunities to express themselves in varying ways. Two of the methods, writing and interview, cover verbal aspects of human communication. We acknowledged that to articulate the topic joy of movement verbally could be challenging for children and considered it advantageous to include also a bodily aspect. We chose observation as a third method. We consider all three methods and material we gained with help of them valuable to illuminate our research questions; to explore how children express joy of movement, how children's descriptions and expressions of joy of movement change and vary, and how children's expressions and our observations can contribute to unpack the phenomenon joy of movement.

The writings were a part of a drawing and writing task whose aim was to provide children an enjoyable, non-stressful way to express themselves and to enter into the research process (Yuen, 2004). We asked children to draw one picture of something they liked very much in

PE and another picture of something they did not like or liked less. We have not included an analysis of the drawings in this article. In addition, we asked children to write short explanations about what they chose and why. We specified that ‘something’ could be either an activity or something that had happened to them in PE. For this article, we analysed whether and how children expressed joy of movement in their writings.

We chose to include the interviews due to the central role of verbal language in human communication. We used both group and individual interviews, reasoning that it might be more comfortable for children to express themselves to an adult researcher in a group setting (Horowitz et al., 2003; Parrish et al., 2012), while we also wanted to provide children an opportunity to share more private experiences with us in an individual setting (Morgan et al., 2002). We used semi-structured guides in all interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). We prepared themes and questions in advance, and we often changed the order of questions, dropped some or probed further issues that emerged during the interviews. Some of the questions concerned children’s experiences of movement in general, while others specifically targeted the phenomenon ‘joy of movement’, such as ‘What can joy of movement be for you?’ and ‘Can you describe an enjoyable movement experience?’ We also used the drawings and writings to elicit responses in the interviews once.

Finally, we chose observations due to our emphasis on the bodily dimensions of expression and interactions. We wanted to see how children moved and interacted, as well as sense the atmospheres that emerged (Fangen, 2004). During the observations, we adopted the role of partially participant observers. We sat or stood by the side and did not participate in the activities. Sometimes, the first author talked with some of the children before, during or after the lesson. We began the observations with an open perspective and increasingly refined our attention toward relationships and interactions between children as well as children and their teachers and situations in which children moved. In addition, we followed up topics that

emerged in interviews or writings occasionally, when a situation reminded us about what we had talked with children. Vice versa, we asked children about topics we noted during observations in interviews occasionally when they contributed with material relevant to the overall aim, we had chosen for the interview. The first author wrote field notes on each observational unit the same day or the day after. In addition, we consider the embodied experiences and memories we have from the observations to be part of the material. We did not use video in observations due to ethical issues of filming participants classmates who had not consented the study.

As a part of a larger study which included health measures, our study was approved by The Regional Committee for Medical Research Ethics, (REK; 2014). In addition to the written informed consent, we verbally informed the children about the research project. We highlighted that it was voluntary to participate and that we would not use their real names. At the halfway point and close to the end of the research project, we verbally confirmed the written consent from the 32 children we included in the in-depth interviews and observations. When a child did not want to participate in some part of the research project, we respected their wishes. One boy did not want to participate in the last interview.

Analysis

In accordance with Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) 'thinking with theory' (p. 14), the process of analysis was characterised by a circulating movement between several elements. We visited and discussed the material several times, considering what was interesting in relation to the affect theoretical perspective. In addition, we understand and have considered the material from writings, interviews and observations in relation to each other. We read and discussed Spinoza's (2011) and Seigworth and Gregg's (2010) writings several times to think about how

the concepts of affects, to be affected and to affect could be understood through the material. We reflected upon and discussed what was relevant in relation to the research questions and the research context. We chose to further analyse a selection of quotes and sequences that are detailed, relate to varying locations and situations, and illustrate a variation of forms and intensities of joy. Some of the quotes and sequences illustrate different aspects of a theme. Other times, we identified a theme only in writings, interviews, or observations.

To preserve the temporal, dynamic and relational character of the children's expressions of joy of movement, we sought further inspiration in Bruce et al.'s (2016) 'story lines' (p. 3). In accordance with Bruce et al., the way we organised our findings has some characteristics of thematic categories but is more open. We ground the findings in data material and use quotations and sequences to enliven the analysis. In addition, we use theoretical concepts to add another level of the complexity and diversity of joyful movement. However, several of the story lines contain substance for more than one theme. The quotations and sequences we have chosen under each story line relate to the main topic, while the analysis that follows each quotation and sequence opens a different side story. The story lines are narratives rather than categories; they do not proceed in a linear way or attempt to summarise a topic. When choosing main topics, side stories, and elaborating the story lines, we have aimed to disclose discrepancies and fluctuations as well as patterns and moments of harmony in the material. The story lines reflect the way children talked and wrote about joy of movement and the way we observed and experienced joy when children moved.

Findings

The story lines that provide insight into a specific aspect of joy of movement are as follows:

1. The invigorating force of joy, 2. The gathering force of joy, 3. The engaging force of joy, 4. Fluctuations of joy and 5. The latent joy of movement.

The invigorating Force of Joy

Children often associated movement with ‘fun’ and something they liked. However, it was difficult for them to explain the fun or joy of movement more specifically and personally.

Children demonstrated a bodily knowledge of how it felt to enjoy movement but were not used to reflecting upon their own movement experience and give verbal meaning to these terms. Their experiences with joy of movement manifested in sensations and intensities, and the experiences were embodied. However, many children discussed and further explained *why* they liked to move and what they enjoyed about moving. Children used different terms, such as ‘fresh’ and ‘being active’. Other expressions were ‘I feel like doing something’ and ‘I keep coming up with ideas’. Thea reasoned: ‘It’s fun when we have activities that are a little bit exciting and when a lot of things happen [...] It’s almost never the same’. These terms and descriptions indicate experiences of energy, motion, excitement, readiness, alertness, and surprise. Children spoke of joy of movement as a tickling, embracing and invigorating force.

Furthermore, joy of movement was associated with confidence and capacity in children’s speech. One example was Maja, who explained that, when enjoying movement, she felt

that I can do whatever I want [...] I feel like running so fast that I can pass everyone else, even though I might be running last, heh [...] If I run as fast as I can, and someone runs faster than me, and then I feel that I run faster than they do, although I actually run slower.

Maja experienced running together with other children and observed that they run faster than her. However, Maja *felt* fast and strong: even faster and stronger than the other children. Maja was confident in herself and in her joy of running. She felt capable. One could further suggest that Maja's encounter with running was empowering and that Maja's capacity to act was increased (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010; Spinoza, 2011). However, Maja's notion that she was behind, even though she felt faster than others, indicates that she misinterprets the world around her. Maja relies on her feelings or imagination. Thus, Maja's experience of confidence and capacity is not equal to Spinoza's (2011) understanding of the capacity to act. Feelings and imagination are passive forces, which draw a person into a coincidental action that might or might not be beneficial in the situation. In comparison, adequate knowledge involves that a person acts upon a tacit understanding of her own and other people's or element's responses and further what is best for herself as well as for other persons and elements involved in the given situation. Regardless, the feelings of confidence and capacity were accompanied by an openness to the situation and environment. Further, this openness involved the courage to be affected and to affect, to partake and to continuously experience running together with other children (Hurley in Deleuze, 1988; Spinoza, 2011).

Another example of this amalgamation of joy, confidence and capacity came from Anna, who wrote:

I like to dance because I move fast, do cool tricks and can talk and express myself.

I like to sing because, for example, I am afraid and shy about saying I am sorry, so it becomes easier when I sing.

Like Maja, Anna expressed that, when experiencing joy of movement, she felt confidence and capability. Specifically, Anna not only felt confident and capable of moving but also of partaking in social interactions. She was open to and had courage to encounter and relate to other people, which leads us to the next dimension of forceful joy: the gathering force of joy.

The gathering Force of Joy

Children often moved together with others, especially in school, but also in organised sports and during leisure time with friends and siblings. Accordingly, joy of movement was often related to feelings of togetherness. Thea said:

Now we have 'Just Dance' in a five-minute break, and I think everyone thinks it is quite fun. At least we girls think so, because we have, like, we are always together, if it is two and two, so it is always me and Sandra. If it is four, then I'm always together with Sandra, Emilie and Emma. We have become a group in 'Just Dance'.

Thea's class began with five-minute movement breaks between academic lessons, and she enjoyed them. One important reason was that Thea was together with her friends, and she felt that she and her friends had become a group. In observations, we noted the following:

Thea, Emilie, Emma and Sandra all go together to the back of the classroom. Their faces are turned toward the white screen, but occasionally, they glance at each other. The girls' eyes shine; their steps are firm, and their arms wave and swing, following the figure on the screen.

When dancing, the girls settled close to each other, and they made eye contact several times. Their body language conveyed that they sought each other's company when moving. The shining eyes, firm steps and waving arms further conveyed that the girls were confident about and enjoyed dancing together in the classroom. They shared the moment and joy of movement intertwined with the pleasure of togetherness. According to Spinoza (2011), each body consists of many individual parts and is thus complex and capable of affecting and being affected in multiple ways simultaneously. This complexity concerns both human and non-

human bodies. The above example shows both how a movement environment consists of multiple elements and how a child who enjoys movement can be affected by several of these elements at the same time. Due to this complexity, multiple bodies can be drawn together in moments of joyful movement. One aspect is several children being drawn together, while another is that children, movement activity and movement environment become intertwined. Furthermore, when children were drawn toward one another, it was not only possible for them to share joy, but that joy could also pass between children and spread into the atmosphere. This example concerns a dodgeball game:

Daniel picks up a ball. He looks around and sees Emilie. Emilie notices this. A brief laugh slips out of her mouth, and she starts to run away from Daniel. They pass by Emma, who walks around slowly with a neutral look on her face.

Suddenly, Emma notices that another child is targeting her. She speeds up into a run, and a small smile appears on her face.

Smiles and laughter passed between children, and with such exchanges, they involved and engaged each other in the game. Meanwhile, the game itself moved on, as if it had a life of its own. A joyful energy passed between and circulated among the bodies, which were drawn toward each other (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010). The joy was shared in interactions between children, which intertwined with the course of the game. The joyful energy gathered in the atmosphere, making the whole environment joyful.

The engaging Force of Joy

When children talked about their favourite activities or memorable movement experiences, their voices became intense, and their eyes lit up. Here, Elias describes his joy of biking down a bumpy road:

My grandfather has sheep, and he has a place up there, like a meadow, so it's really bumpy there, and the first time I was there with my cousin, we went up along an old road; we rode a horse and rode down there [by bike]. It was fun, and then I tried once again, and in the end, it was so much fun that I decided to buy one; my bike was quite old, and so I bought a new one with suspension and better wheels, and so it got much more fun, and I started to ride more often.

Elias spoke in an engaged way about the situation and expressed that the environment had a personal meaning for him. Elias recalled several details about the environment and the day he rode the bike down the bumpy road for the first time. The details were imprinted on Elias's body and memories as he took part in the environment and experienced it through his biking. Elias, his bike, the movement and the environment became intertwined. All elements were affected by each other in ways that drew them toward each other. The terrain was challenging and to bike down involved an element of risk. Elias experienced the environment as inviting and he was drawn to bike down the bumpy road. As he rode down the bumpy road, his movements and the bike became one with the terrain. Biking was pleasant and exciting. Elias felt joy and a desire to continue biking. He bought a new bike that allowed him to experience the terrain and movement in a new way. He continued to bike down the bumpy road, and his enjoyment grew even more intense. The relationships and interactions between Elias and the environment in which he moved, as well as the joy of movement, developed and deepened side by side. In addition to providing an example of the engaging force of joy, the emergence and development of Elias's desire to bike provide an example of the enlivening, multifaceted and changing character of joy of movement (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010; Spinoza, 2011).

Fluctuations of Joy

The forms and intensities of joy varied across situations, environments and individuals and over time. One example of different forms of joy was Tobias's comparison of scoring in football and playing a 'fun' game:

Tobias: [...] You are happy there, and then when you score, and afterwards you have forgotten it.

The first author: ... Mm, but in a game, you think it lasts a bit longer, the enjoyment.

Tobias: Yeah, like if you do a fun thing, do it for a long time, it is fun all the time.

Tobias described two different kinds of joy: a short and intense joy that follows scoring in football and the long-lasting joy of playing a game that one likes. The joy of scoring further relates to success, achievement and acknowledgement, while the joy of playing a game one likes concerns doing something for its own sake either alone or with others. Just as the mode of a body can vary in accordance with other bodies that affect it, the mode of joy here varies in accordance with children, objects and features that affect each other when joy emerges (Spinoza, 2011).

Another example of multiple forms of joy is playing a game one knows well. As a conversation between Petter and Edvard illustrates, this form of joy relates to learning and may take time to emerge:

Petter: For example, capture the flag, first time I tried it—

Edvard: It was boring.

Petter: It was a little boring, yes, but then it gets more and more fun, but yes, and when we have tried it many times it gets, it has become really fun.

Daniel: Yes, but we knew, we didn't know what was allowed and what was not allowed.

Petter: Mm.

Daniel: ... And if we get to know it better, then it gets like...

Petter, Edvard and Daniel's experience of a specific movement activity transformed from boring to fun over time. Significantly, the boys became familiar with it. In the beginning, they did not know how to play the game, and they experienced few opportunities to become involved in it. After repeated rounds, they learned what was allowed, and they started to see and use opportunities. Joy of movement grew alongside experience, increased understanding and capacity to play the game. Similarly, Spinoza (2011) reasoned that a body's capacity to affect and to be affected tends to improve as one acquires more experience. A body's capacity to relate to other bodies in varying ways increases, allowing a wider range of ideas as well as ways to act and engage. In a movement context, more nuanced and variable relationships and interactions between a child and the environment become possible. The child's capacity to notice opportunities and to respond in expedient ways increases. Variation, opportunities to choose and feeling able are all features that children often associate with liking or enjoying movement. However, variations, freedom, feelings of ability and the joy of movement are not always apparent. Just as joy of movement could emerge and grow more intense, it could also fade or stay latent.

The latent Joy of Movement

Although the children talked about movement as 'fun', they experienced some activities as boring. Boring activities were often static and monotonous, such as sit-ups, push-ups and relay races. Thea explained:

I think it becomes a little bit boring if we have relay races and stuff like that, 'cause I feel we just run back and forth and nothing new happens. [...] Everyone has to do the same, it gets a little bit boring.

A relay race did not surprise Thea, and she experienced few alternative ways to engage in the activity. Instructions and rules defined how one was supposed to move. The same was true of sit-ups and push-ups, which are further meant to be performed in a standardised and technically correct way. According to Spinoza (2011), instructions and rules as well as norms and standards diminish a body's capacity to act or to live in accordance with one's own nature. The instructions, rules, norms and standards take precedence in an encounter between children and activities such as sit-ups, push-ups and relay races. Children have few opportunities to bring their own uniqueness into the encounter and to contribute to how the activity emerges and develops. They easily become objects of the rules, and their positions as acting subjects disappear. On this topic, Elias described his experiences with moving in PE:

I don't really feel like doing this anymore, but I have to [...] I don't want to do that, but I have to because it is PE [...] It was actually a bit boring to do it, it is decided how to do it correctly. [...] We couldn't do as we wanted to, we did what we were supposed to, we couldn't do it differently, we had to do it exactly as it is supposed to be done.

In Elias's case, it was the learning environment in PE that was restricting. Elias emphasised that the way he and his classmates were supposed to move was predefined and that there was little room for individual variations and choice. Similarly, Spinoza (2011) related passions to enslavement, in which one blindly follows an internal or external force. A school institution is traditionally hierarchical, and children are expected to follow teachers' instructions and orders, as Elias's quote indicates. In comparison to being attracted to moving, Elias moved

because he felt that he had to. He did not follow his own desire but a passive force, and he was only faintly engaged.

Elias's example, as well as the examples with sit-ups, push-ups and relay races, are all related to moving in school. Even though children emphasised that they found these activities boring, they still described PE, PAE lessons and PA breaks as fun. The activities and learning environment may have limited and diminished children's desire to take part in and opportunities to experience joy of movement, but even when doing 'boring' activities, joy was not totally absent; it was faint or latent. Joy lived in children's hopes as a promise of what could occur. The joy (or lack of it) was not inherent in movement or in any movement activity or environment. It was a matter of interactions among children, the ways they moved and the situations and environments in which they moved. Joy of movement emerged when the movement and/or movement environment was inviting and when children became attracted and engaged. The more intense and nuanced the relationships and interactions were, the more intense was the joy that emerged. When any of these elements was weak or absent, the joy diminished.

Discussion

Our findings show that children experience joy of movement in varying situations and forms. The analysis reflects how joy of movement is invigorating, gathering and engaging. Joy brings along confidence, courage and feelings of capacity, togetherness and belongingness. In addition, the joy of movement emerges, grows, fades and stays latent, as well as how its intensity fluctuates across situations, environments and individuals and over time. Movement involves a promise of 'fun' or enjoyment and is appealing to children per se. The findings

extend the knowledge base of what joy of movement is and provides a basis to discuss what joy means for children, and how to identify and facilitate joy of movement in PE.

The invigorating force of joy aligns with Winther's (2014) notions of energy and traction as well as Stevens's (2017) observations of a child's joy in her/his own movement capabilities and how joy of movement contributes to one's ability to flourish in life. We related the joy of movement to openness and the courage to encounter new situations and to engage and experience oneself, other people and the world. According to Spinoza (2011), openness to otherness and participation are necessary qualities for learning to know oneself, others and the world adequately. As such, joy of movement contributes to personal growth and involves a potential for social learning.

Within social aspects of life, acceptance, acknowledgement and togetherness are pleasant and can contribute to making moving meaningful, while exclusion and rejection cause discomfort and eventually withdrawal (Beni et al., 2017). These notions align with the intertwining of joy and feelings of togetherness. Like Winther (2014), we argue that joy of movement brings children together. In addition, the intertwining of joy and togetherness indicates that facilitating joy of movement can simultaneously facilitate togetherness and vice versa. To facilitate joy of movement and socially safe and encouraging movement environments are interrelated. A socially safe and encouraging movement environment provides children with opportunities to share experiences of joy together with others and to enjoy feelings of moving together with others. Vice versa, joy encourages social interactions and engagement, which further contribute to emergence of socially safe and encouraging environment. Joy is shared in glances and closeness, and it passes among children as well as between children and the environment. Hence, we argue that observing and encouraging small gestures, such as smiles and helping children to involve each other, are an essential aspect of teaching in PE.

In addition, we showed how joy of movement emerges in personally meaningful environments and how joy of movement and a personal interest in a situation or activity intertwine. The engaging force of joy is interesting in relation to the discovery of personal meaning and developing identities (Kretchmar, 2006). Connectedness to one's environment provides feelings of belonging somewhere. In addition, experiencing personally meaningful movement, such as biking down a bumpy road in a special place and developing an interest in continued engagement, relate movement to questions about who one is and what one likes and dislikes. Such experiences and considerations are important for children's psychological well-being and capacity to handle difficulties and challenges, which are further fundamental qualities that both equip children for life and facilitate learning (Ringereide & Thorkildsen, 2019). The engaging force of joy has educational potential.

We have related the educational value of joy of movement to invigorating, gathering and engaging forces of joy, which all are characterised by close relationships between the moving child, other children, the activity and/or the movement environment. However, it is rather recreation and superficial forms of joy such as fun that characterise PE (Kretchmar, 2006; Nyberg & Larsson, 2014). Thus, there is a need to discuss whether joy of movement always has educational value and how different forms for joy relate to specific educational aims. Our findings indicate that the educational value of joy is bound to specific situations and holistic movement experiences. One example is the interrelatedness of the gathering force of joy and socially safe movement environments. Another example is how boys' experience of the game capture the flag changed from boring to fun as they learned to see and use opportunities within the specific activity frame. Joy of movement was interrelated with learning or the increasing feeling of capability and freedom to choose and vary one's own movements. We argue that the situational and relational aspects of joy of movement should be considered when legitimating joy in an educational context.

The situational and relational aspects of joy are essential when facilitating joy, as well.

Stevens' (2017) and Pringle's (2009) studies have shown that joy is not equally available for all children. They stress the meaning of social norms and traditions that favour some children over others. Stevens and Pringle encourage teachers to be critical of their own attitudes and values. Our findings indicate that learning and familiarity with an activity, as in the example of capture the flag, are other essential factors. That example further shows that learning to play a game and achieving a closer and more nuanced relationship to it is possible within the frames of PE. One way to achieve such closer and nuanced relationship is to create opportunities for children to play the game on repeated occasions and to be aware of the opportunities children themselves experience. The examples of 'boring' activities indicate a need to choose activities which invite children to move in varying ways and involve an element of unpredictability. The contrast between biking downhill for one's own interest and moving in ways a teacher has instructed, meanwhile, indicates a need to consider children's opportunities to contribute to the learning environment in PE and to choose their own ways of moving. Further, the examples where joy of movement spreads among children and into the atmosphere indicate a need to encourage interactions between children and to teach children to take each other into account.

However, joy of movement cannot be predicted or guaranteed. While dodgeball and capture the flag are examples of activities which involve an element of unpredictability, where children can choose their own ways of moving and where children move together, it is not given that all children in every situation experience them as joyful. Some children find such complex activities rather confusing, and some children withdraw or fail to establish a connection with their classmates, whether the activity facilitates interactions or not (Ingulfsvann, 2018). Facilitating joy of movement requires physical educators to know the children they work with and to help them relate to activities and interact with one another.

From an affect theoretical perspective, knowing, forming and fostering relationships further requires physical educators to engage; to take part in the events and environments, and to interact with children continuously.

Conclusions

We have explored when and where children experience movement as enjoyable and elaborated on the children's descriptions and our observations to 'unpack' 'joy of movement'. In addition, we have discussed the meaning of joy of movement in PE and pedagogical implications of our findings. We conclude that joy of movement emerges when the movement environment is inviting and when children becomes attracted and engaged in the environment, the activity and/or one another. The joy of movement is both a pleasant state to which children are attracted and a force that provides them with confidence and the courage to engage in new environments, situations and interactions with others. The central contribution from analysing children's descriptions of enjoyable movement experiences from an affect theoretical perspective is the insight into the intertwining of children, movement and environments and how joy emerges in varying forms, as well as how it fluctuates and fades. To consider situational and relational aspects of joy of movement is important both when legitimating the educational value of movement and when facilitating joy of movement in PE. The joy of movement is related to children's well-being, their capacity to handle difficulties and challenges in life, and to experience personal growth and social learning. Both variation and opportunities to repeat and to learn to know movement activities in depth facilitate joy of movement. Our analyses show that it is important that children are offered opportunities to choose and to contribute the creation of the movement environment in PE. Another dimension of facilitating joy of movement is encouraging interactions and teaching children how to involve each other.

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