Included yet Excluded?
Conditions for Inclusive Teaching in Physical Education and Health

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Where the road ends, the adventure begins.”

This slogan was invented during my early days in Borgafjäll. Beyond the trodden paths, one could experience unexpected, new, or exciting situations. This was also the case with the dissertation process. This road has finally come to an end. After more than four years of the exciting, tumultuous, and inspiring but also frustratingly arduous trek toward the end of the road, new challenges will emerge. During an academic life’s journey like this there have of course been many people involved and to whom I am deeply grateful to.

First, I would like to thank my beloved family. Thank you Karin, Ludvig, and Wilma for all your understanding, always being there, and helping me “off work.” Thanks also to my fantastic parents, Anita and Lage, for your generous support, and to all the kind and supportive relatives and friends who have been part of my life during the years of my journey.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Simon Wolming and Staffan Karp, for assisting and guiding me through this process. Special thanks to my main supervisor, Staffan, who patiently and professionally read all of my drafts carefully, induced my reflexive thinking, and made invaluable contributions to the work. I also want to mention Professor Jan Wright for her professional help in co-writing, publishing, and being supportive far beyond her obligations as a guest professor in our department. My second reader, Suzanne Lundvall, also deserves attention for her reading and valuable feedback on my work.

This trip would never have started without Kim Wickman and Eva Olofsson, who initially pushed me and talked me into this journey. There have been many colleagues and staff who deserve particular credit for their help during this particular journey. Kent Löfgren for assisting, supervising, and cooperating in the KULIG teacher development program and Helena Hellgren, Johan Lundberg, and Maria Liljeholm Bång for assisting me as co-observers during classroom observations. Thanks also to Seppo Salonen and Ulrika Sahlén for helping me with all the technical support and Ann-Marie Smeds for helping me with all the practical details. Thanks also to all members of the seminar groups who have read and commented on various drafts of my articles. Finally, I would like to thank the school actors, especially the teachers and pupils who contributed to my studies and shared their experiences with me.

Peter Åström

Röbäck, August 2013
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Abstract

This dissertation has examined the conditions for teachers who teach Physical Education and Health (PEH) in elementary school (age 11-12) and their opportunities to pursue inclusive teaching with the aim of reaching all pupils. The compilation thesis consists of four different articles and provides knowledge from the perspectives of pupils and teachers, but it also includes teaching and learning processes that were studied *in situ*. The first article contributes to knowledge on how different related variables affect learning motivation and how cultural aspects influence and affect shaping patterns of attitudes, beliefs, and values shared by pupils. Based on and selected from the sample of the first study, the second article examines low-motivated pupils’ perceptions about learning in the subject and their representations of teaching, learning and participating in PEH. The third article takes the teacher’s perspective into account and examines teachers’ discursive representations of low motivated pupils and related beliefs regarding inclusive teaching and strategies for reaching all pupils. The last article presents a case study examining teaching and learning in PEH in situ and demonstrating how a teacher’s assumptions about the purpose of PEH and consequent interactions with a student assumed to be “low motivated” had effects that were detrimental to the student’s confidence and capacity to engage and learn in PEH. The general major findings and the suggested implications of the results have been discussed and organized from the two major dichotomies involved in the two fundamental inclusive perspectives: a *categorical perspective* (problems are sited within individuals) and a *relational perspective* (perceived problems occur in the interaction between an individual and the surrounding environment). Applying a categorical perspective, pupils categorized as “low motivated” toward learning in PEH experienced little opportunity to influence either content or form and also had difficulties in verbalizing the aim and purpose of the subject. Despite long-term health-related goals, they had difficulties understanding and connecting to PEH. The pupils also had difficulties connecting with their teachers, who were described as being insensitive, uncaring, or inflexible and forcing “unrealistic” goals on them when they did not feel competent at mastering the content relative to their peers. The studies confirm that learning motivation is strongly related to perceived competence, and low learning motivation is related to feelings of anxiety, especially for girls. Teachers, on the other hand, attributed motivation problems to the individual (the pupil) or the context (social background, parents, etc.) rather than the situation, their own teaching in class. Teachers had various strategies for teaching inclusively. Cooperative and collaborative methods,
such as using skilled pupils or pupils with the “right” attitude as role models for behavioral transfer or “strategic grouping,” were mentioned as inclusive teaching strategies. Adapting the rules of games or traditional sports so that everyone started on the same level was another strategy. By presenting a multi-activity approach to teaching with many different sports, pupils were assumed to be able to find “their” particular sports. Results also showed that the stereotyping of “low motivated” pupils often is related to the teacher’s own perception of what is experienced as essential learning in the subject. Applying a relational perspective, focus is on the system beyond the individual. Based on the results of these studies, the subject seems to be influenced and guided by two logics or discourses: fostering to sports and related values, and health and fitness. Both logics also highlight the importance of content and form in teaching. The sport discourse seems to create a situation where normative performance-oriented components have negative consequences for certain pupils. A general use of a multi-activity approach for structuring the content with short-term units, using primarily team sports and ball games, can be argued counterproductive for pupils, especially for those pupils who start at lower skill levels. This approach with fragmentary or blurred learning objectives may then contribute to disservice in a long-term perspective. This, combined with the effect of high activity and unilateral focus on exercise risks blurring of other possible learning dimensions in the subject, and may also contribute to the alienation of pupils who lack skill, ability, or interest in the subject. With inclusive intentions abilities in the subject may need to be reconceived and alternative abilities recognized to challenge the established order and normalized ways of thinking in terms of content and form. Teaching efforts that give primary consideration to the individual needs of “marginalized” pupils may be necessary if inclusive intentions are to be met. It is therefore suggested that teachers need to look beyond the traditionally trodden paths and challenge the currently dominating discourses that influence PEH. Reinforcing other learning dimensions and reconceiving abilities to go beyond the emphasis on skill and performance may strengthen pupils in other areas they possess. Differentiated teaching must not lose sight of needs that are common to a group or a class as a whole, but rather, it must also consider the needs of each individual.
Reprinted publications

This thesis consists of four articles. The articles were reprinted with the kind permission of each publisher and links as listed below.

Article I


Available from publisher’s website:


Article II


Article III


Available from publisher’s website:

http://www.ejss.ch/content_vol9_issue1+2.html

Article IV

Åström, P., & Wright, J. (Submitted). Running away from learning.
Introduction

The Great Wall of China
As a parent, I am following my child’s class during a school day, and this includes witnessing a lesson in physical education and health (PEH). My son, Ludvig, has told me how thrilled he is about a new game they should have the chance to play today.

The children in the third grade are waiting in the locker room with high expectations and can barely wait for the lesson to start. Today, they will play the Great Wall of China. The teacher opens the door to the gym. All of the children run into the open space like small whirlwinds. Within minutes, just before the lesson begins, there are children playing around, climbing and hanging onto the wall bars, hula-hooping, chasing one another, and jumping on one or two legs. Only a couple of kids are standing immovably, discussing something seemingly important. Suddenly, they stop talking and get a hula hoop, which they roll between each other.

Is there an innate desire to move around and to play at a young age? If so, why do the inherent desire and joy of movement fade away for some children the older they get? These questions flash through my mind. I know that for a majority of children, PEH seems to remain enjoyable and is considered to be the most popular subject in school, but on the other hand, for a minority, it seems to create feelings of inadequacy, discomfort, and anxiety; as a result, low motivation toward the subject of PEH. I recall numerous examples of individuals expressing memories from PEH well into adulthood. Feelings of anxiety and traumatic memories appear to fade away very slowly.

The teacher blows the whistle and the spontaneous activities stop. “And hang back all the hula hoops,” the teacher urges. The children quickly sit down on invisible dots (apparently organized before every lesson) in four straight lines, probably so that the teacher can quickly check whether anyone is missing as well as gain control without battling disturbances among the children. It strikes me how disciplined this group seems to be. “Today we will play the Great Wall of China”, the teacher continues. All of the children seem to have their eyes wide open, excited to hear about the game. Apparently, none of the children have played the game before. The teacher explains that the “Great Wall” is symbolized by the long gray carpet that will be rolled out in the middle of the gym. The “wall” divides the gym into two halves. Some of the children will be placed at regular intervals on the wall as guards, and they are only allowed to move on the gray carpet. Almost everyone wants to act as a guard, but the teacher calms everyone down by saying that everyone will get a chance to act as a guard—later. The rest of the children are divided into pairs, with one treasure trove (hula hoop) made available per pair. All of the
pairs are then spread out over one side of the two halves of the gym. Treasures (bean bags) are placed on the floor on the other side of the wall. The task is to get to the other side of the Great Wall without being caught by the guards, to collect a treasure, and then to get back over the wall again without being caught. The children must keep putting treasures in their own treasure troves until all of the treasures are collected. After the teacher explains the rules, the game begins, and the intensive activity starts. Children are running back and forth across the wall, alternating in each pair. The attempts to avoid being tagged, to distract the guards by doing body feints, to sneak behind the guards’ backs, and to distract the guards with parallel or triple simultaneous attacks without being tagged seem to make the activity meaningful.

A pupil who gets tagged by a guard on the wall must run back without a treasure and switch places with his or her partner. Happiness is obvious when a child manages to trick a guard to get a bean bag and places it in his or her treasure trove. Everyone involved seems to embrace the excitement that the game generates. Bean bags run out after a while, and the game ends. The children are thrilled and excited. What a great game this was! However, in a moment, the game’s focus will change, which will be a crucial turning point in understanding the game’s purpose and will guide the pupils toward the game’s implicit learning objectives. The teacher’s first comment to the children after the game was succinct: “How many treasures did you get?” The children, who until now have apparently not even bothered about how many bean bags they have collected, begin to count their treasures: “We’ve got six of them,” one pupil shouts; “We received the most. … We’ve got nine,” another pupil says. The teacher replies with a short comment: “Oh, that’s good; with that many, you seem to have won.” Then, the bean bags are moved to the other side of the wall, new guards will get their chance, and the game will start all over again.

After the break, the game’s focus seems to have changed drastically. Various forms of cheating arise: someone takes two bean bags in one attempt, another refuses to accept being tagged and fails to leave his bean bag behind. The teacher tries to mediate a fair game and emphasizes moral behavior: “Roland, what would it look like if everyone took two bean bags?” A couple of children are now expressing clear disappointment toward their partners who “fail” to get bean bags. Overall, the children now seem to be more stressed in their attempts to collect more treasures than before; some continuously compare their own number of beanbags with those of the other pairs. One of the girls, Sara, puts herself on the floor and refuses to participate anymore: “This is so boring. The boys are cheating all the time,” she quietly comments to me and refuses to participate for the rest of the lesson. The teacher tries to get Sara into the game again but fails in her
attempts. Afterward, the teacher even comments on Sara’s behavior to me: “This is typical Sara; she is usually not motivated.”

After the lesson, a series of questions was raised for me. Looking at the learning objectives, for example, what type of learning was planned, and how could the setup from the teacher be understood? Was one of the objectives to arrange a competitive situation so that a discussion about fair play could be initiated, or was the competitive element used to create a more intense game and to get the children more physically active? Learning how to cooperate and to improve a variety of coordinative and perceptual skills could have been other possible learning objectives. At first glance, the “harmless” question of “how many treasures did you get?” after the game indicated that a single comment can have an extremely high impact on pupils’ experiences and behaviors. The teacher’s attention to comparing the numbers of bean bags directed focus to comparisons and to the goal of outperforming others, and the game became one of winning or losing. One can, of course, argue whether an isolated comment such as this actually reflects the true teaching/learning objectives that the teacher had in mind, but nevertheless, this observation clearly shows the strong impact that a short statement from the teacher can have.

The teacher’s comment about Sara popped into my mind. Not motivated toward the subject? How could the teacher tell that Sara was not motivated? According to Sara, boys and girls act and behave differently, which reminded me of the processes of gender embedded in the subject. The episode also clearly illuminated the effect that different comments from the teacher can have, directing attention to certain learning objectives that may affect pupils’ perceptions of an activity. From a long-term perspective, experiences and feelings from situations such as this are most likely to affect and to shape pupils’ attitudes, thus resulting in various conceptions of and motivations toward the subject.

**Motivation for Teaching/Learning in Physical Education and Health**

Contemporary ideas of PEH in school can be considered as reflecting the educational needs of each society. Throughout Europe and in most of the westernized countries of the world, despite some differences, the subject and its syllabus and has many similarities. In addition to focusing on motor skills, fitness and health education, the development of life skills, such as self-perception and socioemotional skills, have increasingly been emphasized in the curricula of Western Europe, with the sociocultural context co-determining how the syllabus is worked out and applied (Liukkonen, Auweele, Vereijken, Alfermann & Theodorakis, 2007). In general, one could say the goals of contemporary PEH go beyond more restricted and traditional conceptions of the body, physical training, and
movement education to an even broader and newer conception of personality education (e.g., promoting healthy lifestyles and life-long interest) through movement and exercise. The Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE) emphasizes the function of promoting conditions for life-long learning in school (SNAE, 2011). Pupils should experience motivation, self-efficacy, and positive attitudes toward education and learning, assuming individual responsibility for their own educative processes, with a special responsibility existing for those students who, for various reasons, have difficulty with achieving their goals (SNAE, 1999, 2011); this is also the case with PEH.

Promoting physically active lifestyles and education in, through, and about movement, to use Arnold’s (1988, 1999) vocabulary, is therefore also inevitable, directing the focus to human behavior and mechanisms of behavior change. Behavioral change is partly related to individual psychological mechanisms (but is also affected, of course, by the surrounding context). From an individual perspective, motivation for learning in PEH can be viewed as a dynamic process, and interaction among a person’s characteristics, performances, skills, experiences, expectations, and evaluation of self is closely related to self-concept in achievement situations. Different motivation theories have been developed trying to explain motivation in qualitative or quantitative terms. Arguing for an all-embracing theory that covers all aspects will be impossible. Rather, one can see different motivation theories as generative in order to gain an understanding of the complexity of human motivation in social settings. Different approaches to motivation have been of particular interest to researchers in the fields of sports and physical activity due to the general belief that changes in motivation affect both performance and participation in sports and physical activity. Motivational concerns have also been high on the agenda in society in relation to individuals’ potential present and future health-related behaviors (Biddle, Sallis & Cavill, 1998) as well as in understanding motivation in the context of physical education (see e.g., Duda, 2001; Duda & Hall, 2001; Liukkonen et al., 2007). This concern is for example also reflected in a report from the Swedish National Institute of Public Health (2005). From an educational perspective, motivational aspects are central components in the teaching/learning process, with implications for the pedagogic interactions that take place in school PEH.

To study teaching, learning and related motivation processes PEH, compared with many other subjects in school, can be regarded as somewhat different. It can be argued that these processes in PEH are of a more practical and embodied nature, therefore many researchers claim that studies of these processes is not only an individual affair within people’s minds (see e.g., Quennerstedt, Öhman & Öhman, 2011). Accordingly, it would be more relevant to study learning in PEH if scholars considers
addressing both practical and cognitive factors as well as taking sociocultural factors into account, affecting the formation of the subject and the individuals involved in the processes. Studies of teaching/learning processes, how content is formed and constituted discursively within communicative (and embodied) processes can be considered as central in this context, and this incorporates studies of motivation and meaning-making processes.

In order to understand teaching/learning and motivational processes comprehensively, it can be argued that it is necessary to approach them from different angles. This includes the knowledge that the pupil should learn, the content with its underlying context, and the pupils’ and teachers’ perspectives with their related beliefs, but it also incorporates the actual teaching/learning processes in situ. Meckbach (2006) and Annerstedt (2007) consider didactic research in Sweden in the area of PEH to be fastidious even though some discernible progress has been made during the 21st century. Valuable contributions to the didactic research field have been made by the KIS project (the acronym for gender, sports, and school), which studies the construction of gender and perceptions of the body in PEH, and the SIH project (the acronym for school, sports, and health), a larger longitudinal study that focuses on children’s physical capacities/health statuses as well as the importance of surrounding factors, with the school subject PEH in this context being of central importance (see for example Larsson, Fagrell & Redelius, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011; Larsson & Redelius, 2004). A thesis by Ekberg (2009) compares the intentions in the PEH syllabus with the intentions of teachers and actual practice. Öhman (2007) analyzes lessons from a Foucault perspective, showing how pupils (and bodies) are disciplined through the subject of PEH. Teachers’ perceptions of the relation between PEH and voluntary sports were examined by Londos (2010). However, Engström (2010) states that didactic research in PEH with a focus on the actual teaching/learning processes over time has been neglected.

The Swedish school system since the middle of the 20th century has had a vision of organizing a compulsory school based on equitable and inclusive ideologies, a school accessible for all pupils (SNAE, 2005a). Intentions such as “create a permanent interest in physical activity for all pupils” (SNAE, 2000, p. 22), “education should be tailored to each student’s abilities and needs” (SNAE, 1994, p. 4), and “teaching should create opportunities for all pupils, throughout their schooling, to continuously participate in physical activities in school and help pupils to develop a sound self-image of the body and confidence in their own physical abilities” (SNAE, 2011, p. 51), all of which were expressed in the two latest curriculum reforms, exemplify this.

Despite the fact that many pupils have positive attitudes toward PEH, it is also clear that not all pupils appreciate the subject (Bräkenhielm, 2008;
Lundvall & Meckbach, 2008; Redelius, 2004; SNAE, 2005b). Those pupils often experience negative feelings, develop negative self-esteem, and learn helplessness, which result in strategies for avoiding participation or even absence and truancy (Jerlinder, 2009; Redelius, 2004). In that sense, the inclusive ideologies seem to fail. Investigations about different factors and dimensions that affect pupils’ learning experiences and motivations as well as pupils’ and teachers’ related beliefs to and about the subject are therefore of interest and will be the focus of this thesis.
The Scope of the Study

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore and to capture conditions for teachers of PEH and their opportunities to pursue inclusive pedagogies and teach with the aim of reaching all pupils. This thesis will accomplish this by focusing on perspectives of individuals (pupils) those of teachers as well as by studying the actual teaching/learning processes in the classroom in a multidimensional way. Through these methods, a deeper and more nuanced understanding can be reached of the teaching and learning processes in PEH with the intention of reaching all pupils. The thesis consists of four sub-studies (articles) that aim to investigate this issue.

The first article aims to investigate how different related variables affect learning motivation, considering cultural factors that shape patterns of attitudes, beliefs, and values shared by individuals in a broader sense. The first study should be seen as mapping the area of learning motivation and indicating areas of interest for future research.

Two major questions based on and selected from the sample of the first study were addressed for the second article: What are low-motivation pupils’ perceptions about learning in PEH, and what are their reasons for distancing themselves from participating in the subject? What other representations about teaching/learning in PEH can be found in the statements from these pupils?

In order to gain the teacher’s perspective, the third article addresses the following questions: What beliefs do teachers hold regarding general aims and important learning objectives for the subject, and what implications do these beliefs have for how they conduct their teaching, considering the overarching ideology of inclusion and reaching all pupils?

The last article presents a case study that focuses on the complex teacher-pupil interaction in situ. The research interest that guides the study was to examine in detail, on a micro level, the conditions and actions taken in relation to the life-worlds of a pupil perceived as being low motivated toward learning in PEH.

Outlining the Thesis

With research questions that focus on exploring and capturing conditions for teachers’ opportunities to pursue inclusive pedagogies and teaching, I will first present a theoretical framework for studying teaching/learning and for positioning my articles. This will be followed by a section on the central components involved in the teaching/learning process that form the conceptions of the subject as contextualized in Sweden. The next section will
be a background and summary of the articles, followed by a discussion with implications for practice including some concluding thoughts and future directions for teaching. In the end, the articles will be presented in full.
Theoretical Framework

Studying Teaching/Learning—A General Framework
Focus on the understandings of the actual teaching and learning processes as well as consideration of the teacher’s and the individual’s perspectives can be regarded as central, having an ambition of capturing conditions for teachers’ opportunities for reaching all pupils. These processes can be described and illustrated in many different ways. In this dissertation, I will use a transactional model (Huitt, 1995) for describing and illustrating the great complexity of factors involved in the teaching and learning processes. The model gives an overview of different dimensions and will serve as a foundation for placing my dissertation and the articles into the field of teaching/learning.

Figure 1. A Transactional Model of the Teaching/Learning Processes in PEH. Adapted and Modified to PEH Conditions from Huitt (1995).
The model is based on how reasons for action and behavior can be understood, explained, and classified by four different dimensions. The first dimension refers to the surrounding context with social, historical, cultural, and global factors outside of the classroom that influence teaching and learning. The second dimension refers to input, where characteristics or qualities of pupils and teachers are brought to the classroom situation. A third dimension, classroom processes, refers to actual teacher and pupil behavior in the classroom and other factors, such as the classroom climate and teacher/pupil relationships. The fourth dimension, output, is considered to be the actual learning outcomes where measures of pupil learning are taken apart from the deliberate instructional process. The forthcoming articles included in this compilation thesis will mainly focus on studying aspects of the dimensions of input and the actual classroom processes.

Inclusive Teaching—Different Perspectives as Analytic Lenses
In education, inclusion is a general concern and is a mantra in legislation, policy, and programming worldwide (Haycock & Smith, 2010; Rioux, 2010), but there still remain debate and discussion between practitioners and scholars over what constitutes effective inclusion practice (Ainscow, 2007; Vickerman, 2002; Vickerman & Coates, 2009). Ainscow (1998, p. 34) does not describe fluidity of the term “inclusion” as a summative or measurable entity; rather, the author describes it as “grand” and “elusive” and as enabling diversity through the transformation of different practices.

Dealing with inclusive education, two fundamental and almost contradictory societal perspectives can be outlined as the dominating paradigms (Haug, 1998). The first perspective treats deviation from the group primarily as an individual phenomenon. This means that the problem is to be found within the individual, which involves applying a compensatory participatory perspective. With the compensatory perspective, as the name suggests, an approach is needed that compensates the pupil for his or her difficulties. Educational issues will then focus on compensation or on adjusting for perceived individual problems as well as on giving solutions for overcoming these barriers. The other perspective, a democracy-oriented perspective, is more in line with the intentions linked to the democratic ideologies of “a school for all” and all pupils’ rights to be involved in learning activities, where pupils are facing problems with their surrounding conditions, and where these problems are placed for the societal level (conditions in schools and society as a whole) to solve. According to this account, inclusion is a process that is engaged through changes to various dimensions of a school’s structure and practices. Haug (1998) describes this
view as “systems pathological” due to the notion that the problem is created in the school system rather than being found in the individual.

In a similar way, Emanuelsson, Persson, and Rosenqvist (2001) present two perspectives, a categorical and a relational perspective. Embracing a categorical perspective, problems in situations (that arise in education for example) are reduced to the effects of individual deviation and differences. A problem is cited in the categorized individual, who is seen as the carrier of his or her problems. With relational perspective, on the other hand, perceived problems occur in the interaction between a pupil and the surrounding environment (Emanuelsson et al., 2001; Nilholm, 2005). The problem’s solution will then be found and located in the surrounding environment.

A weakness or risk of the perspectives reported above is that they can be said to lack the ability to weave together aspects of different levels. When a problem is treated unilaterally, this might conceal key aspects in the pedagogical interaction. The risk then is that the complexity is reduced, and other crucial aspects will be hidden or placed in the shade. Another risk is that the described perspectives show a muted interest in the actual practice and in the ongoing teaching/learning processes.

In this thesis, the categorical- and the relational perspective will both be used as analytic lenses for which the results in the articles can be interpreted and understood. To overcome the potential risk of overlooking actual practice, this thesis will also examine teaching/learning processes in situ.

**Who Are the Pupils at Risk?**

A possible way to meet the conditions of inclusive ideologies in teaching is to identify certain target groups for whom PEH seems to fail. One clearly defined target group—pupils who are categorized with physical disabilities—has been scrutinized by Jerlinder (2010), who shows that teachers were positive about integration if the demands of adequate training in inclusive education, strategies, a supportive school environment, and personal resources were met. This type of integration with defined or formally labeled target groups was connected with resources in order to be more successful. Jerlinder (2010) highlights a paradox related to the inclusion of this group. The group has to be considered as excluded in order to gain resources, but on the other hand, diversity among pupils in a group should be seen as the normal situation. Being viewed as “different” or regarded as being excluded may have negative consequences for pupils’ self-esteem and social integration as well as induce unnecessary discrimination, but on the other hand, a categorization is crucial for gaining necessary resources, according to teachers (Jerlinder, 2010).
PEH is also considered to play an extra important role in paying inclusive attention to other pupils besides this (important) identified group. This attention can be seen in relation to societal beliefs about certain target groups or pupils at risk. The result from a meta-study of individually related barriers (Jenkinson & Benson, 2010) showed that descriptions of pupils’ lack of engagement, expressed dislike of activity, lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and low fitness levels, as well as interpersonal generic attributes such as laziness, will, and attitude, are common and have retained interest in international research. Labeling and descriptions of categories of pupils at risk are also inevitable, directing the focus to dimensions of normalcy and deviation. However, those pupils lack the necessary resources connected thereto. Which pupils are the target groups for teaching, which pupils are considered to be normal, and which pupils are considered to be deviating or at risk? Looking back at the contextual dimension that affects the teaching and learning processes in the transactional model (figure 1), there are several agents and different forums that exercise influence, producing and reproducing views about the subject and its role/function in the Swedish school system. This will to some extent also affect the way teachers (and others) think about, talk about, and perceive the subject as well as perceive their pupils.

With a retrospective look, different categories and the labeling of pupils at risk for not being included in the teaching/learning situation can be found in larger evaluations, guidelines, policy documents, and research connected with the subject. For example, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, in its political plan of action, identified future core development areas where the school subject needs to consider the needs of certain pupils at risk: “The school subject PEH needs to be developed and quality assured; in particular the preferences and needs for children showing low levels of physical exercise as well as the gender perspective has to be considered” (Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2005, p. 198). Organized sports activities also seem to exert great influence over the subject. Not only have a vast majority of PEH teachers been involved in organized sports, but 70% of all children between 7 and 13 years of age are also involved in organized sports (Swedish Sports Confederation, 2011). The current content of PEH seems to strongly favor pupils who are already active in voluntary sports, especially if they are involved in team sports and ball games, a predominant focus in PEH (Londos, 2010). Pupils who are not involved in voluntary sports can therefore, in general, be seen as disfavored due to much of the current PEH class form and content and thus be categorized as pupils at risk.

Also, moral characteristics with bearing on values borrowed from mainly male competitive sport logics addresses certain types of pupils. Going back to the mid-19th century and the process of democratization, the subject was
an important tool in creating gender and in distinguishing activities where certain characteristics were oriented to boys and girls, respectively (Lundqvist Wanneberg, 2004). Emphasizing certain attributes and exercises for the male body in the areas of strength and agility continued to emphasize physiological differences between boys and girls as well as to develop strong bodies, but it also developed strong characters—male characters. As education in the subject was separated, the female content was focused on more aesthetic expressions in the forms of dance and gymnastics. However, with a society aiming to increase equality, co-education was implemented in school reform in 1980 (Lgr80). Yet again, it seems that the girls’ interests were overshadowed by the boys’ and the male norm. A strong, fit body—and pupils who direct their best efforts in that direction—was desirable, and the health aspects of the subject were guided by biomedical recommendations and research that claimed the need for physical exercise to avoid creating inactive pupils who were at risk due to their “sedentary” lifestyles. Conversation about the role and importance of the subject was dominated by physiological arguments.

Applying a historical gender theoretical perspective, Carli (2004) and the Swedish National Institute of Public Health (2005) have shown that the subject has been and continues to be an arena that is far from gender neutral. After the introduction of co-education in the subject, for example, girls’ average grades were reduced (Carli, 2004). Comparisons of segregated education and co-education in terms of grading also exemplifies this (see e.g., Redelius, 2007; Redelius, 2009). Carli (2004) argues that co-education reform made girls’ “traditional” subject content disappear. Thus, elements of the female subject culture have been neglected, and the male culture—with its base in competitive sports—has taken over and become the “parent ideology” in the subject.

Other guiding contemporary research initiated by The Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) (SNAE, 2005b, 2010a, 2010b; SSI, 2010, 2012) and evaluative studies (Bråkenhielm, 2008; Larsson & Redelius, 2004; Lundvall & Meckbach, 2008; Meckbach & Lundvall, 2008) consider the subject to be gendered. Boys overall have more positive attitudes toward the subject and are more actively engaged during PEH. Twice as many girls experience decreased self-confidence or view their own bodies less positively, and girls more often have feelings of being “clumsy and bad” accompanied by feelings of anxiety and insecurity due to participation in PEH (SNAE, 2010a). Lesson content that is chosen and influenced by “male norms and interests,” including skill-related performance, seems to reward boys, while low-performing girls (and low performing boys) from this perspective can be considered to be a group that is at risk (Redelius, 2009).
Quality in Teaching
Dealing with inclusive intentions also draws attention to quality aspects of teaching. Quality will be attached to different meanings, as it can be viewed differently in various educational contexts. Bernstein (1977) terms three message systems of schooling as central and inter-related dimensions in teaching: curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment—systems that can be involved and used in discussions about quality and quality teaching. Without considering the pedagogy or the insights into pedagogical expressions and the enactment of the curriculum, no meaningful judgments about quality can be made (Penney, Brooker, Hay & Gillespie, 2009). In quality and quality teaching, teachers’ “pedagogic actions” need to consider some basic fundamental concepts: the relationships among the teacher, the classroom, the view of learning, and the view of pedagogy (Penney et al., 2009). These concepts simultaneously embrace and inform rationale, curriculum design, teaching, and learning in and of physical education, and pedagogy and pedagogic action in relation to this can even be seen as missing ingredients in the development of PEH internationally (Penney et al., 2009). From a pupil’s perspective, content and curriculum outcomes can never be considered independently from pedagogy. According to Penney (2013), there is a need for a pedagogic approach that helps to make learning more important and meaningful to all pupils if inclusive intentions are to be met. Conceptualizations of ability in the subject (see Evans, 2004; Larsson & Quennerstedt, 2012; Wright & Burrows, 1996) need to be broadened and discussed so that more pupils feel both “able and enabled” in and by PEH in schools (Penney, 2013).

Looking specifically at assessment, Macdonald and Brooker (1997) state that a challenge for PEH exists in developing an assessment that is characterized by applied, relevant, and substantial tasks (ongoing and regular) and that draws on a broad disciplinary base. But at the same time, the assessment should be pupil centered and authentic from a learner perspective. Assessment practices should be inclusive, reliable, and valid without being de-contextualized, product-oriented, focusing on isolated skills or fitness components, or limited to specific tests or time limitations (Penney et al., 2009). Assessments therefore need to be made by teachers across different learning periods or segments and require that teachers reference pupils’ performances against criteria or standards that are explicit, well-articulated, understood, and internalized (Hay, 2006). Providing pupils with opportunities to set and to assess learning goals as well as to reflect on personal growth and performance is therefore a key element in quality programs where pedagogy is considered the prime consideration for planning and programming (Pill, 2004). Building on Pills’ ideas, Penney et al. (2009) contend that quality from a pedagogical perspective requires:
choice of pedagogic approach that supports the pursuit of learning outcomes and reflects identified learning needs;

- learning, teaching, and assessment to be viewed as integrated;
- learning and assessment tasks that are authentic from a learner perspective and inclusive of individual learning needs and interests; and
- development of pedagogy that draws on research and wider professional communities.

To summarize Bernstein’s (1977) three message systems and to quote Penney et al. (2009): “How one teaches is therefore inseparable from what one teaches, from what and how one assesses and from how one learns” (p. 431). Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment can be regarded as key features in quality teaching and as a collective dynamic that is inseparable from the knowledge structures of physical education (Penney, 2013).

Understandings of quality in PEH and perceptions about pupils can be acknowledged and framed by many factors, including teachers’ beliefs and values. The following sections will critically engage with some of these beliefs and values and their influences upon professional practice.

**Teacher Beliefs, Expectations, and Teaching Styles**

The teacher’s role as one of the inevitable cornerstones in the triadic relationship involving the teacher, the pupil, and the subject matter will be the focus of this section. Teacher beliefs, attention paid to teachers’ thoughts and actions, and how these affect teaching (and teacher education) are considered to be central to research on teaching (Borko & Putnam, 1996). The beliefs teachers hold form their thinking and expectations but also form their behaviors; the way they think about teaching, how they teach and think about the subject, and, ultimately, how they present and choose the subject content. Teachers’ beliefs can be inferred from actions or statements, and in order to understand teaching from teachers’ perspectives, it is necessary to examine the beliefs that define their work (Nespor, 1987). Many scholars suggest that there is a need to shift focus from pedagogical strategies and teaching behaviors to studying the beliefs that prompt teachers to use these strategies and behaviors (see e.g., Calderhead, 1996; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Pajares, 1992; Richardsson, 1996; Tsangaridou, 2006, 2008). One could say that the beliefs teachers hold serve as the foundation that continuously governs their actions, influences their strategies, and plays an important part in the judgments, understandings, and interpretations they make every day.

A large body of research on beliefs is directed at teacher effectiveness. As such, process-product studies have been conducted in which the behavior of the teacher constitutes the process and the student learning outcome is
treated as the product that is valued and assessed by researchers (Tsangaridou, 2006). Capturing teachers’ own voices and personal accounts of what constitutes effective teaching is rarer. McCullick (2001) has explored perspectives of experienced teachers that are related to important values, knowledge, and skills required for teaching. Those findings suggest, from a teacher’s perspective, that teachers should have a love for physical activity, children, and people and be physically fit and flexible. Teacher beliefs in another study show that one of the most attainable outcomes, “having fun,” often seems to have substituted skill development: “Despite their desire and efforts to promote lifetime involvement in physical activity, it was most often fun that was highlighted, rather than any attention to skill and challenge” (O’Reilly, Tompkins & Gallant, 2001, p. 220).

In a study about beliefs about subject matter and exploring everyday “philosophies” by Green (2000), enjoyment was a prominent goal of all teachers in the study. Teachers’ ideologies related to sport, health, education for leisure, and “sport for all” were other major considerations for teachers. The study also showed that contradictions were common features of their views, and one conclusion indicated that “teachers’ ‘philosophies’ appeared more like justificatory ideologies that served to vindicate teachers’ own preferred conceptions of PE” and teachers’ philosophies can only be fully understood when teachers are located in the figurations they form with each other—as inescapably interdependent people and PE teachers seems to be a group of professionals with similar habituses at the personal level” (Green, 2000, p. 124). Other scholars also conform to the notion that due to positive experiences in sports and with their prior PE teachers or coaches, their understanding of what it means to be a PE teacher is rooted in those experiences (Stroot, 1996). Studies also show that teachers’ belief systems are well established and that new experiences have to pass the screen of their earlier belief systems, where accepted practices are those that complement earlier belief systems, while they ignore practices that do not fit there (Doolittle, Dodds & Placek, 1993). In Sweden, similar findings are made by Lundvall and Meckbach (2004) and Larsson (2009), who show that teachers and pre-service teachers almost exclusively have backgrounds in sports, and many of them are still actively training or competing and/or are coaching in voluntary sports. According to Green (2000) teachers’ philosophies “bore clear hallmarks of their prior sporting practice and PE and their respectively contemporaneous practical teaching context” (p. 127). A Swedish longitudinal study of pre-service teachers conforms with that notion (Larsson, 2009), and looking at the transformation of teachers’ belief systems, teachers’ largely normative views of their subject are transmitted by teachers to future teachers, while the latter are pupils who are experiencing school PEH. Teachers’ belief systems seem to be hard to change.
Another part of teachers’ belief system relates to research on teacher expectations. Emerging from a famous study from more than four decades ago, Rosenthal and Jakobson (1968) show a relationship between differential teachers’ expectations and pupils’ self-fulfilling prophecies. This was followed by numerous other classroom studies that examine this relationship. Research on classroom interaction patterns associated with differential expectations states that the pupils for whom teachers have low expectations are taught less effectively than “high expectation” pupils. They receive less praise for successful performance and more criticism for incorrect responses and receive inadequate feedback in terms of quantity, accuracy, and specificity. In general they also receive fewer learning opportunities, receive learning content “diluted,” and teachers tend to place fewer demands overall but maybe most important fewer positive non-verbal communications of warmth and personal regard (Proctor, 1984, p. 123).

Expectations placed on pupils and the ways they are labeled or identified in the group can result in negative or positive effects on how they manage in school. Low expectations were also found to be related to groups with minority and low socioeconomic statuses as well as low achievement (Brophy & Good, 1974). Teachers’ misinterpretations may be internalized by pupils who look, act, or learn differently from their peers. As a result of this, self-fulfilling behaviors are ingrained in pupils (Obiakor, 1999). Other studies show that apart from having low expectations, teachers also tend to be less forgiving, to be less empathic, and to show a lack of concern for low-skilled, non-athletic pupils and pupils with disengaged behavior. Some researchers argue that PEH teachers choose the profession due to their positive passion for sports, a passion fueled by sports values and experiences from competitive successes and team spirit supported by parents, coaches, and like-minded friends (Fox, 1988; Gard, 2006; Larsson, 2009). As a result, the profession can be viewed as: “a profession that talks and teaches to itself” (Gard, 2006, p. 2).

Apart from teachers’ beliefs and expectations, the impact of teaching style is central a factor within the classroom processes that affects teachers’ ways of transferring planned learning outcomes. If guided by inclusive ideologies and the intention to reach all pupils, the choice of teaching style may be especially important. According to Byra (2006), the need for teachers to adapt and to use a variety of styles stems from the fact that pupils are individually very different, and the subject involves various learning objectives, including psychomotor, cognitive, and social domains. In addition, certain subject matters and contexts are also more suitable to specific approaches (Byra, 2006). Traditionally, teachers are the main decision makers in schools, and this may be especially true when considering PEH. Teachers usually demonstrate and select exercises and games to be performed, and the pupils follow the teachers and imitate teachers’
demonstrated activities and tasks (Kirk, 2010). According to Mosston and Ashworth (2002), this kind of teacher-centered instructional approach would be at the far end of a spectrum of teaching styles, while a student-centered approach would be at the other end. Described as direct or command style, with possible roots/influences from German Turn gymnastics and Swedish Ling gymnastics, this emphasizes the idea of precision, drill repetition, and uniformity in learner performance that seem to have dominated the norm until the 1950s. There was hope that the sport education model could bring in something else with more collaboration- or problem-based approaches, but as Kirk (2010) argues, much of the content taught still seems to be taught from a teacher-centered approach. Since the 1950s, the Swedish school curricula have been based on equity and inclusive ideologies. As a result, greater attention has been paid to pupils' different ways of learning, their different cultural backgrounds, and their entering PEH with different levels of movement experience. An overall evolution of increased pupil influence and other teaching styles has been given attention. Peer teaching, stations in teaching, and teaching in small groups changed focus from conformity to increased individuality, which are in line with the rest of society (Byra, 2006). In student-centered teaching structures, more decisions are shared between the teacher and learner, moving the center of the process closer to the needs and involvement of the learner and thus supposedly resulting in a more inclusive PEH environment. At its best, inclusive pedagogies promote an equal opportunity for success and learning for all pupils (Hastie, 2003; Sidentop & Tannenhill, 2000). Transformation to more pupil-centered approaches, including student-centered decisions that promote multiple learning outcomes, seems to have an effect on inclusive intentions. However, while teacher-centered teaching structures have had a long and strong history (Van der Mars, 2006) and are deemed effective in promoting and developing student motor skill learning with significant student achievement gains in skill performance, researchers as well as PEH teachers have contested this unilateral view of the subject (Rink, 2002). PEH should not be limited in the psychomotor domains; rather, it should include cognitive-, social-, moral-, and health-related outcomes that will contribute as much, if not more, to student learning. According to Byra (2006), these multiple goal approaches require alternative teaching styles, where, for example, self-check, peer-teaching, discovery, problem-solving, cooperative, and collaborative styles are suggested.

**Individual Processes That Affect Learning in Achievement Situations**

As mentioned earlier, pupils’ lack of engagement, expressed dislike for activity, lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and other interpersonal barriers, such as laziness and low fitness levels, are frequently examined in
international research (Jenkinson & Benson, 2010). In theory, when applying an inclusive perspective, this research can also be assumed to guide actions at the institutional level (e.g., curriculum, schools) but also for teachers and their related beliefs in school. As indicated earlier, this can also be ambiguous when defining certain at-risk pupils. On the one hand, it will direct attention to concepts of intra-individual and inter-individual differences, but on the other hand, by addressing those problems, it defines and labels pupils according to certain categories (Jerlinder, 2010), often resulting in a search for certain features that address and identify pupils (Obiakor, 1999). This can be a risky business and needs to be considered. Information and assumptions made about one pupil in one setting may not apply in another setting, and even if an assumption is correct, it is not possible to generalize it to suit other pupils. What works for one teacher simply may not work for another in a different context (Obiakor, 1999). However, general research and understanding about theories of self-concept and motivation in achievement situations can direct attention to understanding the processes of inclusion/exclusion and the prerequisites and conditions that better apply to certain individuals.

The following section will give a short retrospective overview of some of the more influential approaches to self-concept, the fundamental psychological theories of motivation. It will include background on achievement motivation and need-achievement theories as a foundation for understanding the motivation theories used in this thesis (article 1 and 2).

Because self-concept is a considerable and substantial variable in human interactions, negative presumptions about self-concept fail to value their efforts to succeed in today's schools, whereas positive presumptions about self-concept among learners facilitate individual growth (Brooks, 1991; Osborne, 1996). An individual’s self-concept is viewed as self-perspective or self-identity, referring to an individual’s perception of self in various situations that form beliefs about the self (Obiakor, 1999). Self-concept has three components: self-knowledge (an individual’s understanding of his or her own characteristics); self-esteem (an individual’s self-valuation of those characteristics); and self-ideal (a willingness to expend efforts to achieve one’s goals). A pupil’s self-knowledge is linked to ongoing interactions in various situations and is closely linked with teacher expectations (but, of course, also those of peers), as mentioned earlier (Obiakor, 1999). It is therefore reasonable to believe that the ways in which pupils are identified and displayed and the expectations placed on them can negatively or positively influence how they succeed in school and in PEH.

Early motivation theories were based on humans’ striving for pleasure, welfare, and avoidance of pain, and they tried to explain all sorts of behaviors with more or less physiological explanations. Numerous instincts and impulses motivate people to behave, and they result in different actions,
with reward is considered an attractive object supplied as a consequence of a particular behavior. Cognition theories replaced behavioristic theories, also considering individuals’ thoughts and expectations of future events as important controlling factors that affect motivation. Heider’s (1958) attribution theory described how people come to explain (make attributions about) the behaviors of both others and themselves. According to this theory, an individual’s behavior is attributed to internal disposition (e.g., personality traits), or external situations (e.g., external pressures, social norms), and individuals seem to attribute success or failure to either external or internal factors. In relation to school PEH, pupils with low self-esteem subscribe failure more often to internal factors—they themselves.

McClelland (1961) and Atkinson (1957) seek to explain how motivation is affected by an individual’s desire to achieve success or to avoid failure, and McClelland (1961) proposes the needs for achievement (e.g., different competences), authority/power, and affiliation as essential determinants that all people share to varying degrees and that affect people’s motivation to achieve. Similar needs are also a foundation in basic need theory (BNT), later proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which proposes that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are basic human needs that interact to influence an individual’s motivation.

Different approaches to achievement have been conceptualized in accordance with one another. According to Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot (1997), achievement goals can affect the way a person performs a task and represent the desire to show competence. Achievement motives include the need for achievement and the fear of failure. These are the more predominant motives that direct our behaviors toward positive and negative outcomes.

Many theorists have utilized a social-cognitive achievement goal approach in accounting for individuals who are striving for competence. Three types of achievement goals are suggested by Elliot & McGregor (1999); performance-approach goal, performance-avoidance goal, and mastery goal. A performance-approach goal is focused on attaining competence relative to others, a performance-avoidance goal is focused on avoiding incompetence relative to others, and a mastery goal is focused on the development of competence itself and of task and mastery goals (Elliot & McGregor, 1999). Achievement motives can be seen as direct predictors of achievement-relevant circumstances. When skills and competences performed in PEH are very visible and are exposed, compared with most other subjects, different strategies of avoidance are reasonable among pupils who perceive low competence relative to others.

Motivational climate and goal setting are generally said to be either task/mastery- or ego/performance-oriented depending on how the individual perceives and interprets the structure of the achievement
environment (Duda & Hall, 2001). Task-involvement activity more often results in challenging attributions and increasing effort (typically in activities that provide an opportunity to learn and to develop competence) than ego-involvement activity does. Intrinsic motivation, which is defined as striving to engage in activity because of self-satisfaction, is more prevalent when a person is engaged in task-involved activities. When people are more ego-involved, they tend to take on different conceptions of their abilities, where differences in ability limit the effectiveness of effort (Duda & Hall, 2001). Ego-involved individuals are driven to succeed by outperforming others, and their feelings of success depend on maintaining self-worth and avoiding failure. On the other hand, task-involved individuals tend to adopt their conceptions of ability as learning through applied effort (Butler, 1999). A body of research claims that a task-oriented climate is preferable not only because it stimulates intrinsic motivation but also because of its link to participation in and conditions for long-term health-related behavior (Lioukkonen et al., 2007).

Harter (1985) is more domain-specific proposing his competence-motivation theory where skills in a particular area are especially important in areas deemed important by the individual. Bandura (1986, 1994) also emphasizes confidence and self-esteem connected to a person’s own ability as important and develops the concept of situation-specific self-esteem: self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be described as an individual’s perception of his or her own performance on different tasks throughout life, and it varies depending on the situation. Because the subject content can be very domain-specific and therefore varies, so does pupils’ self-efficacy depending on the situation. The way pupils feel about themselves in relation to a certain task determines how many of their abilities they will use to succeed at that task. A pupil who is motivated feels accomplished through appropriately designed tasks. Positive feedback from peers and teachers develops a “self-efficacy feeling” that will encourage better performance (Bandura, 1994). Biddle and Brooke (1992) distinguish between internal/autonomous and external/social achievement motivation as different forces that act at the individual level. The autonomous achievement motivation is based on the individual’s inner experience of success, while social achievement motivation is driven by external rewards and appreciation from others, where different types of feedback from the teacher can be assumed to be powerful for different processes. Individuals will be able to learn as much as they feel that they can learn. Earlier mentioned research on differential teachers’ expectations (Proctor, 1984) also shows the importance and impact of teachers.

The widely accepted self-determination theory (SDT) states that a person’s will to determine what is important is crucial, and the theory offers a model for understanding the interplay between the extrinsic forces that act on individuals and their intrinsic motives and needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985,
SDT describes motivation in terms of more qualitative measures rather than quantitative ones, and it claims to give a different approach to motivation, seeing motivation as a unitary concept that targets the individual’s motivation related to his or her development and personality in a certain social context.

In relation to the focus on teaching inclusively and on reaching all pupils, Deci and Ryan (2000) use the term “amotivation” to refer to the absence of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation among individuals, that is, where there is a lack of will to attend an activity with the target behavior. For example, amotivated pupils in PEH would be those pupils who do not seem to have a specific purpose and who do not demonstrate the intent to engage in activities that they feel are not worth the effort required. For teachers, similar behavior can be assumed to be closely related to stereotyping beliefs about certain pupils. Amotivation has been referred to as “learned helplessness,” where the individual withdraws effort due to earlier experiences and perceptions of incompetence and loss of control (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vallerand & Bisonette, 1992). For amotivated pupils, involvement in PEH is not a result of their will, desires, and interests; rather, it can reflect the obligation to participate but lack defined goals related to their own perceptions.
Central Components for Teaching/Learning—A Swedish Context

In the forthcoming section, a brief historical retrospective of the evolution of the curricula and conceptions of the school subject in Sweden will be presented.

With no intention of dismissing earlier history, this overview will begin in the middle of the last century. In the middle of the century, there was a clear paradigm shift between “gymnastics” and “sports” and ideologies of a more equal society pervade the school reforms of 1962 (Lgr62) and 1969 (Lgr69). These school reforms were underpinned by equitable and inclusive ideologies to support a “school for all” (Hedenborg och Kvarnström, 2006). The strong era and dominance of Ling gymnastics was challenged in the subject and gradually replaced by different forms of less formalized activities, collective sports, and games used to better motivate and mediate physical training (Annerstedt, Peitersen & Rönholt, 2001). Different sports and “looser” forms of sport activities became the dominating movement practice in schools (Annerstedt, 2001). In the middle of the 20th century, the subject was embossed by a physiological discourse with strong influences from biomedical and physiological (mainly aerobic) research traditions (Annerstedt, Peitersen, & Rönholt, 2001; Öhman, 2007; Quennerstedt, 2006; Quennerstedt & Öhman, 2007, 2008; Swartling-Wiederström, 2005).

In the curriculum reform of 1980 (LGR80), the subject changed its name to idrott [sports] from the former gymnastik [gymnastics], and co-education was implemented. The subject should contribute to pupils’ physical, psychological, social, and aesthetic development but also to the learning of different sports. In the next reform of 1994 (LPO94), the health benefits of sport-related activities were emphasized even more when the subject changed its name again to today’s name: idrott och hälsa [sports and health]. According to Lundvall and Meckbach (2003), these name changes are evidence of significant shifts in the character, content, and goals of the subject. The current name (idrott och hälsa) can be regarded as equivalent to PEH and as the wider definition for the subject, although the educational part of the word is not explicitly expressed in the Swedish sense (which one could argue is a problem, considering the educational value and learning in the subject). In the 1994 syllabi, the concept of health refers to different

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1 The term idrott can be understood as a wider definition, where physical activity is carried out with the purpose of promoting health, recreation, competition, and aesthetic experiences, whereas the Swedish term “sports” usually refers to activities connected with the sports movement (Olofsson, 2007; Quennerstedt & Öhman, 2008).
Included yet Excluded?

aspects of bodily movement, exercise, nutrition, outdoor life, physical and mental health, and social well-being. “Health” could be understood not only as a healthy lifestyle with fitness related outcomes, but also considered to be more holistic where the perspective of health is not a state or an outcome, rather considered as a process and a resource, a salutogenic approach (Quennnerstedt, 2006).

This additional health perspective, including the psychological and social dimensions of health, is open to various interpretations of the syllabus by the teachers (Annerstedt, 2005). Even if results in this thesis are based on the situation before the latest reform 2011 (Lgr11), a slight change to the health concept in the latest reform might be worth mentioning, as more emphasis has been placed on the physical dimensions of health. During the past 25 years, the overall Swedish school system has not only undergone major reforms in terms of the name change but also the change from a norm-referenced system to a criterion-referenced system, where pupils’ achievements should be assessed in relation to criteria or goals established in advance (Annerstedt, 2007). Since the mid-20th century, PEH and the curricula in other subjects have moved from detailed descriptions of the content toward less prescriptive formulations that state goals and objectives to reach (Annerstedt, 2007).

Until 2011, it has, however, been argued that the actual learning objectives in the subject are not concrete enough, and there seems to be a discrepancy or a gap between what the curriculum stipulates and what actually goes on in the teaching practice. According to teachers and students in research by Larsson and Redelius (2008), Annerstedt (2008), and Ekberg (2009), there is today no consensus on what knowledge is worth communicating, what the learning objectives are, and what the core of the subject should be.

Following debates of what is actually going on and looking at teaching/learning, it is maybe no surprise that a picture that is not so streamlined and rather is diverse can be viewed with multiple goals expressed according to both teachers and pupils. Several other Swedish studies also state that it is far from clear, for teachers and/or pupils, what the subject should aim for and what children are supposed to learn (see e.g., Annerstedt, 2007, 2009; Quennerstedt, 2006; Redelius, Fagrell & Larsson, 2009; SNAE, 2005b). Using Linde’s (2006) three arenas of curricular transfer in the analysis, there is, according to Ekberg (2009), a clear mismatch between the formulation arena (syllabus) and the arenas between transformation (teacher interpretation) to realization (actual teaching).

Maybe the historical lack of a consensus and interdisciplinary challenge to define learning goals and objectives that last over time also have led to questioning the subject as well as descriptions of a subject that is in crisis and that is considered to be lower in the hierarchy among school subjects
(Lundvall & Meckbach, 2008). As examples, the classification as a practical-esthetical subject in relation to other “knowledge subjects” and the fact that pupils until 2010 could deduct their grades in PEH if the subject lowered their overall merit ratings, or that PEH teachers historically have had more extensive teaching hours compared with other teacher groups, illustrate this (SNAE, 2010a). Studies of content analysis in Sweden (see e.g., Larsson & Redelius, 2008; Sandahl, 2004; Sandahl, 2005) and inspections made by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI, 2010) show that different forms of conventional sport activities, team sports, and ball games characterize and tend to dominate the subject. In some cases, this has led to situations where as much as 70 percent of the subject content taught includes games and sports, predominantly team sports and ball games (SNAE, 2010a), with the language of the subject heavily loaded with competitive sport connotations (Larsson & Redelius, 2008).

Besides the school subject, today’s school system in Sweden is also generally more sport-profiled than ever before, according to Olofsson (2007). A recent survey from elementary schools (Eliasson, Ferry & Olofsson, 2012) show that one of four schools offers school sports profiles besides PEH. This extra time for the “pupil’s option” has been set aside in the Education Act for each pupil to deepen his/her studies in an optional subject, which can be used for sport training. There are mainly two kinds of sport profiles in schools—one in which schools offer training in a wide range of physical activities and sports (sport-for-all approach), and one in which schools offer training in individually-selected sports. The two are equally common, and an estimated one in eight pupils participates in the activities (Eliasson, Ferry & Olofsson, 2012). The sport-profiled phenomena of team sports, for example, represent nearly 75 percent of the cases chosen. At the same time, a trend of increasing polarization between children who are heavily engaged and physically active in voluntary sports and children who are inactive—essentially, standing outside of the sport movement and not participating in physical activity during their leisure time—can be discerned (Engström, 2005; Eriksson et. al., 2003).

A society’s values concerning what sport is about and the meaning of the concept of sport in school can be assumed to “rub off” on parents, teachers, and pupils. Most teachers and a vast majority of pupils participate in sports and are likely to be embossed with logics from dominant sports and sport values from contexts outside of school, which many studies show (see e.g., Ekberg, 2009; Larson, 2009; Londos, 2010). According to Londos (2010), both teachers’ and pupils’ experiences with sport contexts may therefore be assumed to have influenced the actual subject substantially. Through Linde’s (2006) definitions, PEH can be referred to as a non-paradigmatic subject and, as such, different agents with competing perceptions about the fundamental concepts as well as the actual educational content. Drawing on
 Bernstein’s vocabulary (1971, 2003), the subject in Sweden (and elsewhere) can be characterized as having loose boundaries and weak framing and classification with an identity of the subject that is far from clear. Still, today, there is an ongoing debate about what PEH should aim for, what the core of the subject should be, and what skills, competences, or abilities should be developed. Critical voices could say that the wide frames of possible interpretations have left PEH and its teachers in a situation where it is hard or even impossible to share perspectives and reach a consensus in aiming for mutual goals.

This framework and contextualized background will function as a foundation for which the results in the articles can be both understood and problematized. In the next section, a background of the articles and extended summaries will follow.
Background and Summaries of the Articles

The first study was initiated by a Swedish-Japanese joint project with Nagoya University that started 2006. The project was the starting point in doing inquiries, studying the relationship between motivation variables, and teaching/learning among pupils (Swedish population n=573). The exchange led to initial interest in a diagnostic instrument, the Achievement Motivation in Physical Education Test (AMPET), developed by Nishida (2003) using the tenets of achievement motivation (Nicolls, 1984) and need achievement theory (McClelland 1961; McClelland, 1987; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark & Lowell, 1953). The instrument measures motivation in a multi-dimensional and comprehensive fashion and focuses on how different related variables affect learning motivation, also considering cultural aspects as shaping patterns of attitudes, beliefs, and values shared by individuals. The cross-culture study in this thesis will function as an example illuminating if and how differences in values, roles, and environment affect motivation in PEH programs and how this can be attributed to cultural differences.

When the results were interpreted, a need for deeper knowledge was required in order to add greater understanding from a pupil perspective, especially from pupils who showed low motivation for learning in the subject. Interviews with pupils who showed the lowest scores on learning motivation, selected from the larger sample data from this study, complemented the individual perspective in the second article.

The teachers’ perspective was captured in the third article, moving the perspective from pupils to teachers. The teachers’ beliefs were examined through individual interviews and focus-group interviews with teachers who joined a one-year teacher development program.

The last study was inspired by an ethnographic-oriented approach and focused on studying practice in situ from a micro perspective. By following the ongoing interaction in the classroom and the conditions for teachers to pursue inclusive education, multiple sources of data were used for a more comprehensive understanding. Sociocultural and situated approaches were used to understand the conditions for learning, considering “low-motivated” pupils, in particular.
Selection of Empirical Material and Methods for Empirical Inquiry

- Mapping the Area—Understanding of the Pupil’s Learning Motivation

The first study was conducted in 2007 and had both exploratory and comparative intentions that aimed to get a broad picture of pupils’ learning motivation and related aspects. The study focused on how different variables are related to pupils’ learning motivation in PEH while also allowing for cross-cultural comparisons with Japan. AMPET was further developed into DLMPET by Nishida (2007) in order to also encompass preferences in learning behavior, factors hypothesized as supporting learning motivation, and other related topics. The instrument was then translated, adjusted, and adapted to conform to Swedish PEH conditions. Twenty-two different schools from a medium-sized municipality, ranging from small village schools to schools in the city center, were chosen with populations that corresponded to those in the Japanese community. The pupils were 1,562 Japanese fifth and sixth graders (776 boys and 786 girls) ranging from 10 to 12 years of age, as well as 573 Swedish fifth graders (306 boys and 267 girls) from 10 to 13 years of age.

- Perspectives of low motivated pupils scoring low on learning motivation in PEH

Based on the larger sample, pupils who scored the lowest on the learning motivating scales in the first study were selected in 2008, almost a year after the first study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted so as to capture the voices of seven of the informants, five girls and two boys. The interview guide was structured following recommendations by Kvale (1997), Gillham (2008), and Gratton and Jones (2004) in order to cover the two areas of learning motivation (e.g., perceived competence, value of subject, interest, anxiety, belief in one’s own improvement) and supporting factors (e.g., climate, teacher, peers, content) included in the DLMPET as well as an additional contextual section (e.g., interests outside of school, interest in sport activities, siblings’, and parents’ interests) but also allowing for the discussion of other topics as they emerged during the interviews without being constrained solely by the areas in the DLMPET.
• Gaining Teachers’ Perspectives

The results from the first two studies partly guided the third study aiming to capture teachers’ voices. During 2009–2010, a professional teacher development program was conducted, and data consisting of 14 individuals’ (11 men and three women) in-depth interviews, two focus-group interviews, and shorter interviews in connection with four teachers (three men and one woman) in 24 observed lessons was gathered and used with a threefold purpose. Firstly, this was done to capture individual beliefs in the in-depth interviews in order to get an overview of what the teachers consider important and valuable in the subject and, more specifically, their views on teaching difficulties; secondly, the goal was to use the focus-group interviews to examine the experienced teaching difficulties that they found relevant in their teaching; and thirdly, the aim was to have a shorter dialogue after observing real teaching situations in order to get a deeper understanding of teaching strategies and perceptions of what happened in practice.

• Participant Observation Case

Based on findings from the earlier studies, participant observation cases (see Smith, 1978) were conducted to examine teaching and learning in PEH in situ in a multi-comprehensive way. Four teachers (three men and one female) and their classes were followed during two semesters in 2009–2010. Ethnographic-inspired methods were used, particularly considering the situation of “low-motivation” pupils and the conditions for learning offered vis-à-vis this group. For a richer and deeper understanding of the teaching-learning interaction and the processes of inclusion and exclusion, data were collected through multiple sources in the form of field-notes from two independent observers, video- and audio recordings, and interviews with both teachers and pupils prior to and post the lessons. Two episodes from two of the 24 observed lessons were chosen in the article and will represent a single case. In those episodes, one pupil, who was perceived by her teacher as having “low motivation,” will illustrate some of the critical conditions for learning in PEH. The example will mirror how certain pupils are constructed due to teachers’ differential expectations and how the social context and the contemporary discourses of the subject affect the conditions for teachers’ opportunities to pursue inclusive teaching and equity.
Included yet Excluded?

Below, a short overview of the articles and the data collection is presented.

Table 2. Overview of the studies in the thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Year of data collection</th>
<th>Type of method</th>
<th>Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article I</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Swedish pupils (n=573) Japanese pupils (n=1562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article II</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Pupils (n=7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article III</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Interviews, Group interviews, Short dialogues</td>
<td>Teachers (n=14) Groups (n=2) Teachers (n=4, 6 lessons each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article IV</td>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>Observations, Interviews, Audio recordings</td>
<td>Classroom observations (n=24) Pupils (n=44) Teachers (n=24) Pupils (n=89)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical Considerations**

Procedures for collecting all participants’ approval and routines that guarantee confidentiality have been created because the studies contain data with video and audio recordings, interviews, and surveys of both teachers and children in school. The principal of each school gave consent to the research, and informational letters that requested consent were delivered to the children and parents (as the children were underage) and then collected by the teachers. All participants were free to terminate or to reject participation in any form and at any time without having to provide reasons for doing so. Steps for conducting the observational study, which includes video material and an additional application, following the guidelines from the Swedish Research Council, were provided to the ethical committee of Umeå University. The study was given approval in September 2009 from the ethical committee of Umeå University.

The teachers have been given approval to use the data collected as a source for contribution and presentation in forthcoming research articles. I conducted all of the interviews as well as the collecting and handling of the data in the survey and the observational study, and sometimes, I was accompanied with an assistant researcher. All data collection complies with the rules governing research on humans, as detailed in the Personal Data Act (PUL, 1998:204) and the Act on Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (SFS, 2003:460). All data in the survey as well as schools have been decoded in the analysis. Surveys, video and audio recordings, and transcripts from interviews are stored on separate hard drives in computers with password-protected access, or they are filed and stored in locked offices. In
the articles, information is decoded and treated with anonymity, and all names are fabricated. The information has been treated as confidential in line with the Secrecy Act (SFS, 1980:100) and the protection of privacy standard (SOU, 2007:22). The risks of empirical material that will lead to further negative consequences for the individual are expected to be minimal and are considered to fall outside of the factors of CODEX (rules and guidelines for research) with regard to the handling of so-called “extra-sensitive” information.

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Motivation to Learn in Physical Education: Japanese vs. Swedish School Children


Article I examines differences between Japanese and Swedish school children in learning motivation-related variables in physical education in secondary school. Results were discussed in relation to differences in the sport environment and culture of the two countries. Three questionnaires were used to evaluate the children’s learning motivation, factors for supporting the motivation to learn, and preferences of learning behavior. The questionnaires used were taken from a multidimensional and comprehensive test, DLMPET, which measures learning motivation. The instrument has its roots in achievement motivation theory, which is interpreted as the achievement of a goal that is valued in a given culture with a standard of excellence, and achievement tendency is assessed by the relative strength of the tendency to approach success and to avoid failure.

Regarding variables related to learning motivation, Swedish pupils scored their competence of motor ability and the value of learning in a significantly higher manner, whereas anxiety of failing or anxiety before the PEH lesson was lower than that of their Japanese counterparts. Results also indicate that Japanese boys and girls perceive the learning setting more analytically and with more ingenuity when they exercise, showing higher scores for learning strategy, whereas Swedish pupils seem to be more dependent on their teachers when it comes to how they learn. Girls in both countries are more diligent and perceive their own motoric competence and the value of learning in the subject to be lower in comparison to the boys. In general, both boys and girls who lack confidence in their own abilities were likely to become tense or worry about failure when performing in different exercises, and there is a strong relationship between low competence of motor skills and high anxiety while performing in front of others, especially among girls.
The second questionnaire, on factors assumed to support learning motivation, showed that Swedish pupils have stronger interest in PEH, have higher expectations for improvement, and perceive the class atmosphere more positively. They also feel that they receive guidance from teachers and support from their peers to a greater extent in relation to Japanese children. The teacher guidance and interest in the actual PEH class show the highest scores in relation to pupil’s learning motivation, and boys in both countries show higher scores regarding their physical health. Notably, pupils’ perceived physical health is relatively higher among the Japanese population.

Looking at findings from the third questionnaire on preferences in learning behavior, the results indicate that Swedish pupils prefer individual learning, and this tendency is stronger among boys in both countries. Swedish boys prefer a stronger group orientation than do Japanese boys, and girls in both countries favor group-oriented learning over individual learning. The Swedish pupils also prefer active exercise and competitive learning more than the Japanese pupils do, with the latter being less preferable among girls. This can be compared with the Japanese pupils, who perceive the learning setting more analytically and with more ingenuity when they exercise. Perhaps there is more focus dedicated toward reflective thinking about learning in the subject in Japan.

The results suggest that Swedish children participate more enthusiastically and also have more positive attitude toward PEH than the Japanese children do. Differences in the sport environments and cultural elements, such as beliefs and attitudes toward PEH as well as actual classroom experiences, are likely to explain the differences. The rate of participation in voluntary sports outside of the school for the Swedish group was almost 82 percent as compared to the merely 49 percent in the Japanese group and may be a crucial factor of importance. It can be hypothesized that positive feelings gained while participating in sports and exercises outside of school seem to generalize and transfer to the classroom setting, enhancing the Swedish children’s enjoyment of their PEH classes. On the other hand, it can also indicate how the subject is taught in the Swedish schools in general. The type of learning that takes place in a voluntary sport is also recognized and rewarded in PEH. Preferences in learning behavior indicate that Swedish boys and girls prefer active exercise and competition in PEH more than do Japanese children, and this tendency is also stronger among boys in both countries.

To summarize, two major cultural differences can be drawn from the study. The first is the assumption that the more positive view of the subject in Sweden overall can be attributed to the higher rate of participation in voluntary sport clubs. The second is the idea of the “the interdependent view of the self” versus “the independent view of the self” (Markus & Kitayama,
where the former stresses connectedness, social context, and relationships as culturally-formed norms, values, and beliefs become powerful in shaping individuals’ self-concept. This may explain the higher levels of anxiety and less individualistic features in the Japanese population. There is no doubt that the subject is gendered. If girls—who, to a larger extent, perceive feelings of anxiety and content to be less meaningful—prefer group-oriented learning versus competitive learning and underestimate their own capabilities, the voices, needs, and the interests of the girls must be considered even more. Results also indicate that competitive learning elements need to be used with care or be toned down, and opportunities for increased reflexivity should be orchestrated in the teaching practice. This will broaden the chance of pupils’ perceiving and understanding the learning objectives and for teachers to focus on orchestrate individual—as well as collaborative learning in the subject. The fact that Swedish boys, and in particular girls, consider their physical health to be lower than that of their Japanese counterparts encourages reflection on what messages the subject delivers to pupils. In terms of body constitution, teaching on the ideal body in PEH, for example, has the opportunity to allow pupils to reflect, critically illuminate, and discuss these and similar societal issues. Teaching with too strong of an “instrumental” health discourse and a dualistic view of the body can surely create feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, or distorted pictures of normalcy. The strong positive association between being involved in sports outside of school and having a high motivation for the subject surely has its drawbacks for pupils who are not involved or interested in sports. How can teaching be arranged to better address those pupils’ needs, and what role do current content and form play if the discourse of sports in the subject, to a large extent, is dominating? Using DLMPET or similar diagnostic instruments as a mapping tool on an individual basis may help teachers to address pupils’ different needs and preferences as well as help teachers in their orientations toward inclusive intentions.

Children’s Low Motivated towards Physical Education and Health—Voices and Reflections


Article II focuses on the pupils selected from scoring the lowest on learning motivation for PEH in the Swedish sample. Drawing on data from in-depth interviews with seven pupils (five girls and two boys), low motivation toward PEH (aged 11–12), the study aimed to give a voice to this small, yet important, group regarding their perceptions about learning in PEH; their reasons for not liking the subject; and their representations about learning
and participating in PEH. The results are interpreted and discussed in relation to contemporary PEH research and in relation to the tenets of the need achievement theory. The theory argues that the need for achievement, authority/power, and affiliation are essential features affecting pupils’ motivation. The results show that perceived competence is closely connected to the pupils’ motivation. If one is not “good” at something, it is often described as “boring and not fun.” Feelings of anxiety in performing in front of others were expressed by the children. The interviewed pupils feel they have limited possibilities to affect or influence actual lesson content and to be able to choose activities, and the teacher, to a large extent, is perceived as deciding/setting the agenda. Pupils in the study also have difficulties expressing the purpose of much of the content in the subject. Long-term health-related goals are expressed with some skepticism from a pupil’s perspective in the interviews. It seems that the health rationale for physical activity and exercise is not meaningful or appealing enough for motivation among the interviewed pupils. Teachers were described as not sensitive, not caring, or inflexible, seen as forcing “unrealistic” goals in many of the interviews. At times, the teacher even showed a bad temper in front of the class. The relationship with the teachers seems to be generally poor for these pupils.

The results from this study direct attention to some crucial aspects with implications for teaching. The experienced lack of power to influence or to affect the learning content, particularly for the pupils who are in a subordinate position, needs to be considered and dealt with. The emphasis on negative feelings and experiences that emerge from non-empathic teachers bear witness to the importance of building a “good” and trusting relationship with the pupils. This aspect cannot be underestimated and can almost be considered as a prerequisite for inclusive teaching. PEH and its form of a “transparent subject” have consequences when it comes to pupil achievement and competences. How can teachers stimulate pupils to feel more “able” and highlight abilities outside of “traditional” performance and sport? How, then, can abilities in the subject be re-conceived and alternative abilities be recognized that can challenge established order and the normalized ways of thinking in terms of content and form?
**Teachers’ Discursive Representations of Pupils “Low Motivated” for Physical Education and Health**


*Article III* draws on interviews, two focus-group discussions, and dialogues in a one-year teacher development program (2009–2010) with 14 PEH teachers (three women and 11 men). Teachers’ conceptions regarding problems with pupils who are disengaged or who have low motivation toward PEH and their discursive beliefs of the purpose of the subject are studied and analyzed in relation to contemporary research. The results show that the types of learning that teachers consider and find essential in PEH seem to create and favor certain pupils. Dominating discourses that include health and well-being, learning sports and a broad variety of motor skills, and the learning of moral and social values (closely related to those of voluntary sports) direct focus on teaching and, consequently, assessing, valuing, and judging certain pupil characteristics and behavior based on these discourses. By presenting a multi-activity smorgasbord with many different sports, pupils are assumed to find “their” particular sports to be or stay as active as possible (also in a life-long perspective), and to learn behaviors influenced by those in/from voluntary sports. Teachers express a variety of teaching strategies to practice inclusively when pupils are not performing on a certain level, not exercising enough, or not showing enough engagement by “doing their best.” This includes, for example, using adapted forms with alternative rules in games and sports. This way, the aspect of prior experiences will be less prominent, and differences in performances become blurred, according to the teachers. Teachers perceive it to be somewhat problematic to handle both those who want to participate and those who do not, as this requires a balancing act to design and to adapt learning conditions that suit the needs of the minority group when there is a majority for whom the present content seems to fit very well (with a domination of team sport and ball games). To overcome this, cooperative or collaborative methods like using skilled pupils or pupils with the “right attitudes” as role models, or strategic grouping is used as teaching strategies. The latter is due to the hypothesis that there will be a behavioral transfer to pupils of concern. A multi-activity approach to teaching seems to create a situation of fragmentary learning without enough depth, where focus is on exercise and high-intense activity. This may result in a lack of time for depth in teaching/learning, which can be at the expense of pupils who have not reached sufficient levels of motor skills. Norms and values from sport contexts outside school and the promotion of healthy lifestyles seem to affect teachers’ perceptions of important learning objectives and the purpose of the
subject, to a large extent. Pupils who are not involved in sports outside of school are likely to have low motivation and be disengaged toward PEH when the logic of PEH essentially equals the logic of sports with health-related, long-term goals as the only other option. Despite the different teaching strategies mentioned, teachers seem to see the problem as related to the individual level (the pupil) or the contextual level (social background, parents etc.) rather than the situational level—their own teaching in the class.

Running Away from Learning in Physical Education and Health


Article IV has used data selected from a one-year teacher development program during 2009–2010 in elementary school. One of the urgent themes during the program was a mutually experienced “problem” among the teachers regarding difficulties in teaching and how to deal with pupils who are considered to have low motivation towards learning in the subject. The article focuses on the complex teacher-pupil interaction in situ and studies what the conditions for learning are in PEH in relation to pupils whom the teachers perceive to have low motivation. The article seeks to demonstrate how a teacher’s assumptions about the purpose of PEH and consequent interactions with a student who is assumed to have low motivation have effects that are detrimental to the pupil’s confidence and capacity to engage and learn in PEH. Ethnographic methods were used, which allowed a micro-perspective on the ongoing interactions in the gym, capturing lived experiences of those involved. Multiple sources of data were gathered for a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomena in relation to ordinary lessons in PEH. Data were gathered from interviews of teachers and pupils, field notes, and video and audio recordings captured during 24 lesson observations. Selected episodes from two lessons for the same class, focusing on the interactions of one girl in particular, who was described by her teacher as being low motivated, are analyzed and presented in this article.

Results from these lessons suggest that the problem lies not so much with the motivational characteristics of individual pupils, but rather, what is needed are different ways of teaching, choosing, presenting, and negotiating the educational content. The current format of the subject seems to maintain non-equal conditions that are not adapted to individuals’ different abilities and interests. Teaching efforts that give primary consideration to the needs of “marginalized” pupils may be necessary if inclusive intentions are to be met. Those needs may not conform to the interest of the majority of the pupils.
Discussion and Implications for Practice

Claims and Perspectives
Starting by examining learning motivation as an important area of knowledge for teachers’ opportunities in reaching all pupils, the first study contributes to the understanding of pupils’ motivation on a general (group/population) as well as on an individual level. It also examined preferences in learning behavior and factors that are assumed to support learning motivation and other related areas (e.g., appreciation of other school subjects, participation in voluntary sports or other leisure activities, etc.). For a deepened knowledge and increased understanding of some of the factors in the transactional model of relevance for pursuing inclusive education, the interviews in the second study brought a deeper understanding of pupils’ perspectives. The third article captured teachers’ beliefs, and the fourth article focused on teaching/learning processes in situ. The general major findings and the suggested implications of the results will be discussed and organized from the two inclusive perspectives outlined earlier: a categorical perspective and a relational perspective.

A Categorical Perspective on Inclusive Teaching
Applying a categorical perspective, the findings from pupils’ individual learning motivation in the mapping study were useful in understanding individual needs as well as factors on a general level. One of the key findings, as the mapping study and the pupil interviews show, but that also visible during the classroom observations, were pupils’ disengagement when they fail to master or perceive that they are competent enough in different situations with related feelings of anxiety. Negative attention due to poor achievement is a central factor for teachers to handle. The results show the way pupils feel about themselves in relation to certain tasks or content seems to decide how much of their abilities they will use to succeed. Results from the in situ observations also show how negative presumptions of certain pupils also can reinforce the processes of exclusion, so pupils will fail to value their efforts in their succeeding in the subject. This supports the pioneering research from Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) showing that teachers’ differential expectations of pupils are working toward processes, similar to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Pupils in that study reacted the way their teacher expected them to do. However, when the last study indicates this relationship with negative consequences, these processes can work in a positive way as well. Individuals will be able to learn as much as they feel that they can learn, and teachers’ (and other pupils’) expectations are therefore an aspect of great importance.

In the mapping study, results showed how low perceived achievement and competence were related to low motivation. When self-concept is such a significant aspect in human interaction (and for PEH in particular due to the
transparency of the subject), efforts to eliminate or reduce the public situations, where normative- or performance-related bodily expressions are made visible and bring up comparisons, can be almost an prerequisite for inclusive teaching, especially at younger ages where self-concept is closely related to perceived competence.

Pupils with low self-esteem, as exemplified with Sabina in the case study, seem to subscribe failure more often to internal reasons—themselves. Reinforcing individual efforts with feedback (verbal and non-verbal) from teachers (and peers) can develop positive self-efficacy feelings that will encourage development and further involvement. However, when public comments from the teacher at the same time also are directing efforts in a “normative direction” (for example praising skills/performance), as is shown in the case study, this has to be handled with care. Comments and feedback that direct focus to giving information on improvement or reflective thinking on an individual basis, rather than general feedback in public can be preferable. Considering preferences of learning behavior, the first two studies illustrate the importance of downplaying the ego/performance-oriented teaching climate, in favor of task/mastery-oriented climate. Among the low-motivation pupils’ competition-oriented learning was the least preferred, whereas collaboration in group-oriented learning the most popular. The positive effects of fostering a task/mastery-orientated climate have since long been ascertained positive regarding intrinsic motivation and lifelong learning (Duda & Hall, 2001).

Directing attention to task/mastery-oriented and individually oriented development outcomes, where pupils feel accomplished through appropriately designed tasks, can be one way toward achieving this intention.

Drawing on the results from interviews with the teachers and observations, it was evident that teachers direct issues of inclusive teaching outside of their own teaching by placing the “problem” on either the individual (the pupil) or the contextual level (e.g., social background, parents). In that sense, teachers’ categorization or labeling of pupils will have consequences for teaching, as the results in the last study clearly show. Teachers’ use of strategic grouping and expectations of transfer from pupils who have the “right” attitude or are more experienced and skilled illustrate this “taken for granted” categorization as well. Findings from the pupil interviews also place focus on the significance of the pupil and teacher relationship. The experiences of non-emphatic and disapproving teachers who do not understand, and the “forcing activities” demonstrated in the pupil interviews, illuminate the importance of teachers’ empathic abilities. Efforts in teaching to create a permissive teaching climate where the teacher manages to create trust, in particular considering the needs and interest of these pupils, was highlighted in the teacher interviews. According to the teachers, this can almost be considered as a prerequisite to (or a method to) include these pupils in learning. To quote a well-known author:
"They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”  
(John Maxwell, American author)

The last study also illustrates how a teacher’s earlier expectations resulting in missed opportunities to see Sabina in a different role where she is being able to use her potential in full. With inclusive intentions, there is a challenge for teachers to enter the classroom unbiased before each lesson. The expressed lack of opportunity marginalized pupils has to affect and influence their situation may relate to teacher biases but also to the pupils’ subordinate position in the group. This places emphasis on the importance of considering the needs and interest of minority groups in particular and increasing their possibilities of communicating ideas and interests and of gaining more influence over content and form in the subject if inclusive intentions will be achieved.

A Relational Perspective on Inclusive Teaching

Applying a relational perspective when looking at the results, pupils are “in problems” with the current structure and format of PEH, rather than being considered as “having problems.” Analyzed through a relational perspective, the results show how some factors of importance in the contextual dimension interact with and affect the conditions for inclusive teaching. The findings from all four studies reflect a reality influenced by similar logics as those prevalent in organized sports, however applied and transformed to an “adapted” and “lighter” version. Nevertheless, looking at pupils’ attitudes in general, most pupils seem to appreciate the current format, as the mapping study clearly shows. A situation where most pupils and teachers are imbued by conceptions influenced from the sport movement outside school seems to create a situation where normative performance-oriented components are difficult to overlook, but as shown in the studies earlier, they also have negative consequences for certain pupils. This was obvious in the interviews with the teachers, but also visible when attending most of the classes. However, what else could be expected? It might be the case that most pupils and teachers prefer and may want to keep the present format because this is a form in which they have their own personal experiences and already have been attracted or attached to. Knowledge content and forms are inevitably tied to questions of what knowledge are recognized, communicated, and developed, and whose interest, needs, and abilities are acknowledged and addressed through contemporary PEH.

The results show that the subject routinely marginalizes and excludes pupils by positioning and denying access to certain types of knowledge, while other types of knowledge that they possess or may be able to develop beyond the boundaries of legitimate PEH are neglected. The teacher interviews and the observation studies show a general use of teacher-centered approaches in choosing, managing, and presenting the content in teaching. Some pupils have
Included yet Excluded?

problems finding the rationale behind the activities when lessons often are structured as short-term units using primarily different forms of team sport and ball games. If pupils do not understand the purpose of playing ball games, and also dislike team sports, they will, in many of the lessons show low-motivated behaviors, especially when values from sports are used explicitly in an effort to motivate and satisfy the majority. Lessons weakly linked to learning objectives in the curriculum will also be counter-productive, perhaps especially for pupils who start on lower skill levels with less experience from organized sports. One could argue that if certain levels of skills are required to experience an intrinsic dimension of fun, for example, applying a smorgasbord of activities with fragmentary and/or diffuse learning objectives may then be a disservice in a long-term learning perspective. In this sense, choice of content, teachers’ ability to use more collaborative teaching styles, and teachers’ ability to verbalize and emphasize learning objectives as shown in the studies are central issues in the efforts to pursue inclusive education.

Despite the fact that there is a fair amount of flexibility in the curriculum for alternative organizational frameworks that could privilege alternative ways, the findings point towards a teacher-centered multi-activity approach strongly influenced by sport resulting in shallow segmented learning and pedagogy. This type of approach can also be criticized for not promoting in-depth or cumulative learning to produce long-lasting learning outcomes (see e.g., Kirk, 2010; Penney, 2013). Jess (2011) claims that a multi-activity curriculum model and its structure are even limiting the expression of new possible discourses. Even if the structures of a curriculum have symbolic and social meaning attached and also a vital function and control to it (Bernstein, 1996), results from this study conform to Penney’s (2013) findings that current practices, subject content, and form play a key role in defining influence on contemporary thinking in PEH.

The results also show the effect of the physical dimension within the health and fitness-related discourse. Efforts and comments were frequently used during the lessons to get the pupils as active as possible, even if other goals (if at all) were pronounced by the teacher before the lesson. However, when health is interpreted and reduced to mainly exercise orientations, as some of the observations indicate, this also has consequences for how pupils will be constructed. The effect of high activity and unilateral focus on exercise risks is the blurring of other possible learning dimensions in the subject, and this may also contribute to the alienation of pupils who lack the skills, abilities, or the interest thereof. In that sense, there is a paradoxical situation where a society’s intention that aims for physical exercise and activity for all pupils, especially considering the group of “low-active” pupils realized in the teaching, in general seems to set an implicit standard of physiological outcomes that overarches other possible learning dimensions. One could even argue that instrumental health-related goals could be counterproductive in relation to the goal of reaching all pupils by blaming those who do not exercise enough. In practice,
there seems to be little room and space for alternative learning dimensions in the subject.

Drawing on Penney’s (2009) recommendations for quality teaching results in this dissertation show a need for continued efforts to pursue a pedagogic approach that supports or makes learning outcomes more visible, where individual learning needs are reflected. The integration of learning, teaching, and assessment also needs to be further developed in practice. In the age groups studied for this thesis, assessment tasks connected to reflective teaching and learning (opportunities for reflection) were in general weak, if there were any. The pursuit of finding authentic learning- and assessment tasks that are also inclusive, considering the individual learning needs and interests in relation to the group, remains.

Concluding Thoughts and Future Directions
This dissertation aimed to increase the understanding of the conditions affecting teachers and their opportunities to pursue inclusive education. Referring back to the transactional model (Fig. 1), there are a variety of factors and dimensions that affect teaching. There are, of course, other frame factors, such as time, class size, facilities, or other sociocultural models/factors, that also could have been used as filters or given explanatory value to some of the results. In this sense, it would be naïve to claim the dissertation as fully comprehensive.

The results have been discussed and contextualized from various factors and dimensions in the transactional model. Considering both the pupils’ perspectives and the teachers’ perspectives as well as studying the actual classroom processes and ongoing interactions in the classroom, also taking social and cultural dimensions into account, this dissertation has mirrored a complex and multifaceted reality and has hopefully thereby contributed to a more diverse, deepened, and nuanced understanding of what is going on in the practice of PEH. The two inclusive perspectives applied to the results are, as earlier mentioned, both somewhat criticized for reducing the complexity and lacking the ability to weave together aspects of several different levels and actual interest in teaching practice. To overcome this potential risk, this thesis has also examined actual practice in situ, and the perspectives used as a lens from which the results in the articles can be interpreted and understood.

The teaching/learning processes in the classroom places focus on the complex interaction and the relation between teacher and pupils. One of the major findings looking at the results overall, and which was most obvious, especially during the observation study, was the importance of content and form, and its consequences for certain pupils. Is contemporary PEH caught between the mission of fostering sport values and normalization to health and fitness ideals? In this sense, it could be fruitful to argue for PEH to be more multi-dimensional regarding learning objectives/content. For example, broaden the learning dimensions, offer and make visible other possible participatory
ologies than those of sport, health, and fitness. Reinforcing other learning dimensions and/or other areas of strength individuals possesses can also have a ripple-effect and bring alternative feelings to the situation for pupils who may lack confidence in their skills or in their abilities to learn. Then, there also is an opportunity to better address individual differences and to set more realistic expectations on pupils as well as to create accurate self-concepts among pupils. As the subject in general seems to fit and be guided mainly from the interest of a dominating sport-interested group of pupils (and teachers), the needs and the interests of the minority are neglected and ought to be considered even more in planning and in teaching. How can focus be redirected even more toward alternative content and/or other learning dimensions that give attention to individual development of different abilities in a broader sense than solely skills (sports) that can reduce negative experiences and/or feelings connected to the current format? Again, it seems like content and form and how learning objectives are introduced and presented are highly central components together with the teaching styles used to direct focus on learning outcomes as well as individual learning in a group context.

The data presented in this dissertation were collected before the implementation of the new PEH curriculum reform 2011 (Lgr 11). A faint hope, looking positively, can be directed in implementing the intentions with the syllabus differently and find other ways than the dominating and traditional. This may well lead to more equal focus in directing teaching more based on the three central emphasized learning areas; movement, health, and lifestyle and outdoor education. Several studies have highlighted the marginalization of outdoor life (Backman, 2004, Lundvall, Thedin Jakobsson & Meckbach, 2002). In search for alternative learning dimensions in the subject, this learning area may offer adequate alternatives. As results from all four sub-studies show that both teachers and pupils have problems in verbalizing learning objectives (especially if instrumental health-oriented goals is deducted), the importance of teachers’ endeavors to clarify and communicate learning objectives is much needed and cannot be underestimated. The new curriculum, with its new formulation, may at best provide clearer focus and support in communicating, negotiating, and verbalizing the learning objectives—an urgent need according to the results in this dissertation. This includes finding alternative ways of planning teaching as well as reflecting on the content in PEH and referencing pupils’ performances against criteria that are explicit, well-articulated, and understandable. Looking negatively, the subject will remain in current form, continuing to exclude some pupils by offering content structured in line with a multi-activity approach weakly linked to the curriculum, an approach that supports decontextualized segmented learning (of mainly sport skills) rather than cumulative learning based on authenticity, inclusive of individual learning needs and interests, from a learner perspective.
It can be argued that considering the individual needs of all pupils is an impossible mission when the teacher usually needs to direct focus to the majority of the pupils. However, I argue that this way of thinking can violate a basic tenet of education. Reaching all pupils is not easy, yet it remains the constant challenge.

A triadic view of interconnected needs is proposed by Lewis and Norwich (1996), where thinking about how to meet the different needs could be based on: (a) individual needs unique to the individual pupil, (b) exceptional needs shared with some other pupils, and (c) common needs shared with all pupils. This way of thinking may offer a significant and positive shift rather than thinking about pupils as problematic and labeled in certain ways.

Teachers’ ability to implement varying instructional strategies may also be dependent on confidence in their ability to cater for diverse needs as well as on having knowledge of their pupils’ needs, but it also challenges the role of a teacher. Armour and Jones (1998) propose a more individualistic take toward a personal horizontal relationship in which there is an exchange of equals, allowing for more meaningful and caring relations between teachers and pupils, which also was an important aspect highlighted in my studies, rather than a vertical, impersonal, highly-regulated teacher-and-pupil relationship of traditional teaching in the subject. Applying an inclusive ideology, teaching in general will need to better place focus on the individuals who display other needs, perceptions, and feelings connected to the subject. The teacher’s ability to work inclusively may need to change and shift in emphasis from the more didactic teacher-led methods to more student-centered discovery, constructivist, or problem-solving methods, where dimensions of collaboration in learning (between pupils) are more emphasized. A change from “one-size-fits-all” teaching toward differentiated teaching, where teaching is more responsive to the unique differences of pupils’ learning needs, is conceivable. Teachers must be able to continually assess the collective participation and adjust their practices accordingly while also having the individual in mind.

Referring back to interviews with the teachers, the challenge of individualizing is a question of time and resources, and the balancing act of keeping the majority of the group “happy and busy” while simultaneously considering certain individuals’ unique needs. This can, to some extent, be a challenge in a goal-oriented framework when, at the same time, needs of the individual should be considered. Maybe the current format (multi-activity dominated) and a perceived struggle with limited resources, a crowded curriculum, and large classes limit teachers’ opportunities to provide alternative forms of PEH. Forms could include more exploring, collaborative, and problem-solving approaches but also a progression of applicable learning characterized by transfer to a range of contexts rather than bounded to a specific or particular context.
As a final reflection on what is going on in traditional practices of physical education, this dissertation has exemplified both the role of the teacher as well as PEH as an arena that is shaping, enhancing, and constructing certain pupils that do or do not fit in relation to both normative- and performance-based practices of PEH. There are, of course, no straightforward solutions or elixirs available for teachers, and differentiated teaching must not lose sight of needs that are common to a group or a class as a whole, but rather, it also must consider the needs of each individual. More studies with a multi-methodological research approach, where issues of inclusion get high priority in studying teaching/learning processes, can bring additional aspects and broaden the body of knowledge related to this area. PEH research and physical educationalists are needed that challenge and reaffirm normalized ways of thinking about PEH, what type of learning discourses are privileged and legitimated, and how those discourses can be evidenced and further developed. By also realizing that pupils are not fixed and unchangeable, there is a variety of different “possible identities” to fit particular situations that offer future opportunity for PEH teachers to guide and to inspire pupils to evolve in the directions that are best for them through teachers’ daily choices in terms of content, form, and teaching methods based on the inter-related dimensions of curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy.
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Article IV

Åström, P., & Wright, J. (Submitted). Running away from learning

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