

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

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ABSTRACT: This study explored the lived experiences of game-based learning approaches in Physical Education and Health classes as basis for developing integrative lesson exemplars for Grade 7 learners. It aimed to describe the learners' experiences with game-based learning, derive meanings from these experiences, identify the major themes that emerged from the coded responses, and use the findings as basis for a framework and sample lesson exemplars. The study employed a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews with eight Grade 7 participants who had been exposed to game-based and game-based activities in PEH classes. Interview responses were transcribed, coded, and analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings showed that participants generally found game-based learning enjoyable, engaging, and meaningful. They reported that games increased their motivation, sustained participation, and reduced boredom during PEH lessons. The learners also perceived that gameplay helped them understand concepts and skills more clearly through active participation, practice, and direct application. In addition, the findings emphasized the importance of teamwork, peer encouragement, teacher support, clear instructions, and manageable challenges in making game-based learning effective. The thematic analysis generated four major themes: cognitive and skill development through gameplay, affective and motivational engagement in game-based PEH, social participation and enabling conditions, and transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond class. Based on these findings, the CAST Gamification Integration Framework was developed to guide the design of integrative lesson exemplars in PEH. The study concludes that game-based learning is a meaningful and effective pedagogical approach that may enhance learning, participation, and values formation among Grade 7 learners in Physical Education and Health.

KEYWORDS: Game-based learning, Physical Education and Health, gamification, Grade 7 learners, lesson exemplars

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical Education and Health (PEH) is an essential component of basic education because it supports the holistic development of learners. It promotes physical fitness, movement competence, social interaction, self-discipline, teamwork, and positive health practices. In school settings, PEH is expected to provide meaningful and engaging learning experiences that encourage students to appreciate physical activity and healthful living as part of daily life.

However, PEH instruction may become less effective when it relies heavily on repetitive drills, routine exercises, and teacher-centered activities that do not fully sustain learner interest and participation. In such cases, students may comply with tasks but remain minimally engaged in the learning process.

In response to these challenges, game-based learning has emerged as a relevant instructional approach for PEH. Game-based learning integrates educational content with game elements such as rules, challenges, feedback, participation, and interaction. Since PEH is naturally active and social, it is well suited for this approach. Through game-based activities, learners are able to move, think, cooperate, and apply skills in structured and enjoyable ways.

Instead of treating play as separate from learning, game-based learning allows lessons to be experienced through participation, problem-solving, and performance. This approach transforms PEH into a more engaging and meaningful learning experience.

Local studies support the effectiveness of this approach. Marcaida et al. (2022) found that gamification in physical education enhanced student engagement and improved understanding of PE concepts among senior high school students in Pampanga. Similarly, Longakit et al. (2024) reported that game-based physical education activities improved movement competence and

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

strengthened teamwork, cooperation, and participation among university students in the Philippines. These studies highlight the instructional value of game-based learning in PE contexts.

At Concepcion Integrated School, variations in student participation during PEH classes have been observed. Some learners actively engage in activities, while others show hesitation, low motivation, or limited involvement. This situation highlights the need for more engaging, inclusive, and learner-centered instructional strategies.

Thus, this study explores the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners in game-based learning within PEH classes. The insights gathered serve as a basis for developing integrative lesson exemplars that enhance engagement, participation, and meaningful learning in PEH instruction.

Research Question

This study aims to explore Grade-7 students' experiences with game-based learning methods in their Physical Education and Health classes. The findings will help develop enhanced lesson examples that encourage active participation, boost motivation, and improve learning retention.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

Central Question

What is the essence of the lived experiences of Grade 7 students with regards to game-based learning approaches in Physical Education and Health classes?

Corollary Questions

1. How do Grade-7 students describe their experiences as to game-based learning approaches integrated in their Physical Education and Health classes?
2. What meanings may be drawn from the most significant experiences of Grade-7 students?
3. What themes emerged from the testimonies of the Grade-7 students?
4. Based on the results, what integrative lesson exemplars can be designed for Physical Education and Health instruction through the integration of game-based learning?

II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study focused on exploring the phenomenological study on the lived experiences of game-based learning in Physical Education and Health classes among Grade 7 learners at Concepcion Integrated School. Specifically, it examined the lived experiences of students who had been exposed to game-based and game-based activities in PEH, the meanings they drew from these experiences, and the themes that emerged from their responses. The findings of the study served as the basis for the development of integrative lesson exemplars guided by the CAST Gamification Integration Framework. The inquiry was qualitative in nature and used a phenomenological approach in order to understand how the participants experienced game-based learning within the context of PEH instruction.

The participants of the study were limited to eight Grade 7 learners selected from Concepcion Integrated School. These participants were chosen because they had actual exposure to game-based learning activities integrated into their PEH classes. The study therefore centered only on the perceptions and experiences of these learners and did not include the perspectives of PEH teachers, school administrators, or parents. In addition, the investigation was confined to Grade 7 PEH classes and did not extend to other grade levels, other learning areas, or other school settings.

The study was also limited in terms of method and source of data. Data were gathered through interviews, and the analysis was based on the participants' verbal testimonies as coded and interpreted by the researcher. Since the study relied on self-reported experiences, the findings reflected the participants' personal accounts and meanings at the time of the interview. The study did not employ experimental procedures, classroom observation, intervention testing, or quantitative measurement of learning outcomes, academic performance, or physical performance. As such, it did not seek to determine causal effects or statistically generalizable results regarding the effectiveness of game-based learning in PEH.

Furthermore, while the study developed integrative lesson exemplars from the findings, it was limited to the preparation of sample exemplars and did not include full-scale classroom implementation or long-term evaluation of these materials. The lesson exemplars were proposed as outputs grounded in the participants' experiences and the resulting framework, but their effectiveness in actual classroom practice may still require further validation through future studies.

FRAMEWORK

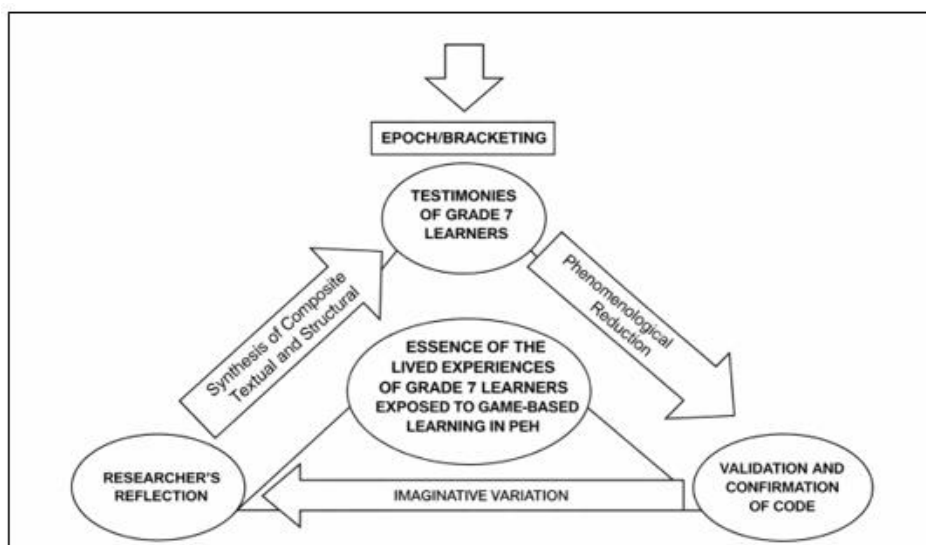


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

At the top of the paradigm is Epoch/Bracketing. This represents the researcher's deliberate effort to set aside personal assumptions, prior judgments, and expectations about game-based learning in PEH before and during data analysis. In phenomenological inquiry, this step is important because it helps the researcher approach the participants' responses as faithfully as possible, allowing the meanings to emerge from the learners' own accounts rather than from pre-existing beliefs or instructional preferences. In this study, bracketing allowed the researcher to focus on how Grade 7 learners themselves experienced game-based PEH activities, including their feelings of enjoyment, challenge, motivation, participation, and understanding.

The next component is the Testimonies of Grade 7 Learners, which serves as the primary source of data. These testimonies came from the interview responses of the participants regarding their experiences with game-based learning approaches integrated into PEH classes.

On the right side of the paradigm is Phenomenological Reduction. This refers to the analytic process of examining the testimonies closely, extracting significant statements, and reducing the data into essential units of meaning.

Closely connected to this is Validation and Confirmation of Code, shown on the lower right side of the diagram. This emphasizes that the coding process was not treated as arbitrary. The extracted meanings and codes were checked for consistency, relevance, and alignment with the original responses. This stage ensured that the emerging interpretations remained grounded in the participants' actual words and were supported by repeated patterns in the data. In the context of the study, this step strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings by showing that the identified codes and themes truly reflected the learners' experiences rather than the researcher's assumptions alone.

At the lower center of the paradigm is Imaginative Variation. This is a crucial phenomenological step in which the researcher examines the participants' experiences from different angles in order to understand the underlying conditions that shaped them.

On the left side of the paradigm is Researcher's Reflection. This shows the continuing role of reflexivity throughout the research process. While bracketing seeks to suspend bias, reflection allows the researcher to remain critically aware of how interpretations are being formed during analysis. In this study, reflection helped the researcher examine how the participants' testimonies were being understood and how emerging meanings were connected to the broader context of PEH instruction and game-based learning. This reflexive process contributed to a more careful and thoughtful interpretation of the data.

The arrow labeled Synthesis of Composite Textual and Structural represents the integration of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it. The textual aspect refers to the descriptive content of the learners' narratives, such as their feelings of enjoyment, confusion, challenge, teamwork, and motivation.

At the center of the paradigm is the final outcome: the Essence of the Lived Experiences of Grade 7 Learners Exposed to Game-Based Learning in PEH. This is the culmination of the phenomenological process. It represents the distilled meaning of the participants' collective experiences as uncovered through bracketing, reduction, validation, imaginative variation, and synthesis.

As a whole, the research paradigm shows that the study did not merely describe isolated student opinions about games in PEH. Rather, it followed a structured phenomenological process to uncover the shared meaning of those experiences. It demonstrates that the findings were grounded in participant testimonies, examined through systematic qualitative analysis, and

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

synthesized into an essential understanding that later served as the basis for the CAST Gamification Integration Framework and the development of integrative lesson exemplars.

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design, which is appropriate for exploring how individuals experience a phenomenon and the meanings they assign to those experiences. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation was the exposure of Grade 7 learners to game-based learning approaches integrated into Physical Education and Health (PEH) classes.

Rather than measuring effectiveness through numerical indicators, the study focused on describing and interpreting how learners experienced game-based PEH, including their perceptions of enjoyment, participation, motivation, challenge, teamwork, confusion, and understanding. The design allowed the researcher to move beyond surface-level description and uncover the essential meanings embedded in learners' lived experiences.

The phenomenological process involved bracketing (epoché), close reading of narratives, extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of codes, and generation of themes. Through this process, the study produced a composite understanding of the essence of learners' experiences, which later informed the development of the CAST Gamification Integration Framework and integrative lesson exemplars.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made semi-structured Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide consisting of open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives. The instrument was designed to elicit detailed descriptions of learners' lived experiences in game-based PEH classes, particularly their feelings, participation, motivation, challenges, and perceived learning outcomes.

A semi-structured format was used to maintain consistency across participants while allowing flexibility for follow-up and probing questions. This ensured that participants could fully elaborate on their responses and provide deeper insights into their experiences.

Prior to data collection, the interview guide was reviewed by experts in research and Physical Education to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Questions were simplified when necessary to ensure comprehension by Grade 7 learners.

Data Gathering

The data gathering procedures were conducted systematically and ethically. The researcher first secured permission from the school administration of Concepcion Integrated School and explained the purpose and nature of the study.

After approval, participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the inclusion criteria. Consent forms were distributed to parents or guardians, and assent was obtained from student participants prior to participation.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted in a safe, quiet, and comfortable school environment to encourage open sharing of experiences. During the discussion, participants were guided using a semi-structured interview guide while being allowed to freely express their thoughts.

Follow-up and probing questions were asked whenever clarification or elaboration was needed. These questions helped participants provide specific examples, explain emotions, and further describe their classroom experiences.

With permission, all sessions were audio-recorded and supplemented with written notes. After data collection, recordings were transcribed verbatim and carefully checked for accuracy. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant identity throughout the process.

Treatment of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were analyzed using phenomenological and thematic analysis procedures. The researcher first immersed in the data by reading the transcripts repeatedly to gain familiarity and to bracket personal assumptions regarding game-based learning.

Significant statements relevant to the participants' experiences were identified and extracted from the transcripts. These statements were then coded to capture essential meanings. Similar codes were grouped into clusters, which were later developed into sub-themes and major themes.

Formulated meanings were derived from the coded data to interpret what the participants' statements revealed about their lived experiences. The researcher then applied imaginative variation to identify structural conditions influencing these experiences, such as teacher guidance, peer interaction, game mechanics, clarity of rules, and challenge level.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

Through the synthesis of textural descriptions (what was experienced) and structural descriptions (how it was experienced), the essence of the phenomenon was derived. The final analysis produced thematic interpretations that served as the basis for the CAST Gamification Integration Framework and integrative lesson exemplars for PEH instruction.

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the gathered data, together with This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings of the study based on the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding game-based learning in Physical Education and Health (PEH) classes. The discussion follows a phenomenological approach, integrating both textural descriptions (what the participants experienced) and structural descriptions (how the experiences occurred). Each theme is presented with interpretative analysis and implications for Physical Education and Health instruction and gamified classroom practices.

Profile of the Grade-7 students exposed to Gamification approaches to Physical Education and Health Classes

The participants in this study were eight Grade 7 learners who had been exposed to game based learning approaches integrated into their Physical Education and Health classes. Rather than describing them only through demographic characteristics, the present subsection situates the participants in relation to their classroom experiences with gamified and game based activities, since these experiences formed the basis of the inquiry. Across the coded transcripts, the participants generally described their exposure to game based learning as frequent enough to make them familiar with its basic structures, such as team play, rules, timed tasks, physical challenges, scoring, classroom competitions, and cooperative group activities. Their accounts suggest that game based learning was not entirely new to them, but had become an observable and meaningful part of how PEH lessons were delivered and experienced.

Table 1 <i>Profile of the Grade-7 Student-Participants</i>			
Participant	Pseudo name	Sex	Section
Participant 1	Ez	Male	7-Active
Participant 2	Queen	Female	7-Adorable
Participant 3	Wacky	Male	7- Brilliant
Participant 4	Mica	Female	7-Blessed
Participant 5	Jess	Female	7-Blissful
Participant 6	Max	Female	7-Brave
Participant 7	Chen	Female	7-Caring
Participant 8	Jaz	Female	7-Cheerful

As a group, the participants appeared to share a common orientation toward Physical Education and Health as an active and engaging subject. Their responses indicated that they often encountered lessons through movement based tasks, interactive group exercises, and classroom activities that incorporated game elements. These exposures shaped their perceptions of gamification not merely as play, but as a method that influenced motivation, participation, understanding of lessons, and interaction with peers. While the degree and manner of experience varied from one participant to another, the coded responses consistently showed that the participants had sufficient exposure to recognize how game based learning affected their enjoyment, behavior, and learning in PEH.

Ez emerged from the transcripts as a participant whose experience of gamification was closely connected to challenge and active participation. His responses suggest familiarity with PEH activities that required movement, competition, and engagement with structured gameplay. For Ez, game based learning appeared to function as a motivating classroom approach that sustained interest and encouraged participation. His exposure to gamified PEH tasks seemed to be associated with enjoyment derived from action oriented and goal directed activities, indicating that he experienced learning more positively when tasks involved challenge and clear objectives.

Queen described experiences that reflected the social and enjoyable aspects of gamification in PEH. Her responses suggest that she encountered game based activities as opportunities for involvement, enjoyment, and interaction with classmates. In her case, exposure to gamified instruction appeared to support participation by making lessons feel less routine and more inviting. Her general experience points to the role of games in creating a more pleasant and cooperative learning atmosphere, where engagement was encouraged through interactive and shared activities rather than passive instruction alone.

Wacky appeared to experience game-based learning primarily through energetic and performance-oriented activities. His responses suggest exposure to lessons that involved competition, movement, and direct participation in class tasks. The coded data indicate that gamification helped make PEH more stimulating and less monotonous for him. His experiences show that game

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

based learning supported attention and willingness to join class activities, especially when the tasks contained competitive or physically challenging elements that matched the active nature of the subject.

Mica described a gamification experience that was strongly linked to enjoyment and participation. Her responses suggest that game-based activities in PEH helped make lessons easier to engage with because they were interactive and dynamic. Her exposure appears to have included tasks that combined physical action with group involvement, allowing her to experience learning as both enjoyable and socially meaningful. In this regard, Mica's background as a participant reflects how game-based learning can make PEH more approachable and appealing for Grade 7 learners.

Jess described experiences that indicate meaningful exposure to game-based learning as a participatory classroom strategy. Her responses suggest that games in PEH helped maintain interest and encouraged active contribution during lessons. The coded transcripts point to her appreciation of activities that allowed learners to move, cooperate, and remain attentive through structured play. Her general experience implies that gamification supported not only enjoyment, but also sustained involvement in class tasks and a more favorable disposition toward the lesson.

Max appeared to experience gamification in PEH as a source of confidence, challenge, and engagement. Her responses suggest exposure to activities in which learners were expected to participate, respond to objectives, and work through physically or socially demanding tasks. For Max, game-based learning seemed to make classroom experiences more encouraging because it provided a setting where participation felt purposeful and energizing. Her background in the study reflects the way learners may connect gamified PEH tasks with increased willingness to try, perform, and collaborate.

Chen described experiences that highlight the cooperative and interactive dimensions of gamification. Her coded responses suggest familiarity with PEH activities that involved teamwork, peer coordination, and classroom participation through structured games. Her exposure appears to have helped frame PEH as a socially engaging subject where learning was reinforced through shared activity. In her case, gamification seems to have supported both enjoyment and interaction, showing how learners can experience PEH more meaningfully when lessons are mediated by collaborative game structures.

Jaz emerged as a participant whose experience of game-based learning was characterized by enjoyment, involvement, and positive classroom energy. Her responses suggest exposure to PEH activities that used game elements to capture attention and encourage participation. The transcripts indicate that she found gamified learning a helpful way to make lessons more engaging and interactive. Her background reflects the broader pattern in the study, wherein learners perceived games not as distractions from instruction, but as vehicles through which PEH became more engaging and understandable.

The participants may be described as Grade 7 learners with direct classroom exposure to gamification and game-based learning in PEH. Their experiences suggest that they were not responding to an abstract concept, but to a teaching approach they had actually encountered through movement-based games, group tasks, classroom competitions, and interactive lesson structures. Their backgrounds are therefore pedagogically significant. They represent learners who were sufficiently familiar with gamified instruction to articulate how it influenced their motivation, enjoyment, participation, teamwork, and understanding of the lessons.

SOP 1. Significant experiences of Grade-7 students as to game-based learning approaches integrated in their Physical Education and Health classes

This section presents the significant experiences of Grade 7 participants regarding the use of game-based learning approaches integrated in their Physical Education and Health classes. The responses highlight how game-based and gamified lesson structures such as team challenges, relay activities, cooperative games, competition, clear rules, feedback, and physically active tasks shaped their motivation, understanding of lessons, classroom participation, teamwork, and health-related learning.

The interpretation of the findings is anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Flow Theory. Constructivist Learning Theory explains that learners build understanding through active experience and social interaction. Self-Determination Theory explains that meaningful learning experiences are strengthened when students experience competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Flow Theory further explains that deep engagement is more likely when learners encounter clear goals, immediate feedback, and a balance between task challenge and personal skill. These perspectives are useful in interpreting how the participants experienced game-based learning as both enjoyable and educationally meaningful.

Table 2a. Significant Experiences of Ez
<i>"Masaya ang aking pakiramdam kapag gumagamit ang aming guro ng mga laro sa aralin. Mas nagiging masaya at kapana-panabik ang pagkatuto. Nasisiyahan akong makilahok kasama ang aking mga kaklase."</i>
<i>"Naaalala ko noong naglaro kami ng relay race sa klase. Kailangan naming tumakbo at ipasa ang baton sa bawat miyembro ng aming grupo. Nakakatuwa ito dahil hinihikayat at sinusuportahan ng lahat ang kanilang mga kasamahan."</i>
<i>"Nasasabik ako kapag malapit nang manalo ang aming koponan sa isang laro. Naghihiyawan at ginagawa ng lahat ang kanilang makakaya. Dahil dito, mas nagiging determinado akong maglaro."</i>
<i>"Minsan ay nalilito ako kapag hindi ko nauunawaan ang mga patakaran ng laro. Humihingi ako ng paliwanag sa aking mga kaklase o guro. Pagkatapos nito, mas nagiging madali na para sa akin ang maglaro."</i>
<i>"Ang paglalaro sa PEH ay nakatutulong upang mas maunawaan ko ang aralin. Mas natututo ako sa pamamagitan ng aktwal na paggawa kaysa sa pakikinig lamang. Dahil dito, mas madali kong naaalala ang paksa."</i>

Significant Experiences of Ez

Ez’s account shows that his most significant experiences with game-based learning in Physical Education and Health were grounded in enjoyment, active participation, and concrete understanding of lesson content. He described the approach positively when he stated, “I feel happy when our teacher uses games in the lesson. It makes learning more fun and exciting. I enjoy participating with my classmates.” This response suggests that Ez did not experience PEH as a purely instructional subject, but as a participatory learning space in which movement, interaction, and enjoyment were central to meaning making. His recollection of the relay race, where “everyone was cheering for their teammates,” further shows that his engagement was strengthened by social participation and group energy. Viewed through Constructivist Learning Theory, Ez’s experience indicates that knowledge in PEH was built through active involvement in shared tasks rather than through passive reception. His statement that “I learn by doing, not just by listening” directly reflects the constructivist principle that understanding is formed through experience, action, and interaction with the learning environment.

Ez’s responses also point to the motivational mechanisms emphasized in Self-Determination Theory. His enjoyment of game-based lessons and his excitement when “our team is about to win a game” suggest that the activities supported his sense of competence by allowing him to perform, improve, and contribute to group success. The cheering of teammates and his enjoyment of participation with classmates likewise reflect relatedness, since his motivation was sustained within a socially supportive setting. At the same time, his admission that he sometimes felt confused “when I do not understand the rules of the game” indicates that motivation was strongest when task expectations were clearly structured. This is also consistent with Flow Theory, which posits that learners are more likely to become deeply engaged when goals are clear, feedback is immediate, and challenge is balanced with skill. For Ez, confusion temporarily interrupted immersion, but once the rules were explained and the game became understandable, he was able to re-enter the activity with greater ease and engagement.

The pattern in Ez’s responses is consistent with recent literature on game-based and gamified PEH instruction. A systematic review by Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) found that game-based learning in physical education tends to strengthen engagement, enjoyment, and active participation. Similarly, Ezeddine et al. (2025) reported that game-based physical education can enhance student motivation and learning outcomes by making lessons more meaningful and participatory. From a motivational perspective, Vasconcellos et al. (2020) showed that PE contexts that support competence, autonomy, and relatedness are associated with more adaptive forms of motivation, while Vergara-Torres et al. (2021) underscored the importance of clear instruction and supportive feedback in satisfying students’ psychological needs. Ez’s narrative therefore suggests that his significant experiences were shaped by an instructional environment in which active practice, team support, and understandable rules made PEH more enjoyable and easier to learn.

Significant Experiences of Queen

Table 2b. Significant Experiences of Queen
<i>"Napakasaya ng aking karanasan dahil nagiging masigla ang klase sa pamamagitan ng mga laro. Mas nagiging aktibo ako at mas interesado sa aralin. Nakakatulong din ito upang mas madali kong maunawaan ang mga aralin."</i>
<i>"Isa sa mga gawain na naaalala ko ay ang larong pagpapasahan ng bola. Kailangan naming maipasa ang bola nang mabilis sa aming grupo nang hindi ito nahuhulog. Masaya ito at nakatutulong upang matuto kaming magtutulongan."</i>
<i>"Nakakaramdam ako ng hamon kapag medyo mahirap ang gawain. Dahil dito, mas nagsisikap akong pagbutihin ang aking sarili. Ipinagmamalaki ko ang aking sarili kapag natatapos ko ang gawain."</i>
<i>"May mga pagkakataong nakakaramdam ako ng pressure kapag natatalo ang aming koponan. Pakiramdam ko ay kailangan kong mas pagbutihin ang aking paglalaro para sa aming grupo. Ngunit patuloy pa rin akong sinusuportahan ng aking mga kaklase."</i>
<i>"Mas nagiging masaya at malinaw ang aralin dahil sa mga laro. Nakikita ko kung paano nauugnay ang mga gawain sa aming pinag-aaralan. Dahil dito, mas mabilis kong nauunawaan ang aralin."</i>

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

Queen's significant experiences were marked by lively participation, cooperative challenge, and clearer understanding of lesson content. She described game-based PEH as "very enjoyable because games make the class lively," adding that she felt "more active and interested in the lesson" and that the approach "helps me understand better." Her recollection of the ball-passing game, in which the group had to pass the ball quickly without dropping it, is especially important because it shows that her learning was organized through coordinated group action. Within Constructivist Learning Theory, this kind of experience suggests that Queen understood PEH concepts not through abstract explanation alone, but through direct participation in an activity that required coordination, timing, and collective effort. Her statement that games make the lesson "fun and clear" and help her "understand faster" indicates that action and understanding developed together.

Queen's responses also reflect the motivational dynamics described by Self-Determination Theory. She stated, "I feel challenged when the activity is a little difficult. It makes me want to try harder and improve. I feel proud when I finish the task." This response points to competence, because she experienced challenge as an opportunity for improvement rather than as a reason to disengage. Her feeling of pride after successful completion suggests that game-based tasks gave her a visible sense of accomplishment. Relatedness is also evident in her statement that even when her team was losing and she felt pressure to do better, "my classmates still support me." That support appears to have buffered the pressure of competition and helped her remain involved. In terms of Flow Theory, Queen's account suggests that moderate challenge enhanced concentration and persistence, but only when the activity remained understandable and socially supportive. Her desire for organized games with simple instructions also indicates that clear goals and clear rules were necessary conditions for sustained engagement.

Queen's experience aligns with recent evidence indicating that game-based and cooperative PE approaches can increase enjoyment, motivation, and understanding. Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) concluded that game-based learning and gamification in physical education commonly improve engagement and make lessons more meaningful for learners. Likewise, Boke et al. (2025) found that cooperative learning interventions in PE produce benefits across affective, cognitive, physical, and social learning domains. The motivational aspect of Queen's account is also consistent with Liu and Lipowski's (2021) meta-analysis showing that cooperative learning can enhance intrinsic motivation in physical education, and with Engels and Freund's (2020) finding that cooperative games can increase positive experiences and enjoyment in PE settings. Queen's narrative suggests that her most significant experiences emerged when challenge, teamwork, and rule clarity worked together to make PEH both enjoyable and educationally effective.

Table 2c. Significant Experiences of Wacky

"Gusto ko kapag bahagi ng aralin ang mga laro. Hindi ako madaling mainip at mas nakakapagpokus ako. Natututo rin ako habang nagsasaya."

"Naaalala ko ang isang laro kung saan kailangan naming gawin ang iba't ibang ehersisyo sa bawat istasyon. Nag-jumping, stretching, at pagtakbo kami. Nakakapagod ito ngunit napakasaya rin."

"Nasasabik ako kapag nakikipagpaligsahan kami sa ibang grupo. Masayang makita kung aling koponan ang unang matatapos. Mas nagiging kawili-wili ang gawain dahil dito."

"Minsan ay nalito ako dahil bago sa akin ang mga panuto ng laro. Hindi ko agad alam kung ano ang dapat gawin. Ngunit nang mapanood ko ang ginagawa ng iba, mas naunawaan ko ito."

"Mas nauunawaan ko ang paksa dahil naisasagawa ko ito sa pamamagitan ng mga laro. Ang aktwal na pagsali sa gawain ay nakatutulong upang mas madali kong maalala ang mga tuntunin at kasanayan."

Significant Experiences of Wacky

Wacky's significant experiences were strongly tied to movement, competition, and understanding through direct practice. He explained that when games were used in PEH, "It makes me less bored and more focused. I also learn while having fun." This response suggests that he perceived game-based instruction as more cognitively and emotionally engaging than conventional activities. His memory of a station-based game, where learners performed different exercises such as jumping, stretching, and running, further illustrates how he encountered PEH concepts through embodied activity. Interpreted through Constructivist Learning Theory, Wacky's responses indicate that his understanding developed through physical participation in structured tasks. This is reinforced by his statement that he understood the topic better because he practiced it through games and that "doing the activity makes it easier to remember the rules or skills." Such responses reflect the constructivist position that knowledge becomes more meaningful when learners actively experience it in context.

Wacky's account also shows how game-based learning supported motivation while introducing productive forms of challenge. He reported feeling excited "when we compete with other groups" and described the race to finish first as a source of interest.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

This response suggests that competition strengthened his sense of competence by giving him a concrete goal and a visible standard for success. At the same time, his comment that he felt confused when the instructions were new, but later understood after observing others, shows that learning and confidence were socially supported. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, his experience involved competence through task performance, relatedness through cooperation, and adaptive engagement when peers provided models or assistance. Flow Theory is likewise relevant because his most enjoyable experiences appear to have occurred when the tasks were active, goal-oriented, and sufficiently understandable. When the rules were unfamiliar, immersion was interrupted, but once the activity became clearer, he was able to focus more fully and participate with enjoyment.

The experiences described by Wacky are supported by recent research on active and cooperative learning in PE. Yang et al. (2021) found that cooperative learning in physical education can improve both action skill learning and learning motivation. Boke et al. (2025) similarly reported that cooperative learning interventions are associated with broad improvements in students' affective and social learning outcomes. In relation to game-based instruction more specifically, Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) observed that game-based PE activities often reduce passivity and increase engagement, while Ezeddine et al. (2025) noted that active, play-oriented instruction may strengthen student motivation and meaningful participation. Wacky's narrative therefore indicates that his significant experiences were shaped by physically active tasks that combined enjoyment, strategy, teamwork, and practical understanding.

Significant Experiences of Mica

Table 2d. Significant Experiences of Mica

"Nasasabik ako tuwing naglalaro kami sa klase. Nakakatulong ito upang manatili akong aktibo at nakikilahok sa mga gawain. Nasisiyahan din akong makipagtulungan sa aking mga kaklase."

"Isa sa mga larong naaalala ko ay ang pangkatang hamon kung saan kailangan naming tapusin ang iba't ibang gawain nang sama-sama. Nagtulungan kami upang matapos ang aktibidad. Naging masaya ako dahil nakasama ko ang aking mga kaklase sa pagtutulungan."

"Mas nagiging determinado ako kapag hinihikayat ako ng aking mga kaklase. Nagbibigay ito sa akin ng kumpanyansa upang gawin ang aking makakaya sa laro. Dahil dito, mas nae-enjoy ko ang gawain."

"Minsan ay hindi ako komportable kapag napakahirap ng gawain. Nag-aalala ako na baka magkamali ako. Ngunit sinisikap ko pa ring makilahok sa mga aktibidad."

"Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang matuto ako nang hindi nababagot. Nagagamit ko ang aking mga natutuhan habang nagsasaya. Dahil dito, mas nagiging kawili-wili ang aming aralin."

Mica's significant experiences centered on teamwork, encouragement, and continued participation despite difficulty. She described game-based PEH as exciting because it helped her "stay active and engaged" and because she enjoyed "working with my classmates." Her recollection of a group challenge, in which "we helped each other so we could complete the activity," suggests that collaborative accomplishment was one of the most meaningful aspects of her experience. From the perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory, Mica's account shows that learning was not an isolated process. Rather, it emerged through interaction, shared problem solving, and active participation in tasks that required cooperation. Her statement that games help her "apply what I learned while having fun" further indicates that understanding was strengthened when concepts were experienced directly through action.

Mica's responses are especially important when interpreted through Self-Determination Theory because they reveal the central role of social support in sustaining motivation. She stated, "I feel motivated when my classmates cheer for me. It gives me confidence to do my best in the game." This statement reflects relatedness very clearly, since encouragement from classmates made participation feel safer and more rewarding. It also reflects competence because social affirmation increased her confidence to perform the task. Although she admitted that she sometimes felt uncomfortable "when the activity is very difficult" and worried about making mistakes, she also said, "But I still try to participate." This shows persistence in the face of challenge. Through Flow Theory, her experience suggests that complete immersion was more likely when challenge was matched by social reassurance. Difficulty alone created tension, but peer encouragement helped her remain engaged rather than withdraw from the activity. Recent literature supports the pattern evident in Mica's responses. Research has shown that cooperative and socially supportive PE environments can improve students' motivation, enjoyment, and persistence. For instance, Engels and Freund (2020) found that cooperative games increase positive experiences in PE, while Liu and Lipowski (2021) reported that cooperative learning interventions can strengthen intrinsic motivation. Boke et al. (2025) likewise concluded that cooperative learning in PE contributes to affective, social, and cognitive gains. In addition, Vasconcellos et al. (2020) emphasized that motivation in PE is enhanced when students' needs for competence and relatedness are supported.

Table 2e. Significant Experiences of Jess
<i>"Mas nagiging masaya ang lahat kapag gumagamit ng mga laro sa aralin. Magaan at masaya ang aking pakiramdam habang isinasagawa ang mga gawain. Nakakatulong din ito upang mas madali akong matuto."</i>
<i>"Naaalala ko noong naglaro kami ng habulan sa PEH. Kailangan naming tumakbo at umiwas na mahuli ng taya. Napakasaya nito at nagtatawanan kaming lahat."</i>
<i>"Nasasabik ako kapag mabilis at aktibo ang laro. Masayang tumakbo at kumilos sa iba't ibang gawain. Talagang nae-enjoy ko ang mga sandaling iyon."</i>
<i>"Nakakaramdam ako ng hamon kapag kailangan ang pagtutulongan upang matapos ang laro. Nagtutulongan kami upang makumpleto ang gawain. Masaya ang aking pakiramdam kapag nagtatagumpay ang aming grupo."</i>
<i>"Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang makita ko kung paano nagagamit ang aming aralin sa tunay na buhay. Mas nauunawaan ko ang paksa kapag ako mismo ang sumusubok nito. Dahil dito, mas nagiging aktibo ang aking pagkatuto."</i>

Significant Experiences of Jess

Jess’s significant experiences reflect a combination of enjoyment, social connection, and emotional risk during participation. She explained that using games in the lesson made everything “more fun” and that she felt “relaxed and happy during the activities.” At the same time, her recollection of the tag game, where “everyone was laughing,” shows that she experienced PEH as a lively and socially shared environment. Constructivist Learning Theory helps explain why these experiences were meaningful. Jess did not merely hear about movement, strategy, or teamwork. She encountered these ideas in action, especially when she said that games help her “see how the lesson works in real life” and that she understands the topic better “when I try it myself.” This indicates that her understanding of PEH was built through active involvement and real-time participation rather than through passive instruction alone.

Jess also described important emotional moments that can be interpreted through Self-Determination Theory and Flow Theory. She stated that she felt excited “when the game is fast and active,” but she also recalled a moment of pressure when “everyone was watching during the game” and she felt nervous because she did not want to make a mistake. This response is significant because it shows that game-based learning did not produce enjoyment in a simple or uniform way. Rather, it combined excitement with evaluative pressure. From an SDT perspective, her eventual statement that she “felt better after trying” suggests that competence was gradually restored through successful participation, while her broader comments about encouraging and supporting classmates point to the importance of relatedness. From a Flow Theory perspective, fast-paced games may have increased involvement, but social self-consciousness temporarily interrupted deep immersion. Once she re-entered the task and managed the pressure, the activity again became enjoyable and meaningful.

Jess’s experience is consistent with recent literature showing that game-based PE can increase enjoyment and active engagement while also requiring thoughtful design to ensure that challenge remains supportive. Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) reported that game-based learning and gamification frequently enhance enjoyment and participation in PE contexts. Hsia et al. (2025) also showed that gamified PE environments can support motivation when they are designed in ways that satisfy basic psychological needs. In relation to emotional experience, Oliveira et al. (2025) noted that gamification may shape students’ flow-related experiences, although the effects depend on how the activity is structured.

Table 2f. Significant Experiences of Max
<i>"Maganda ang aking karanasan kapag gumagamit kami ng mga laro sa PEH. Mas nagiging kawili-wili at masaya ang aming aralin. Mas nagiging kumpiyansa rin akong makilahok sa mga gawain."</i>
<i>"Isa sa mga gawaing naaalala ko ay nang nagsagawa kami ng sayaw sa klase. Tinuruan kami ng aming guro ng mga simpleng hakbang at sabay-sabay namin itong isinasagawa bilang isang grupo. Masayang magtanghal kasama ang aking mga kaklase."</i>
<i>"Nakakaramdam ako ng hamon kapag kailangan ang pagtutulongan upang matapos ang laro. Nagtutulongan kami upang makumpleto ang gawain. Masaya ang aking pakiramdam kapag nagtatagumpay ang aming grupo."</i>
<i>"May mga pagkakataong nalilito ako kapag nagbabago ang mga patakaran habang isinasagawa ang laro. Kailangan ko ng kaunting oras upang maunawaan ang mga ito. Ngunit tinutulongan ako ng aking mga kaklase na matutunan ang tamang paraan."</i>
<i>"Mas nauunawaan ko ang aralin dahil ipinakikita ng mga laro kung ano ang tamang gawin. Mas madali kong naaalala ang mga hakbang at tuntunin."</i>

Significant Experiences of Max

Max’s account suggests that her significant experiences in game-based PEH were built around confidence, teamwork, and learning through visible demonstration. She described the approach as making “the lesson more interesting and enjoyable” and noted that she felt “more confident to join.” Her memory of performing a dance routine with classmates is particularly meaningful because it shows that her learning was situated within a coordinated group performance that required practice, imitation, and

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

bodily control. Consistent with Constructivist Learning Theory, Max's responses indicate that understanding developed through participation in concrete activities. This is reinforced by her statement that games help her understand the lesson more because they "show me what to do" and help her remember "the steps and rules easier." For Max, the lesson became clearer when it could be enacted rather than only explained.

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, Max's experience reflects the strengthening of competence and relatedness through successful group participation. She reported feeling challenged "when we need teamwork to finish the game," but she also described feeling happy "when our group succeeds." This suggests that challenge was motivating when it was linked to collective accomplishment. Her statement, "I feel proud when I complete the games," clearly reflects competence, while her enjoyment of being part of a team reflects relatedness. However, Max also identified one condition that could weaken engagement: "There are times when I feel confused if the rules change during the game." This is a notable finding because it shows that motivation and confidence depended partly on stability and clarity in the learning structure. In Flow Theory, clear goals and understandable rules are central conditions for deep involvement. Max's confusion when rules shifted suggests a break in flow, whereas consistent mechanics allowed her to stay focused and engaged.

The literature supports these features of Max's experience. Vergara-Torres et al. (2021) emphasized that instructional quality in PE, including clear task presentation and feedback, is closely linked to students' psychological need satisfaction. Vasconcellos et al. (2020) likewise found that PE environments supporting competence, autonomy, and relatedness are associated with more adaptive motivational outcomes. Hsia et al. (2025) further demonstrated that gamified PE can be effective when task structures support motivational processes in line with Self-Determination Theory. Max's narrative is also consistent with Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023), who noted that game-based PE tends to make learning more engaging and understandable when activities are interactive and well organized.

Table 2g. Significant Experiences of Chen

<i>"Mas nae-enjoy ko ang klase kapag may kasamang mga laro. Nakakatulong ito upang mas madaling maunawaan ang aralin sa masayang paraan. Mas nagiging aktibo rin ako."</i>
<i>"Naaalala ko ang isang laro kung saan kailangan naming magbalanse habang naglalakad patungo sa finish line. Nakakatawa ito dahil may ilan sa amin na muntik nang mawalan ng balanse. Nag-enjoy kaming lahat sa gawaing iyon."</i>
<i>"Mas nagiging determinado ako kapag hinihikayat kami ng aming guro habang naglalaro. Dahil dito, mas gusto kong makilahok sa mga gawain. Mas nagiging masaya rin ang aming klase."</i>
<i>"Nakaramdam ako ng hindi komportableng pakiramdam nang mapagod ako sa isang napakaaktibong laro. Naging mahirap para sa akin na makasabay sa iba. Gayunpaman, ginawa ko pa rin ang aking makakaya upang ipagpatuloy ang paglalaro."</i>
<i>"Mas madaling sundan ang aralin kapag may kasamang mga laro. Mas mabilis akong natututo kapag aktwal kong ginagawa ang gawain kaysa sa pagbabasa o pakikinig lamang."</i>

Significant Experiences of Chen

Chen's significant experiences were shaped by health-oriented participation, encouragement from the teacher, and understanding through active performance. She described game-based PEH as helping her "understand the lesson in a fun way" while also making her "feel more active." Her recollection of a balancing game, in which learners had to walk to the finish line without losing balance, shows that she encountered PEH concepts in practical and memorable form. Through Constructivist Learning Theory, Chen's responses suggest that learning became meaningful because she was physically involved in the activity and able to connect movement to lesson objectives. This is made more explicit in her statement that she learns faster "when I do the activity instead of just reading or listening." Such responses indicate that experience and action were central to how she constructed understanding in PEH.

Chen's experience is well supported by contemporary PE literature. Ezeddine et al. (2025) argued that game-based PE can promote student motivation and meaningful participation by making activity more engaging and educationally relevant. Vergara-Torres et al. (2021) found that the quality of the teacher's instruction and feedback has important implications for students' psychological need satisfaction and vitality in PE, which is directly relevant to Chen's emphasis on teacher encouragement. In addition, Hsia et al. (2025) showed that gamified PE systems informed by Self-Determination Theory can support motivational engagement, while Zhang et al. (2026) linked gamified physical education with positive cognitive outcomes in secondary school populations.

Table 2h. Significant Experiences of Jaz

"Sa kabuuan, masaya at kapana-panabik ang aking karanasan. Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang manatili akong nakapokus at mas aktibong nakikilahok. Dahil dito, ang PEH ay isa sa mga paborito kong asignatura."

"Isa sa mga gawain sa PEH na naaalala ko ay ang pangkatang laro gamit ang mga cone at bola. Kinailangan naming tapusin ang gawain nang mas mabilis kaysa sa kabilang koponan. Dahil dito, naging mas kapana-panabik at masigla ang aming klase."

"Nasasabik ako kapag nagagawa kong matapos ang isang gawain sa laro. Ipinagmamalaki ko ang aking sarili dahil dito. Naghihikayat din ito sa akin na patuloy na magsikap."

"Minsan ay nalilito ako kapag hindi nauunawaan ng aming grupo ang mga panuto. Humihingi kami ng karagdagang paliwanag sa aming guro. Pagkatapos nito, mas nagiging malinaw ang laro para sa amin."

"Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang maiugnay ko ang aming mga natutuhan sa klase sa mga tunay na gawain. Dahil dito, mas nagiging malinaw at mas madaling maunawaan ang paksa."

Significant Experiences of Jaz

Jaz's significant experiences were characterized by strong enjoyment, sustained focus, competition, and the transfer of learning beyond the classroom. She described her overall experience as "fun and exciting," explaining that games "help me stay focused and participate more" and make PEH one of her favorite classes. Her memory of a team game using cones and balls, in which the goal was to complete the task faster than the other team, shows that her engagement was linked to active challenge and visible goals. Constructivist Learning Theory helps explain this pattern because Jaz reported that games help her "connect what we learn in class to real activities," making the topic "clearer and easier to understand." Her responses therefore suggest that knowledge in PEH became meaningful when it was embedded in practical, embodied, and socially shared experiences.

Recent studies support the kinds of experiences described by Jaz. Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) concluded that game-based learning and gamification in physical education commonly improve motivation, participation, and lesson comprehension. Ezeddine et al. (2025) similarly emphasized that game-based PE can increase student motivation and learning outcomes. In relation to confidence and cognition, Zhang et al. (2026) reported positive associations between gamified PE and cognitive performance among secondary school students. Flow-related engagement is also relevant here, as Oliveira et al. (2025) examined how gamification can shape students' flow experience under specific design conditions.

SOP 2: Meanings may be drawn from the most significant experiences of Grade-7 students

This section presents the meanings formulated from the significant experiences shared by the Grade 7 participants regarding the integration of game-based learning approaches in their Physical Education and Health classes. Drawing on significant experiences, the analysis explains how the learners interpreted their enjoyment, challenge, teamwork, confidence, participation, and health-related learning. The discussion is organized per participant to preserve the idiographic quality of the accounts while still relating them to broader patterns in the data.

The interpretation of the findings is anchored in Constructivist Learning Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Flow Theory. Constructivist Learning Theory is used to explain how the participants constructed meaning through direct action, social interaction, and embodied practice. Self-Determination Theory is used to interpret how game-based learning supported or constrained the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Flow Theory is used to examine how enjoyment, concentration, challenge, and clarity of goals shaped the participants' engagement during game-based PEH activities.

Table 3.a. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Ez

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Masaya ang aking pakiramdam kapag gumagamit ang aming guro ng mga laro sa aralin. Mas nagiging masaya at kapana-panabik ang pagkatuto. Nasisiyahan akong makilahok kasama ang aking mga kaklase."	Game-based instruction heightens Ez's intrinsic motivation and makes PEH learning emotionally engaging.
"Naaalala ko noong naglaro kami ng relay race sa klase. Kailangan naming tumakbo at ipasa ang baton sa bawat miyembro ng aming grupo. Nakakatuwa ito dahil hinihikayat at sinusupportahan ng lahat ang kanilang mga kasamahan."	Cooperative challenge and peer encouragement make learning socially meaningful and energizing.
"Minsan ay nalilito ako kapag hindi ko nauunawaan ang mga patakaran ng laro. Humihingi ako ng paliwanag sa aking mga kaklase o guro. Pagkatapos nito, mas nagiging madali na para sa akin ang maglaro."	Clear rules and teacher or peer explanation function as scaffolds that restore participation and comprehension.
"Ang paglalaro sa PEH ay nakatutulong upang mas maunawaan ko ang aralin. Mas natututo ako sa pamamagitan ng aktwal na paggawa kaysa sa pakikinig lamang. Dahil dito, mas madali kong naaalala ang paksa."	Active participation enables concrete understanding and stronger retention of PEH concepts.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Ez

Ez's significant experiences suggest that he understood game-based learning in PEH primarily as an enjoyable and energizing mode of participation. His statement that "I feel happy when our teacher uses games in the lesson. It makes learning more fun and exciting" indicates that the presence of games altered the emotional tone of the class and made participation more appealing. Rather than positioning PEH as a routine requirement, he experienced it as an activity-rich setting that stimulated interest and anticipation. This meaning is consistent with Philippine-based work showing that gamified PE environments can increase classroom engagement and improve students' sense that lessons are more understandable and enjoyable (Marcaida et al., 2022). It also agrees with broader evidence that game-based learning and gamification in PE tend to strengthen motivation, participation, and commitment to learning tasks (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023).

Ez's experience further shows that engagement depended on instructional clarity. He admitted, "Sometimes I feel confused when I do not understand the rules of the game," but added that once the rules were explained, "it becomes easier to play." This suggests that enjoyment alone was insufficient; meaningful participation required intelligible goals and comprehensible mechanics. In Constructivist terms, explanation served as scaffolding that allowed him to connect action with understanding. In Flow Theory, his response reflects the importance of clear goals and actionable feedback, since confusion interrupted immersion, whereas clarification restored it. His observation that he "learn[s] by doing, not just by listening" further indicates that he drew meaning from embodied practice. This interpretation aligns with studies showing that PE students learn more effectively when game tasks provide clear structure, immediate feedback, and opportunities to apply concepts physically rather than receive them passively (Fernández-Río et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2026).

Table 3.b. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Queen

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Napakasaya ng aking karanasan dahil nagiging masigla ang klase sa pamamagitan ng mga laro. Mas nagiging aktibo ako at mas interesado sa aralin. Nakakatulong din ito upang mas madali kong maunawaan ang mga aralin."	Game integration transforms PEH into a lively learning space that sustains attention and supports comprehension.
"Isa sa mga gawain na naaalala ko ay ang larong pagpapasahan ng bola. Kailangan naming malpasa ang bola nang mabilis sa aming grupo nang hindi ito nahuhulog. Masaya ito at nakatulong upang matuto kaming magtutungan."	Cooperative mechanics help Queen associate successful learning with coordination and group trust.
"Nakakaramdam ako ng hamon kapag medyo mahirap ang gawain. Dahil dito, mas nagsisikap akong pagbutihin ang aking sarili. Ipinagmamalaki ko ang aking sarili kapag natatapos ko ang gawain."	Moderate challenge functions as a mastery experience that strengthens persistence and pride.
"May mga pagkakataong nakakaramdam ako ng pressure kapag natatalo ang aming koponan. Pakiramdam ko ay kailangan kong mas pagbutihin ang aking paglalaro para sa aming grupo. Ngunit patuloy pa rin akong sinusupportahan ng aking mga kaklase."	Peer support buffers performance pressure and helps sustain motivation during competitive moments.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Queen

Queen’s account reveals that the meaning she drew from game-based PEH was closely tied to lively participation and active understanding. Her statement that “games make the class lively” and help her feel “more active and interested in the lesson” suggests that games altered the classroom from a passive instructional space into an interactive learning environment. For Queen, the significance of game-based learning was therefore not limited to enjoyment. It also lay in its ability to make lessons more accessible and interesting. This pattern is comparable to findings from a Philippine MAPEH study showing that gamified classroom experiences were perceived by learners as more engaging, motivating, and memorable than conventional instruction (Barzaga & Venadas, 2024). It is also consistent with the systematic review of Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023), which found that game-based learning in PE commonly supports motivation and learning outcomes when movement and task engagement are built into instruction.

Queen also framed her meaningful experiences around teamwork and shared responsibility. Her recollection of the ball-passing game, where the group had to keep the ball moving “without dropping it,” highlights the way cooperative mechanics shaped how she understood the lesson. Through Constructivist Learning Theory, this indicates that knowledge was constructed in a social and embodied context rather than acquired individually through passive reception. She learned the value of timing, coordination, and responsibility while participating in the task itself. Self-Determination Theory also helps explain her response because teamwork supported relatedness, while successful participation strengthened competence. Research on cooperative games in Philippine higher education similarly shows that structured cooperative play can strengthen teamwork and sportsmanship, both of which were central to Queen’s account (Tianio et al., 2025).

Another key meaning in Queen’s narrative is that challenge was productive when it remained achievable and socially supported. She explained that slightly difficult activities made her “want to try harder and improve,” and that she felt “proud” after completing them. At the same time, she acknowledged pressure when the team was losing. Interpreted through Flow Theory, this suggests that Queen responded positively when the challenge-skill balance remained within a manageable range. Too little challenge would have reduced excitement, whereas meaningful difficulty stimulated focus and persistence. The supportive response of classmates appears to have prevented pressure from becoming withdrawal. This interpretation is supported by recent evidence that gamification in adolescent PE can increase motivation, autonomy, and classroom atmosphere when affective support accompanies challenge (Sal-de-Rellán et al., 2025).

Table 3.c. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Wacky

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
“Gusto ko kapag bahagi ng aralin ang mga laro. Hindi ako madaling mainip at mas nakakapagpokus ako. Natututo rin ako habang nagsasaya.”	Game-based PEH reduces monotony and redirects attention toward purposeful participation.
“Naaalala ko ang isang laro kung saan kailangan naming gawin ang iba’t ibang ehersisyo sa bawat istasyon. Nag-jumping, stretching, at pagtakbo kami. Nakakapagod ito ngunit napakasaya rin.”	Progressive physical challenge is interpreted as meaningful when variety and movement are built into the activity.
“Nasasabik ako kapag nakikipagpaligsahan kami sa ibang grupo. Masayang makita kung aling koponan ang unang matatapos. Mas nagiging kawili-wili ang gawain dahil dito.”	Competition serves as a motivational trigger that intensifies effort and investment in the task.
“Ang paglalaro ay nakatutulong upang mapaunlad ko ang aking kakayahang magplano ng tamang estratehiya. Inilip ko ang pinakamabisang paraan upang manalo o matapos ang gawain.”	Game-based learning stimulates tactical thinking and problem solving alongside physical participation.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Wacky

Wacky’s responses show that he derived meaning from game-based PEH as an antidote to boredom and as a mode of sustained attentional engagement. His statement that games made him “less bored and more focused” indicates that he interpreted game-based tasks as cognitively and physically involving, not merely entertaining. The significance of the experience lies in how the game format kept him mentally present while moving. This is consistent with local and international evidence suggesting that gamified PE can make instruction more engaging and better aligned with students’ preference for interactive activity rather than sedentary participation (Marcaida et al., 2024; Fernández-Río et al., 2020).

His memory of a station-based activity, where students performed “jumping, stretching, and running,” further suggests that variety itself was meaningful. Although he described the activity as “tiring,” he still interpreted it positively because the challenge was distributed across changing tasks. From the perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory, Wacky’s understanding emerged through sequenced experiences in which he physically encountered different movement demands and learned by navigating them. His experience also reflects Flow Theory because varied stations likely maintained involvement by presenting clear sub-

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

goals and a continuing sense of progression. The desire for inclusive and fair participation elsewhere in his responses suggests that he valued challenge most when everyone could remain involved.

Wacky also attached importance to competition and strategy. He noted that he felt excited when competing with other groups and that games made him think about “the best way to win or complete the activity.” This indicates that he did not experience games solely as movement but as structured problems requiring judgment, anticipation, and coordinated action. Self-Determination Theory helps explain this through competence, since successful tactical participation can strengthen feelings of capability, while relatedness is supported by group-based competition. At the same time, Flow Theory is relevant because competitive tasks often intensify concentration when goals are clear and feedback is immediate. Recent meta-analytic evidence further shows that cooperative and game-based PE environments can improve affective, cognitive, and social outcomes, including collaboration and strategic participation (Boke et al., 2025).

Table 3.d. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Mica

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Isa sa mga larong naaalala ko ay ang pangkatang hamon kung saan kailangan naming tapusin ang iba't ibang gawain nang sama-sama. Nagtulungan kami upang matapos ang aktibidad. Naging masaya ako dahil nakasama ko ang aking mga kaklase sa pagtulungan."	Shared task completion gives Mica a sense of collective accomplishment and positive classroom belonging.
"Mas nagiging determinado ako kapag hinihikayat ako ng aking mga kaklase. Nagbibigay ito sa akin ng kumpiyansa upang gawin ang aking makakaya sa laro. Dahil dito, mas nae-enjoy ko ang gawain."	Peer encouragement acts as a motivational resource that strengthens confidence and persistence.
"Minsan ay hindi ako komportable kapag napakahirap ng gawain. Nag-aalala ako na baka magkamali ako. Ngunit sinisikap ko pa ring makilahok sa mga aktibidad."	Difficulty creates tension, but Mica interprets participation as worthwhile even under uncertainty.
"Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang matuto ako nang hindi nababagot. Nagagamit ko ang aking mga natutuhan habang nagsasaya. Dahil dito, mas nagiging kawili-wili ang aming aralin."	Learning becomes meaningful when skill application is embedded in enjoyable activity.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Mica

Mica's significant experiences suggest that the meaning she drew from game-based PEH was deeply relational. She repeatedly described games in terms of working with classmates, helping one another, and feeling happy during shared tasks. Her recollection that a group challenge “made me feel happy to work with my classmates” indicates that the significance of the activity was not only successful performance but also collaborative participation itself. This aligns with studies in the Philippines showing that cooperative games can strengthen teamwork and positive interpersonal behavior in movement-based classes (Tianio et al., 2025). It also reflects the preference of many learners for socially interactive and less lecture-centered physical education experiences (Tagare et al., 2026).

A second meaning in Mica's account is that encouragement functions as emotional scaffolding. She stated, “My classmates cheer for me. It gives me confidence to do my best in the game,” which shows that confidence was not experienced as purely individual. Rather, it was relationally produced through peer support. Within Self-Determination Theory, this reflects the satisfaction of relatedness and competence: she felt supported by others and more capable because of that support. Constructivist Learning Theory likewise suggests that learning in PEH was socially mediated, with understanding and confidence co-constructed in interaction. Evidence from physical education research supports this interpretation by showing that cooperative games and positive peer climates are associated with enjoyment, confidence, and willingness to remain engaged (Engels & Freund, 2020; Vasconcellos et al., 2020).

Mica also drew a meaning of perseverance from difficult tasks. Although she admitted feeling uncomfortable when an activity was “very difficult,” she emphasized that she still tried to participate. This response indicates that challenge did not automatically result in withdrawal. Instead, it became part of a meaningful effort to remain involved. In Flow Theory terms, her account suggests that optimal engagement depended on balancing challenge with support. If challenge was too high, discomfort emerged; yet peer encouragement helped her continue. Her comment that games helped her “learn without feeling bored” further indicates that embodied application made the lesson feel worthwhile. This is consistent with recent work showing that game-based and gamified PE environments are most effective when challenge is coupled with supportive social feedback and active skill application (Ezeddine et al., 2025; Hsia et al., 2025).

Table 3.e. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Jess

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Mas nagiging masaya ang lahat kapag gumagamit ng mga laro sa aralin. Magaan at masaya ang aking pakiramdam habang isinasagawa ang mga gawain. Nakakatulong din ito upang mas madali akong matuto."	Game-based learning is interpreted as an emotionally safe and enjoyable way of participating in PEH.
"Nakakaramdam ako ng hamon kapag kailangan ang pagtutulungan upang matapos ang laro. Nagtutulungan kami upang makumpleto ang gawain. Masaya ang aking pakiramdam kapag nagtatagumpay ang aming grupo."	Initial performance anxiety can be overcome through participation, leading to adaptive confidence.
"Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang makita ko kung paano nagagamit ang aming aralin sa tunay na buhay. Mas nauunawaan ko ang paksa kapag ako mismo ang sumusubok nito. Dahil dito, mas nagiging aktibo ang aking pagkatuto."	Embodied gameplay enables Jess to connect abstract lesson content with real-world application.
"Nakakatulong ang mga gawaing ito upang mas mapabuti ang aking pakikipag-usap sa aking mga kaklase. Mas nagiging komportable akong makilahok sa mga pangkatang gawain."	Game-based tasks function as social spaces that strengthen communication and comfort in group work.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Jess

Jess’s responses indicate that she interpreted game-based PEH as a mode of learning that was both affectively positive and socially enabling. When she said that games made her feel “relaxed and happy,” she suggested that the lesson format lowered tension and made participation feel inviting. In her account, the meaning of game-based learning was not merely excitement but a more accessible classroom atmosphere in which she could join more comfortably. This pattern resembles Philippine findings from gamified MAPEH instruction, where students reported that game elements made class experiences more enjoyable, participatory, and memorable (Barzaga & Venadas, 2024). It also aligns with broader evidence that students often experience game-based PE as more motivating than traditional, teacher-centered instruction (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023).

At the same time, Jess’s account shows that game-based learning also involved evaluative tension. She recalled feeling nervous because “everyone was watching” and she “did not want to make a mistake,” yet she added that she felt better after trying. This suggests that participation in games exposed her to social visibility and risk, but that action itself reduced anxiety. Through Self-Determination Theory, this can be understood as a movement from uncertainty toward competence as she successfully remained in the activity. Flow Theory is also relevant because full immersion may have been temporarily interrupted by self-consciousness, then gradually restored once she engaged the task. Recent studies of flow and gamification suggest that enjoyment and concentration depend not simply on adding game elements, but on whether the activity allows students to move beyond anxiety into focused participation (Oliveira et al., 2025).

Jess also attached meaning to the practical and interpersonal dimensions of gameplay. Her statement that games helped her “see how the lesson works in real life” reflects a constructivist process in which understanding emerged from doing rather than passive reception. Likewise, her improved communication with classmates indicates that the game environment operated as a social practice space. These meanings are consistent with local findings that students prefer interactive, varied, and socially engaging physical activities over lecture-heavy formats (Tagare et al., 2026). They are also supported by research showing that active and cooperative game formats in PE can foster communication, teamwork, and more meaningful connections between lesson content and lived experience (Boke et al., 2025; Tianio et al., 2025).

Table 3.f. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Max

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Maganda ang aking karanasan kapag gumagamit kami ng mga laro sa PEH. Mas nagiging kawili-wili at masaya ang aming aralin. Mas nagiging kumpiyansa rin akong makilahok sa mga gawain."	Game-based instruction strengthens Max's willingness to participate by making class more inviting and confidence-building.
"Isa sa mga gawaing naaalala ko ay nang nagsagawa kami ng sayaw sa klase. Tinuruan kami ng aming guro ng mga simpleng hakbang at sabay-sabay namin itong isinagawa bilang isang grupo. Masayang magtanghal kasama ang aking mga kaklase."	Collaborative performance gives meaning to learning through synchronized practice and shared accomplishment.
"May mga pagkakataong nalilito ako kapag nagbabago ang mga patakaran habang isinasagawa ang laro. Kailangan ko ng kaunting oras upang maunawaan ang mga ito. Ngunit tinutulungan ako ng aking mga kaklase na matutunan ang tamang paraan."	Stable and comprehensible rules are necessary conditions for meaningful engagement.
"Para sa akin, nakatutulong ang mga gawaing ito upang mapaunlad ang aking mga kasanayan at kumpiyansa sa sarili. Ipinagmamalaki ko ang aking sarili kapag natatapos ko ang mga laro. Dahil dito, mas nahihikayat akong magsikap pa."	Successful completion of game tasks functions as a mastery experience that reinforces skill growth and self-belief.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Max

The general assessment of the composite mean for Max's account suggests that she understood game-based PEH as a more inviting and confidence-supportive way of learning. Her observation that games made the lesson "more interesting and enjoyable" and made her "more confident to join" indicates that the format reduced hesitation and increased readiness to participate. This meaning is consistent with studies showing that game-based learning can enhance engagement and concept retention by making learners more willing to enter and remain in the activity (Almario et al., 2023; Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023). For Max, the significance of gamification was therefore not only amusement but the creation of a classroom condition in which joining became easier and more appealing.

The dance routine she recalled is also important because it reveals that meaningful learning occurred through collaborative performance. She noted that the class practiced "as a group" and that it was fun performing with classmates. Through Constructivist Learning Theory, this indicates that learning took place through guided, shared enactment. The content was not simply explained; it was rehearsed, coordinated, and embodied. Such experiences can deepen understanding because learners actively organize movement knowledge while adjusting to peers. Relatedly, Self-Determination Theory helps explain why these moments were meaningful: group practice supported relatedness, and successful performance strengthened competence. Research on gamified and feedback-rich PE likewise shows that activities become more engaging when students can track improvement, receive support, and experience success with others (Hsia et al., 2025).

Max's responses also show that meaningful engagement depended on rule stability and achievable challenge. She admitted feeling confused when "the rules change during the game," suggesting that unclear or shifting expectations disrupted her involvement. In Flow Theory, this points directly to the need for clear goals and coherent task structure. Without clarity, immersion weakens and confidence may drop. Conversely, she reported feeling proud when she completed the games, indicating that successful completion restored competence and intrinsic satisfaction. Her mention of patience and calmness during turn-taking further suggests that games also socialized self-regulation. This interpretation aligns with Self-Determination Theory research indicating that need-supportive PE environments enhance high-quality motivation and behavioral persistence when learners perceive tasks as understandable, meaningful, and appropriately challenging (Ntoumanis & Moller, 2025; Vasconcellos et al., 2020).

Table 3.g. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Chen

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
"Mas nae-enjoy ko ang klase kapag may kasamang mga laro. Nakakatulong ito upang mas madaling maunawaan ang aralin sa masayang paraan. Mas nagiging aktibo rin ako."	Game-based PEH gives Chen a more active and intelligible route into lesson content.
"Mas nagiging determinado ako kapag hinihikayat kami ng aming guro habang naglalaro. Dahil dito, mas gusto kong makilahok sa mga gawain. Mas nagiging masaya rin ang aming klase."	Teacher encouragement serves as a motivational support that increases willingness to participate.
"Nakaramdam ako ng hindi komportableng pakiramdam nang mapagod ako sa isang napakaaktibong laro. Naging mahirap para sa akin na makasabay sa iba. Gayunpaman, ginawa ko pa rin ang aking makakaya upang ipagpatuloy ang paglalaro."	Physical fatigue can interrupt comfort, yet Chen interprets persistence as part of meaningful participation.
"Ang paglalaro ay nakatutulong upang mapaunlad ang aking kasanayan sa paglutas ng problema. Nag-iisip ako ng mga paraan upang matapos ang gawain o malampasan ang mga hadlang."	Game-based tasks are understood as cognitive as well as physical experiences that develop strategic thinking.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Chen

Chen's responses show that she drew meaning from game-based PEH as a way of learning that combined health, activity, and clearer understanding. She stated that games helped her understand the lesson "in a fun way" and also made her feel more active. This suggests that the value of the experience lay in the union of bodily movement and conceptual accessibility. Her response reflects the preference for interactive and engaging physical education tasks reported among Filipino learners in PATH-Fit contexts, where students favored less lecture and more activity-based participation (Tagare et al., 2026). It also supports the broader literature indicating that game-based PE can improve both engagement and understanding when tasks are physically enacted rather than merely explained (Ezeddine et al., 2025).

A second meaning in Chen's account is the importance of teacher encouragement. She said that encouragement during games made her "want to participate more," indicating that motivation was partly relational and teacher-mediated. Within Self-Determination Theory, such encouragement can be interpreted as support for relatedness and competence, because the teacher's

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

feedback affirmed both her connection to the classroom and her ability to continue participating. Recent research on gamified PE similarly underscores the value of feedback-rich, student-centered environments in sustaining motivation and improving outcomes (Zhang et al., 2026; Hsia et al., 2025).

Chen also described the limits of challenge. She became uncomfortable when she got tired and found it “hard to keep up with the others,” yet she still tried to continue. This indicates that she understood participation as meaningful even when the task was physically demanding, but her response also shows that challenge must remain manageable. Through Flow Theory, her account highlights the importance of calibrating activity demands to learners’ capacities so that challenge stimulates engagement rather than discouragement. Her statement that games improved her problem-solving skills further suggests that she experienced PEH tasks as requiring planning and adjustment, not only physical effort. From a Constructivist perspective, this means she constructed understanding while attempting to solve movement problems in real time. Research on cognitively and physically challenging games in PE supports this view by showing that students often develop planning, decision making, and adaptive thinking through structured game tasks (Boke et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2026).

Table 3.h. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings of Jaz

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
“Sa kabuuan, masaya at kapana-panabik ang aking karanasan. Nakakatulong ang mga laro upang manatili akong nakapokus at mas aktibong nakikilahok. Dahil dito, ang PEH ay isa sa mga paborito kong asignatura.”	Game-based learning gives Jaz a strong sense of attentional engagement and positive class value.
“Isa sa mga gawain sa PEH na naaalala ko ay ang pangkatang laro gamit ang mga cone at bola. Kinailangan naming tapusin ang gawain nang mas mabilis kaysa sa kabilang koponan. Dahil dito, naging mas kapana-panabik at masigla ang aming klase.”	Competition provides meaningful urgency that heightens effort and emotional investment.
“Nasasabik ako kapag nagagawa kong matapos ang isang gawain sa laro. Ipinagmamalaki ko ang aking sarili dahil dito. Naghihikayat din ito sa akin na patuloy na magsikap.”	Task completion is interpreted as a mastery experience that reinforces confidence and persistence.
“Ginagawang mas masaya ng mga laro ang pag-aaral tungkol sa kalusugan at pisikal na kaangkupan (fitness). Dahil dito, mas nahihikayat kaming mag-ehersisyo at manatiling aktibo kahit nasa labas na ng paaralan.”	Game-based PEH is understood as transferable to everyday health behavior and active living.

Meanings Drawn from the Significant Experiences of Jaz

Jaz’s account suggests that she drew a strongly affirmative meaning from game-based PEH. She stated that games helped her “stay focused and participate more” and that they made PEH one of her favorite classes. This indicates that for Jaz, the significance of the approach lay in its ability to capture attention while simultaneously increasing willingness to join. Her response closely parallels findings from Philippine and international work showing that gamified PE environments can increase classroom engagement and make movement-based learning more appealing to adolescents (Marcaida et al., 2022; Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023).

Another important meaning in Jaz’s narrative is that competition intensified involvement without undermining the value of teamwork. She remembered a team task in which the class had to finish faster than another group, and she described the activity as “exciting and competitive.” She also said that successful task completion made her feel “proud” and motivated her to keep trying. Through Self-Determination Theory, these responses point to competence as a major source of motivation, while her references to cooperation and sportsmanship indicate that relatedness remained equally important. Flow Theory is also applicable because the competitive structure likely offered clear goals, immediate performance feedback, and an optimal level of urgency that sustained concentration. Recent research confirms that gamified PE environments can strengthen intrinsic motivation and outcomes when challenge is paired with feedback and teacher support (Ezeddine et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2026).

Jaz further interpreted game-based learning as relevant beyond the class period itself. Her view that games make students “more likely to exercise and stay active outside of school” suggests a transfer of meaning from classroom participation to health behavior. From a Constructivist standpoint, this transfer emerged because school activities were connected to recognizable real-life practices rather than treated as isolated school tasks. Her mention of sportsmanship, fairness, and cooperation likewise shows that the lessons she drew from games were moral and social as well as physical. This is comparable to local evidence showing that

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

cooperative and gamified physical activities can reinforce teamwork, positive peer relations, and student investment in movement-based learning (Tianio et al., 2025; Tagare et al., 2026).

SOP 3. Themes Emerged from the Coded Responses of Grade 7 Participants

The thematic analysis generated four major themes from the coded responses of the eight Grade 7 participants regarding their experiences of game-based learning in Physical Education and Health. These themes are: Affective and Motivational Engagement in Game-Based PEH; Cognitive and Skill Development through Gameplay; Social Participation and Enabling Conditions; and Transfer of Values and Healthy Behaviors beyond Class.

Across the testimonies, the participants converged in describing game-based PEH as enjoyable, socially interactive, and easier to understand than non-game lessons. They consistently linked games with active participation, teamwork, challenge, and clearer lesson understanding. At the same time, their responses diverged in emphasis. Some participants foregrounded enjoyment and excitement, others emphasized challenge and confidence, while several highlighted confusion when rules were unclear, pressure when competition intensified, or the need for more inclusive and well-structured play conditions. These convergences and divergences indicate that the educational value of game-based PEH did not rest on fun alone, but on how game elements were designed, scaffolded, and connected to learning goals.

Table 4a. Thematic Clusters and Emergent Theme 1

Clustered Codes	Sub-themes	Emergent Theme
Active play as core game meaning; Continued skill engagement through enjoyable play; Engagement heightened by game integration; Enjoyment reinforced by successful participation; Experiential learning through enjoyable gameplay; High-energy engagement through pursuit gameplay; Higher engagement in game-based lessons; Intrinsic motivation through active play	Enjoyment and active participation	Affective and motivational engagement in game-based PEH
Learning enhanced through game-based delivery; Meaningful play in PEH learning; Meaningful play increasing class value; Playful engagement schema; Playful immersion in PEH learning; Positive closure on game-based learning experience; Positive experience with game-mediated instruction; Social play association in PEH	Meaningful and socially engaging play	
Challenge-based persistence; Competition-driven motivation; Competitive team challenge with clear task goals; Difficulty tension in game participation; Mastery satisfaction from task completion	Challenge, competition, and mastery incentives	
Motivation sparked by game challenge; Performance pressure within competitive play; Progressive challenge through station-based tasks; Sustained motivation through game-based PEH; Confidence building through mastery experience	Sustained motivation and self-efficacy	

Emergent Theme 1: Affective and motivational engagement in game-based PEH

This theme was reflected across all eight participants and accounted for 64 coded occurrences, making it the most dominant pattern in the data. It captures the participants' common interpretation of game-based PEH as a learning experience that was pleasurable, energizing, meaningful, and motivating. The strongest convergence within the theme is that the learners did not experience games as peripheral to learning. Rather, they experienced gameplay as the very condition that made PEH lessons feel alive, approachable, and worth engaging in. Ez noted that games made learning "more fun and exciting," Queen described the class as becoming "lively," and Wacky explained that game-based lessons made him "less bored and more focused." Such statements suggest that enjoyment functioned as a pedagogical entry point into participation rather than as mere entertainment.

At the same time, the responses diverged in the specific affective sources of engagement. For some participants, enjoyment came primarily from active movement and social play; for others, it came from challenge, competition, or the pride of finishing tasks. A smaller but important set of responses also showed that motivation could coexist with tension, such as when Mica worried about making mistakes or when Queen felt pressure when her team was losing. This divergence is analytically important because it shows that game-based PEH did not generate a single emotional response. Instead, it produced a spectrum ranging from excitement and immersion to pressure and discomfort, depending on the alignment among challenge level, peer support, and task clarity. From a constructivist perspective, this theme indicates that emotions were intertwined with meaning-making because students interpreted lessons through action, interaction, and immediate classroom consequences. Through Self-Determination Theory, the theme shows that game-based PEH supported relatedness through group participation, competence through successful performance, and, in some cases, autonomy through willing involvement. From Flow Theory, the theme reflects conditions of enjoyment and absorption when students encountered clear goals, active feedback, and challenge levels that were stimulating but manageable. These findings are consistent with systematic and experimental literature showing that game-based and gamified PE generally enhance student motivation, enjoyment, and participation when design conditions support

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

psychological needs and meaningful challenge (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023; Ezeddine et al., 2025; Sal-de-Rellán et al., 2025; Pacturan et al., 2024).

Sub-theme 1: Enjoyment and active participation

This sub-theme was reflected in all eight participants and 22 coded occurrences. The convergence of responses shows that the most immediate meaning students attached to game-based PEH was enjoyment anchored in bodily activity. Queen stated that games made the class “lively” and made her feel “more active and interested in the lesson,” while Mica explained that games helped her “stay active and engaged.” Wacky likewise associated games with “running, jumping, and being active,” and Jaz described game-based PEH as one of her favorite classes because it was “fun and engaging.” These statements indicate that enjoyment was not abstract or passive. It was tied to movement, participation, and physical involvement. The participants generally experienced activity itself as a motivating feature of learning, which suggests that the game format reduced monotony and invited fuller participation.

The divergence within this sub-theme lies in how active participation was valued. For some participants, such as Queen and Mica, activity was inseparable from social enjoyment and shared class energy. For others, like Wacky, the emphasis was on movement and the reduction of boredom, while Jaz attached enjoyment to memorable task completion and class preference. This variation suggests that active participation was a common outcome but was experienced through different affective routes. Under Constructivist Learning Theory, these experiences show that students were constructing understanding through bodily engagement in authentic lesson contexts. Under Self-Determination Theory, active participation appears to satisfy competence and relatedness because students felt capable while also learning alongside peers. Under Flow Theory, the repeated references to energy, focus, and immersion suggest that physical engagement helped narrow attention toward the activity at hand. This interpretation is supported by recent research indicating that game-based PE increases engagement and motivation by making participation more active, dynamic, and learner-centered (Ezeddine et al., 2025; Viray, 2025).

Sub-theme 2: Meaningful and socially engaging play

This sub-theme was also reflected in all eight participants and 22 coded occurrences. The convergence of responses shows that the students did not simply enjoy games because they were playful; they also interpreted them as meaningful learning experiences. Ez shared that when games were used, “It makes learning more fun and exciting. I enjoy participating with my classmates,” while Wacky stated that “game-based activities make the lesson easier to understand” because he learns better “when moving and participating.” Jaz similarly explained that games help her remember the lesson better, and Max emphasized that practicing skills through games makes class more meaningful. These responses suggest that play was interpreted as a legitimate mode of learning, especially when it linked enjoyment with peer participation and lesson comprehension.

The divergence appears in how meaningfulness was constructed. For some participants, meaningful play was grounded in social participation and class enjoyment, while for others it was linked to memory, comprehension, or skill use. This indicates that meaningful play functioned both affectively and cognitively. Constructivist Learning Theory strongly illuminates this sub-theme because students were assigning meaning to PEH concepts through social action rather than through detached explanation. Self-Determination Theory also explains why such play was motivating: the social dimension supported relatedness, and the successful completion of tasks nurtured competence. From Flow Theory, meaningful play becomes significant because learners are more likely to enter a focused, autotelic state when the activity is both enjoyable and purposeful. This interpretation aligns with Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023), who noted that games in PE support motivation, socialization, and meaningful learning, and with Marcaida et al. (2024), whose Philippine review identified engagement and learning outcomes as recurring benefits of gamification in physical education.

Sub-theme 3: Challenge, competition, and mastery incentives

This sub-theme was reflected in seven participants and eight coded occurrences. The strongest convergence in the data is that challenge and competition often acted as motivational triggers. Queen remarked that when the activity was “a little difficult,” it made her “want to try harder and improve,” while Ez said he felt excited when his team was about to win because “everyone cheers and tries their best.” Jaz likewise recalled a competitive team activity using cones and balls that made the class “exciting and competitive,” and she added that completing a task made her feel “proud of myself.” These statements indicate that challenge and competition were not merely external mechanics. They were interpreted as catalysts for persistence, effort, and mastery satisfaction.

Yet the responses also diverged in how challenge was experienced. For several participants, challenge was energizing and competence-enhancing. For others, especially Mica and Chen, difficulty could become uncomfortable or tiring when the task demand exceeded their ease or readiness. This divergence suggests that competition and challenge are productive only when they remain pedagogically calibrated. Constructivist Learning Theory explains that challenge creates disequilibrium that prompts

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

learners to adapt and make sense of action. Self-Determination Theory helps explain why challenge can increase motivation when it supports competence without undermining belonging. Flow Theory is especially relevant here because the participants' experiences point to the classic balance between skill and challenge: excitement and immersion emerged when the activity was demanding but still achievable, whereas discomfort emerged when challenge outran understanding or confidence. Recent research similarly shows that gamified challenge in PE can strengthen motivation and engagement, but its benefits depend on careful task design and emotional support (Sal-de-Rellán et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2026).

Sub-theme 4: Sustained motivation and self-efficacy

This sub-theme was reflected in all eight participants and 12 coded occurrences. The coded responses converge in showing that games sustained students' motivation over the course of PEH activities and strengthened their sense that they could succeed. Jess explained that fast and active games made the activity "fun," while Max shared that she felt proud when she completed the games and that the activities motivated her "to try harder." Chen and Ez similarly associated game-based PEH with stronger motivation to join and continue participating, and confidence-building was evident when students described feeling more able to perform after challenge completion. These statements indicate that game-based learning did not only generate short bursts of excitement. It also sustained participation and shaped self-belief.

The divergence lies in the fact that self-efficacy did not always arise from the same source. For some participants, it came from successfully finishing a task; for others, it was reinforced by peer support, repeated effort, or simply being encouraged to keep trying. Queen and Jess also revealed a more fragile side of self-efficacy, where competitive pressure could temporarily threaten confidence before support restored it. Under Constructivist Learning Theory, self-efficacy grew out of successful encounters with situated tasks. Under Self-Determination Theory, these experiences directly reflect the strengthening of competence and relatedness, especially when students were encouraged, supported, and able to see their own progress. Under Flow Theory, sustained motivation may be explained by the continuing perception that task demands were meaningful and worth pursuing. This interpretation is supported by Hsia et al. (2025), who found that gamified PE environments improved autonomy, competence, relatedness, and engagement, and by Sal-de-Rellán et al. (2025), who concluded that gamification in PE commonly strengthens motivation, autonomy, and classroom atmosphere.

Table 4b. Thematic Clusters and Emergent Theme 2

Clustered Codes	Sub-themes	Emergent Theme
Concept clarity through applied gameplay; Concept understanding through embodied practice; Game-based learning preferred over traditional delivery; Lesson comprehension through gameplay	Comprehension through active application	Cognitive and skill development through gameplay
Need to align fun with learning objectives; Preference for experiential over passive instruction; Retention strengthened by active application	Experiential preference and retention	
Challenge mechanics support fitness skill development; Challenge-course mechanics support problem-solving and fitness; Fast-paced mechanics support agility learning; Meaningful play supporting skill acquisition; Problem-solving developed through challenge tasks; Rhythmic game mechanics support coordination	Physical and motor skill development	
Skill challenge through balance-based gameplay; Strategic thinking prompted by game mechanics; Strategy mechanics support planning skills; Team-based mechanics support skill learning; Timed challenge mechanics support skill focus; Transfer of adaptive thinking from gameplay	Strategic and problem-solving skill development	

Emergent Theme 2: Cognitive and skill development through gameplay

This major theme was reflected across all eight participants and comprised 27 coded occurrences. It captures the way the learners understood game-based PEH as a cognitive and skill-building process rather than only an enjoyable class format. The convergence across the responses is clear: participants repeatedly indicated that they understood lessons better when they could perform, practice, or apply concepts through games. Queen explained that games make the lesson "fun and clear," while Ez said, "I learn by doing, not just by listening." Mica similarly emphasized that she could apply what she learned while having fun, and Jaz noted that games help her connect lessons "to real activities." These statements indicate that understanding in PEH was constructed through embodied and applied learning experiences.

The divergence within the theme lies in the forms of development most salient to each learner. Some participants highlighted conceptual understanding, some emphasized memory and retention, while others drew attention to physical competence,

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

coordination, strategic thinking, or adaptive problem solving. This shows that game-based PEH supported multiple forms of learning simultaneously, but the salience of each depended on the task and on the learner's position within it. Constructivist Learning Theory is central here because students learned by manipulating, performing, testing, and refining their understanding in real-time activity. Self-Determination Theory explains why such learning often became more persistent: students were more willing to exert effort when they felt successful and involved. Flow Theory also helps interpret the responses because skill growth was strongest when students were deeply engaged in activities that matched action with immediate feedback and visible progress. These findings are broadly consistent with recent literature showing that game-based PE can improve comprehension, movement competence, coordination, and higher-order thinking when learners actively apply concepts in authentic physical tasks (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023; Longakit et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2026).

Sub-theme 5: Comprehension through active application

This sub-theme was reflected in five participants and six coded occurrences. The strongest convergence lies in the participants' repeated claim that games made lessons easier to understand because the concept was experienced directly. Queen said that games helped her understand faster because she could "see how the activities relate to what we are learning," while Jess explained that games helped her understand because she learned through action and not through passive reception alone. Mica and Chen likewise emphasized that game-based lessons were clearer because they could apply what was being taught while participating, and Jaz noted that games connected classroom ideas to real activities. These responses indicate that comprehension emerged through enactment, demonstration, and direct physical application.

The divergence is that comprehension was not always framed in the same way. For some learners, active application clarified abstract lesson content. For others, it clarified procedures, rules, or the practical meaning of PEH concepts. This suggests that active application supported both conceptual and procedural understanding. Constructivist Learning Theory directly supports this interpretation because students built understanding through situated activity and social interaction rather than mere verbal explanation. Self-Determination Theory complements this reading by suggesting that comprehension improved because students were more engaged when they felt competent and involved. Flow Theory is also relevant because concentration tends to increase when tasks are immediate, purposeful, and feedback-rich. Zhang et al. (2026) similarly found that gamified PE supported cognitive outcomes through enjoyment, social interaction, and feedback, while Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) reported that game-based approaches in PE frequently improve learning and academic performance when tightly linked to lesson content.

Sub-theme 6: Experiential preference and retention

This sub-theme was reflected in five participants and seven coded occurrences. The convergence in the responses shows that several learners preferred game-based PEH over passive or traditional instruction because active experience helped them retain what they learned. Ez stated that playing games makes the topic "easier to remember," while Wacky said that doing the activity makes it easier "to remember the rules or skills." Max similarly explained that she remembered steps and rules more easily through games, and Queen contrasted learning by doing with "just reading or copying." These responses indicate that retention was strengthened when students encountered content through concrete, memorable, and embodied tasks.

The divergence appears in the reason why experiential learning was preferred. For some participants, experience improved retention because it created vivid and memorable action. For others, it prevented boredom and therefore sustained attention. Mica's suggestion that games should balance fun and learning also adds an important cautionary note: experience alone is not enough unless it remains aligned with instructional purpose. Constructivist Learning Theory supports this sub-theme by asserting that durable understanding is strengthened when learners connect ideas to direct experience. Self-Determination Theory suggests that memory and persistence may improve because students are more motivated when they enjoy the task and feel competent within it. Flow Theory helps explain why experiential formats can strengthen retention, since deep concentration and immersion often make learning episodes more memorable. This interpretation is consistent with the systematic review of Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023) and with local findings by Pacturan et al. (2024), who reported that gamification is positively associated with student engagement and performance. It is also supported by Seraji et al. (2023), who emphasized activity-centeredness, interaction, and discovery as constructivist principles in serious game learning.

Sub-theme 7: Physical and motor skill development

This sub-theme was reflected in six participants and seven coded occurrences. The participants converged in describing specific kinds of games as vehicles for developing concrete PEH skills, particularly endurance, agility, coordination, and body control. Jaz explained that fitness challenges teach "endurance, strength, and discipline," Mica associated tag games with "movement, agility, and quick thinking," and Max said dance or rhythm games helped her learn "coordination and body control." Jess and Chen likewise connected challenge-based and balance-based tasks to fitness and problem-solving demands. These

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

responses show that students experienced game-based PEH as physically educative: the mechanics of the games themselves became the medium through which motor learning occurred.

The divergence lies in the type of skill most emphasized. Some learners emphasized locomotor speed and endurance, others coordination and rhythmic control, while others foregrounded balance and general movement confidence. This variation indicates that the pedagogical value of games depended on the specific game mechanics and the type of bodily learning they elicited. Constructivist Learning Theory supports this interpretation because motor competence was developed through practice in meaningful contexts rather than isolated repetition. Self-Determination Theory also applies because students were more likely to persist in physically demanding tasks when the activity remained enjoyable and socially supported. Flow Theory explains why skill development may have been reinforced in these contexts: repeated action, immediate feedback, and a visible sense of progress often produce intense focus during movement tasks. This interpretation is supported by Longakit et al. (2024), who found that a 12-week game skill-based PE activity improved movement competence, and by Viray (2025), who reported motivational and endurance benefits from game-based PE among junior high school students.

Sub-theme 8: Strategic and problem-solving skill development

This sub-theme was reflected in five participants and seven coded occurrences. The convergence in the data shows that games were not experienced only as physical tasks but also as cognitive spaces requiring planning, adaptation, and tactical thinking. Wacky explicitly stated, “I think about the best way to win or complete the activity,” while Chen described games that supported planning and problem solving. Queen linked relay races to focus and timing, and Jess associated challenge-course activities with adaptive thinking. Ez and Wacky also referred to team-based games that required coordination and shared decision making. These responses suggest that game-based PEH supported not only bodily action but also strategic reasoning embedded within movement.

The divergence concerns the cognitive emphasis of different learners. Some participants framed strategy in terms of winning or completing tasks efficiently, whereas others framed it as solving movement-related problems, coordinating with a team, or adapting to changing activity conditions. This variation suggests that game-based PEH supported multiple forms of cognition, from tactical thinking to practical problem solving. Constructivist Learning Theory illuminates this sub-theme because learners generated solutions from within situated activity systems rather than receiving them ready-made. Self-Determination Theory suggests that strategic participation became motivating when students felt agentic and capable inside the task. Flow Theory helps explain why decision-making intensified in these settings: activities that require rapid adjustment, attention, and response can produce deep task absorption when challenge is appropriate. This interpretation is consistent with Zhang et al. (2026), who found that gamified PE can support cognitive performance, and with Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023), who noted improvements in decision making and learning in game-based PE contexts.

Table 4c. Thematic Clusters and Emergent Theme 3

Clustered Codes	Sub-themes	Emergent Theme
Need for clear goals and instructions; Need for inclusive and fair participation; Need for rule clarity as gameplay scaffolding	Clear rules and structured scaffolding	Social participation and enabling conditions
Need for supportive play conditions; Need for variety and novelty in game design; Need to reinforce prosocial game norms	Inclusive and supportive game design	
Collaborative challenge promoting shared success; Collaborative learning advantage of game-based PEH; Collaborative performance through rhythmic gameplay; Communication strengthened by game interaction; Cooperation reinforced by team mechanics; Cooperative task completion through shared mechanics; Peer bonding through cooperative play	Cooperation and peer connection	
Peer collaboration through shared play; Sense of belonging through inclusive play; Social feedback reinforcing effort; Social interaction expanded by game mechanics; Team confidence fostered by cooperative play; Team coordination through relay challenge	Belonging, interaction, and team confidence	

Emergent Theme 3: Social participation and enabling conditions

This major theme was reflected across all eight participants and comprised 32 coded occurrences. It captures the social architecture that made game-based PEH effective or, in some cases, difficult. The convergence across the data is that students did

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

not experience games as isolated individual encounters. They understood them as structured social events requiring rules, fairness, inclusion, communication, teamwork, and supportive peer relations. Queen associated games with trust and teamwork, Ez described the class as full of cheering and coordination, and Mica emphasized that group challenges made her feel happy because classmates helped one another. At the same time, the data also show that the social benefits of games depended on enabling conditions such as rule clarity, inclusive participation, and supportive interaction.

The divergence within this major theme is especially important. Several participants emphasized smooth teamwork and peer bonding, but others pointed to confusion when instructions were unclear, discomfort when rules shifted, or the risk of exclusion if not everyone could participate meaningfully. These tensions show that the social value of game-based PEH was not automatic. It depended on design and facilitation. Constructivist Learning Theory explains this well because knowledge construction in PEH occurred within collaborative and socially negotiated activity. Self-Determination Theory is equally relevant, since many of the enabling conditions identified by participants are directly tied to relatedness and competence. Flow Theory adds another layer by showing that immersion is disrupted when rules are vague, goals are unstable, or the learner feels socially unsafe. These findings align with recent literature showing that cooperative and well-structured PE environments yield stronger affective, cognitive, social, and physical outcomes, particularly when communication, inclusion, and role clarity are protected (Boke et al., 2025; Fernández-Espínola et al., 2020; Tianio et al., 2025).

Sub-theme 9: Clear rules and structured scaffolding

This sub-theme was reflected in five participants and seven coded occurrences. The convergence of responses shows that students needed clear instructions, stable rules, and understandable goals in order to participate confidently in games. Ez said he became confused when he did not understand the rules and needed the teacher or classmates to explain them again. Wacky reported that he “did not know what to do at first” when instructions were new, while Max explained that confusion emerged when “the rules change during the game.” Queen and Jaz also requested “simple instructions” and “clear goals or challenges.” These statements indicate that rule clarity functioned as instructional scaffolding rather than as a minor procedural detail.

The divergence lies in the form of the problem. For some students, unclear rules initially prevented engagement; for others, changing mechanics interrupted confidence and flow after participation had already started. Wacky also introduced a fairness dimension by suggesting that games should include everyone so that no one feels left out. Constructivist Learning Theory supports the view that scaffolding is necessary for learners to act meaningfully within shared tasks. Self-Determination Theory explains that competence is undermined when students cannot understand what is expected, and Flow Theory predicts that confusion breaks immersion because clear goals and unambiguous feedback are foundational conditions of flow. This interpretation is supported by Hsia et al. (2025), who showed that feedback-rich and psychologically supportive gamified PE improves engagement, and by Oliveira et al. (2025), who discussed flow as a desirable but design-dependent educational experience. The local work of Pacturan et al. (2024) also reinforces the practical point that gamification succeeds when implementation challenges are addressed rather than ignored.

Sub-theme 10: Inclusive and supportive game design

This sub-theme was reflected in four participants and four coded occurrences. The convergence in the responses shows that students needed game environments that were emotionally and socially safe. Jess implied that support mattered when she felt nervous about making mistakes, and Max emphasized the need to reinforce teamwork and sportsmanship. Ez and Chen also indicated that variety and encouragement helped sustain participation, while Mica’s account of discomfort during difficult tasks suggests that support acts as a protective condition when challenge intensifies. These responses show that learners did not simply need games; they needed games designed in ways that preserved dignity, inclusion, and encouragement.

The divergence is that supportive design was expressed differently by different participants. Some focused on emotional encouragement, others on novelty and variety, and others on behavioral norms such as sportsmanship. This indicates that supportive design is multidimensional, involving emotional, motivational, and ethical conditions. Constructivist Learning Theory suggests that inclusive design broadens access to participation in shared meaning-making. Self-Determination Theory shows why such conditions matter: relatedness and competence are difficult to sustain when learners fear embarrassment or exclusion. Flow Theory also suggests that supportive conditions reduce self-consciousness and allow the learner to remain absorbed in the task. These findings are consistent with Hsia et al. (2025), whose SDT-based gamified PE design strengthened engagement and psychological need satisfaction, and with Sal-de-Rellán et al. (2025), who noted that gamification benefits may decline when affective-motivational dimensions are neglected.

Sub-theme 11: Cooperation and peer connection

This sub-theme was reflected in six participants and 10 coded occurrences. The convergence across the testimonies is strong: many learners viewed game-based PEH as a setting for cooperation, communication, and shared accomplishment. Queen recalled

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

a ball-passing game that “helped us work together,” Mica described a group challenge where “we helped each other,” and Ez and Jess spoke of games that strengthened communication and cooperation. Max likewise described dance performance as a group effort, and Jaz connected games with friendship and teamwork. These responses indicate that cooperation was not incidental. It was one of the principal meanings students attached to game-based PEH.

The divergence lies in the specific form cooperation took. For some participants, it meant communicating during tasks. For others, it meant mutual help, coordinated movement, or completing group goals together. This variation suggests that cooperation in game-based PEH operated at multiple levels, from talk and encouragement to task coordination and collective problem solving. Constructivist Learning Theory strongly supports this reading because collaborative activity is a central site of knowledge construction. Self-Determination Theory also explains why cooperation mattered: relatedness needs were visibly satisfied when learners felt connected and supported by peers. In Flow Theory terms, cooperative mechanics may deepen immersion by focusing students on shared goals rather than self-consciousness. This interpretation aligns with the meta-analytic findings of Boke et al. (2025), which showed strong social and cognitive effects of cooperative learning in PE, and with the Philippine study of Tianio et al. (2025), which reported that cooperative games enhance communication, collaboration, and mutual support.

Sub-theme 12: Belonging, interaction, and team confidence

This sub-theme was reflected in seven participants and 11 coded occurrences. The convergence in the responses shows that game-based PEH strengthened social belonging and team confidence. Wacky said games made him feel “included because everyone can join and participate,” Queen said she felt closer to classmates because “we play together,” and Mica highlighted the confidence she gained when classmates cheered for her. Chen and Max also associated games with greater interaction and support, while Ez’s relay-race account showed how team coordination and cheering generated shared momentum. These statements indicate that games created a social climate in which participation could be emotionally affirmed.

The divergence concerns the kind of belonging students experienced. For some, belonging meant inclusion and friendship. For others, it meant confidence within a team or the motivational effect of social feedback. This variation suggests that belonging in PEH has both interpersonal and intrapersonal effects. Constructivist Learning Theory explains belonging as participation in a community of shared practice. Self-Determination Theory is especially salient because relatedness emerges here as a decisive motivational resource, while competence is strengthened through affirming peer feedback. Flow Theory also helps explain why belonging matters: when learners feel socially secure, they are less likely to become distracted by anxiety and more likely to remain deeply engaged in the activity. This interpretation is consistent with Tianio et al. (2025), who emphasized inclusivity and reflection in cooperative play, and with Boke et al. (2025), whose meta-analysis found especially strong social learning effects in PE cooperative models.

Table 4d. Thematic Clusters and Emergent Theme 4

Clustered Codes	Sub-themes	Emergent Theme
Fair-play transfer to everyday behavior; Health behavior transfer through active play; Meaningful play linked to active living; Real-life skill transfer from game-based learning; Real-world teamwork transfer through gameplay	Transfer to health and teamwork behaviors	Transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond class
Respect cultivated through fair play; Rule-based discipline developed through gameplay; Self-regulation developed through turn-taking; Sportsmanship reinforced by competitive play	Fair play, discipline, and self-regulation	

Emergent Theme 4: Transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond class

This major theme was reflected in seven participants and 13 coded occurrences. It captures the participants’ tendency to interpret game-based PEH not only as an in-class method but as a source of values and behaviors that extend beyond the immediate lesson. The convergence within the theme is that students frequently connected gameplay to staying active, being fair, cooperating with others, and behaving with discipline. Queen said that games help her “stay healthy and energetic,” Mica linked fitness activities to building strength and endurance, and Jaz explicitly stated that game-based PEH makes students “more likely to exercise and stay active outside of school.” These responses suggest that learners did not confine the meaning of games to temporary classroom enjoyment. They saw them as connected to habits and values relevant to everyday life.

The divergence lies in which form of transfer was most salient. Some learners emphasized health and active living, while others emphasized teamwork, fairness, discipline, respect, or self-regulation. This means that transfer was multidimensional: game-based PEH was perceived as a bridge to both physical habits and social-moral development. Constructivist Learning Theory explains this transfer as the carrying forward of meanings first formed in activity. Self-Determination Theory suggests that values

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

are more likely to internalize when experiences are enjoyable, competence-supportive, and relationally meaningful. Flow Theory is relevant because memorable, absorbing, and emotionally positive activities are more likely to leave lasting behavioral impressions. This interpretation is consistent with literature showing that gamified and game-based PE can promote healthier habits, social learning, and prosocial behavior when gameplay is structured around meaningful action and reflection (Camacho-Sánchez et al., 2023; Ezeddine et al., 2025; Marcaida et al., 2024).

Sub-theme 13: Transfer to health and teamwork behaviors

This sub-theme was reflected in seven participants and nine coded occurrences. The convergence in the data shows that many learners connected game-based PEH with active living and teamwork beyond class. Ez, Mica, and Jaz all linked games to health behavior and activity outside school, while Queen and Max associated games with teamwork skills usable in group tasks and social settings beyond PEH. Chen likewise described game-based learning as relevant to real-life skills. These responses indicate that the participants did not see PEH games as isolated class events. They saw them as rehearsals for active, cooperative living.

The divergence lies in what kind of transfer each learner foregrounded. Some emphasized exercise, fitness, and active habits, whereas others emphasized communication, teamwork, and practical cooperation in everyday settings. This suggests that transfer depends partly on which aspect of the game experience becomes most meaningful to the learner. Constructivist Learning Theory explains this as the transfer of situated learning into other contexts once the learner recognizes the relevance of the activity. Self-Determination Theory suggests that such transfer is more likely when students voluntarily value the activity rather than merely comply with it. Flow Theory helps explain why these lessons may endure: highly engaging and meaningful tasks often become memorable enough to influence later behavior. These findings align with Camacho-Sánchez et al. (2023), who noted health and social benefits associated with GBL and gamification in PE, and with Longakit et al. (2024), who found that game skill-based PE offered both physical and social-psychological benefits. Local studies also support this pattern, with Tianio et al. (2025) showing that cooperative games can strengthen teamwork skills with real-world relevance.

Sub-theme 14: Fair play, discipline, and self-regulation

This sub-theme was reflected in four participants and four coded occurrences. The convergence in the responses shows that a number of learners interpreted games as sites for practicing fair play, discipline, respect, and emotional control. Queen explained that games teach discipline because she has to follow rules and stay focused. Mica said games teach respect because students must listen and give everyone a turn. Max associated games with patience and staying calm while waiting, and Jaz described sportsmanship as celebrating others' success and trying one's best even in losing. These statements suggest that students experienced games as moral and behavioral learning spaces, not just physical or motivational ones.

The divergence concerns the particular behavioral value that each learner emphasized. Queen foregrounded rule-following, Mica highlighted respect, Max emphasized self-regulation, and Jaz stressed sportsmanship. This variation shows that the same game environment can cultivate different dimensions of social-moral learning depending on each learner's standpoint. Constructivist Learning Theory supports this interpretation because values are not simply told to learners; they are enacted, negotiated, and internalized in shared activity. Self-Determination Theory suggests that prosocial norms are more likely to become internalized when participation is meaningful and socially supported. Flow Theory contributes a subtler insight here: when students are deeply engaged in structured play, rule-following and disciplined attention become part of the activity rhythm itself. This reading is supported by Tianio et al. (2025), whose findings linked cooperative games with sportsmanship and teamwork, and by Boke et al. (2025), whose meta-analysis underscored the broader social and affective outcomes of cooperative PE pedagogies.

SOP 5: Integrative lesson exemplars designed for Physical Education and Health instruction through the integration of game-based learning

The results of the themes based on the analyzed responses from the Grade-7 students led to the CAST Gamification Integration Framework, where CAST refers to Cognitive and skill development, Affective and motivational engagement, Social participation, enabling conditions, and Transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond class. As a whole, the framework positions game-based learning in PEH not as a simple strategy for making lessons fun, but as an organizing principle for designing integrative lesson exemplars that are developmentally meaningful, engaging, socially responsive, and behaviorally transferable.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

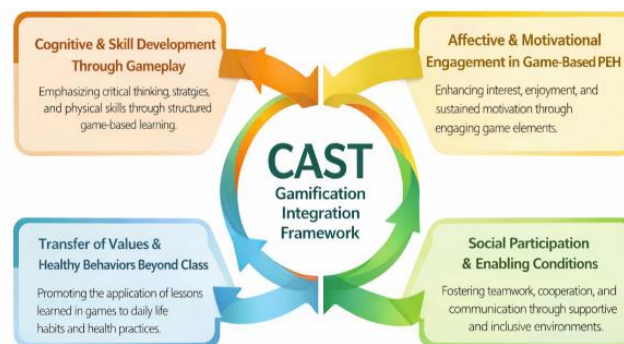


Figure 2. Gamification Framework for Lesson Exemplar Development

At the center of the framework is gamification integration, which means that lesson design should intentionally use game elements such as clear goals, rules, challenge, feedback, team interaction, rewards, and reflection to support PEH outcomes. The circular arrangement of the four domains shows that these dimensions are interconnected. In practice, an effective PEH lesson exemplar should not focus on only one area, such as enjoyment or competition alone. Instead, it should be designed so that cognitive learning, motivation, participation, and value formation operate together within the same lesson sequence.

The first domain, Cognitive and Skill Development Through Gameplay, emphasizes that games in PEH must promote learning and not merely activity. This means the lesson exemplar should include tasks that develop understanding of concepts, movement patterns, strategies, and health knowledge. In Physical Education, this may involve gameplay that develops coordination, agility, decision making, and tactical thinking. In Health, it may involve game tasks that help learners classify healthy practices, solve health related problems, or apply safety and wellness concepts. As a guiding principle, this domain requires the teacher to ask: What specific knowledge or skill will learners construct through the game? In this sense, the game is not an add on. It is the medium through which learners practice, apply, and deepen understanding.

The second domain, Affective and Motivational Engagement in Game-Based PEH, emphasizes the emotional and motivational power of gamified instruction. PEH lesson exemplars should therefore be designed to increase interest, enjoyment, confidence, and willingness to participate. This can be achieved through age appropriate challenges, meaningful rewards, progress markers, cooperative or competitive mechanics, and immediate feedback. The point is to make learners feel that participation is worthwhile and that success is possible. As a guiding principle, this domain reminds teachers that motivation is not incidental. It must be planned. A lesson exemplar should therefore anticipate how the activity will sustain attention, reduce boredom, and encourage hesitant or less confident learners.

The third domain, Social Participation and Enabling Conditions, highlights that game-based PEH works best when it is socially inclusive and supported by conditions that allow all learners to participate meaningfully. This includes teamwork, communication, peer encouragement, fairness, clear instructions, safe spaces, accessible materials, and differentiated roles. The lesson exemplar should not privilege only the fastest or most skilled students. Rather, it should create opportunities for shared success and cooperative engagement. As a guiding principle, this domain asks teachers to consider the classroom ecology of the game: Are the rules clear? Are learners safe? Can all students join, contribute, and experience belonging? This is especially important in PEH because learning is highly social and embodied, and exclusion can weaken both motivation and learning.

The fourth domain, Transfer of Values and Healthy Behaviors Beyond Class, extends the lesson beyond immediate classroom performance. This domain recognizes that PEH instruction should cultivate values and practices that learners can apply in daily life, such as discipline, teamwork, respect, self-regulation, active living, and health consciousness. In a lesson exemplar, this means that gameplay should be followed by reflection, synthesis, or application tasks that help learners connect the experience to real life. For example, after a team challenge, learners may reflect on cooperation and respect. After a fitness game, they may identify how the activity relates to staying active at home. As a guiding principle, this domain ensures that gamified PEH does not end with participation alone. It should lead to personal insight and behavioral transfer.

As a framework for crafting lesson exemplars, CAST can guide the teacher through a four-part design logic. First, identify the learning competencies and align them with the cognitive and skill demands of the game. Second, embed motivational features that make learners want to participate and persist. Third, structure the activity so that participation is inclusive, collaborative, and supported by appropriate enabling conditions. Fourth, include a transfer component that links the experience to values formation and healthy behavior outside class. This makes the framework highly practical because it can serve as a checklist for lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

A PEH teacher using this framework may therefore design a lesson exemplar in the following way. The lesson begins with a competency-based objective, such as demonstrating proper locomotor skills or identifying practices that promote personal health. The teacher then selects or creates a game that requires learners to perform those skills or apply that knowledge in context. Game mechanics such as points, timed rounds, team missions, or challenge stations are used to sustain engagement. The teacher ensures that rules are clear, roles are equitable, and materials are accessible so that all learners can participate. Finally, the lesson ends with a reflective processing activity in which learners explain what they learned, how they worked with others, and how the lesson connects to healthy living beyond school. In this way, the framework transforms lesson planning from activity-based teaching into theme-aligned pedagogical design.

In general, the sample lesson exemplars demonstrate how existing Grade 7 MATATAG PEH lessons may be redesigned so that classroom tasks become more interactive, learner-centered, and competency-driven. Rather than relying solely on direct instruction or repetitive drills, the exemplars transform lesson content into structured game experiences with clear rules, goals, feedback systems, group interaction, and reflective processing. In this way, the exemplars operationalize the CAST framework by ensuring that every game-based activity addresses not only physical participation but also concept formation, motivation, collaboration, and behavioral transfer.

The exemplars also strongly reflect social participation and enabling conditions. Their structure encourages teamwork, communication, peer support, and inclusive participation. This is evident in the use of collaborative tasks, group-based problem solving, shared scoring systems, and role distribution within activities. More importantly, the exemplars show awareness that game-based PEH should not privilege only highly skilled or highly athletic learners. Instead, they are designed so that participation is scaffolded through clear instructions, accessible materials, manageable rules, and cooperative structures that enable broader involvement. This dimension is crucial because it ensures that gamification supports an inclusive classroom climate where learners experience belonging, fairness, and meaningful participation. The exemplars therefore do not present games as isolated competitions alone, but as structured social experiences that promote interaction and support learning.

Another major contribution of the lesson exemplars is their incorporation of transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond class. The activities are not meant to end with the completion of the game. They are followed by synthesis, processing, or reflection tasks that guide students to connect the lesson to everyday health practices, teamwork, discipline, respect, sportsmanship, and active living. This feature is especially important in PEH, where the goal is not only immediate classroom performance but also the formation of habits and values that extend beyond school. By including reflection and application components, the exemplars embody the idea that gamified learning becomes most meaningful when students can relate classroom experiences to real-life behavior and decision-making.

Viewed as a whole, the sample lesson exemplars in Appendix E may therefore be described as integrative, competency-based, and theory-informed instructional models. They are integrative because they combine physical skills, cognitive processing, emotional engagement, and social interaction within a single lesson sequence. They are competency-based because the activities remain anchored in Grade 7 MATATAG PEH learning competencies rather than being detached games. They are theory-informed because the lesson structure follows the CAST framework, which emerged from the participants' actual experiences with game-based learning in PEH.

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on Beyond the Game: A Phenomenological Study on the Role of Game-Based Learning Approaches in Physical Education and Health Classes. It synthesizes the major results derived from participants' significant statements, formulated meanings, and emergent themes. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for practical application in Physical Education and Health instruction, curriculum development, and future research.

The following findings were derived from the thematic analysis of participants' lived experiences and align with the study's research questions.

1. The finding revealed that game-based learning made Physical Education and Health (PEH) classes more enjoyable, lively, and participatory. Learners associated game-based activities with excitement, reduced boredom, and increased willingness to participate in class activities. They also experienced improved understanding when lessons were integrated with actual movement and group interaction. However, some participants experienced confusion when rules were unclear, pressure during competition, and discomfort when tasks were physically demanding. Despite these challenges, the overall experience remained positive, indicating that game-based learning promotes an engaging learning environment in PEH.
2. The finding showed that learners gave meaningful interpretations to game-based learning experiences. They did not view games as purely recreational but as instructional tools that enhanced understanding, supported skill development, strengthened confidence, and improved retention. Participants emphasized the importance of peer support, teacher encouragement, clear

Beyond The Game: A Phenomenological Study On the Lived Experiences of Game-Based Learning in Physical Education and Health Classes

instructions, and successful task completion in making learning meaningful. They also connected game-based learning to real-life movement, teamwork, and health-related behaviors.

3. The finding identified four major themes that describe learners' experiences in game-based PEH: (a) affective and motivational engagement, (b) cognitive and skill development through gameplay, (c) social participation and enabling conditions, and (d) transfer of values and healthy behaviors beyond the classroom. These themes show that game-based learning supports not only enjoyment but also learning, social interaction, motivation, and behavioral development.

4. The finding revealed the development of the CAST Gamification Integration Framework, which serves as a guide for designing integrative PEH lesson exemplars. The framework includes four dimensions: cognitive and skill development, affective and motivational engagement, social participation and enabling conditions, and transfer of values and healthy behaviors. The framework demonstrates that PEH lessons can be redesigned into structured gamified learning experiences aligned with curriculum competencies.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Game-based learning in Physical Education and Health creates a more engaging, enjoyable, and participatory learning environment for Grade 7 learners. The integration of games into PEH instruction increases learner interest and reduces boredom, making it an effective pedagogical approach for student engagement.

2. Game-based learning also enhances cognitive and skill development by allowing learners to understand PEH concepts through active participation, movement, and real-time application of skills. This confirms that gameplay functions not only as motivation but also as an instructional strategy that supports meaningful learning.

3. The effectiveness of game-based PEH is influenced by instructional and social conditions such as clear rules, teacher facilitation, peer support, and appropriate challenge levels. While learners generally had positive experiences, confusion and difficulty emerged when instructions were unclear or activities were overly demanding, indicating the importance of proper lesson design and facilitation.

4. Finally, game-based learning contributes to the development of values and health-related behaviors that extend beyond the classroom. Learners demonstrated improved teamwork, discipline, cooperation, sportsmanship, and awareness of active living, suggesting that gamified PEH instruction supports both academic and character development.

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Physical Education and Health teachers are encouraged to systematically integrate game-based and gamified learning strategies into Grade 7 lessons. These strategies should be carefully aligned with MATATAG or Most Essential Learning Competencies to ensure that games function as instructional tools rather than purely recreational activities. Teachers are further encouraged to design lessons that incorporate clear rules, structured mechanics, and meaningful learning objectives to maximize student engagement and understanding.

2. Schools are encouraged to provide continuous professional development opportunities such as training, workshops, and seminars focused on the design and implementation of game-based learning and gamified lesson exemplars. These programs may specifically utilize the CAST Gamification Integration Framework as a guide for instructional design.

3. School administrators are advised to support the implementation of game-based PEH instruction by ensuring adequate provision of facilities, equipment, instructional materials, and flexible scheduling that supports active learning activities.

4. Curriculum developers and lesson planners are encouraged to adopt and refine the CAST Gamification Integration Framework in developing PEH lesson exemplars. This will ensure that lessons address cognitive, affective, social, and behavioral learning domains in a balanced and integrated manner.

5. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies involving larger populations, different grade levels, or other subject areas. Further studies may also explore comparative analyses between traditional instruction and gamified learning approaches, as well as investigate the long-term impact of game-based learning on student achievement, motivation, and behavior.

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