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Physical education research from postmodern, poststructural and postcolonial perspectives

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Introduction

Physical education research drawing on poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches is relatively new. At this point in time there seems to be a notable absence of research in physical education drawing on postcolonial theory and agendas, although the relevance of such an approach to research in the field is one that will be argued in this chapter. Whether researchers describe their work as postmodern or poststructural tends to be determined by whether they are researching in a North American context or UK, European, Australian and New Zealand context. In many cases, there is no explicit indication as to whether researchers identify their work as drawing on either of these perspectives. And so the decision to include research in this chapter has been based on the theorists researchers draw on, the technical language that they use, and on my judgements as to whether their approach is consistent with the ontological and epistemological parameters of a postmodernist/poststructuralist perspective. In addition, it is likely that there will be considerable overlap in this chapter with research reported in other chapters on 'approaches' and disciplinary contributions. Poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives also inform other types of emancipatory research including feminist research (Macdonald, 1993; Oliver & Lalik, 2004), research from a critical theory perspective and sociological research (Evans, Evans, & Rich, 2002; Evans, Evans, & Rich, 2003; Gilroy & Clarke, 1997; Penney & Evans, 1999; Penney & Glover, 1998). In addition, very few qualitative methodologies have been untouched by shifts towards an understanding of the constructed and unstable nature of 'truth' and subjectivity; an understanding which has usually been drawn from poststructuralist or postmodernist theorists (Denzin, 2000). As Sparkes (1992) argues 'the post-structuralist turn has the potential to provide us with insights into our own engagement in the research process because it brings to the fore the relationships between language, meaning and power as they act to influence the interpretation of any text' (p. 274). This makes it difficult at times to draw the line on what to include and what not. However that being said, research

which draws on a poststructuralist and postmodernist framework will have characteristics that are recognisable and one of the main purposes of this chapter is to demonstrate what these are.

Core Concepts

The term 'post' suggests a temporal relationship with an 'other' that came before. However, this fails to capture the complexity of the 'post' relationship with those theories and forms of practice that have this prefix. While the 'post' form has only been able to come into existence because of a preceding perspective or theory, it has not come to replace that perspective; instead it stands in a critical relation to it. 'Post' in this way signifies a disjunction, a disruption, a critically engagement with an existing 'set of ideas' or, with postcolonialism, a set of circumstances which have produced a particular set of ideas and social relationships (colonialism). Indeed one of the important tenets of a 'post' perspective is the fluidity of boundaries; as Usher and Edwards (1994) suggest, postmodernism 'is complex and multiform, resisting reductive and simplistic explanation' (p. 7). The terms postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism are thus hard to pin down. As constructs they are used differently by authors and researchers, and this use changes over time as ideas evolve, and are reinterpreted. In addition, the terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are often used interchangeably. According to Scheurich (1997), North American educational and social science researchers have little familiarity with the term poststructuralism, although many draw on what, in the European tradition, are known as 'key poststructuralist texts', in particular, the work of Michel Foucault. The term poststructuralism is more widely used in educational research in the UK, Europe, Australian and New Zealand to describe work which draws on Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, and that takes a particular interest in how 'texts' 'in both the narrow sense of written, electronic, spoken texts, and in the broader sense, of discourses, practices, institutions, produce particular subjects, subjectivities and social relations. In this sense poststructuralism comes closer to providing a specific methodology, 'a way of analysing and asking questions by anyone in *any* field' (Marshall, 1992, cited in Usher & Edwards 1994, p. 18). However, the same 'deconstructive' approach in North American contexts might be described as postmodernist (e.g. Nilges, 2000; Rail, 1998). What seems

to be particularly foregrounded in self-described postmodernist research is the explicit challenge to 'received' knowledge, and the desire to 'transgress boundaries' in the ways of *doing* research, 'including the ways in which researchers write reality and people's understanding of it' (Rail, 1998, p. xii). But then again many poststructuralist researchers in Europe, UK, Australia and New Zealand would describe themselves as taking up the same challenge.

Despite these difficulties in pinning down definitions, there are some understandings about knowledge and the self that characterise all of the 'post' perspectives and which provide guidance to the choice of research to be included in the chapter. For example, one would expect such work to critique essentialist notions of identity/self, to be working from a premise that reality is not fixed, and to be based on an assumption that it is important to understand how relations of power work in determining what meanings have precedence in particular contexts. In education and physical education research, postmodernist and poststructuralist research seems generally to have an emancipatory purpose; that is, to make visible the ways in which power and knowledge operate to privilege certain practices and forms of subjectivity and to examine their effects on the lives of individuals and groups. Such a process also has a purpose of opening spaces for alternative ways of 'knowing' and 'being' that provide new possibilities for practice in physical education and related fields.

Sheurich (1997) suggests that 'postmodernism is Western civilization's best attempt to date to critique its own most fundamental assumptions, particularly those assumptions that constitute reality, subjectivity, research, and knowledge' (p. 2). Critiquing well-established practices and theories is not always an easy or popular task. However, a reflexive approach to the assumptions which underpin physical education practice and research seems important if we are to avoid a position which continues to endorse, unquestioningly, deep seated biases based on the centrality of certain kinds of thinking – for instance, Eurocentric, scientific, patriarchal views of the world. As Foucault (1997) points out:

> If one is to challenge the domination of particular truths/a particular truth regime then must do so by playing a certain game of truth, by showing its consequences, by pointing out that there are other reasonable options, by teaching people what they don't know about their own situation, their working conditions and their exploitation. (pp. 295-6)

What poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism share is the notion that 'truth' is a fiction, that it is complex and constructed in relation to context, and that certain 'truths' have more power to affect practice and self-constitution than others. The process of identifying poststructuralist, postmodernist and postcolonial work is further complicated, however, by the ways in which researchers draw on concepts, technical terms and so on without explicitly situating themselves in relation to these perspectives. In reviewing research which draws on postmodern or poststructural theory and approaches, I will use these terms as the researchers themselves use them or if this is not made explicit, as the research exemplifies specific poststructuralist or postmodernist tasks and/or methodologies. The distinctions between the terms, as they are used by physical education researchers, will not always be pursued. What is important here is the work these perspectives do in assisting researchers to set problems, design and conduct research and interpret their findings in the context of physical education research. In physical education poststructuralist/postmodernist research, it is the work of Michel Foucault or the work from key researchers in physical education who have drawn directly on Foucault (e.g. Kirk, 1998; Wright, 1995), or indirectly (Tinning, 1990) on some of the key ideas from Foucault which have been most influential. In addition, it is possible to characterise some of the sociological research using Bernstein's more recent conceptualisations of discourse (e.g. Evans & Penney, 1995; Kirk, Macdonald, & Tinning, 1997; Penney & Evans, 1999; Penney & Glover, 1998) as poststructuralist research.

By way of clarifying the differences in the research covered in this chapter the main ideas associated with each perspective will be briefly described before turning to examples of research in physical education. A discussion of postcolonialism as a perspective will

begin this section, more to point to its potential for research in physical education than as an introduction to existing work.

A postcolonial perspective

Postcolonialism as research perspective has been included in this chapter, not because it is widely used by physical education researchers, indeed a fairly comprehensive search suggests its absence (with the one exception, (Hastie, Martin, & Buchanan, in press), but because of its potential as an important perspective for interrogating discourses and practices where issues of race and ethnicity/cultural diversity/minorities arise. This applies in relation to groups within countries such as USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand, and to those countries which are traditionally recognised as struggling with the effects of colonisation. Postcolonial theory, and related areas of research, such as subaltern studies, provide a way of examining the influence of globalisation and colonisation on what counts in relation to physical education curriculum and pedagogies

Postcolonialism as a perspective is derived from the influential work in the 1970s of Edward Said. Since the publication of his book *Orientalism* in 1978, which critiqued the western construction of the Orient, there has been widespread use of the term postcolonialism in the academy. Again, 'the "post" in postcolonial 'is not to be understood as a temporal register but as a sign and cultural marker of a spatial challenge and contestation with the occupying powers of the West in the ethical, political, and aesthetic forms of marginalisation' (McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood & Park, 2003, p. 459). Although postcolonialism began as a study of interactions between European nations and the societies they colonised in the modern period, it has been expanded to encompass dominant and subordinate relations produced through the effects of globalisation and the dominance of particular cultures in and between nations. This position is exemplified in the following quote from McCarthy and his colleagues (McCarthy et al. 2003) in their 'Afterword' to a collection of papers on postcolonialism and education in the *Harvard Education Review*:

> By postcolonial theory we are referring to the practice(s) of systematic reflection on dominate/subordinate relations produced in colonial and neo-colonial relations and encounters between metropolitan industrial and industrialized countries. These relations are properly but not exhaustively understood as center-periphery because they continue to be asymmetrical in their organization and their character. (p. 459)

Postcolonial studies therefore challenge notions of singular identity and ancestry and essentialist notions of identity and confront discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity. In relation to education, postcolonial writers and researchers challenge monologic interpretations of culture and the dominant Eurocentric curriculum. In relation to physical education, postcolonial theory can help to take up the same work and to challenge the dominance of practices based on Eurocentric meanings about health and physical activity, and what, arguably, is ‘an unremitting whiteness’ (Olesen, 2000, p. 220) in physical education research.

Poststructuralism as methodology: Discourse and discourse analysis

While both postmodernist and poststructuralist researchers are concerned with meanings as produced in ‘text’, it does seem that poststructuralism is able to provide more specific analytical tools to interrogate texts, in the form of ‘discourse analysis’ (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). ‘Discourse analysis’ is a term used to describe the process of identifying regularities of meaning (patterns in language use) as these are 'constitutive of discourses and to show how discourses in turn constitute aspects of society and the people within it’ (Taylor, 2001: 9). The term ‘discourse(s)’, here, captures the relationship between meaning and power; it is used to refer to systems of beliefs and values which produce particular social practices and social relations. According to Stephen Ball (1990), ‘(d)iscourses are about what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when and with what authority’ (p.2). Foucault (1972) describes discourse as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... Discourses are not about objects; they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own intervention' (p.49). It is through discourse that meanings, subjects and subjectivities are formed.

Although in this sense discourse is not equivalent to language, choices in language – for instance, choosing to define health in terms of fitness - point to those discourses being drawn upon by writers and speakers, and to the ways in which they position themselves and others.

Discourse analysis, then, is a process designed to capture regularities of meaning (generally patterns of language use). What a discourse analysis takes as its unit of analysis depends on what forms of meaning making are being explored. In most cases researchers draw on the tools of linguistics (Wright, 1993, 1997, 2000) or critical discourse analysis (Clarke, 1992; Lupton, 1992, 1999), however, Nilges (2001) in a particularly innovative analysis of meaning, has used bodily movements as recorded by Laban notation. Key to most forms of poststructuralist analysis, then, is the notion that all forms of meaning production, including 'lived experience', can be treated as texts. Thus, ethnographies, interviews, journals, narratives, even physical movements as they are documented by video or in the form of field notes can be systematically analysed as texts (written, spoken or visual), as they are constituted in and by specific social and cultural contexts.

Within physical education the term 'discourse' has a history which begins with the work of John Evans in the UK in the1980s. For Evans and those who have followed his lead in interrogating policy and practices in physical education, Bernstein's notion of pedagogic discourse has been the key conceptual tool in this process. 'Discourse' as used by Bernstein, incorporates notions of meaning and power in ways similar to the use of discourse by Foucault. However, for those working with Bernstein's notion of 'pedagogic discourse' and related concepts such as instructional and regulatory discourse, these are highly theorised and modelled concepts relating specifically to education (increasingly in the broadest possible sense). Increasingly those drawing on Bernstein are using his later work to ask questions about the 'body', that is how knowledge of the body is produced, transmitted and 'received' and embodied through PEH and sport in schools' (Evans & Davies, 2004b: 4). The kinds of projects such theoretical resources make possible have much in common with research that I would characterise as falling within a

post-structuralist approach: they seek to interrogate the ways the social practices associated with schooling shape 'consciousness and social relations. What seems to be different about those working within a Bernsteinian framework is that there is a search for specific regularities, an interest in defining codes and in mapping relationships which have some stability. Evans and Davies (2004) for example ask 'how are particular forms of knowledge and discourse encoded and translated into pedagogical practices and with what consequences for identity and consciousness?' (p.207). They criticise Foucault for failing to address these issues and argue that he does not provide the theoretical resources to do so:

> We share Bernstein's view that Foucault's analysis of power, knowledge and discourse is a mighty attempt to show the new forms of the discursive positioning of subjects. Yet there is no substantive analysis of the complex of agencies, agents, social relations through which power , knowledge and discourse are brought into play as regulatory devices; nor any discussion of modalities of control. It is a discourse without social relations. Furthermore Foucault ignores almost completely any systematic analysis of the common denominator of all discourses, education and the modalities of its transmission (Bernstein 1996). (Evans & Davies, 2004b, p.207)

What Bernstein's and Evans working in physical education offers that is less obvious in other physical education research which does not refer in some way to Bernstein, is an analysis of social class relations. While Foucault's notion of power offers a way of understanding the microphysics of power, that is how power is always contextual and works with 'knowledge' to constitute individuals and institutions. For Foucault,

> Power is an effect of the operation of social relationships, between groups and between individuals. It is not unitary it has no essence. There are as many forms of power as there are types of relationship. Every group exercises power and is subjected to it. (Sheridan, 1980) , p.218

By drawing on Bernstein's notions of pedagogic codes and pedagogic modalities , Evans is able to demonstrate how 'social and cultural hierarchies which operate both within schools and outside them' work to shape an individual's embodied consciousness.

An historical perspective: 'Posts' in physical education

Prior to 1990, one would have been hard pressed to find a reference to postmodernism, poststructuralism or postcolonialism in the English language physical education research literature. A comprehensive search suggests that postcolonial and related perspectives such as subaltern studies are still notable by their absence. This is not all that surprising given the late entry of these perspectives into educational research, despite their having a considerable impact in social sciences and humanities research.

Poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives are still relatively marginal in mainstream physical education research in the USA, although they have a stronger following in UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Their marginality is not simply to do with their relative newness in the field but also because like 'critical theory' these perspectives, by their very nature, trouble taken-for-granted ways of thinking about and doing physical education, and traditional approaches to research in physical education. They challenge the implicit positivism that has underpinned physical education research reported in the major journals such as the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*. Despite a major shift in this journal to a welcoming of qualitative research in 19xx, the strong and important relationship in the journal between research and classroom practice appears to allow little room for theories which raise fundamental questions about the relationship between physical education as a social practice and the formation of the self and culture/society.

Before discussing the empirical research in physical education which has been influenced by a poststructuralist/postmodernist perspective, some mention needs to be made of another body of work in physical education which refers in one way or another to postmodernism or poststructuralism but do not report on empirical research. The books

and papers which fall into this category are usually informed by a critical pedagogy perspective. Some like the edited collection by Juan-Miguel Fernandez Balboa (1997) raise questions about the nature of physical education in post- or high modernity. Others question the relevance of traditional forms of physical education for young people whose lives, expectations and interests are shaped by postmodern times and the influences of globalisation (e.g. Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992), provide commentary on curriculum and curriculum change processes in a postmodern context (e.g. Macdonald, 2003a, 2003b) or critically examine pedagogical practices using poststructuralist concepts of governmentality and performativity (e.g. Kelly, Hickey, & Tinning, 2000; Macdonald & Tinning, 2003a, 2003b).

The first two *research* papers which, arguably, draw explicitly on a poststructuralist or postmodernist methodological perspective are found in two edited collections: the first, *Teachers, Teaching and Control* (Evans, 1988) edited by John Evans from the UK; and the second, *Physical Education, Curriculum and Culture* (Kirk & Tinning, 1990), by David Kirk and Richard Tinning, both in Australia at the time. Evans' book collects together papers that have been written primarily from a sociological perspective about teachers' work and careers in physical education. There is one chapter, however, by Evans and Gill Clarke (1988) which reports on the results of research interrogating physical education as a social practice. This chapter examines how the 'new privileging texts' of health related fitness (HRF) and teaching games for understanding (TGFU) are taken up in classrooms at a case study school. Using Bernstein's understanding of pedagogic discourse the authors examine 'not only how children are differently positioned in '*relation to*' the privileging text by virtue of their cultural habitus but also the *'relations within*' the text' (p. 127). They describe through extracts of teacher talk the ways in which teachers control classroom discourses; that is, how "the discourse routinely demonstrates the teacher's authority, knowledge and power" (p. 136). Their conclusion from this analysis is that 'substantial curricular and organisational change has left largely unchanged relations between teacher and taught and pupils and knowledge' (p. 137).

The collection of papers in *Physical Education, Curriculum and Culture* is framed by the authors as 'critical studies of curriculum' with all of the papers taking up the task of examining how the knowledge in physical education is 'selected, organized, appropriated, legitimated and evaluated' (Kirk & Tinning 1990, p.3). In the introduction to their collection, Kirk and Tinning explicitly make reference to Foucault's work as a way of analysing the relationship between the body, movement and culture. However, it is only Jennifer Gore's chapter (1990), 'Pedagogy as text in physical education teacher education', that explicitly draws on Foucault to interrogate her practice as a physical educator and researcher. In this chapter she analyses a scenario drawn from her work as a physical education teacher educator as a 'pedagogical text' using theories of 'reading' from cultural studies and Foucault's notion of relations of power. The purpose of her analysis is to go beyond the preferred or dominant reading to a reading from a 'critical perspective'. A critical perspective in this case is one which focuses on 'issues of knowledge and issue of power relations' (p. 111). The poststructuralist (Gore describes her position as one aligned with cultural studies) aspects of the paper are recognisable in her secondary analysis of her initial interpretations of the research she conducted on her pedagogical practice. In her research on the lesson Gore uses methods which both answer questions about the effectiveness of the lesson and the ways in which the students engaged with the lesson. She used interviews with students, students written work completed for the subject (journal entries, lesson critiques and photograph comments) and questionnaires to collect demographic data and evaluate the course. From this data she categorised the responses of the students to her pedagogical approach (which emphasised reflective practice and student-centred learning) into three types: recalcitrant, aquiescent and committed. Reflecting on her processes of categorisation and indeed on her own expectations of her practice as an academic as 'transformative', she concludes that research approaches to pedagogy which draw only on technical or even transformative perspectives, close down multiple readings, multiple ways of understanding students' responses, and ways of recognising changing and partial subjectivities. She argues that researching 'pedagogy as text' points to 'overlooked or marginalized readings' which in turn can point to 'inequities and injustices, the acknowledgement and correction of which depend on the audience, on its moral and

political commitments' (p. 134). Although not elaborated in this chapter (see Gore, 1998), Gore signals the importance of Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth' to an understanding the relationship between power knowledge and social practice.

The more detailed work of elaborating this relationship and the ways in which physical education has been shaped by particular social, economic and political circumstances has been a major part of the influential work of David Kirk. His first book on the social construction of the British curriculum, *Defining Physical Education* (Kirk, 1992), introduced a genealogical approach to the study of physical education which has proved to be the model for those interpreting physical education curriculum from both an historical and contemporary perspective. His second book, *Schooling Bodies* (Kirk, 1998), which provided an analysis of school practice and public discourse in physical education and related fields, extended this analysis to the Australian context. (Kirk, 2003, 2004)

Although the research reported thus far challenged the nature of 'truth' and interrogated the production of truth in the context of relations of power, no research in physical education to this point explicitly identified itself as drawing on a poststructural or postmodern approach. The first paper to do so was one published by Wright and King in *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* in 1991, which reported on research analysing teachers' talk for the ways it contributed to the construction of gendered subjectivities. This paper was followed by another by Wright in 1995 which laid out a framework for a poststructuralist approach to research in physical education. This paper reported on the methodology employed in a study which investigated the (re)production of femininity and masculinity in three secondary schools through an analysis of teacher-student interactions in coeducational and single sex physical education lessons. Using Foucauldian notions of subjectivity and discourse and the analytic tools of systemic functional linguistics, the study involved the analysis of physical education lessons as specific genres or texts jointly constructed by teachers and students. The power of the texts to position students in relation to particular forms of masculinity and femininity was interpreted through an investigation of the likely institutional and cultural discursive

resources available to students to take up or challenge such positionings. These resources were identified through an analysis of media sporting texts and interviews with teachers and students.

There have been a few papers since in the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*. In 1996, British based journal, *Sport Education and Society*, was established to provide a context for the reporting of research which dealt with sport and physical education and 'a wide range of associated social, cultural, political and ethical issues in physical activity, sport and health' (*Sport Education and Society* inside cover). This journal has provided a forum for socially informed research and since its establishment the number of research articles in the physical education domain, drawing on poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives has grown.

A survey of recent research suggests that certain 'technical' terms, such as 'discourse' derived from postmodernist and poststructuralist theories have come into common usage in research papers that do not explicitly locate themselves as drawing on these perspectives. These have come into use through the influence of writers, such as David Kirk (corporeal discourse), John Evans and Dawn Penney (official and unofficial discourses of physical education) and Richard Tinning (performance and participation discourses). They have also come into use through slippages from earlier work using the term 'ideology' (1990) to later work where discourse is now used in a very similar context (Tinning, Macdonald, Wright, & Hickey, 2001), and/or from feminist theory where terms such as gender discourses, or (hegemonic) discourses of femininity and masculinity have become common currency. Williams and Woodhouse (1996), for example, report on their investigation of the match between students 'feelings' about physical education, as determined by their responses to a survey, and the 'official' (and contradictory) discourses of physical education. While 'discourse' is used here in the poststructuralist (Foucauldian/Bernstein) sense of meanings constructed in relations of power there is no other indication that the research has been conducted within the parameters of a 'post' perspective.

This slippage in the use of what have been ‘post’ technical terms has made choosing what should and should not be included in the survey of physical education literature drawing on ‘post’ perspectives a challenge. In addition, as a perspective that critiques the taken-for-granted and thereby prompt changes in social practice, there is a considerable overlap between physical education research which draws on, or names itself feminist, critical, and/or emancipatory research. Further, there is no research design/paradigm that is particularly unique to ‘post’ work. In general, it is likely to be qualitative, although not always (see, for example, (Nilges, 2000), and to be interested in text(s). It is likely to take account of relations of power between participants and the researcher, it often explores different ways of representing information, drawing on narrative inquiry and life history research (which have in turn been informed by postmodernism), and at its best it should be reflexive (Gore, 1998; Scheurich, 1997).

In surveying the work in physical education research which has drawn on a poststructuralist, postmodernist, I will for the most part only refer to that work which explicitly frames the project of the research in poststucturalist terms, that is, is specifically concerned with investigating the nature of knowledge as discursively constructed, the relationship between knowledge/discourse and the constitution of selves and social relations. What this means is that I will primarily (but not only) be reporting on work from researchers located in UK, Australia and New Zealand, which generally identifies itself as poststructuralist, and draws on the work of Foucault and/or Bernstein.

There are now also a number of papers which describe the process of doing poststructuralist work in physical education research: using a genealogical discourse analysis to interrogate curriculum texts (Burrows, 1997), using a close interrogation of interview texts to investigate the process of subjectification (Wright, 2004); designing a poststructuralist analysis of classroom talk (Wright, 1995) and a comparative analysis of classroom talk (Wright, 2000a,b); and the use of observation and notation to demonstrate how quantitative data can be used to investigate the construction of gendered identities (Nilges, 2000).

‘Post’ research in Physical Education

Mapping the discourses of physical education: genealogies of physical education

In his early work, Foucault (1979) was interested in mapping or constructing a genealogy of the emergence of particular ‘technologies of power’ in institutional contexts, specifically in relation to the science, medicine and, particularly in *The Birth of the Clinic*, psychiatry. For Foucault (1997), ‘technologies of power are, 'those technologies which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the subject' (p. 225). In undertaking a geneaology, Foucault sought to show the 'specificity and materiality' of the interconnections between power and knowledge (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1986, p. 203). Power in this sense is understood as not primarily located in structures or in an all-powerful state apparatuses, but rather institutions act as specific sites where particular techniques of power are channelled and brought to bear on individuals in systematic ways. In this way a school, through its architecture, its organisation, its curriculum and daily practices, becomes a disciplinary site which draws on particular regimes of truth (discourses) to legitimate its existence and to define what it does. Thus, for example, particular pedagogical practices in physical education, such as those associated with assessment, the organization of classes based on ability and the measuring of bodies for weight and fitness work to produce particular kinds of bodies as normal and thereby construct for individuals particular opportunities for forming an understanding of themselves in relation to others (particular forms of subjectivities) (Burns, 1993).

Foucault uses the term ‘genealogy’ to differentiate between the more traditional ‘narrative’ histories and investigations of historically situated social practices in specific political, social and economic contexts. Genealogies interrogate operation of power in constructing knowledge; as a form of research a genealogical approach provides ‘an incisive strategy for getting at and disturbing the seemingly unalterable form of truth’ (Harwood & Rasmussen, p.?). Most of the genealogical work in physical education is interested in physical education as a curriculum text and a social practice. Indeed, most of

the contemporary critical policy and curriculum analysis in physical education is interested in the conjunction of power, the production of particular 'truths' in relation to physical education and the practices they effect. This research examines the ways physical education discourses and practices have come to be as they are, why and how some forms have come to prominence (in what social, political and cultural contexts) and others not, and with what consequences for individuals and social groups. In addition, it is interested in interrogating physical education curriculum and policy texts to identify the work of discourses in constituting particular 'subjects'.

The two major areas of research in this area are those which look historically at physical education (e.g. Burrows, 2000; Burrows & Wright, 2001; Kirk, 1998, 2003, 2004; Kirk & Twigg, 1994; Wright, 1996) and those which examine contemporary shifts in policy and curriculum construction and the consequences of these for physical education practice (Gilroy & Clarke, 1997; Glover, 2001; Lupton, 1999; Macdonald & Kirk, 1998; Penney & Evans, 1999; Penney & Glover, 1998; Penney & Harris, 2004; Thorpe, 2003). The first tends to draw primarily on Foucault and the second, primarily on Bernstein's later work (with some exceptions) where it moves away from a more structuralist approach with its focus on language and social class to 'his later poststructuralist attention (to) text, voice and discourse [which] could, in fact, be termed "postmodern" (Tyler, 2004, p.16). In Australia research on the ways in which particular discourses (e.g. those associated with 'health') have influenced the curriculum have often combined the two (e.g. Evans, Evans, & Rich, 2002; Tinning & Glasby, 2002).

The two most influential researchers in this area have been David Kirk and John Evans. Kirk has used Foucault's work on 'disciplining the body' and his notion of 'biopower' to examine how school based physical education has been implicated in regulating and normalising the bodies of students (e.g. Kirk 1998; Kirk 2003, 2004). In *Schooling Bodies*, Kirk draws together a number of paper published in various provide a genealogy of physical education in Australia from 1880-1950. Although his method of collecting data is that of historical research he is more interested in physical education as 'a field of corporeal knowledge that provides valuable insights into the social construction of

bodies' (p. 2). He collects archival materials, like school magazines, education department memoranda and policy documents and reports from school inspectors, which are then examined to identify the impact of public discourses, such as those associated with nationalism and eugenics, on how physical education, physical activity and bodies were understood. He uses his analysis of historical documents to demonstrate the shift in the schooling of bodies, from 'the meticulous, detailed and precise' forms of regulation associated with the militarised physical training and school medical inspections of the nineteenth and early twentieth century to one which were 'increasingly individualized, internalised and diffused' (3). He argues that the move from drill and exercise to a greater emphasis on games signalled a shift from predominantly external forms of regulation to self-regulation. In his later work (2003, 2004) he explores this shift as signalling, a wider social shift in the ways power operates in society in relation to the body. Drawing on Foucault's concept of 'biopower', that is the integration of two forms of power - one that operates at the level of the material body and the other of the social body – he demonstrates how shifts in 'biopower' from the 'heavy ponderous and meticulous' to 'a looser form of power over the body' can be identified in the shifts in physical education from an emphasis on drill and exercise to games Kirk (2003, 2004). His main point however in this later work is that a 'looser' form of power does not mean that necessarily mean that bodies are free from the exercise of power (nor should they be). Instead games, particular as practised in the formal environment of the physical education and school sport have their own embedded techniques of power - the regulation of time and space, the objectives of the game and the requisite training of bodies to achieve mastery. He suggests that while they may seem to have offered a liberating and more individualised, experience, there are forms of regulation and 'hazards' associated with games as they are currently taught (and coached) that are rarely acknowledged. Kirk (2004) concludes that,

> a necessary component of the process of schooling bodies is both their empowerment and their regulation; empowerment in the sense that practices such as physical education provide opportunities for young people to develop and realise particular movement capacities of their bodies; regulation in the sense that the

> development of some forms of movement expertise inevitably delimits other movement capacities young people might develop. (p.131).

Wright's (1996) paper, 'Mapping the discourses', builds on Kirk's earlier genealogical work on the British and Australian physical education to examine the social construction of the New South Wales (Aust) physical education curriculum from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. Archival material and interviews with those who took part or were subjected to physical education as a social practice prior to the 1980s were collected and analysed to identify how particular cultural and institutional discourses operated to marginalise female physical educators and students and to the forms of practice historically associated with women. In a similar vein, Burrows (2000; Burrows & Wright, 2001) draws on the poststructuralist analyses of development psychology to inform her interrogation of the ways in which developmental discourses and discourses of childhood shaped the New Zealand curriculum and create particular notions of 'normality'.

In one of the rare reports in English from European researchers in physical education drawing on a poststructuralist perspective, Gleyse and (his) colleagues (Gleyse, Pigeassou, Marcellini, De Lesleleuc, & Bui-Xuan, 2002), analyse the influential texts which have contributed to 'the development of physical education in France from the mid nineteenth century to the 1960s' to show the shifts from the conceptualization of the body as 'a steam engine and then as a machine' to more generalized notions of 'humanized productivity' and how these 'were to express and often to influence the reality of the practice put into effect and sometimes even the programs and policies themselves' (p. 6-7).

Whereas the research thus far reported as doing genealogical work has been historical, there is also research which takes a similar approach – that is, interrogates institutionally produced texts but which is primarily concerned with contemporary curriculum and policy. This research examines how particular conjunctions of meaning and power come together to constitute physical education in the context of policy, syllabus and in one case

popular media texts, and with what likely effects for practice. Much of this work is influenced by Basil Bernstein's concept of 'pedagogic discourse', as well as, or instead of, Foucault's theorising of the relationship between knowledge and power.

One of the recent focuses of work on the PE curriculum as been to investigate the influence of health discourse particularly as Health becomes incorporated into or joined with contemporary physical education syllabuses as HPE (e.g. Penney & Glover, 1998; Penney & Harris, 2004; Tinning & Glasby, 2002). Drawing on both the work of Bernstein and Stuart Hall, Penney and Harris (2004), for example, examine the representations of the body and health in texts derived from recent physical education policy documents produced by the government in England. They use physical education policy documents from New Zealand to highlight the cultural specificity of each and to demonstrate which discourses are 'variously included, privileged and marginalised or excluded' (p.98). From their analysis of the official curriculum texts they argue that the NCPE uncritically promotes a particularly narrow gendered conceptualisations of health, physical activity and the body. Their analysis of support materials and inspectors' reports suggests that these conceptualisations of physical education are unlikely to be challenged and indeed may be further restricted and constrained by influences on teachers, such as the privileging of sport in the UK, as these texts are 'recontextualised' into classroom practice.

Using the theoretical resources from Foucault ('governmentality'), Beck (1992)and Giddens (1991) ('risk society') and the 'new public health' (Lupton, 1995; Petersen & Bunton, 1997; Petersen & Waddell, 1998), Tinning and Glasby (2002) analyse the Queensland Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum for the ways in which it constructs particular notions of the body and the healthy person. Their purpose is to 'understand why HPE continues to be implicated in the reproduction of values associated with the cult of the body' (p.109). They demonstrate how, through the privileging of 'expert' knowledge about food, exercise and the body, particular forms of pedagogical work are performed by the Qld HPE syllabus and the teachers who organise learning experience s from its expected outcomes. This pedagogical work serves to regulate and

govern body practices in ways which continue to reinforce the ‘cult of the body’ and which silence alternative ways of thinking about health and the body.

One of the recurrent themes in physical education commentary is that the profession and/or the subject is in crisis (Glover, 1993; Kirk, 1996a, 1996b; Kirk & Tinning, 1990; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). In a paper entitled ‘Crisis discourse in physical education and the laugh of Foucault’, Stephen Thorpe (Thorpe, 2003) examines a particular instance of the ‘crisis discourse’ for its ‘effects’ (p. 131). Using as his text the Four Corners Program, 'Fools Gold', a 1992 ABC documentary which tapped 'into national sentiments surrounding the then approaching Olympic games in Barcelona' (p. 134), he demonstrates how particular ‘truths’ about physical education are mobilised through the articulation of ‘exercise, fitness, public health and national success in elite sport’ with the ‘four key interrelated discourses of nationalism, militarism, eugenics and capitalism (Kirk 1998b)’ (p. 134). He demonstrates how this articulation allows ways of understanding children’s participation in physical activity and their health as being in decline, with school physical education being held largely responsible. This analysis is juxtaposed with an analysis of the crisis discourse as it was manifested in the report of the 1992 Commonwealth Senate Inquiry into sport and physical education and the parliamentary commentary which followed. Thorpe identifies similar ‘truths’ about physical education as being mobilised in these texts. On the basis of his analysis, Thorpe concludes that those within physical education who are concerned to bring about change should be more concerned with ‘problematizing’ (Foucault 1985) the crisis discourse; that is, asking ‘*why the word crisis is used*’ and ‘*the consequences of its use*’, than investigating ‘*the nature of the crisis*’ (p. 147). He argues that there is no end to the ‘crisis’ and that the role for ‘critical intellectuals’ is one of ongoing critique, ‘an incessant activism’ which is alert to self evident and commonplace knowledge.

Governmentality: How discourses and subjectivities are called into practice

The work described above has helped to begin the process of mapping the discourses that have shaped and continue to shape physical education and to explain the *potential* of

these discourses for constructing particular kinds of subjects. Another body of work has explored how these and other cultural and institutional discourses are implicated in constituting particular subjectivities in and through physical education as a social practice in schools. This research falls under two main categories: that which is interested in how discourses taken up by teachers and students as they talk about physical education and related topics – for example, health, fitness, the body; and that which is interested in how particular subjectivities and social relations are constructed in the context of physical education classes. The first category of research tends to use interviews as a way of identifying what institutional and cultural discourses teachers and/or students draw on to make sense of physical education (e.g. Lupton, 1999; Macdonald & Kirk, 1996, 1999; Olafson, 2002; Wright, 1996); the second usually involves an analysis of texts derived from teacher pupil interactions in physical education lessons (e.g. Davies, 2001; Delamont, 1998; Gore, 1990; Prain & Hickey, 1995; Ronholt, 2002; Wright, 1997, 2000). In both cases from a poststructuralist perspective the interest lies in how particular 'subjectivities' are formed in relation to competing discourses and how power relations and particular discourses are enacted to constitute physical education lessons.

Teachers and students subjectivities

Any interrogation of the ways in which teachers take up particular notions of physical education generally requires some discussion of the discursive resources available for making meaning. In some cases, this is limited to material published in other papers. In other cases, the specific nature of the context requires a brief genealogy of the syllabus or related documents to provide context and a comparison between the possible readings of the institutional texts and their interpretations by teachers. This latter project is exemplified by Lupton's (1999) investigation of the ways teachers negotiated the discourses embedded in the Victoria health and physical education curriculum, as instantiated in the Victorian Board of Studies Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) published in 1995. She describes her method as follows:

> These texts were analysed for the appearance of key words, phrases and ideas, and the formation of such words, phrases and ideas into larger discourses. In the context of the present discussion, the texts were read with the following questions in mind: How do the texts represent the objectives and concerns of the health and physical education curriculum? What dominant principles do they espouse? How do they represent students and teachers/ What notion of health is privileged in the texts? What are the broader discourses (those 'outside the texts) evident that are structuring these representations? (p. 290)

Using this approach she demonstrates how the neo-liberal tenets of 'the new public health', which inform the CSF, can be identified in the teachers' talk as they described their idea of the 'good student'. These tenets are particularly exemplified in both sites by 'notions of ethical self-management and citizenship' (p. 290). She argues from her analysis that 'while the curriculum document represents such objectives as unproblematic and taken for granted', there are tensions between these 'ideals' and the practices of teachers; tensions which are related to the everyday contexts of teachers lives and work. This was particularly evident in the teachers' struggle to reconcile what they perceived health education sets out to achieve ('the development of the social, emotional and communicative capacities of students') and a traditional emphasis in physical education on 'demonstrating superiority over others' (p. 298-299). She concludes that the teachers' responses demonstrate the extent to which 'disciplinary strategies' such as those embedded in curriculum documents meet with resistance and fail at the site of the school and warns against any assumption that curriculum imperatives in any way point to practice.

In a rather different example, Macdonald and Kirk (1996) investigated how the nature of physical education teachers work and the expectations of how physical education teachers should be, as these are shaped by the institutional and corporeal discourses associated with sport and physical education, effect teachers identity and their relation to the profession, to their work environments and so on. In the context of teacher socialisation, they use Foucauldian notions of discourse and identity, to explain how

particular forms of embodiment are enforced through the social practices of those around them. For example, in the context of a larger study on physical education teacher attrition, they use Foucault's notions of regulation and surveillance to explore the pressures to conform on beginning physical education teachers in remote and isolated schools in Queensland. They describe the consequences of these pressures for the ways the beginning teachers were able to construct their professional and personal identities. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, conversations and notes taken on field visits. The main theme that emerged was that the teachers regarded themselves as being under constant surveillance with their private and public lives monitored by students and teachers. They were expected to embody the community's ideas of the sporting healthy body, and to conform to local conservative expectations in terms of expressions of sexuality, lifestyle, dress and grooming. As a consequence several of the beginning teachers chose to leave physical education due in part to the negative effects of the surveillance' (p. 74).

School physical education as social practice

For the researchers investigating school physical education as social practice, the texts of interest are those derived from the interactions between teachers and students in lessons. In many cases the focus has been on the construction of gender, that is, how particular notions of masculinity and femininity have been constituted in and through the social practices (the language and nonverbal behaviours) enacted in lessons. In some few cases, the focus has been on how bodies and/or specific forms of movement practice are constituted in the classroom language and the bodily movements of students. Most of those involved in conducting this form of analytic work are not so much concerned with providing definitive and generalisable information about gender differences, or about the ways in which the body is used in physical education, but want to provide a way of recognising how language and other social practices work to position 'subjects' in relation to specific discourses. The papers from these studies often conclude with a comment that the insights provided into localised practices can provide a basis for reflection whereby teachers may develop a better understanding of their own practice.

The analytic tools to conduct this research have been drawn variously from linguistics, semiotics, discourse analysis, Laban notation and phenomenology. The use of Laban notation and phenomenology point to ways of being able to document systematically the 'language' choices in movement. In all cases there is a detailed analysis of text, ranging from a close analysis of the section of one lesson to particular linguistic or nonverbal phenomena across a number of lessons.

Jan Wright's series of papers (Wright, 1993, 1997, 2000; Wright & King, 1991) on the language of physical education lessons exemplifies the use of linguistics to demonstrate how teachers' choices of language contribute to the construction of gendered subjectivities and social relations. The teachers in her study agreed to wear tape recorders with lapel mikes (with current technology, less intrusive forms of recording are available). The tapes were then transcribed and analysed systematically for language choices in terms of grammatical (such as, speech functions and modality) and lexical (vocabulary) patterns. The lessons were video-recorded for context and to assist in interpretation of the transcripts derived from the tapes. The video recordings also provided possibilities for the analysis of non-linguistic aspects of lessons such as the students' use of space, choices of activities and so on. Wright used this analysis to demonstrate how female and male teachers constructed very different language environments for female and male students, that is, how the language that they used with female students as compared with male students anticipated a different subject – one who was less capable, less skilled, less interested in physical activity and who needed cajoling into action. The following quote sums up the main conclusions of this work:

> A detailed analysis of lessons reveals complexities and contradictions - on the one hand the female teachers provide more explicit instruction, more praise and encouragement and attempt to create more personalised relationships with their female students. On the other hand, their use of language also attempts to more closely control students' behaviour through regulatory statements about appropriate attitudes to physical education and the proper comportment of their bodies.

> The boys appear to be allowed more freedom. On the other hand their compliance with the discourses and practices of physical education is assumed (except in dance where they are expected to be resistant). For a boy to be non-compliant is not so much to identify himself as a poor or problem student but to bring into question his masculinity, his very identity as male. For girls, resistance to the discourses of physical education brings no similar risk, rather resistance can ironically confirm their positioning as feminine in a patriarchal gendered discourse. ###

An examination of the ways in which gendered subjectivities are constituted is also the focus of Ronholt's 'critical classroom study' of teaching and learning. In this paper, the emphasis is on the association between discourses of physical education and gender, how this association is constructed through the structures of the physical education lesson and how it influences children's learning. Ronholt uses a phenomenological and 'critical discourse analysis' of a video recording of a primary/elementary school lesson (Grade 2) taught by a female teacher to identify how physical education and gendered discourses are embedded in children's and teachers' discursive practices. She points to the importance of language, in this case a sequence of exchanges about who in the class can and can't take breaks during an extended run. The comment by one of the boys in the class that 'It's only the sissies ... [who cannot run without breaks]', encapsulates the nature of the group and then determines who will opt for which group: the boys all run without breaks (despite and early indication that some may have opted otherwise), and all except one girl join the group who takes breaks. Ronholt uses the concept of 'situated learning' to link her analysis of the classroom practices to the children's learning about what matters in physical education and in the wider society as they participate in their social world in the case a physical education lesson. Like most poststructuralist researchers one of the purposes of her analysis is to make 'visible what is usually hidden' so that in through their awareness of how discourses work teachers can 'critically reflect and react pedagogically in and educational situation' (Ronholt 2002: 34)

While the focus of Wright and Ronholt's work is physical activity based lessons, Deana Leahy and Lyn Harrison (Leahy & Harrison, 2004) uses Foucault's (Foucault, 1988, 1991) notions of 'governmentality' and 'technologies of the self', together with

contemporary social analyses of ‘risk (Beck, 1992) to investigate the ways in which risk discourses (re)constituted in HPE lessons work 'to shape and produce particular kinds of people' (p. 130). She analyses texts derived from teacher and key informant interviews, classroom observations and curriculum documents to demonstrate how the ‘expert knowledge’ deployed in the HPE classroom constitutes the ‘at risk’ student, that is, ensures that students understand themselves at being ‘at risk’ or in danger of being at risk (133). This is accomplished by drawing on 'hybrid risk knowledges', where melodramatic and often mythical risk narratives (supported by popular cultural images) are mixed with scientific information' to persuade young people of the risks that face them.

Whereas there have been analytical tools readily available to do the work of analysing language from a poststructuralist perspective, the analysis of physical education as an embodied practice has required other ways of working. In an innovative study of students’ use of their bodies in educational gymnastics tasks, Nilges draws on the work of Kirk, Fernandez Balboa and Stuart Hall to construe 'movement as a nonverbal discourse that is capable of (a) enfleshing bodies with gender knowledge and (b) serving as a cultural medium through which the inequities of traditional gender knowledge are displayed or actively resisted.' She uses these constructs to understand 'the moving body' as 'situated as a discursive arena for studying gender where bodies are socially constructed and take an active role in constituting and shaping the social systems in which they exist.' (p. 288). What is particularly innovative about Nilges’ work is her use of use Laban notation as the basis of an interpretive framework for systematically analysing the ways in which male and female undergraduate students use their bodies to construct movement sequences. The interpretive framework involved the identification of parameters for coding and recording the data in ways that could be analysed quantitatively. The dimensions of ‘effort analysis’ were used to provide

> … a link between theorizing the embodiment of gender and studying the embodiment of gender. Effort analysis allowed the body’s ever-changing use of weight (strong/light), time (sudden/sustained), space (direct/indirect), and flow (bound/free) to be abstracted from movement. A coding system for quantifying and

> interpreting the embodiment of gender in student sequence work was constructed by overlaying the effort aspect with a gender reference imparted by historical images of masculinity and femininity. (p. 296)

The data collected through the coding of students movements was analysed using 'a three-stage, chi-square analysis' to determine whether 'males as a group were significantly more likely to use strong, sudden, direct and bound movements actions in their sequences than females … and whether females as a group were significantly more likely to use light, sustained, indirect, and free actions in their sequences than males…' (p. 299). Her hypothesis was confirmed.

Like much of the research in this area which wants to compare female and male behaviour (language included), this research has to argue that its purpose is not to contribute to an essentialised notions of female and male behaviour. Rather it is about demonstrating how particular practices in physical education continue to reproduce narrow and limiting notions of what it means to be and move as a woman or a man. In this case Nilges argues that her research provides 'a postmodern framework for the studying the embodiment of gender … to establish a lens for examining ways in which traditional images of masculinity and femininity are nonverbally constructed and communicated through the discourse of bodily movement in the educational gymnastics setting' (p. 303-4).

While Nilges' work is the only example of postmodernist research which specifically uses bodily movement as the unit of analysis, the body is certainly not absent from other poststructuralist work. Indeed the notion of 'embodied subjectivity', the body as the object of/subjected to power (biopower) and the body as constructed in and by particular social and cultural contexts is an integral part of much of the poststructuralist analysis in physical education (and related fields such as sociology of sport and health). For example, Wright (2000a, b) uses Jennifer Gore's (1995) categories derived from Foucault's 'techniques of power' to analyse the ways the social practices (in this case specifically language) work to constitute particular embodied subjectivities and social

relations in a physical education lesson. This work is extended in Wright (2000a) where the meanings about bodies in a physical education lesson are compared to those in a Feldenkrais lesson. These analyses lead Wright to suggest that physical educators should pay close attention to the forms of embodiment that are produced by the kinds of interactions and language use which are generic in physical education lessons and be alert to the possibilities of alternative forms of movement practices. Hunter (Hunter, in press) draws on the work of Bourdieu to explore how 'discourses associated with the body, both within the classroom context and the *field* of PE, create discursive spaces for constituting the *embodied subjectivities* of those within the social space' (3). She interviewed students during their last year of primary school and first year of high school and their teachers, conducted field observations and collected journals, photographs and video footage. The data derived from these procedures was analysed by a variety of methods including critical discourse analysis and drawing on the theoretical perspectives of critical pedagogy, poststructural feminism, cultural studies and youth studies. Her analysis demonstrates what has also been discussed in relation to other studies above, that physical education through its association with sport and other discourses which constitute a particular kind of 'ideal body', marginalizes 'many young people from PE, physical activity, health and their bodies, and reduce(s) positive spaces for different subjectivities to exist' (p.24). She suggests that by 'redefining what a good student in PE could *be* like or *look* like, within and outside sport discourses, there may be spaces for more students to successfully position themselves (and be positioned by others)' (p.25) as worthy and as able to participate 'successfully' in physical education and physical activity.

In a last example which does not fall neatly into either the category of classroom research or subjectivities as they are constituted in and through discourses associated with physical education and/or health is a very evocative paper by Halas and Hanson titled 'Pathologising Billy', who uses autoethnography and Foucault's concept of governmentality to examine how the pathologising of a young native American student, diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, living in foster care, shapes what it is possible for him to be and do. Halas describes how she uses shooting hoops in her efforts to

connect with Billy. Over a long and difficult period Billy manages to stay in school and make it to the end of the year through the care of the teacher and the opportunity to shoot hoops and attend extra PE. In the following year Billy, discovers volleyball and in an unprecedented (for Billy) opportunity is permitted to play volleyball in an interschool game. The team wins and Billy is 'a winner in every sense of the word' (#). Within a week he is expelled from school. Halas and Hanson conclude Billy's story as follows:

> Forced to attend a treatment centre and living in foster care, the institutional parameters of Billy's day-to-day reality attempt to mold him into a body which complies to society's norms. Athletic, young and slight he is marked by not only the physical forces his body has been subjected to but also the effects of power, that is the knowledge relations which turn him into an object of focus for the justice and educational systems and services… Eventually … the young man who wasn't allowed in a regular physical education class has progressed to becoming a participant in an interschools competition.
>
> All the while he never transcends the subjectivity of a special student, the pathologized behavior problem, the Young Offender soon to have a record…. he cannot escape larger discursive conditions that find expression in the material realities of his existence. (p. #)

This paper points to the possibilities of a poststructuralist approach to help understand the multifaceted relationships between teachers and their pupils and to examine these in the complex context of students' and teachers' subjectivities and the cultural and institutional discourses and material circumstances which shape both.

Postcolonial research

At the time of writing this chapter, it was possible to identify only one research paper in physical education which drew on postcolonial theory. The paper, by Hastie, Martin and Buchanan (Hastie et al., in press), describes how two Anglo teachers came to understand 'their ***praxis*** as they attempted to present a culturally relevant physical education program

to a class of African-American sixth-grade students' (ms5). The program, a unit on ‘stepping’ (a form of African-American vernacular dance), was designed to challenge physical education as a practice that reflects ‘a Euro-American hegemony that proscribes certain cultures ... as backward and marginal'. The paper draws on the reflections of the teachers (two of the authors) as they interrogate the legitimacy of white teachers teaching ‘stepping’ to African American children in a rural elementary school, and on the ethnographic data collected by the third author as observer. The authors describe how by adopting a postcolonial frame of reference they were able to develop a deeper consciousness of the implications of their innovation. They argue on the basis of their experience and reflections that if teachers are to implement (and they argue that they should) culturally relevant curriculum where there are questions about their legitimacy to do so they must be

> At least, … a willing participant in the act of praxis, not only engaging in the cycle of looking, thinking, acting, reflecting (Stringer, 2004), but also extending the process to consider the political and social aspects that impact curriculum and pedagogy, and indeed, the students we teach. (ms 21)

Directions for the future

Researchers in physical education have barely tapped the potential of a post approach, although it is clear that poststructural, postmodern and postcolonial perspectives provide powerful theoretical and empirical frameworks for addressing important questions associated with the production of knowledge, the formation of subjectivities and an understanding of embodiment. These are all fundamental to understanding the ways in which policy, curriculum and pedagogy are shaped in specific social and cultural contexts and with what effect for all of those involved in any way in the field of physical education. Although ‘post’ perspectives eschew grand narratives and totalising explanations of any phenomenon, as is obvious from the work described above, in making visible the ways in which power and knowledge are joined to construct particular social practices, subjectivities and social relations, research informed by a ‘post’

perspectives clearly has an emancipatory purpose. The work of identifying the operation of discourses as they impact on all levels of practice is important ongoing work. In the immediate future the impact of health discourses on physical education is an area of obvious need. This challenge has been taken up by some of the authors discussed earlier in this chapter (e.g. Leahy Penney), however, the increasing salience of health discourses associated with the 'obesity epidemic' and with young people and 'risk' in the context of physical education, requires further empirical work. It is worth pointing at this stage to some of the doctoral work in progress which is beginning to address this need. Louise McQuaig's doctoral work for example analyses the Queensland HPE curriculum as it is explicitly engaged in deploying biopower technologies to construct healthy citizens of the future. Gabrielle O'Flynn uses Foucault's concept of the 'technologies of the self' to explore how health and physical activity discourses operate in different school and community setting to construct different kinds of selves and different relations to the body.

What obviously missing from this review of physical education research informed by post perspectives is work informed by a postcolonial perspective. Whereas poststructuralist and postmodernist theory has been coupled with feminist theory to make visible the means by which gender is constructed in and through physical education, with the one exception cited above, this has not been the case with race and ethnicity. There is obviously considerable potential for deconstructing the way in which curriculum has been constructed and physical education has been taught in ways which privilege Eurocentric notions of the self, of physical activity and learning; and which interrogate the 'effects' of globalisation and European and American hegemony on physical education internationally. Physical education researchers might well look to research in the sociology of sport (e.g. Bale & Cronin, 2002) and in education (e.g. McCarthy *et al.*, 2003; *Journal of Postcolonial Education*) to assist in the raising of problems and the setting of research agendas.

Finally 'post' researchers in physical education should be beware of falling into the complacency of the same patterns of research. Theorising in the areas of postmodernity,

poststructuralism and postcolonialism continue apace. A key to ‘post’ work is the need to keep ‘troubling’ the taken-for-granted and the familiar, to engage what Foucault describes as ‘an ethic of discomfort’, that is, ‘to never consent to being completely comfortable with your own certainties’ (Foucault 1997, quoted in Harwood & Rasmussen). This includes the research methods that are employed as well as the questions that are asked.

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