

**“If we were all, like, learning at the same time, we might have,
like, the same experience”:**

**An investigation into the development of physical subjectivities in
early primary education**

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Abstract

There is growing consensus about the importance of physical activity and regular engagement is known to have a number of health and developmental benefits. Accordingly, research across a variety of fields has argued for the importance of laying the foundations for lifelong physical activity engagement in the early years. The school plays a central role in this effort by impacting children's initial relationships with physical culture. Within the school, PE is often the primary vehicle for the promotion of physical activity. However, the problems with PE and its failure to connect with all children has been widely reported. Concurrently, there has been a significant physical activity dropout rate in adolescence for girls, and some boys. Scholarly attempts to address these concerns have focused mainly on late primary or high school settings, specifically curriculum and pedagogy. To date, very little research has focused on the early (Year One/Two) years of PE, when many children are developing their initial physical subjectivities. Rather than a period which all children enter as a 'blank slate', early PE is defined by the differing levels of experience that children bring to class. How these differing levels of embodied experiences are valued mean the children are constantly engaging in a range of stratified interactions. The outcomes of these interactions can have a profound impact on how students engage in physical activity, both in PE and on the playground. To examine how children are embodying and developing their physical subjectivities in these two spaces, a six-month ethnographic project was conducted at a primary school in Victoria. This allowed for the examination of the experiences of a Year 1/2 cohort through the implementation a variety of ethnographic and child-centred methods. Drawing on a theoretical approach, combining Bourdieu (1998) and Collins (2004), this thesis shows how the outcomes of PE activities, impacted the types of activities that children chose to engage in on the playground. Additionally, the findings show how the children play a key role in reproducing the dominant elements of the field (including the 'naturalized' gender order inherent in sport/PE) and the hierarchies that contextualized each activity. This research offers an in-depth focus into the complex social processes, in the playground and PE, which continue to usher children along seemingly pre-determined physical paths. This thesis concludes with a call for a critical approach to early PE that incorporates the different experiences of the children to create

curricula, with a particular focus on teaching children to be reflective of the impact of their embodied experiences. This also incorporates changes to the playground as a continuation of the PE space.

Statement of Originality

I, Cameron Smee, declare that the PhD thesis titled “‘If we were all like learning at the same time, we might have like the same experience’: An investigation into the development of physical subjectivities in early primary education’ is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliographies, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Cameron Smee

1 November 2019

Statement of Authority of Access

I, Cameron Smee, author of this thesis titled “‘If we were all, like, learning at the same time, we might have, like, the same experience’: An investigation into the development of physical subjectivities in early primary education’, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, agree that this thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying and communication in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

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Finishing my PhD has been an all-encompassing, gruelling adventure over the last four years. Like most PhD students, I don't think I truly appreciated what I was getting myself into when I began my PhD journey. It has been full of successes, accomplishments and great opportunities, but also failures, setbacks and hard-learned lessons. It has led to frequent bouts of stress and restless nights. I would not change any of this. I have grown immensely from this process, as a writer, researcher, educator, but most importantly as a person. I take from this process a number of significant lessons that have changed the way I think about the world. None of this would have been possible without the help of a number of significant people in my life. First, I need to thank my partner Kelly. She has been my primary supporter throughout the PhD process. She has been a confidant, sounding board, stress manager, landlord, and far too many other roles to name. Her love and support over the last few years have made the reality of finishing my PhD possible. She has also acted as a necessary escape, helping me to build a life outside of the world of my PhD. I will spend the rest of my life trying to pay Kelly back for her unwavering support, patience and love throughout the last couple of years.

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¹ Pseudonym

² Pseudonym

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Preface

As a low-skilled, awkward, unathletic child/adolescent, I did not particularly enjoy PE. When I think back to my physical education (PE) experience, from years five to ten, I can only think of a handful of memorable positive moments. I continued with PE in year eleven and twelve (in the form of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education) mainly because it focused more on the theoretical side than the practice. I enjoyed this experience enough that I eventually decided to become a PE teacher. I thought that I could become a different kind of PE teacher than the ones that I grew up with. I believed that I could be a more inclusive PE teacher that would ensure all of the children that I taught had memorable experiences. Unfortunately, as a PE teacher, I was a perpetrator of many of the practices that I critique in this thesis: an overemphasis on the Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS), a focus on sport, implementing a ‘one-size-fits-all’, ‘child-centred’, non-interventionist pedagogy. Basically, I was a non-reflexive PE teacher that delivered content based upon what I had learned at university and the small amount of reading that I had done. I am sure I still provided some memorable, positive experiences to some of the children that I taught, but I was not the kind of PE teacher that I hoped to be.

This began to change during my time teaching primary PE in the United States. I was working on a Master’s degree in sports administration and was given the opportunity to study sociology in sports. I read the textbook, ‘Sports in Society’ by Jay Coakley, and instantly connected with many of the concepts covered. Some of the issues discussed in the book connected with the experiences that I had as a PE student and made me reflect on the type of practices that I was implementing as a PE teacher. I started to think about what effect my practices might have on kids and how the broader context of sport was impacting on how they thought and engaged in class. I started to think about starting a PhD to investigate these concepts in more depth. Although a number of moments in class helped move this idea closer to fruition, one moment, in particular, stands out in my mind as the point where I decided I needed to begin a PhD focused on addressing these problems.

I was teaching basketball to a co-ed fourth grade class in Arizona, USA. I was just about to start a class when one of the girls in the class, Lizzy,³ walked up to me and we had the following interaction:

Lizzy: Cameron, what are we doing in class today?

Cam: Today, we are going to be playing basketball.

Lizzy: But I can't play basketball, I am a girl.

This comment caught me off guard. A ten-year-old girl, who had never played basketball, was already stating that she could not engage in this sport based exclusively on her gender. Gendered social structures I had not realized existed were quickly unveiled. A student was already limiting what she was capable of based on her gender. After I introduced the skills of basketball and taught them to the class, Lizzy showed that she was more than capable of playing basketball. Although Lizzy subverted this gendered trope, this was still a powerful moment. I suddenly could see the powerful societal forces that were acting on the children that I was teaching and potentially limiting what each child was capable of. From this moment, I knew that I wanted to understand this issue better and find out what impact these broader forces were having on children's PE experiences and their potential relationship to physical culture. To achieve this deeper level of understanding I pursued this research project. This moment showed that by the time they started year four, children already had already developed strong preconceived ideas about sport and physical activity. I wanted to start earlier and work with year one and two (Year 1/2) children who may not have these same preconceived ideas. My hope was that by conducting this project I could finally become the type of educator that I had originally wanted to be. Importantly, I could also help future PE educators achieve this same goal.

³ Pseudonym

List of Abbreviations

CRP	Castle Rock Primary
EE	Emotional Energy
FMS	Fundamental Movement Skills
HPE	Health and Physical Education
IR	Interaction ritual
IRC	Interactional Ritual Chains
PE	Physical Education
PETE	Physical Education Teacher Education
Year 1/2	Year One and Two

Chapter One - Introduction

Overview

This thesis explores how children develop their physical subjectivities in two important physical activity sites, the physical education (PE) class and the playground. More specifically, it documents an ethnographic study into the embodied interactions of a cohort of Year 1/2 children at a primary school in Victoria, Australia. The focus of my research is on the experiences of early primary children in these two physical spaces. The experiences of children in early PE, the connection to the playground, and the role these spaces play in the development of Year 1/2 children's physical subjectivities have been absent within academic literature. In this chapter, I detail the background for this study, by examining the benefits of physical activity and detailing how PE has emerged as a key vehicle to foster lifelong physical activity engagement. I discuss how PE is failing to achieve this goal, and despite the rise of alternative approaches to pedagogy and curriculum, very little has changed in the early years of PE. I then focus specifically on PE in the primary years, covering contemporary pedagogy and the constraints on delivering effective PE. This section concludes with a focus on the early PE years and a discussion of how the lack of differentiation in the delivery of FMS in many early years classes is problematic. Next, I provide a statement of significance and the associated research questions and aims that this thesis will address. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the thesis structure and a brief summary of each chapter.

Background

The importance of physical activity is widely recognized. The health benefits of physical activity have been extensively discussed (Wiltshire, Lee & Williams, 2019). Regular physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on mental health, well-being and self-esteem (Grogan, 2008) and has been linked to improved academic performance, by increasing attention, concentration, memory and space perception (see Zach, Shoval & Lidor, 2016). Put simply, studies examining the benefits of physical activity argue that a physically active individual is likely to have a better quality of life than their non-active counterpart. Logically then, it makes sense that there has been growing

concern over declining physical activity levels (Nader et al. 2008), particularly in children (Light, 2010; Telford, 2017). This has been of particular concern because of the belief that physical activity patterns established during childhood will cross over into adult life (Telma, 2009). Accordingly, research across a variety of fields, including motor development, health and PE, argues for the importance of laying the foundations for physical development in the early years of childhood to have the physical competence to engage in lifelong physical activity (Barnett et al. 2009, 2016; Stodden et al. 2008; Wainright et al. 2018 Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013a). The school, through the implementation of curriculum, plays a central role in this effort, by providing an initial opportunity to positively influence levels of physical activity (Dinan Thompson, 2018) and by effect contribute to the development of lifelong physical activity habits (Rainer & Davies, 2013).

Within the school, physical education (PE), is regularly regarded as the primary vehicle for the promotion of physical activity (Thompson, Rehman, and Humbert 2005). Accordingly, many stakeholders see PE as playing a significant role in fostering lifelong physical activity engagement (Powell, 2018). In Australia, this focus on lifelong physical activity is explicitly stated in the National Curriculum for health and physical education (HPE).⁴ Although the reasons that underpin this focus and the approaches taken to achieve it tend to vary, it remains a dominant focus within HPE in Australia. This trickles down to the early primary level (Year 1/2), where the emphasis is placed on laying the foundations for future movement patterns and physical activity engagement (Whitehead, 2010). However, research shows that PE has limited ability to actually impact on participation levels beyond the school (Fairclough et al., 2002; Kirk, 2005, 2010, 2013; Powell, 2018; Telford, 2017). Consequently, Kirk (2013, 974) has argued that PE teachers have failed to achieve ‘their most cherished aspiration, that young people would, as a result of their physical education experience, engage in lifelong physical activity.’ Despite these critiques, efforts to foster engagement in lifelong physical activity continues to be a driving aspiration for HPE in Australia.

⁴ It is important to note that in Australia health and PE are linked together and typically referred to as HPE. Accordingly, all health and physical education content is covered in the national HPE curriculum.

Beyond the inability to achieve this aspiration, the failure of PE to connect with all children is widely reported, resulting in many children not enjoying their PE experiences (Kirk, 2010). PE is criticized for focusing too much on skill development (Kirk, 2010); acting as a site for the reproduction of social injustices and inequalities (Evans & Davies, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2018; Flintoff & Scranton, 2001); deterring both boys and girls to the fringes of PE participation (Barr-Anderson et al, 2008; Flintoff & Scranton, 2001; Jachyra, 2016; Kehler & Atkinson, 2010; van Daalen, 2005); and failing to change and adapt to current societal needs and interests (Kirk, 2010). Unsurprisingly, many scholars argue that negative PE experiences are likely related to physical inactivity during adulthood (Beltran-Carillo et al., 2012; van Daalen, 2005; Wellard, 2009). PE is also linked with significant levels of physical activity drop out in adolescence (Barr-Anderson et al. 2008; Flintoff & Scranton, 2001; Garret, 2004), particularly for girls (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Camacho-Minano, LaVoi, & Barr-Anderson, 2011; Enright & McCuaig, 2016; Flintoff & Scranton, 2001; Garrett, 2004; Kirby, Levin, & Inchley, 2012; Oliver & Kirk, 2005, 2016; van Daalen, 2005; Walseth et al. 2018). These problems are perhaps exacerbated by the dominant model of PE that continues to be based on a traditional, 'one-size fits all', sports-based approach (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014, Rainer & Davies, 2013), delivered through a multi-activity model (Kirk, 2010). The purpose of this model is to expose students to a wide variety of sport and movement activities in relatively short and frequently changing units over the course of the year (Kirk, 2010). This model is then expected to engage all learners, which this body of research shows that it is not doing.

These concerns have led to the emergence of a number of alternative approaches to both pedagogy and curriculum. A number of scholars have developed alternative pedagogical models, designed to move away from the traditional approach and engage a diverse range of students. These models, including, but not limited to, Cooperative Learning, Sport Education, and Teaching Games for Understanding, have been extensively discussed in PE literature (Beni et al. 2016; Casey & Goodyear, 2015, Goodyear & Casey, 2015; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2013, 2014; Hastie et al. 2011; Harvey, Cushion & Massa-Gonzalez, 2010; Kirk, 2010; Kirk & McPhail, 2002; Metzler, 2011; Perlman & Goc Karp, 2010; Pill, 2010, 2011; Siedentop, 1998; Wallhead & O'Sullivan, 2005)

and adopted across a variety of settings, including Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). There is also been a growing focus on the importance of physical literacy (Kirk, 2013). The leading scholar in the field of physical literacy, Whitehead's approach to PE emphasizes the recognition of the embodied dimension of human existence and prioritizes the development of the holistic nature of the individual (Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013). However, Whitehead is not alone in emphasizing this focus, as there has been decades of PE literature highlighting the importance of holistic development (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009; Gray et al. 2018; McKay, Gore & Kirk, 1990; Pill, 2007; Rehor, 2004). As a result, over this time there has been a shift in many PE curricula, to focus on the development of the holistic individual (Jess et al. 2016; Wainright et al. 2018). This is reflected in the Australian National Curriculum for Health and Physical Education which attempts to include more than just the dominant 'medico-scientific, biophysical and psychological foundations of HPE' (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009, p. 167), and adds a sociocultural perspective (Lynch, 2014). The goal was to adopt the holistic approach to health and physical education practice that had been advocated by leading HPE scholars for decades. These alternative approaches largely targeted secondary PE, which makes sense since it is the age of concern where many adolescents drop out (Kirk, 2005), but as a consequence have had less direct impact on the primary years of PE (Harvey et al., 2014; Pill, 2010; Ward, 2012, 2013; Ward & Griggs, 2011).

The primary years of PE are a crucial time for the development of children (Kirk, 2005; Pickup, 2012; Rainer & Davies, 2013; Whitehead, 2010). Researchers have highlighted the significance of primary PE in providing the basic building blocks (Haydn-Davies, 2005) so that children can become competent and confident participants in movement and physical activity (MacDonald & Enright, 2013). In this process, early PE plays a significant role as the introduction for many children to structured physical activity.⁵ If the ultimate objective of PE is to foster physical

⁵ While the early years of PE are the not the first time that children engage with their body in a performative sense, for many children it is the first time they engage in *structured* physical activity and sport. While some children may have already engaged in PE during the Kindergarten/Preparatory, as this stage of schooling is not mandatory (Jacob & Ma, 2013), not every child will have had this experience. Similarly, while some children will have already had experience in structured sport and physical activity, not every child gets this

lifelong physical engagement, then this is the first chance to operationalize this objective. Promoting participation in PE and hoping that children develop a positive relationship with physical culture in the secondary years is too late. Accordingly, Kirk (2005) has highlighted the importance of early PE experiences for long-term engagement with PE and physical activity. Logically, if children are not enjoying PE and eventually dropping out, rather than it being an isolated occurrence, it may have a knock-on effect from their earliest PE experiences. Therefore, early PE is a crucial time for the development of children's physical subjectivities, that is a sense of body and self (Evans & Davies, 2004; González-Calvo et al., 2019; Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2015) and a desire to engage with physical culture. If the goal of PE is to help all children develop physical subjectivities that will encourage them to engage in purposeful physical activity, then we must do more to ensure that their early experiences are meaningful.

PE in the primary years

In Australia, the primary years of schooling typically consist of the Kindergarten/Preparatory years through to Year 6 and include children between the ages of four and twelve (Dinan Thompson, 2018). The central focus of these primary years is typically the development of fundamental movement skills, games and sports, and fitness (Ardzejewska, McMaugh & Coutts, 2010; Dinan Thompson, 2017; Morgan & Bourke, 2008). While primary PE has been not substantially impacted by alternative pedagogical models, it has been affected by broader changes in education that now emphasize 'integrated, inclusive, child-centred pedagogy' (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016, p. 527) and self-regulated learning (Marzano, 2009; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). Whereas in the past, the typical pedagogical focus was on 'skills and drills' (Pill, 2010b), often taught through a direct-teaching style, the focus is now on the child centred-learning. In this new approach, the teacher takes on more of a facilitator role, preferring to let the children learn from each other at their own pace (Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). As long as the children are being 'busy, happy and good' (Ward & Griggs, 2018, p. 407), then they are assumed to be learning from each other, and therefore the class is

opportunity. In particular, lower socioeconomic groups, girls and young disabled people do not always get the chance to participate in club sports (Kirk, 2005). So, for many children their only exposure to physical culture before they start Year 1 is through informal play.

perceived as ‘good’ (Akuffo & Hodge, 2008, p. 262). Although this change has moved primary PE practice away from the more traditional ‘skills and drills’ approach, delivering this new pedagogical approach continues to be constrained by a number of factors.

In Australia, primary PE is not commonly delivered by PE specialists (Dinan Thompson, 2018). For most schools, restrictive budgetary regulations make the employment of a full-specialist impossible (Whipp, Hutton, Grove & Jackson, 2011), so delivering PE falls to the individual classroom teachers (Garret & Rench, 2008). This leads to two problems for the implementation of effective PE practice. First, classroom teachers often struggle to deliver effective PE to their students (Ardzejewska et al. 2010; Decorby et al. 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2008). Although they may be experts in how children learn, they do not necessarily have expertise in PE content and pedagogy. Second, the lack of a specialist PE teacher often leads to schools outsourcing their PE practice to external providers (EP) (Griggs, 2007; Powell, 2015; Whipp et al, 2011; Williams, Hay & McDonald, 2011). Typically, these EPs are associated with sporting organizations (Powell, 2015), and although they may have sport-specific expertise (Blair & Capel, 2011), they are very rarely experts in learning, curriculum or pedagogy (Petrie, Penney & Fellows, 2014). Importantly, a school with a PE specialist is not necessarily free from these problems. Even when a school does employ a PE specialist, they are usually limited to teaching each class just once a week (Telford, 2017) and are just as likely to rely on outsourcing their time to EPs (Williams, Hay & McDonald, 2011). So, instead of implementing new, radical approaches to PE practice, primary PE continues to be dominated by a more traditional approach, albeit delivered through a child-centred lens.

The main approach to early PE practice is a focus on the acquisition of the FMS (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Pickup, 2011). The acquisition of these skills is perceived as essential for children to adequately lay down the foundations of movement (Pickup, 2011). As such, the acquisition of these skills is argued to play an essential role in impacting future levels of physical activity (Fisher et al. 2005; Okley, Booth & Chey, 2004; Lawrence, 2012; Wrotniak et al. 2006). In PE, the mastering of these skills is particularly significant, because they are perceived as important to competently participate in the sporting activities (Ward & Griggs, 2018) that are the predominant focus of the

subsequent years of PE practice (Kirk, 2010). As such, the acquisition of these skills continues to be the central focus of both the national curriculum (ACARA, 2012) and most pedagogical approaches to early PE (Evans, 2004; Pickup, 2011; Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Ward, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018). This focus on the acquisition of FMS becomes the primary outcomes that guide most teachers practice, albeit through the implementation of child-centred, self-regulated activities. The problem with this approach is that not all teachers are adequately trained to provide differentiated programs of instructions for teaching these skills in the early years (Goodway et al. 2013). Accordingly, many teachers are unprepared and unable to address the different levels of sporting and physical activity experience that children bring to class (Evans, 2004; Ward, 2012). Consequently, the differing levels of experience and how they are embodied in this child-centred, self-regulated environment can have a substantial impact on how the children develop their physical subjectivities.

The way that those with the most ability embody this experience can be problematic for the other children (Koca et al. 2009; Jachyra, 2016). Those with the most-valued experiences, typically developed through team sports (Hickey, 2008; Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010), are likely to embody certain dispositions at the level of a bodily hexis in the way they move, talk and act. They embody these actions during activities often committing acts of symbolic violence against their peers (Koca et al. 2009; Jachyra, 2016). The child-centred, self-regulated nature of these activities then makes it less likely that the teacher will intervene against these actions, even if they are explicitly aware of them. This process is likely having an impact on how children are developing their physical subjectivities. For those with the most valued experiences, it provides a chance to continue to develop their physical subjectivities, but often at the other students' expense. For those with very little experience, this is likely having an adverse effect on their development of a physical subjectivity, thereby impacting their relationship with physical culture at a very crucial time. Unfortunately, these practices are not contained specifically within the PE class, as they spill over into the playground.

The school playground is a compulsory space (Thomson, 2007) where children engage in physical activity on a daily basis (Knowles et al. 2013). To address safety concerns, teachers and administrators' segment and delimit the playground space (Thomson, 2005) and although they do not

always enforce this separation, the children typically do. This often results in the playground becoming a highly hierarchical space that is constantly contested between groups of children (Karsten, 2003). As an outcome of practices in PE, children are making deliberate choices about which activities they engage in on the playground and which spaces to avoid. This means that many of the practices that are occurring in PE become naturalized on the playground. Particularly because the role of the teacher on the playground becomes that of a behaviour/safety monitor (Thomson, 2005), meaning they are unlikely to intervene in children's play choices or activities. Consequently, the gap in the development of physical subjectivities that contextualized PE classes continues to expand. If laying the foundation for movement is the key concern of early PE (Pickup, 2011; Whitehead, 2010), then we must ensure that we are creating the right environment in which all children will develop healthy physical subjectivities, rather than just privileging a few. To achieve this, an examination of the practices that impact the development of the children's physical subjectivities in these two spaces is essential.

Statement of significance

As discussed, the benefits of physical activity are widely accepted across academic literature. PE can play a role in helping students to achieve some of these benefits, and although the ability of the PE teacher to impact physical activity levels beyond the school is limited (Fairclough et al., 2002; Kirk, 2005, 2010, 2013; Powell, 2018; Telford, 2017), they can still play a key role in helping students to value the physically active life (Oliver & Kirk, 2016). Many scholars argue that PE can play a role in helping students develop across physical, cognitive, social and affective domains (Bailey et al. 2009; Goodyear & Casey, 2015; Kirk, 2010, 2013; Metzler, 2011), but Bailey and colleagues caution this is not likely to happen automatically. This may be because the traditional approach to PE often prioritizes the development of the physical over the social, cognitive and affective learning domains (Kirk, 2010; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2010; Rainer & Davies, 2013). This is likely why there has been a shift by many stakeholders towards the priority of developing the holistic individual (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009; Gray et al. 2018; Jess et al. 2016; Kirk, 2010; McKay, Gore & Kirk, 1990; Pill, 2007; Rehor, 2004; VCAA, 2016; Wainright, et al. 2018; Whitehead,

2010), through the development of these four domains. Importantly, much of this research has acknowledged the need to help children understand the important role that their embodied dimension plays in human existence (Maude, 2010; Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013; Wainright et al. 2018). However, very little research has focused on how this can be achieved in the early years. Thus, my research will contribute by ensuring that early PE helps all children develop positive physical subjectivities so that they learn to value physical activity and are able to develop as holistic individuals with a strong understanding of their embodied dimension.

Research in primary PE has consistently concluded that primary PE is ‘broken’ and in need of being ‘fixed’ (Griggs, 2007, Morgan & Hanson, 2008; Jess et al. 2017). As discussed, this is particularly reflected in the early years of PE where the focus is on acquiring the FMS (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Goodway et al. 2013; Pickup, 2011, VCAA, 2016) to lay a foundation for lifelong physical activity engagement (VCAA, 2016). Instead of starting with the interest and experiences of the children, teachers work their way through the learning of these pre-defined skills. As stated, this is problematic because of the lack of differentiation in the delivery of many FMS-based early years programs (Goodway et al. 2013), which can often mean that all of the students in a class are taught these skills in a homogenous way. As I argue, this approach, in fact, creates the conditions for those with the most ability to impact the learning of the other students. So, instead of creating the conditions for all students to engage with physical culture, many are moving away early on. While Margaret Whitehead’s physical literacy approach has sought to highlight the importance of the early years (Whitehead, 2010), it also encourages the creation of an environment that is likely to exacerbate many of the problems in this period, as I will argue later. Ultimately, while the ability of my research to foster lifelong physical activity beyond the early years of PE may be somewhat limited, I contend that the central concern of early primary PE should be creating an environment that will help all children to develop their physical subjectivities.

The research on how to achieve this goal is limited. As Kirk (2005) has argued, the majority of PE literature has focused on secondary school PE programmes. Very little is known about early PE, as most efforts at reform have focused on the secondary years, and in a similar vein, the research on

children's perspectives of PE focus largely on the late primary (Portman, 1995; Dyson, 1995, 2001; Jachyra, 2016; Gray et al. 2018⁶; Wainright et al. 2018) and high school years (Azzarito, Solmon & Harrison Jr., 2006; Beni, Fletcher & Ni Chronin, 2017; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010, 2012; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gray, Mitchell, Wang & Robertson, 2018; Hay & Isahunter, 2006; Jachyra, 2016; Koca, Atencio, & Demirhan, 2009; Mooney & Gerdin, 2008; Pope & Grant, 1996; Walseth, Engebretsen, & Elvebakk, 2018). While the later body of research, highlights numerous causes of concern for PE educators, we do not really know when the student concerns first arise. My contention is that if students are dropping out of PE and physical activity in large numbers during adolescence it is likely an accumulation of experiences that began in early PE. I address this by examining the experiences of a cohort of first and second graders during PE classes, but with the added depth of a micro-lens. This level of examination places a focus on face-to-face interactions and behaviours of groups to reveal the structure and process of social life (Spaaij & Schaillée, 2020). This will allow for an in-depth examination of how the children may be impacting each other's experiences in class in tacit and explicit ways. Importantly, it will allow for a closer examination of how those with those most sporting experience are embodying certain dispositions, such as aggression (Gardner & Janelle, 2002) and a 'win at all costs' attitude (Doty, 2006), that may be impacting their peers in adverse ways. This will add a deeper level of understanding to the limited knowledge we have of children's earliest PE experiences.

Also missing from the literature is an argument for the connection between the PE and the playground. Although the experiences of children on the playground have been extensively covered in the literature (Clark & Paechter, 2007; Knowles et al. 2013; Martin, 2011; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Paechter & Clark, 2007; Thomson, 2005, 2007; Thorne, 1993), none of these studies have commented on the possible connection between the playground and PE. While, Drummond and Pill (2011), highlighted how the outcomes of sport, particularly in PE, can be translated into the 'play' arena, they did not elaborate on these outcomes or how they impact this space. Therefore, few studies have

⁶ These two studies (Jachyra, 2016; Gray et al. 2018) have been included in both categories because they cover the final year of primary school and high school. Although it must be noted that Gray and colleagues focus on Primary 7 in Scotland (the equivalent of year 7), which is high school in Australia.

explored the impact that actions on the playground may have on actions in PE, or vice-versa, and how these affect the development of children's physical subjectivities. As two sites, where children regularly engage in physical activity (Knowles et al. 2013), it is likely that there is a connection between the spaces. In this thesis, I argue there is a meaningful connection between these two spaces, and in order to affect real change this connection must be acknowledged, and both spaces must be addressed. My goal in this is not to necessarily increase physical activity levels, but rather to address these spaces to ensure that all children are having more meaningful early physical experiences.

Ultimately, my primary goal in this research to highlight the importance of the early years of PE, as argued by Kirk (2005). It is a key site for the development of physical subjectivities. My contention is that some of the problems that emerge in the later years of PE may be because we are not doing enough to encourage all children to develop positive physical subjectivities. This should be the primary goal of early PE, to ensure that children come to value a physically active lifestyle and are able to gain all of the benefits associated with this. As such, I want to make necessary changes to early PE and the playground and ensure that the children play a key role in the process. I hope to make children aware of the embodied actions that I discovered through this project and help them to adopt a more critical approach to their engagement in PE classes. My hope is that will allow for a stronger 'child-centred approach' that will empower children to develop a wider range of physical selves than contemporary practices allow. My goal is to make sure that early physical experiences are reflective of the important role that they play for the children to ensure that that they a meaningful, positive impact.

Research questions and Aims

After reviewing the key body of literature in education, health and PE, the research questions were created to identify the main areas that have not been addressed in current literature. The research questions and the associated methodology were constructed in response to these gaps and the lack of attention towards the period of early PE within academic literature. Therefore, the primary research question for this thesis is:

How do Year 1/2 children develop their physical subjectivities on the playground and in the PE space?

This study involved the participation of a public primary school in Melbourne, Australia. This school will be referred to by the pseudonym Castle Rock Primary (CRP) School for the rest of this thesis.

The associated sub-questions are:

- *How are the playground and the PE space connected?*
- *What are the most significant embodied actions within these spaces and how are they affecting children's experiences?*

The research questions combine both theoretical and practical considerations to examine the early physical experiences of children and to try to contribute to positive social change. The aims of this thesis are:

- To review and position my project within the body of literature on education, health and physical education.
- To develop a methodology to provide insight into the embodied experiences of Year 1/2 children in the PE and playground spaces
- To examine the playground and PE experiences of a group of Year 1/2 children.
- To analyse how the students are embodying and developing their physical subjectivities in these physical spaces.
- To propose strategies that will allow educators (and the children) to intervene positively in this process.

I now provide an overview of the structure of my thesis, and how I plan to examine these questions and address the aims of the project.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis reports on a six-month ethnographic study with a cohort of Year 1/2 children at a primary school in Victoria, Australia. I spent a semester at the school observing the children during PE and on the playground during recess and lunch. This thesis explores the experiences of the children in these important sites of physical culture. I utilized a micro-lens to critically examine the

embodied interactions that are occurring during activities in PE. I then applied a number of child-centred methods to co-create the data in an effort to empower the children to examine their experiences on the playground and their engagement with physical culture beyond the school. Crucially, I critically examine the possible connections between the children's experiences in these spaces. To do so, I utilize a unique combination of Randall Collins' Interactional Ritual Chains (2004) and Bourdieu's conceptual tools (Bourdieu, 1984). Collin's theory allows for an examination of the micro-social dynamics of situational interactions occurring during PE, and Bourdieu's tools allow for a macro-level contextualization of these moments. The central argument developed in this thesis is that children's early experiences in PE affect their engagement with physical culture in other spaces, thereby impacting the development of their physical subjectivities.

This thesis will unfold in the following format. Chapter two introduces the reader to the context of this research project through a review of relevant literature in the field of education, health and PE. The review begins with an examination of the state of physical education, focusing specifically on the history of PE and how the development of PE as a subject has led to the juggling of multiple aspirations. Included in this is a review of the literature on children's perspectives of PE, specifically highlighting the dearth of early primary children's perspectives. Next, consideration turns to the roll-out of the Australian national curriculum on Health and PE and examines the impact that it has had on early primary PE. Finally, this chapter focuses specifically on the primary PE setting, examining current approaches to pedagogy and the constraints on its implementation. In this chapter, I review a number of alternative pedagogical models that have been developed to improve PE but have been identified as problematic for implantation in the primary setting (Harvey et al. 2014; Ward & Griggs, 2011). An examination of Whitehead's (2010) concept of physical literacy is presented because of the focus that it places on the early years and the stressing of the importance of embodiment, but the problems with this conceptualization are explicitly highlighted. This section concludes with a review of the contemporary literature on the playground and an argument for the need to examine the connection between PE and the playground.

In Chapter three, I present the theoretical framework that was used to guide the design, interpretation, analysis and translation of the data that I will present. The chapter begins with an examination of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual tools (field, capital and habitus), which are introduced as a way to understand how children develop their physical subjectivities. Subsequently, I present an examination of Collin's (2004) Interaction Ritual Chains and how it can be used to understand micro-moments. The chapter concludes with an argument for how the two theories fit together conceptually to provide a better understanding of the embodied actions that are occurring in these spaces and the potential broader impact.

Chapter four focuses on the methodology and methods that were utilized in this project. This begins with a discussion of the critical importance of the qualitative approach and how it was the ideal fit for the project. Next, I present my ethnographic research design, cover the participants and the setting, and address my positioning within the research, including attempts at reflexivity. Consideration then turns to the specific child-focused ethnographic data co-creation methods that were used: participant observation, map drawing, photo-elicitation and video analysis. The chapter concludes with a focus on the data analysis strategies that were utilized.

Chapters five through seven are the findings chapters. To present my findings, I weave together elements from my entire data corpus. Following the guidance of Collin's, I begin each chapter with a focus on the situation and then bring in other elements to add important context and provide a voice to the children at the school. Chapter five focuses on the social construction of the two spaces, the playground and the PE space, within the context of Castle Rock Primary School. In this chapter, I utilize my theoretical framework to explain how I came to understand how these two spaces operate and how they compare to their conceptualizations in contemporary literature. I begin with the playground space, highlighting how it is set out by adults, but socially enacted by the children. Next, I examine the PE space and how it is constructed by a number of stakeholders and then socially maintained by the children. I conclude this chapter by laying the foundations for an exploration of the connection between these two spaces.

In chapter six and seven, I examine two types of embodied micro-actions that have the most significant impact on children's experiences in PE. In this effort, I utilize my theoretical framework to analyse what role these interactions may be playing in impacting children's connection with physical culture. In chapter six, I examine the competition that is enacted between the children. I present three specific micro-moments that highlight the competition that defines most of the activities that the children engage in. I argue that the focus on continual competition privileges those students that have prior sporting experience. In chapter seven, I examine the skill focus in PE classes. I analyse three micro-moments that are impacted by the drive of some of the students, to embody their previous experiences, to display skill mastery. I argue that the emphasis on certain sporting skills provides a platform for these students to display their skill mastery, at the expense of those children who are trying to learn.

Chapter eight provides an overall discussion for my thesis, bringing together the significant threads from my findings chapters. To synthesize my findings, I divide this chapter into four key topics: the reproduction of the field; the reproduction of the experience hierarchy; the connection between the playground and PE; and the disconnect between the school and home. I argue that current practices are severely limiting the ability of all children to develop meaningful physical subjectivities at school. The field of PE and the playground are being enacted in a way that mainly provides opportunities for those with the most well-developed physical subjectivities to continue to progress. In chapter nine, I provide an overall conclusion to my thesis, drawing together the findings and discussion chapters. I outline my key contributions to both theory and practice and propose a number of key recommendations that will allow for a reconceptualization of early PE. Finally, I provide an overview of the limitations of this study and propose some important thoughts for future research.

Chapter Two - Historical and current issues facing PE in the Australian and global context

This literature review critically examines the body of literature in education, health and PE. The purpose is to highlight how the PE and the playground space provide a specific context for children to develop their physical subjectivities. To achieve this, I begin by examining the state of PE, focusing specifically on the trends and changes in PE over the last 70 years, the multiple aspirations of PE and children's perspectives on their experiences. Next, I turn to an examination of the national curriculum for Health and PE, and the impact that it has had on HPE curricula. Finally, consideration turns to primary PE, exploring contemporary pedagogical practices in primary education, the emergence of the concept of physical literacy, and the important role that the playground plays as an extension of the PE space.

The state of PE

This section will focus on the current state of PE. To better understand PE as it exists in its current form it is necessary to trace its origins. Although this presentation of trends and changes in PE will not be exhaustive⁷, it will cover some of the moments of significance in the development of PE. Subsequently, the focus will shift to touch upon some of the significant trends and issues in current PE literature.

Historical trends and changes in PE

The history of PE can be traced from its origins in physical movement in post-World War Two to its current form as a specialised academic subject. In his seminal text, *PE Futures*, David Kirk (2010) traced the development of PE from its original modern form as gymnastics focused practice, which he called 'physical education-as-gymnastics', through to the 'sportification' of school PE in the 1950s and the subsequent 'academicisation' of the subject. This change paved the way for the degree decades of the 1960s and 70s, where the subject went from a sub-degree (certificate or diploma) to a

⁷ A true accounting of the nuanced history of PE is beyond the scope of this literature review, therefore, I focus on a few key defining moments.

degree level subject. In other work, Kirk, MacDonald & Tinning (1997), argued that this development led to the rapid growth of institutional PE discourse that focused on both biophysical and sociocultural knowledge, with the biophysical knowledge strongly foregrounded (Kirk, 1994). As this process of ‘academicisation’ continued during the 1980s, PE gained a high profile and efforts were made by government bodies to increase the focus on PE (Kirk, 2010)⁸.

By the 1990s, undergraduate degrees in PE were firmly established at universities around the world, with many emphasizing, ‘biophysical science subjects (e.g. exercise physiology, biomechanics, functional anatomy and motor learning) over socio-cultural subjects (such as sociology, history and philosophy)’ (Kirk et al. 1997, p.278). Accordingly, this approach came to define PE practice in what McKay, Gore & Kirk (1990) called Technocratic PE. In their article, *Beyond the limits of Technocratic Physical Education*, McKay and colleagues examined the three interrelated elements of teachers who adopt this method- an emphasis on professional expertise and a reliance on scientific teaching methods. Accordingly, they claimed that:

this montage of professional values and practices results in the framing of highly selective definitions of health, fitness, the body, sport, and physical education by intellectual gatekeepers (1990, p. 53).

This article built on Lawson’s (1988) finding that the highly selective definition that became a hegemonic discourse in PE was of the body as a machine. This makes sense, since from the 1970s onwards, physical education teacher education (PETE) has, more or less, existed as a sub-discipline of the physical activity field of higher education, often being covered in degrees such as, ‘human movement studies’ and ‘sport and exercise science’ (Kirk, 2010), thereby, blurring the lines between sport and PE.

As a consequence of this developing academicisation, space on the timetable to develop practical experience of physical activities became difficult, meaning physical educators increasingly

⁸ For example, during this time the Victorian Government mandated PE as a core subject (Kirk, 1994)

gained less and less experience of the subject matter that they would have to teach (Kirk, 2010). This led to a narrow pedagogical approach to PE (McKay et al. 1990), dubbed ‘physical education-as-sport-techniques, where teachers specialised in running multi-activity ‘taster’ or introductory level units of work in a wide range of sports in relatively short and frequently changing units (Kirk, 2010). As a result, dominant practice in PE emphasized the teaching of isolated motor skills⁹ (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014; Portman, 1995), through this multi-activity approach (Cothran, 2001; Jess, Atencio & Thorburn, 2011; Kirk, 2005, 2010). This traditional approach (Kirk, 2010), emerged from this period of PE and remains dominant since it tends to align with most PE teachers own experience in sport and PE (Garret & Wrench, 2008; Tinning, 2011; Taplin, 2013; Richards & Andrew, 2015; Jess et al. 2016), but also, through no fault of their own, the academisation of PETE has resulted in many teachers not having the knowledge to move learners beyond introductory level material (Kirk, 2010)

As PE moved into the twenty-first century, the problems with the approach became more apparent. This type of PE was criticized for alienating significant groups of children on the fringes of PE participation (Barr-Anderson et al, 2008; Carlson, 1995). This led Kirk (2010) to make the claim that PE is failing to connect with all children¹⁰. Consequently, the last twenty-five years of PE has been defined by the emergence of a number of alternative pedagogical models¹¹ of PE practice. A pedagogical model has three important components: a key theme, learning outcome and critical elements. The key theme refers to the basic idea that defines the model (Metzler, 2011); while the learning outcomes describe what a student should know, understand or be able to achieve (Metzler, 2011); and the critical elements prescribe the features that make it distinctive as to what teachers and learners must do to effectively implement the model (Kirk, 2013). These models set out blueprints for

⁹ It is important to note that there is significant slippage in PE literature and practice between the terms, ‘technique’ and ‘skill’. In his work, Kirk (2010) relies on the work of Thorpe et al. (1986) to highlight that a technique is a decontextualized movement, while a skill is ‘an amalgam of technique and cognition in context’ (p. 43). Kirk argues that this distinction is important because researchers and teachers often speak of skills when they are actually referring to techniques. In this work, I typically use the term ‘skill’, but to try to highlight when it is actually a technique as much as possible.

¹⁰ A claim that he has continued to elaborate on in his subsequent work

¹¹ In PE literature, there are different names for a models-based approach, such as curriculum models (Jewett, Bain, Ennis, 1995), models-based practice (Casey, 2014; Hastie & Casey, 2014), and instructional models (Metzler, 2011). In my work, I align with Kirk (2013) in my preferred use of the term ‘pedagogical model’ because it highlights the important connection between learning, teaching subject matter and context.

teachers or curriculum writers to create programs that are suited to their specific circumstances and the needs of their students (Metzler, 2011)

These alternative models emerged due to a focused effort by PE scholars to reach all children in ways that the traditional model was failing to do (Kirk, 2010; Tannehill, 2012; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014). These models include Cooperative learning, Sport Education, and Teaching Games for Understanding. These methods have been adopted, discussed and critiqued extensively by a number of PE scholars (and will be covered in more depth in a later section). Hence, the history of PE is defined by a number of substantial shifts in philosophy, curriculum and pedagogy. As a result, it has become a contested subject, meaning different things to different people. In their examination of the possible futures for PE, Penney & Chandler (2000), summed this up by highlighting the need to ‘question the degree to which physical education can legitimately continue to make varied claims and pursue multiple agendas’ (p. 75). Therefore, ultimately, the current state of PE is defined by a focus on juggling multiple, often conflicting, aspirations.

Juggling multiple aspirations

PE is a social construct (Kirk, 2010, Richards & Andrew, 2015), so, as a human invention, it makes sense that it is underpinned by the desire to achieve multiple aspirations. Although other researchers have detailed an exhaustive list of these aspirations (see Kirk, 2010), I focus on three that are specifically aligned with this project. The first aspiration that underpins PE is a focus on promoting interest in sport. Many scholars have highlighted the ubiquity between PE and sport (Green, 2008; Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2011; Walseth, Aartun, & Engelsrud, 2015). In this way, PE and sport have become synonymous in the minds of the public (Drummond & Pill, 2011). As Kirk (2010) highlighted, fostering an appreciation of sport, or at least one sport they will enjoy by being exposed to a wide range, has become one of the overarching goals of PE teachers.¹² Unfortunately, this often leads to the exposure of children to a narrow vision of sport within PE (Koca et al. 2009; Kirk, 2010), where sporting participation becomes the primary focus of practice (Drummond and Pill, 2011).

¹² This also aligns with Kirk’s conceptualization of physical-education-as-sport-techniques where students are exposed to a range of sports in short and frequently changing units (Kirk, 2010).

Accordingly, one of the primary goals of the teacher is then to identify ‘elite’ talent that would be suitable for school or community sport teams (Drummond & Pill, 2011). At the primary school level, the focus on sport participation in PE often leads to the outsourcing of PE to external providers (EPs), usually from sporting organizations. For instance, in a study examining the proliferation of EPS into primary schools, Powell (2015) found that the EPs at four primary schools were all affiliated with the major sporting bodies of New Zealand. In these situations, the primary concern of these sporting EPs is the promotion of their own sport, which leads to an emphasis on the development of their specific skills (Dyson et al. 2016). Their focus is not on fulfilling the concerns of the curriculum, but rather promoting and increasing engagement for their sport, particularly for those who show a clear aptitude. The role of external providers will be discussed in more detail later, but the proliferation of EPs linked with sporting organization shows a clear emphasis on sport in PE. Hence, encouraging children to foster an appreciation of sport has become a primary goal of many PE teachers.

Another aspiration that has been thoroughly explored in literature, is that PE has become a key space to attempt to achieve public health goals. Growing concerns over rising obesity rates (WHO, 2019) and the mounting ‘moral panic’ (Evans, Rich, Davies & Allwood, 2008, Light, 2010) of a ‘childhood obesity’ epidemic (Evans, Rich & Davies, 2004; Gard & Wright, 2005; Gard, 2010) has led to a focus on PE to help address these public health concerns (Evans, Rich & Davies, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Johns, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Powell, 2017; Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2015). There have been numerous critiques of this focus for PE. Importantly, Evans, Rich & Davies (2004) argued that there are problems with the scientific measures that have been used to justify a childhood obesity crisis, including the inaccuracy of the BMI, the difficulties of measuring children’s weight, and the syntactic slippage between overweight and obesity. Accordingly, in 2006, Kirk concluded that claims that we are in the midst of an obesity crisis are mostly without foundation. However, as Fitzpatrick (2011) argued, despite the emergence of this sub-field of critical research in health and PE critiquing this issue, the obesity/intervention field continues to dominate research. Despite multiple critiques from some of the leading scholars in health and PE, this agenda continued to underpin practice for many PE stakeholders. As a result, PE continues to be championed to counter the declining levels of

physical activity among children and to intervene in childhood obesity as a disease of modernity (Jachyra, 2013).

The final aspiration that underpins PE, and is connected to the other two aspirations, is a desire to promote lifelong physical activity engagement (Beni et al. 2017; Gard, 2010; Kirk, 2010; VCAA, 2016). This agenda has been of particular concern due to the significant physical activity dropout rates that are being reported during adolescence (Barr-Anderson et al 2008; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Garret, 2004; McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010). As discussed, this drop out is likely occurring due to the failure of PE to connect with all children (Kirk, 2010), leading to many adolescents disengaging. A number of scholars have shown that it is typically girls that disengage from PE, and physical activity, during adolescence (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Camacho-Minano, LaVoi, & Barr-Anderson, 2011; Enright & McCuaig, 2016; Oliver & Kirk, 2016; Walseth et al. 2018). However, recent research from Kehler & Atkinson, (2010) has shown that there are increasing levels of disengagement among adolescent boys as well. Jachyra (2016) built on this by showing that repeated experiences of symbolic violence, degradation and humiliation were pushing some boys towards disengagement. The concern with these significant levels of attrition is that many adolescents will miss out on the benefits that are associated with lifelong physical activity participation. To address these concerns, there has been a significant focus on interventions, both through curriculum and pedagogy, into the adolescent years of PE to stem these levels of disengagement.¹³

Ultimately, these three aspirations have pulled PE in different directions, each direction influenced by distinct groups that hope to use PE to achieve disparate goals. As a result, these aspirations do not always align to allow for the delivery of a unified form of PE. For instance, research has shown that an over-emphasis on sport is one of the primary reasons that many adolescents disengage from PE (McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010). So, an over-emphasis on sport is unlikely to help address the stream of adolescents disengaging from PE. More importantly, these

¹³ These efforts have included changes to curriculum (VCAA, 2016) and the introduction of a new pedagogical approaches specifically focused on addressing high levels of disengagement in the adolescent years, such as the Co-operative learning model (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2013, 2014; Oliver & Kirk, 2016)

agendas have set goals that PE cannot realistically hope to achieve (Penney & Chandler, 2000). Recently, there has been a concentrated effort in both PE literature (Jess et al. 2016; Wainright et al. 2018; Whitehead, 2010) and curriculum (VCAA, 2016) to recognize and develop the holistic nature of the individual, which will be discussed in more detail later. This fracture in the philosophy of PE has had an impact on student experiences in PE. Accordingly, a growing body of literature has examined PE from the perspectives of children and adolescents.

Children's perspectives of PE

Numerous authors have highlighted the need to understand the types of experiences that children have in PE (Almond, 2013; Beni et al. 2016; Gray et al. 2018; Koca et al. 2009; Kirk, 2010; Tannehill, 2016;) to examine the impact that these current practices are having on children. Accordingly, there has been an increased focus on understanding the perspective of children and adolescents during PE classes. These studies have largely fallen into two groups, retrospective and contemporary studies. The section begins with a focus on retrospective studies that ask participants to reflect on previous experiences of PE. Next, attention turns to the growing body of literature focused on the current experiences of young people PE.

Retrospective studies

To examine student perspectives of PE, many scholars have conducted retrospective studies that ask participants to reflect on previous experiences. The aim of these studies was to examine the impact of PE on long-term engagement in physical activity, and therefore consisted exclusively of accounts from older adolescents and adults (Allender, Cowburn & Foster, 2006; Beltran-Carillo et al., 2012; Carlson, 1995; Thompson, Humber, & Mirwald, 2003; van Daleen, 2005;). The primary concern of these studies was on participants attitudes to PE and the barriers they face to active participation. In a review of literature on physical activity drop-out, Allender, Cowburn and Foster (2006) showed that negative experiences-including a lack of skills and low confidence- during school PE was the defining factor that motivated many teenage girls to drop out of physical activity. Building on this, Beltran-Carillo and colleagues (2012) found that the previous PE experiences of a group of 17/18Year old male and females were defined by feelings of exclusion and rejection, acts of

aggression from peers, and a sense of indifference from teachers. Critically, the shared theme in this body of literature was that negative experiences during PE had a ‘lasting negative impact on participants choice of and participation in physical activities in the adult years’ (Thompson, Humber, & Mirwald, 2003, p.376). So, while these studies provided some insight into the retrospective experiences of older adolescents and adults, they leave a noticeable gap in examining the contemporary experiences of children and adolescents in PE.

Contemporary studies

This gap in the literature has led to a growing body of work examining the contemporary experiences of children and adolescents in PE. The majority of this literature has focused on the experiences of children in high school (Azzarito, Solmon & Harrison Jr., 2006; Beni, Fletcher & Ni Chronin, 2017; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010, 2012; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gray, Mitchell, Wang & Robertson, 2018; Hay & lisahunter, 2006; Jachyra, 2016; Koca, Atencio, & Demirhan, 2009; Mooney & Gerdin, 2008; Pope & Grant, 1996; Walseth, Engebretsen, & Elvebakk, 2018). Importantly, these studies empowered the adolescent participants to voice their own perspective on what was occurring during PE classes. In these studies, participants expressed a number of common factors that impacted their experiences in PE, including feeling marginalized or excluded (Jachyra, 2016; Koca et al. 2009;), an emphasis on competition (Beni et al. 2017; Hay & lishaunter, 2006; Walseth et al. 2018), fear of peer derision (Gray et al. 2018; Jachyra, 2016; Mooney & Gerdin, 2008;), and an inability to connect with the teacher (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Koca et al. 2009). Additionally, in their study into girls’ experiences, Flintoff & Scraton (2001) found that the male-dominated nature of PE negatively impacted on girls’ experiences, which has been echoed in subsequent work (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison Jr., 2008; Koca, Atencio, & Demirhan, 2009; Walseth et al. 2018). Importantly, in his study of boys’ classes, Jachyra (2016) found that the male-dominated nature of PE also impacted those boys on the fringe of PE participation.

There have also been a number of studies that have examined students' experiences in primary school (Portman, 1995; Dyson, 1995, 2001; Jachyra, 2016; Gray et al. 2018¹⁴; Wainright et al. 2018¹⁵). These studies provided slightly different perspectives from high school literature. They provided a voice to those children who are not yet at a level where they can choose to drop out. In Portman's (1995) seminal ethnographic study, he examined the PE experiences of low-skilled year four and five students. Portman's study showed that the low-skilled students had similar feelings of failure, criticism and derision from peers, and a lack of support from the teacher (Portman, 1995). The author argued that fun, enjoyment and positive experiences were possible when 'the activity was easy to perform because the low-skilled students could already do it' (p. 449). However, his observations showed that when new skills were introduced the students struggled because they did not get enough practice time to learn the skill and, therefore, could not translate what they had learned into the games. While Portman's study set the stage for future studies into primary PE experiences, few researchers have taken up this lead. Though Portman's study added insight into the experiences of year four and five students, by this stage children's physical subjectivities are likely already well developed. What is missing from the literature is an examination of children's experiences in early PE, when the development of many children's physical subjectivities are still in their infancy. Therefore, an examination of children's experiences when they are first introduced to PE is needed.

Conclusively, the two types of studies, retrospective and contemporary, have added some critical insight into our understanding of children's experiences of PE. As Enright and O'Sullivan (2010) argue, much has been learned from listening to students' perspectives on their own experiences. It has allowed for a focus on the barriers that impact students' experiences and for the development of pedagogical models, such as cooperative learning specifically designed to improve the experiences of adolescents. That these studies focused on the high school years makes sense (Kirk, 2005), since, as discussed, it is the period where students can choose to disengage, and as the

¹⁴ These two studies (Jachyra, 2016; Gray et al. 2018) have been included in both categories because they cover the final year of primary school and high school. Although it must be noted that Gray et al. 2018 focus on Primary 7 in Scotland (the equivalent of year 7), which would be high school in Australia.

¹⁵ Wainright and colleagues' (2018) study does examine the early years, but it focuses on a movement curriculum called the Foundation Phase, as they have gotten rid of formal PE for children under the age of seven. Their experiences are likely to be very different to typical PE experiences as this curriculum places more of an emphasis on holistic development.

literature shows, many do. However, this body of literature shows a clear gap. Although Kirk has called for a renewed focus on early PE, this has not been reflected in the current body of experience literature.

In conclusion, although PE has developed significantly since its first implementation post-World War Two, it has settled into a traditional multi-activity approach. The development of PE has led to stakeholders hoping that PE can achieve multiple aspirations, including inspiring interest in sport, achieving public health goals and fostering lifelong physical activity engagement. Unfortunately, the focus on these sometimes conflicting goals has led to the delivery of PE that is not engaging all children, leading to negative experiences for many children and adolescents. As discussed, to better understand the experiences of all children in PE an examination of the earliest experiences is needed. In the next section, I examine the introduction of the Australian national curriculum for Health and PE and how its creators have attempted to address many of the concerns with current PE practice.

HPE Curriculum in Australia

Curriculum plays a fundamental role in the education of children. A curriculum is a body of knowledge that is offered in schools and represents what children and young people are expected to learn in order to participate and contribute to the society they live in (Renwick, 2017). In Australia, guidance for how PE should be offered in schools is covered in the HPE learning area of the national curriculum. The purpose of this section is to examine the status and nature of the HPE curriculum in Australia. The section begins with an examination of the traditional approach to PE curriculum. Next, the focus shifts to the Australian National Curriculum for HPE and its implementation in primary schools. Finally, this section concludes with an examination of the focus that the curriculum places on the fundamental movement skills (FMS).

The traditional approach

Research has noted that in Australia HPE is considered a marginalized area of the curriculum with low status¹⁶ and minimal time allocation (Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Dinan Thompson, 2013). Concurrently, the conflation with sport (and the focus on scientifically defined components such as motor learning) has served to reinforce the ‘sportification’ of PE curriculum (Flintoff et al. 2011; Jones & Green, 2015; Mooney & Hickey, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018). The intersection of time constraints and the ‘sportification’ of PE curriculum led to the widespread use of the traditional multi-activity approach (Kirk, 2005), where children are exposed to a wide variety of sports over short periods of time (Cothran, 2001). As discussed, in this multi-activity approach, the children stick with one sport for a block of lessons and are introduced to the decontextualized techniques of that sport in each distinct lesson. According to Kirk (2010), the practice of teaching sports in this way has been desirable because of the way it fits neatly into the school timetable.

This approach to PE curricula has been roundly criticized for only offering shallow ‘sampling’ experiences (Cothran, 2001, Kirk, 2005) that are often compartmentalized and fragmented (Rainer et al. 2012). In their examination of the curriculum development process, Jess, Carse and Keay (2016) argued that this traditional approach to PE is unlikely to offer deep learning experiences which children can apply across different contexts. Importantly, in early PE these multi-activity block lessons have focused specifically on the learning of the fundamental movement skills, through mainly small-sided games (Ward, 2012, 2013). So, at the early primary level, curriculum time over the year gets dived up into FMS blocks. Unsurprisingly, this traditional curricular approach has been heavily influenced by the ‘medico-scientific, biophysical and psychological foundations of HPE’ (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009, p. 167). Due to numerous critiques of this curricular approach, the introduction of the Australian national curriculum sought to move beyond this conceptualisation of PE.

¹⁶ According to Nyberg & Larson (2014), the low status and marginalisation of PE within school curricula is deeply rooted in the notion that the physical is at a subordinate level below the mind.

The national curriculum

The national curriculum was proposed in 2008 after it was agreed that quality education for all Australians under one curriculum framework was critical¹⁷ (Lynch, 2014). The national curriculum (foundation to year 10) was approved by all of the education ministers in 2015 and subsequently introduced for all states to follow. Since then, the national curriculum has served as the guide for teaching in eight key learning areas.¹⁸ As a result, PE practice has been governed by this overarching curriculum¹⁹ (Dinan Thompson, 2018). The curriculum document set out two interrelated strands of HPE practice for foundation to year 10 students (Dinan Thompson, 2013): personal, social and community health; and movement and physical activity. Each of these content strands is further elaborated on as descriptions in the form of sub-strands (Renwick, 2017):

- Personal, social and community health
 - (1) Being healthy, safe and active.
 - (2) Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing.
 - (3) Contributing to health and active communities
- Movement and physical activity
 - (1) Moving the body
 - (2) Understanding movement
 - (3) Learning through movement (VCAA, 2016)

This approach to physical education curriculum attempted to move beyond the dominant ‘medico-scientific, biophysical and psychological foundations of HPE’ (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009, p.167) and include a socio-cultural perspective (Lynch, 2014) at the national level. The goal behind this reform was to encourage a more holistic approach to health and physical education practice. All of the

¹⁷ Curriculum development and implementation was previously conducted at the state level.

¹⁸ These key learning areas are English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Technologies and the Arts (ACARA, 2016)

¹⁹ I note at this point that I use the Victorian HPE curriculum as my primary reference guide. The VCAA document is virtually word-for-word identical to the national curriculum.

content in the curriculum is influenced by an overarching set of educative goals, including focusing on educative purposes, taking a strengths-based approach, valuing movement, developing health literacy, and adopting a critical inquiry approach, all of which are informed by research and contemporary pedagogical approaches (Dinan Thompson, 2018). Importantly, the national curriculum also placed an emphasis on social justice (Macdonald, 2013)

At a practical level, the curriculum set out specific focus areas for school and teachers to follow. These focus areas provide the context through which the HPE content is taught to students (VCAA, 2016). The HPE curriculum contains twelve focus areas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Alcohol and other drugs | - Food and Nutrition |
| - Health benefits of physical activity | - Mental health and wellbeing |
| - Relationships and sexuality | - Safety |
| - <i>Active play and minor games</i> | - <i>Challenge and adventure activities</i> |
| - <i>Fundamental movement skills</i> | - <i>Games and sports</i> |
| - <i>Lifelong physical activities</i> | - <i>Rhythmic and expressive activities</i> |

(VCAA, 2016)

It is important to note that the final six focus areas (highlighted in italics) are the primary focus areas of the primary PE context, as the other health-focused focus areas are largely taught within the classroom.²⁰ The goal for these movement and physical activity focus areas is to provide children and young people a range of skills and experiences so that they can become competent and confident participants in movement and physical activity (Macdonald & Enright, 2013). Therefore, the principle focus of primary PE is to begin to introduce children to this range of movement and physical activity experiences.

²⁰ This is particularly the case in the primary years, where health is covered in the classroom and PE is conducted separately. If a school has a PE teacher then they will largely cover the PE aspect while health will be covered by the classroom teacher

The inclusion of this range of focus areas is designed to encourage a holistic approach to learning. However, as with all curricula, the responsibility for interpreting and developing the curriculum fall to the individual school and teachers (Griggs & Petrie, 2016). In his examination of this reform to physical education, Lynch (2014) highlighted how the rollout of the national curriculum has been criticized for placing significant emphasis on the shaping and writing of the curriculum, but not towards the application and evaluation of the curriculum (Lynch, 2014). The curriculum does not give explicit advice on how the focus areas should be implemented (Renwick, 2017), instead giving this responsibility to the school and teachers (VCAA, 2017). Thus, although the curriculum provides official and valued knowledge, teachers interpret and implement this document in a variety of ways (Rosenmund, 2016), often selecting what they that want to cover (Loughran, 2013) or adapting the curriculum to meet their needs (Renwick, 2017). So, although the new curriculum provides the framework for student learning, it also provides the freedom for PE teachers to choose which elements of the curriculum they want to focus on and the ability to adapt these elements to match their pedagogy. In essence, this explains why, despite the introduction of a new holistic approach, the dominant multi-activity approach is still regularly the central focus of many teacher's curricula (Jess et al. 2016). This lack of change is particularly evident in early primary PE where there is continuing concentration on the FMS.

The national HPE curriculum in the early years

Despite attempts to reform the HPE curriculum to focus on a holistic approach to health and physical education, not much has changed for early physical education in Australia. The dominant approach in early primary PE continues to focus on the learning of the fundamental movement skills (Pickup, 2011; Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016), an organized series of basic movement patterns that involve the combination of two or more body segments (Gallahue & Cleland-Donnelly, 2007). In an in-depth examination of primary PE, Pickup (2011) argued that the acquisition of these skills is essential for young children to lay the foundations of movement, and therefore a critical focus of early PE. This has been echoed across the literature, where the learning of the FMS is said to play an essential role in impacting future physical activity levels (Okley & Booth, 2004; Fisher et al. 2005;

Wrotniak et al. 2006; Lawrence, 2011). The rationale is that mastering these fundamental movement skills is necessary for children to competently engage in physical activity for the rest of their lives.

Within the PE context, the mastering of these skills sets the foundation for children to become proficient in more complex movements and skills (Ward, 2012), which are seen as essential to competently participate in the sporting activities (Ward & Griggs, 2018) that define the later years of PE (Kirk, 2010).

This positioning of the FMS is echoed in the national curriculum, where the fundamental movement skills are said to ‘provide the foundation for competent and confident participation in a range of physical activities’ (VCAA, 2016, p. 8). The FMS are divided into two categories:

- **Locomotor and non-locomotor skills:** rolling, balancing, sliding, jogging, running, leaping, hopping, jumping, dodging, galloping, skipping, floating and moving the body through water.
- **Object control skills:** bouncing, throwing, catching, kicking and striking.

(VCAA, 2016, p. 8)

From a curriculum perspective, the central focus of early primary PE then becomes to teach the fundamental movement skills through active play and minor games²¹ (VCAA, 2016). In this focus on FMS, the national curriculum highlights the importance of teaching all of these skills so that children have the competence to engage in a range of physical activities. Despite critiques of basing PE curriculum exclusively on the successful execution of FMS (Almond, 2013b), this approach at least emphasizes a range of diverse movements. Unfortunately, as discussed, this official knowledge is not always translated into the curriculum of each PE teacher. Instead, primary teachers tend to focus on the movement skills that most directly relate to the sports that they perceive as important to PE practice (Powell, 2015) or that they adopt in the later years of their primary PE curricula (Kirk, 2010)

²¹ The curriculum explicitly outlines that the focuses areas of ‘lifelong physical activities’ (such as Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates) and ‘games and sports’ are not appropriate in the 1-2 stage. Similar to the literature that argues that children must master these FMS before competing in sports and games, the ‘game and sport’ focus area (introduced in year 3) is ‘designed to build on learning in active play and minor games and fundamental movement skills’ (VCAA, 2016, p. 9).

The positioning of PE-as-sport (Hunter, 2004) and the ‘sportification’ of primary PE curricula (Flintoff et al. 2011; Jones & Green, 2015; Ward & Griggs, 2018) justifies this focus on a narrow set of movement skills (specifically the object control skills). This process is further compounded by most PE teachers’ own socialisation into the world of sport (Richards & Andrew, 2015; Jess et al. 2016, Tinning, 2017), particularly in Australia, where sport is a prominent part of our national cultural identity (Cashman, 2010; Stewart, Nicholson, Smith & Westerbook, 2004; Zakus, Skinner & Edwards, 2009). At the early primary level, teachers craft their curricula to prioritize these skills because they perceive them to be the most important for children’s physical development. Accordingly, the emphasis placed on these sporting skills continues to be uncritically reproduced by teachers (Tinning, 2017). Crucially then, sporting skills continue to be a common focus of PE classes (Kirk, 2010) and therefore provide the most capital value to those who possess them (Fitzpatrick & McGlashan, 2016). Herein lies the problem with this curricula approach in early PE, in that it fails to adequately address the differing levels of sporting experience that children bring to early PE classes (Evans, 2004; Ward, 2012). Many children already possess a number of these sporting skills, while other children do not, which creates an imbalance in class.

Ultimately, the research shows that despite attempts in the national curriculum to broaden the scope of PE content this has not translated into many classrooms, particularly in early PE. Essentially, although some teachers have attempted to include the ‘strength-based approach’ promoted by the national curriculum (Renwick, 2017), in their early PE curriculum, they have still emphasized a particular focus on sporting skills, taught in a surface-level, decontextualized way, which is likely to only align with the previous experiences of a certain privileged group of students. From a content perspective, this narrow approach is unlikely to provide all children with the meaningful experiences that many researchers have claimed is vital for ongoing engagement in PE (Koca et al. 2009; Kirk, 2010; Almond, 2013a; Beni et al. 2016; Tannehill, 2016; Gray et al. 2018). This is particularly reflected at the primary level, which has not typically received the same type of recognition or focus as the secondary years of PE (Kirk, 2005). As a result, research activity has consistently concluded that primary PE is broken and in need of being fixed (Griggs, 2007; Morgan & Bourke, 2008;

Tsangaridou, 2014). To examine this in more detail, attention now turns to primary physical education.

Primary Physical Education

Typically, primary PE is positioned as significant because ‘it prepares the basic building blocks’ (Haydn-Davies, 2005, p. 48) for any physical activities that follow. This section examines primary PE from a number of angles. This section begins with an examination of primary PE pedagogy, focusing on current pedagogical practice in primary PE, the constraints on practice and alternative pedagogical models. Following this, the concept of physical literacy and its impact on primary PE will be examined in detail. Finally, this section concludes by examining the playground and the possible connection it may share with PE.

Primary PE Pedagogy

In the past, the typical pedagogical focus was on ‘skills and drills’ (Pill, 2010b), or what Kirk (2010) called the ‘molecular approach’ (in citing Rovegno, 1995), in which advanced skills are added on to basic skills in a linear fashion, followed by the learning of tactics and an eventual game. However, critical theoretical and pedagogical work focused on gender, sexuality, class, and race and racialization (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Azzarito, Solomon, & Harrison, 2006; Enright & McCuaig, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2010; Fitzpatrick & McGlashan, 2016; Hylton, 2015; Oliver & Lalik, 2004a, 2004b; Paechter, 2003; Wright, 1995; Wright, McDonald & Burrows, 2004) have shown how this pedagogical approach tends to exclude large groups of children. Although there has been a shift away from ‘skills and drills’, primary pedagogy is still heavily dominated by a sport and games approach (Green, 2008; Griggs, 2007; Jess et al. 2017; Ward, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018). This pedagogical approach has been criticized for the negative impact on the quality of children’s learning experiences (Morgan & Hansen, 2008) and for the activities often being carried out in a way that alienates and excludes, particularly for children with lower levels of both skill and tactical ability (Hastie & Casey, 2014). Despite criticism of this dominant approach it has still been favoured in most schools (Jess, Atencio & Thorburn, 2011), but with a new child-focused approach.

This dominant pedagogical approach has been impacted by broader changes in education, which now places an emphasis on ‘integrated, inclusive, child-centred pedagogy’ (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016, p. 527) and self-regulated learning (Marzano, 2007; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). As a result, there is now a focus on children learning the sporting-focused FMS skills (Tinning, 2017, Ward, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018), through small-sided cooperative games (Ward, 2012). Critically, even though this new approach has been impacted by broader changes in education, it still places skill progression as the primary focus, which is problematic because of the different levels of skill that children bring to class (Evans, 2004). The new child-centred approach then makes it unlikely that teachers will intervene when this leads to problems, preferring to let the children learn from each other (Morgan et al. 2013). So, the pedagogical change in primary PE has only occurred at a surface level, not particularly moving away from the deep-seated focus on sport and games, but just putting more emphasis on the children to work together and self-regulate. This real pedagogical change at the primary level is difficult because of the low expectations placed upon learning in PE (Pickup, 2011), thereby making it difficult for teachers to know what types of practice are adversely affecting the children.

The issues discussed in this section often go unchallenged in primary education because of the belief held by teachers that PE is effectively implemented if the children are ‘busy, happy and good’ (Ward & Griggs, 2018, p. 407). In an examination of primary teaching practice, Akuffo & Hodge (2008) found that classes, where this occurred, were deemed by teachers to be ‘good’ classes (p. 262). Accordingly, Ward & Griggs (2018), argued this is made worse by that belief that many teachers hold that PE should be underpinned by a focus on ‘fun’. Therefore, as long as children are being ‘busy, happy and good’ (Ward & Griggs, 2018, p. 407) than it is considered a successful lesson and assumed that the children must be having fun, thereby guaranteeing a positive PE experience. By conceptualizing primary PE in such a way, these three features have become the signs of good pedagogical practice, rather than deep, meaningful learning experiences. Consequently, primary PE has often been positioned as a break from the more serious academic subjects (Kirk, 2010), where children are given the chance to expel some energy (Morgan & Hansen, 2008, Dinan Thompson,

2013). This has set a very low bar for good practice in primary PE because it means those delivering primary PE (whether a specialist, a non-specialist or an EP) believe they are doing their job as long as the children are busy on task, appear to be happy and are behaving well. This makes it unlikely that these adults will reflect on their own pedagogy and are only likely to intervene in activities of the children if one of these conditions are not met. Thus, they are unlikely to intervene if there are negative experiences that are occurring within the implementation of these three prime directives. This is particularly alarming considering that the wealth of literature that has shown that many children and young people are having negative experiences in PE. Importantly Primary PE pedagogy has been further impacted by a number of significant constraints.

Constraints on Primary PE pedagogy

The ability to deliver quality pedagogy in primary PE is not always easy, impacted by a number of significant constraints. One problem that has impacted primary PE is that many schools do not have a specialist PE teacher (Kirk, 2005, Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Garret & Wrench, 2008; Petrie & lisahunter, 2011; Whipp et al 2012; Telford, 2017). These schools have faced increasingly restrictive budgetary regulations, and therefore have not been able to rationalize the employment of a full-time PE specialist (Whipp et al. 2011). Consequently, the obligation of teaching PE has typically fallen to the classroom teacher (Garret & Wrench, 2008). Research has shown that these classroom teachers have faced a number of barriers to teaching PE, including inadequate training; low levels of knowledge and experience; an inability to correct technique; and low self-confidence (Decorby et al. 2005; Griggs, 2007; Light & Georgakis, 2005; Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008; Whipp et al. 2011). Importantly, Decorby and colleagues (2005) found that the barriers classroom teacher face often led to the delivery of PE lessons that resemble supervised play. In a similar study, exploring the beliefs and behaviours of specialist vs. non-specialist PE teachers, Farrell, Thompson & Napper-Owen (2004) found that non-specialist teachers do not prioritize PE. This likely plays a role in the choice that many classroom teachers make to remove PE from their daily schedule (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). The obligation placed on classroom teachers teaching PE is problematic because while they may be qualified experts within the classroom, they are not necessarily experts at

delivering PE content. This means children are not delivered quality pedagogy by their teachers, which has a knock-on effect that further impacts primary PE practice.

To solve the non-specialist problem, many schools have turned to outsourcing their PE to external providers. The proliferation of external providers into primary school PE programs has been well covered in the literature (Dyson et al. 2016; Griggs, 2007; Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2008; Petrie, Penney & Fellows, 2014; Powell, 2015; Whipp et al. 2011; Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011), with it noted as a particularly significant trend in Australia (Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015). Within the literature, an external provider refers to as any outside agency coming into a school to provide a service, program or resource (Dyson et al. 2016, p. 4). Across the literature, there are four common reasons that schools outsource their PE to external providers:

- (1) To access the external provider's equipment or resources (Williams et al. 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015)
- (2) To access an expert in the field (Powell, 2015; Williams et al. 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015; Dyson et al. 2016)
- (3) As a form of professional development for PE/classroom teachers (Powell, 2015; Williams et al. 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015; Dyson et al. 2016)
- (4) To provide students with educational experiences beyond the expertise of educators at the school (Williams & Macdonald, 2015)

This literature shows that one or more of these rationalizations was provided as a justification for the hiring of any external provider. Williams and colleagues (2011) pointed out that outsourcing was not unique to schools with non-specialist PE teachers, with it just as likely to occur in PE programs with a specialist. Accordingly, although the literature shows that this is a practice that is disproportionately implemented by schools without a specialist, it is also regularly adopted by PE specialists as well.

As discussed, often these external providers are representatives from sporting organizations. In Powell's (2015) examination of outsourcing at four primary schools (mainly to coaches from sporting organisations), he found that the schools justified the use of EPs to teach PE in a way that privileged the technical elements of sport, including teaching children how to play sport and perform sport-related skills. According to Powell:

The 'teaching PE is the same as coaching sports skills' discourse so strongly underpinned teachers' understanding of PE that the value of an outsourced programme and its expert coach was inextricably entwined with the ability of the coach to develop students' sports-related skills (p. 77).

Hence, if learning sport-related skills is the primary purpose of PE then bringing in 'experts' from the sporting world is the best way to achieve this. There are many problems with this approach, including an over-emphasis on sport, fitness and fundamental movement skills (Petrie, 2011) taught through a 'one-size-fits-all' approach (Powell, 2015). Perhaps the biggest problem with the use of EPs is that few of them tend to 'have knowledge of learners or learning, education settings, curriculum or pedagogy' (Petrie et al. 2014, p.31). While they may be experts in sport, they are not experts in learning or constructing and delivering sound physical education programs. Crucially, this makes it difficult for an external provider to meet the needs of all children (Powell, 2015), particularly those with low-skill levels or that learn in diverse ways (Dyson et al. 2016). Despite these critiques, this practice has created a situation where primary school teachers are willingly relinquishing their PE lessons to non-teachers (Jones & Green, 2017; Ward, 2012), because they have a sport-specific expertise, which in many ways has become the main qualification to teach PE (Blair & Chapel, 2011). This presents a problem where many schools make a choice between a non-specialist and an external provider, neither who have a strong grasp of PE pedagogy, or how to connect with all learners.

Primary PE pedagogy is impacted and constrained by a number of factors. As discussed, often PE is taught either by a non-specialist classroom teacher or an external provider. Both present

problems for delivering quality PE practice for young children. However, it is important to note that even in PE classes with a specialist PE there are still problems that have an impact on pedagogy. Importantly, in most primary schools PE is given a restricted allocation on the timetable (Kirk, 2010), meaning that a specialist teacher is limited to teaching each class once a week (Telford, 2017). This only provides a limited opportunity to cover the content of the PE curriculum. Within this time constraint, delivering content may take priority over best practice. Secondly, PE teachers are often not adequately trained to teach primary school students. This is perhaps a reflection of the status of primary PE, as across the world there is scant attention paid to the preparation of teachers to implement primary PE, particularly in the early-primary years (Goodway et al. 2013). Instead, as Griggs (2007) pointed out teachers are predominantly trained with a focus on secondary PE, and therefore often lack a strong content or pedagogical knowledge to deliver primary lessons. This also explains why many PE specialists choose to outsource some of their curriculum time to EPs. Ultimately, as a result of these constraints, the pedagogy that is actually implemented in early primary PE is often quite limited and basic. To overcome problems with contemporary PE practices, a number of alternative pedagogical models have been proposed.

Alternative pedagogical models

In an effort to move beyond the traditional pedagogical models of PE practice, a number of scholars have developed and implemented a variety of alternative pedagogical approaches. Three of the most well researched and developed models are the Teaching Games for Understanding, Sport Education and Co-operative learning approaches (Ward & Griggs, 2018). These models have been implemented across a range of PE contexts. The developers of these models have sought to foster more child-centred learning and align learning objectives, teaching strategies and subject material in a unified approach (Dyson, Griffin & Hastie, 2004). Importantly, each of these models is based on addressing an element of traditional PE pedagogy that the authors believed was excluding children.

The Teaching Games for Understanding²² model evolved from the pioneering work of Bunker & Thorpe (1982), who believed that games were being taught incorrectly to children. In the TGfU model, the teacher plans a series of game-like learning activities to develop students' skill and tactics, which will eventually allow the children to progress to a modified full version of a game (Metzler, 2011). According to Kirk (2010), Bunker & Thorpe believed that games teaching should not start with the practice of necessary skills, but instead with participation in a game modified to suit the experience level and ability of the players. Thus, the approach emphasized shifting from traditional learning to game-based learning (Pill, 2007). According to Light (2013), this game-based learning is underpinned by an inquiry-based and problem-solving approach that emphasizes learning in game-based activities. The literature on TGFU has shown that its implementation can be effective for skill development (Pill, 2011), can have a positive impact on learning (Harvey, Cushion & Massa-Gonzalez, 2010) by providing opportunities to develop social skills and problem-solving abilities (Light, Curry & Mooney, 2014). However, Kirk and MacPhail (2002) critiqued TGfU for emphasizing linear learning, which is the opposite of what is meant to occur in games. Importantly, in Pill's (2011) examination of teachers' perception of the model, he found that teachers struggled to implement TGfU effectively and therefore concluded that it is a model that is most suitable for implementation in the senior years of PE.

Sport Education (SE) was developed based on the idea that sport was not being taught correctly in PE programs (Kirk, 2010). According to its founder Daryl Siedentop (1998), the model was "designed to provide authentic, educationally rich, sport experiences for girls and boys in the context of school physical education" (p. 18). In his review of the model, Metzler (2011) stressed that SE was designed to teach the concept and conduct of sport, instead of simply introducing children to range of sports. The model relies on a mixture of direct instruction, co-operative group work, and peer teaching (Siedentop, 1998) and involves students engaging in a sport for a season, while taking on a number of roles in the implementation of the sport (Metzler, 2011). The literature on the SE model has shown that it can increase student fun and enjoyment (Beni et al. 2016; Hastie et al. 2011;

²² In Australia, the TGFU model is more commonly known as Game Sense (Pill, 2011).

Wallhead & O'Sullivan, 2005) and lead to positive experiences (Pill, 2010), even for students who are amotivated towards PE participation (Perlman, 2012). However, for SE to work it requires substantial changes to the timetables, and to the roles of the teacher and the pupil (Kirk, 2010). This can be difficult to achieve in every PE program.

Co-operative learning is a student-focused model of pedagogy. The model began to gain momentum in PE practice in the early part of the 21st century, as a result of its proliferation in other subjects (Casey & Goodyear, 2015). The approach has been applied and extensively covered in academic literature (Dyson, Griffin & Hastie, 2004; Goodyear & Casey, 2015a, 2015b; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2013, 2014; Metzler, 2011). In Metzler's (2011) review of the model, he found that it places a major emphasis on student learning, in that the students must cooperate to learn. Simply, there is an emphasis placed on interacting with each other and learning from the experiences that they create together (Dyson, Griffin, & Hastie, 2004). Hence, learning occurs through the co-operative process, not just as an outcome. In a study by Goodyear, Casey & Kirk (2014), with a cohort of year seven girls, they found that the use of cooperative learning increased the girls' engagement with PE. Subsequently, Goodyear & Casey (2015) found that cooperative learning can have an impact on students' physical competence, cognitive understanding and affective development. However, Fitzpatrick and McGlashan (2016) argued that although the model promotes inclusivity, it also implies that students must take individual responsibility for their involvement in PE classes. Additionally, they critiqued the model for assuming that being co-operative is ideal for everyone at all times.

Despite the introduction of these alternative models, their implementation typically only occurs at the secondary level and in the later years of primary education, and therefore few are targeted at the early primary level (Metzler, 2011; Pill, 2011; Ward, 2012). As a result, there is very little literature on how teachers can effectively adapt these models for delivery in the early years of PE. They have therefore had little impact on early primary physical education, except for possibly reaffirming the games based, self-guided approach that dominates primary practice. This lack of impact is likely due to the fact that implementing these models requires substantial pedagogical

expertise and content knowledge (Harvey et al., 2014; Ward & Griggs, 2011), which is particularly problematic in the primary context because of the constraints that impact the ability of teachers to deliver high-quality pedagogy. However, there has been one approach that has had a widespread impact on PE and has emphasized a focus on the early years of PE. To examine that emphasis in more detail, I now turn my attention to the concept of physical literacy.

Physical literacy as an alternative approach

A significant body of literature has called for a move away from the traditional approach to PE (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Goodyear & Casey, 2015; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014; Kirk, 2005, 2010, 2013; Kirk & Kinchin, 2002; Jess et al. 2016; Rainer & Davies, 2013; Tannehill, 2016; Ward, 2012; Walseth et al. 2018), to an approach that includes authentic and relevant learning experiences, with an emphasis on the development of the holistic individual (Cliff, Wright & Clarke, 2009; Gray et al. 2018; Kirk, 2010; McKay, Gore & Kirk, 1990; Pill, 2007; Rehor, 2004; Wainright et al. 2018). As discussed, the decades of academic work on this development has been particularly reflected in the Australian national curriculum for HPE. Concurrently, there has been significant discussion in recent years on the concept of physical literacy, an approach to physical education that is primarily derived from the work of Margaret Whitehead (2010; Kirk, 2013). To examine this concept, I begin by exploring the varying definitions of the concept.

The concept defined

The term physical literacy has become important within the field of PE. While it has been used intermittently for a number of years (Whitehead, 2007), it has become more widely used recently (Corbin, 2016; Lundvall, 2015). The concept has been defined and operationalised distinctly across a variety of fields (MacDonald & Enright, 2014). Accordingly, it has become a concept that means different things in different fields. In their examination of physical literacy in the national curriculum, MacDonald & Enright (2013) argued that in sports policy, physical literacy is positioned as the basis for lifelong physical activity and excellence in sport. This view of physical literacy is backed by the definition of physical literacy proposed by Higgs and colleagues (2008):

‘The development of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that permit a child to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity, rhythmic (dance) and sport situations’ (p. 5)

This definition of physical literacy has been drawn on as the primary approach to physical literacy in multiple areas of sport policy, including the Canadian Sport for Life policy (Corbin, 2016), and both Athletics New Zealand’s and the UK’s Long-Term Athlete Development Models (Almond, 2013b; Ford et al. 2011). In Almond’s (2013b) critique of this approach to physical literacy, he argued that this definition prioritises the development of physical skill and abilities, particularly the learning of the fundamental movement skills.²³ Additionally, MacDonald & Enright (2013) concluded that this version of physical literacy may align with the needs of the sports industry, emphasizing the development of the physical domain, but fails to address the development of other domains. So, while this conceptualization of physical literacy may help to develop athletes, it is unlikely to address the needs of all children in PE

In contrast, Margaret Whitehead’s conceptualization of physical literacy emphasizes the development of the holistic nature of the individual (2010). This means developing the whole range of human dimensions, rather than just the physical dimension highlighted earlier. As Corlett and Mandigo (2016) argued, it is about the development of the whole person, which involves more than just learning and doing basic movement skills. In her work, Whitehead (2013b) offered a concise definition of physical literacy:

As the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for maintaining purposeful physical pursuits/activities throughout the life course (p. 29)

²³ In their use of physical literacy, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) states that their goal is to help all Australians develop their physical literacy for active and healthy lives, while keeping sports relevant and viable (ASC, 2019).. This shows a similar definition to physical literacy as used by Higgs and colleagues (2008). Importantly, Lundvall (2015) argues that these two goals are not compatible because sport is often associated with competition, whereas physical literacy is focused on personal development and the realization of individual potential.

By achieving these components an individual will be able to remain active across the course of their life. Importantly she added to this definition by stating that:

Physical literacy is a universal concept, applicable to everyone, whenever and wherever they may live. Individuals' age, overall endowment and the extent of their embodied abilities, as well as the culture within which they live, will, of course, influence the specific nature of their physical literacy (2010, p. 12)

Put simply, physical literacy can be achieved by anyone but is impacted by the different embodied experiences that an individual brings to their own physical literacy journey. Although physical literacy is applicable to anyone, the introduction to these concepts in the early years is integral for the development of physical literacy across the life course (Kirk, 2013). According to Whitehead & Murdoch (2006), the development and fostering of this type of physical literacy is the underlying goal of physical education.

The three key underlying attributes in Whitehead's conceptualization, motivation, confidence and physical competence, form the core of the concept (Kirk, 2013). There is an interrelationship between the three attributes, which are mutually reinforcing (see Appendix A), as described by Whitehead (2010, pp. 14-15):

- Motivation (A) can encourage participation and this involvement can enhance confidence and physical competence (B). The development of this confidence and competence can, in turn, maintain or increase motivation.
- Development of confidence and physical competence (B) can facilitate fluent interaction with a wide range of environments (C). This effective relationship with the environment, with the new challenge this presents can, in turn, enhance confidence and physical competence.

- The success of developing effective relationships with a range of environments (C) can add to motivation (A). This enhanced motivation can, in turn, encourage exploration and promote effective interaction with the environment.

These concepts are not meant to be developed as isolated attributes, but rather in tandem, always mutually reinforcing each other along the journey. Therefore, physical competency on its own does not constitute physical literacy, rather it is the confidence and motivation an individual gains from feelings of competence that will create interest for further involvement in physical activity (Whitehead, 2013a). Important in this conceptualization of physical literacy is for an individual to acknowledge and be reflexive of their embodied dimension. In stressing the importance of this dimension, Whitehead places an emphasis on overcoming the mind/body dualism that is present in much of sport and physical education literature.

The mind/body dualism

As touched on earlier, the hegemonic discourse in PE focuses on the body as a machine (Lawson, 1998; Whitehead, 2010). This view, deeply entrenched in the Western psyche, positions the body as an object that is valued for its 'role as an instrument in work, elite sports participation and health maintenance' (Whitehead, 2010, p. 11). This approach to seeing the body as an instrument requires viewing the body purely from a biological dimension. This dualistic view of being sees the body as a mechanism, essential to contain our intellect, but of little value, except for its ability to function as a machine to sustain the mind (Whitehead, 2007). Hence, the dualistic view positions the mind and the body as two different entities, with the body positioned as inferior. To address this dualistic split, physical literacy places an emphasis on the monistic nature of the body. That is to say, we are a single indivisible entity, although we possess many different but interdependent capabilities (Whitehead, 2010). A monistic view rejects the dualistic division of the mind and the body. As such, physical literacy is based on the belief that there is much more to our body than just its form as an object, instead, alongside this view of the 'body as object' there is a recognition of the 'body as lived' (Whitehead, 2010, p. 19)

In viewing the body this way, Whitehead aligns with other scholars who believe that the body is a concrete, living structure (Brown, 2006), and is both a social and biological phenomenon (Shilling, 2003). Hence, Connell argues that the body is active in the social process but also plays a concrete, physical role in these processes (2002). It is not just a socialized object, it has a real dimension. Appropriately, our beings are profoundly shaped by our bodies, and our bodies play a central role in our social contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It follows that physical literacy is defined by a monist focus on the holistic being. Viewed from this monist perspective, the human is a complex entity comprising multiple capabilities which build from and enrich each other (Whitehead, 2010). So, while acknowledging the biological view of the body as an 'object', physical literacy stresses the importance of recognizing the embodied dimension of the human experience (Whitehead, 2013). It is this dimension of our daily lives that is often overlooked.

This embodied dimension of our existence plays a central role in human existence (Whitehead, 2010; Wainright et al. 2018). It is the process through which humans create themselves through interactions with the environment. As embodied beings, we all live through our embodied dimension (Whitehead, 2010). Crucially, this embodiment occurs on a pre-conceptual level (Whitehead, 2013a) and therefore much of it occurs below the level of consciousness (Collins, 2004). This produces tacit knowledge of how to do certain things, which is stored in our embodiment and called upon without conscious effort (Whitehead, 2010). So, for example, when driving a car an individual calls upon tacit knowledge developed through previous experience, without having to think consciously about it. So, while the 'body as object' focuses on how our mind impacts our body, the 'body as lived' focuses on how our interactions with the environment impact us as a whole and then how we embody these interactions on a daily basis. Logically, there is no such thing as a disembodied mind, what we know is a direct result of our embodied interactions with the world (Whitehead, 2010). As Bresler (2004) argues, the 'mind is in the body' and 'body is in the mind' (p. 36). Crucially, Maude (2010) argues embodied interactions are the most essential medium of interaction in the early years, and the value of these early interactions provide the foundation for most our dealings with

others in the world (Maude, 2010). Consequently, acknowledging the embodied dimension of human existence plays a significant role in how the concept of physical literacy is implemented in PE class.

Physical literacy in PE

According to Whitehead (2010), physical literacy is about more than just PE. It is not just a pedagogy that replaces PE practice, instead, it is an important concept that should be incorporated into PE practice.²⁴ In her conceptualisation, Whitehead places significance on the early years, arguing that early childhood is a critical period in the development of the disposition (Almond & Whitehead, 2012; Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013). Accordingly, Liedl (2013) believes that strong PE programs should be based on the philosophical and pedagogical concept of teaching and developing the whole child, particularly in the early years. In this way, Whitehouse (2013b) argues that PE should be less focused on skill development and fitness, instead, concentrating on developing both spheres of the embodied individual. This focus on recognizing the embodied dimension of the individual has resonated across literature in PE (Almond & Whitehead, 2012; Azzarito & Kirk, 2013; Datta, 2008; Evans & Davies, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Kirk, 2006, 2010, 2014; Oliver & Kirk, 2016; Tinning, 2002; Wainright et al. 2018; Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013a, 2013b). As a result, incorporating Whitehead's conceptualisation of physical literacy into PE ultimately requires some key adaptations to regular PE practice.

Implementing a focus on physical literacy requires beginning with the perspective of the children and attempting to connect with them by focusing on their interests and the meaning they place on tasks and content (Almond, 2013b; Dudley, 2015). So, instead of starting with pre-defined, generic content, it should start by addressing the interests of the children. Additionally, because physical literacy is an individual journey, it can be problematic for a teacher to attempt to observe and assess performance (Almond & Whitehead, 2013). Therefore, the implementation of physical literacy involves shifting away from assessment practice focused on a child's performance, particularly in comparison with their peers (Whitehead, 2010; Lundvall, 2015) Also, proponents of physical literacy

²⁴ So rather than being replaced by Sport Education, TGFU or Cooperative learning, it would be incorporated and emphasized as a concept within these models.

have argued for a move away from assessing children in comparison to pre-defined, generalised standards, instead assessing their individual growth over time (Masters, 2013). However, Whitehead (2010) also acknowledged that judging the individual progress and potential in this way makes the assessment of physical literacy challenging, leading some teachers to revert back to more traditional performance-based assessment (Lundvall, 2015). Unfortunately, although physical literacy has proposed several of these key differences to PE practice, there was very little consideration on how to change practice in early PE or move away from the focus on the FMS. In fact, as Tompsett and colleagues argue, literature often defines physical literacy based on the ability to perform fundamental movement skills (2014). Therefore, even if teachers do adopt a physical literacy approach, they are still likely to continue to concentrate on the acquisition of the FMS in the early years. According to Dudley (2015), this concentration is likely to limit a full understanding of physical literacy. More importantly, this approach does not fully recognize the embodied dimension of all of the children in a class.

As discussed, the application of physical literacy in PE emphasizes a focus on the embodied-as-living dimension of human existence. As Whitehead (2007) argues:

A physically literate individual, endowed with confidence in his/her embodied dimension, will have a clear sense of self as embodied and that this confidence will permeate the individual's global self-confidence. It also underlines the importance of developing a sound attitude to one's own embodiment, respecting the strengths and weaknesses of this dimension of oneself (p. 290).

Put simply, the concept places a substantial focus on teaching children to be reflective of their own embodiment. However, very little guidance is given on how to practically achieve this, beyond a broad set of practical tips and responsibilities of the physical literacy teacher (see Whitehead & Almond, 2013). More importantly, little guidance is provided for how a teacher can manage the different types of embodied experiences that children bring to a PE class. This should be a significant

consideration for all teachers. Brown (2006) summarized how the different embodied experiences of children can have an impact on how they interact with their environment:

How does the physicality of the boy's body—a boy who has learned to climb high trees, wrestle his peers to the ground, and out-skill them in games—encourage him to explore the world and relationships with others in powerfully different ways than his twin sister who has experienced the antithesis of these practices for the first 10 years of her life? (P. 174)

These two children have had very different embodied experiences in physical culture, which has led to the development of very distinct physical subjectivities. So, how does a teacher manage this when children, particularly in PE, have already had very different embodied interactions with physical culture? Whitehead and Almond (2013) stressed that for all children to develop physical literacy, behaviour that is 'insensitive, demeaning, selfish or aggressive is totally unacceptable' (p. 78), but what if certain children embody these behaviours through their actions in activities based on their individual physical journey? Particularly worrying is when these children start to act out their embodied dimension, at a level below consciousness, in ways that both they and the teacher cannot identify, particularly when filtered through current curricular and pedagogical approaches to PE.

The other problem with Whitehead's (2010) conceptualization of physical literacy is that it places the key focus on the individual, arguing that it is the individual who must 'take responsibility for maintaining purposeful physical pursuits/activities throughout the life course' (Almond, 2013a, p38). According to Fitzpatrick and McGlashan (2016), this type of individual approach is problematic because it implies that problems in PE are solved by 'self-motivating students to 'choose' to be involved (p. 110). This approach fails to recognize that there are factors outside the control of the individual that can constrain their ability to actively engage in physical education. These factors, including ability, gender, race and ethnicity, and sexuality, have been extensively covered in critical PE literature (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Azzarito, Solomon, & Harrison, 2006; Enright & McCuaig,

2016; Fitzpatrick, 2010; Fitzpatrick & McGlashan, 2016; Hylton, 2015; Oliver & Lalik, 2004a, 2004b; Paechter, 2003; Wright, 1995; Wright, McDonald & Burrows, 2004). These authors have argued that these factors play a key role in impacting the ability of many children to connect with PE, rather than it just being a case of individualised lack of motivation. Importantly, the focus on the individual achieving their own physical journey may be translated by teachers to explain the differences in ability between children in their own class. This could mean that teachers identify each child's level of physical ability as their competence level, thereby leading the teacher to uncritically believe that certain students have already reached their literacy potential, without understanding the various factors that may be constraining them from reaching their potential.

This is particularly troubling for children in the early years, because physical literacy literature reaffirms the focus on the FMS (Almond, 2013b; Goodway et al. 2013; Wainright, 2013) that is highlighted in both curriculum (VCAA, 2016) and pedagogy (Almond, 2013b). So, although the proponents of the concept highlight the need to start with the interests of the children (Whitehead, 2013a), this does not translate to early PE, where the focus is on acquiring the pre-defined FMS as an important first step in each individual's physical journey. However, as discussed, many teachers are not adequately prepared, during their teacher education, to deliver the individualised teaching of the FMS that is emphasized in physical literacy (Goodway et al. 2013). Therefore, although the concept highlights the individual journey of each child, it does not adequately acknowledge or problematise the fact that many teachers will struggle to cater for the range of different stages that children will be at in the early years (Evans, 2004; Ward, 2012). Accordingly, the concept does not address how the embodiment of these different levels of 'competence' may play out. What should a teacher do when children with higher levels of physical literacy, based on advanced competence, confidence and motivation, impact the ability of other children to develop a sense of physical literacy? Especially when the predominate focus of primary PE teachers is to keep the children 'happy, busy and good' (Akuffo & Hodge, 2008; Tinning et al. 2001; Ward & Griggs, 2018), and focused on learning the FMS, and their own subjective understandings of PE (Garret & Wrench, 2008; Jess et al. 2016; Richards & Andrew, 2015; Taplin, 2013; Tinning, 2011) may not allow them to see the negative

elements of these moments. So, although Whitehead's concept of physical literacy adds some important elements to PE literature, including a focus on the embodied dimension, ultimately it fails to address many of the problems present in primary PE. What is also missing from PE literature is the connection between PE and the playground. Many of the actions that I have discussed carry over into the playground and affect the ongoing development of children's physical subjectivities there.

The importance of play

Beyond the PE space, there is also emphasis placed on the playground space as a significant physical cultural site in the lives of children. It is perceived as a space for children to have learning opportunities, that are not possible in the classroom. On the playground these key learning experiences are expected to occur through the children engaging in play (Chancellor, 2013; Glenn et al. 2012; Knowles et al. 2013; Martin, 2011; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Pellegrini, Dupuis & Smith, 2007; Tranter & Malone, 2004; Thorne, 1993). Importantly, this 'free-play' is positioned as vital for children's development. (Thomson, 2007, Wainright, 2013). However, often missing from this discussion is how the 'free-play' of the children is actually constrained by multiple structures. Of particular significance, there is a lack of literature exploring the connection between PE and the playground, and how experiences in PE may play a role in constraining this 'free-play'. What does occur in the playground is largely governed by play-based discourses.

Discourse

The playground is a schooling space that all primary age children spend time, making it a space that can exert a powerful influence on their daily lives (Thomson, 2007). At most schools, children must spend multiple periods on the playground as a scheduled part of their regular school day (Pellegrini & Smith, 1993). Time on the playground is perceived as a break from the structured classroom environment for the children (Borman, 1979; Paechter & Clark, 2007) and the teachers (Martin, 2011). However, this does not mean that the playground is perceived as a break from learning. In fact, Chancellor (2013) highlights that in Australia, federal and state governments have

acknowledged the importance of play experiences for learning in the early years.²⁵ So, despite not being considered as a ‘structured’ learning space like the classroom (Paechter & Clark, 2007), the playground is still positioned as a key learning space, where children will learn through play-based experiences (Chancellor, 2013; Martin, 2011; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993) and interactions with their peers (Borman, 1979).

This focus on play for young children is underpinned by discourse that positions free play as an important part of developmental learning (Martin, 2011). As discussed, the importance of this play has been widely covered across academic literature. Play is seen as important for children’s social, physical and emotional development (Glenn et al. 2012; Knowles et al. 2018; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993; Schwartzman, 1978; Trater & Malone, 2004). The opportunities offered through play can impact the richness of children’s daily lives (Maude, 2010), by providing opportunities for creativity and spontaneity, posing problem-solving opportunities and promoting intellectual growth (Singer, 2006). Accordingly, the playground is positioned to offer the potential for children to develop across a number of domains, through play-based experiences. (Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018). Therefore, as Knowles and colleagues (2013) argued, the expectation is that on the playground children will engage in play that is fun, enjoyable, spontaneous, encompasses a wide range of activities, and is minimally constrained by adults (Borman, 1979). This has an impact on how teachers perceived the playground and their role on it

Teachers believe in the importance of free play (Chandler, 2008) and therefore see their role on the playground as distinctly different to the classroom. Teachers see the playground as a break from the teacher intervention that defines the classroom (Martin, 2011; Tranter & Malone, 2004). Hence, as Martin (2011) argues, the developmental discourses that underpin the playground space encourage early years teachers to think that intervention in children’s play is wrong.²⁶ Accordingly, teachers generally perceive the playground as a child-centred space (Thomson, 2005), where children will learn from each other through free play (Chancellor, 2008, 2013; Martin, 2011 Thomson, 2005;

²⁵ This led to introduction of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Developmental Framework (VEYLDF) in 2011 (for children up to eight years of age), which requires primary schools to address play-based learning in their curriculums (Chancellor, 2013).

²⁶ For example, in a 2018 study conducted across multiple schools, Pawlowski and colleagues found that the monitoring teachers did not often intervene in the children’s play. If it did happen, it was mostly male teachers joining in on a ball game (Pawlowski, et al. 2018).

2007). Any intervention into the free play of the children would negatively impact the autonomy and learning of the children within this child-centred space. The flaw with this perception is that the primary playground experience is highly structured and administered by adults. It is an institutional educational space that is planned out by adults, based on their perceptions of appropriate development and behaviour (Thomson, 2007). So, rather than being an open, child-centred space, it is, in fact, meant to be a highly structured environment that promotes significant separation between the children.

Playground separation

Adults play the central role in the construction of this child-centred space. The playground is planned (architects and school planners) (Knowles et al. 2013; Thomson, 2005, 2007), conceptualized, maintained and monitored by adults (Thomson, 2007). Accordingly, children do not typically have a say in how the playground is planned out and regulated (Chancellor, 2008). Instead, primary children's daily playground experiences are supposed to be regulated by a number of rules and regulations set out by the adults at a school (Thomson, 2005). These rules and regulations are often justified based on concerns over the children's safety (Chancellor, 2013; James & James, 2004; Knowles et al. 2013; Little & Eager, 2010; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Prout & James, 2014; Thomson, 2008). Without rules and regulations, the playground is perceived to be an unsafe space for the children to play in. As such, a child cannot do whatever they want on the playground. Instead, they are forbidden to play certain games, carry out certain activities or enter specific areas, all to keep them safe. The primary job of the teacher/monitor on the playground then becomes focused predominantly on monitoring behavioural and safety concerns (Thomson, 2007). Therefore, their pedagogical role in the classroom shifts to the role of a safety/behaviour monitor while on the playground. Ultimately, teachers then face a dilemma on the playground, they must allow children to engage in essential 'free play' (free from teacher intervention) but in a way that is devoid of any potential safety issues (Chancellor, 2008). To address this concern, educators try to prevent possible safety problems by seeking to separate the children within this space.

To prevent playground problems, teachers and administrators' segment and delimit the playground space (Thomson, 2005). So, instead of being open and free, the playground space is supposed to be highly de-centralized and set up into distinct zones. In an examination of the primary school playground, Thomson (2005) concluded that this separation is typically implemented based on age, with a specific aim of separating the older children from the younger children. Thomson found that safety was the main justification for this rule, to 'prevent the older children knocking over the smaller children' (p. 70). Following this logic, the playground is supposed to be divided along developmental lines and is segregated into distinct zones for specific grades. Importantly, this demarcation is not always explicitly enforced by the teachers, often it is the children themselves who enforce the separation of the playground space. Karsten (2003) argued that this separation leads to the playground becoming a highly hierarchical space that is constantly contested between groups of children. Importantly, Ndhlovu and Varea (2018) concluded that this contestation can lead some groups of children to dominate certain spaces, thereby pushing others to the margins and making them feel excluded. One of the key variables in this separation and contestation on the playground is gender. In her seminal text, *Gender Play*, Barrie Thorne (1993) argued that while on the playground children actively engage in gendered border work, using gender as the basis for separation and the justification for certain groups to own certain spaces. This focus on gendered separation has now become widely agreed upon across playground literature (Clark & Paechter, 2007; Martin, 2011; Pawlowski et al. 2018; Paechter & Clark, 2007). Importantly, Armitage (2005) found that typically boys dominate the sporting spaces on the playground, which is a concern because most of the space on playgrounds are typically devoted to sports fields (Chancellor, 2008). So, although the separation of the playground may address safety concerns, it is clearly also constraining the play opportunities for many children, which is likely having an impact on their playground experiences.

Although the separation of children on the playground has been well covered in literature, what is missing is the role that PE may be playing in this separation. There has been some notable discussion in PE literature on the importance of play (see Whitehead, 2010), but not in a way that focuses on this connection. Importantly, Drummond and Pill (2011) touched on how the outcomes

through sport and from sport can be translated into the lunchtime ‘play’ arena but did not elaborate on these outcomes or their impact. Consequently, they missed an opportunity to tease out the connection between these two spaces, and how the playground may play a role in exacerbating many of the problems with early primary PE. If separation between the children is occurring during PE, then it is likely being naturalised on the playground, where children are given more freedom to choose their physical pursuits. So, while the studies in the playground and PE literature provide critical insight for their respective fields, without this connection being properly examined we are missing a key level of understanding into how children are developing their physical subjectivities.

Conclusion

This chapter critically reviewed the intersection of education, health and PE literature. The literature examined how the PE and the playground space provide a specific context for children to embody and develop their physical subjectivities. The important role that these contexts play in the early years was particularly emphasized. The literature on HPE curriculum showed that there have been significant changes in official HPE curricula within Australia, including an emphasis on the development of the holistic individual. Similarly, there has been the introduction of a number of new pedagogical models to the field of PE. While these models have not filtered down to the early years of PE, there has been a move towards the ‘student-centred (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016) self-regulated’ approach (Marzano, 2009; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013) that is favoured in broader education. Additionally, primary PE pedagogy has been further affected by a number of problems, including the delivery of PE by classroom teachers and the proliferation of EPs (particularly from sporting organisations) into schools. As argued, this environment is clearly having an impact on the children. However, very little is known about the explicit and tacit ways that children may be impacting each other in the early years, and how these experiences may be affecting the development of their physical subjectivities. To address this, I focus specifically on the development of these subjectivities in and between the PE and the playground spaces. In the next section, I lay out the theoretical framework which I used to understand these processes in both spaces, and beyond.

Chapter Three - Theoretical Framework

Overview

Face-to-face interaction is the foundation of social life (Collins, 2004). The nature of the playground and the PE spaces mean they are sites of constant face-to-face interaction. This is particularly the case in early primary PE, where there is a focus on engaging in ‘integrated, inclusive, child-centred pedagogy’ (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016, p. 527) and self-regulated learning (Mazarno, 2007; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). Children are divided into small groups and left to engage in small-sided cooperative games (Ward, 2012), typically free from teacher intervention (Morgan et al. 2013). These small group settings are analytically important because they involve routine face-to-face interaction between members (Summer-Effler, 2006). According to Summer-Effler (2006), much can be learned about the other levels of social life by observing the small group in action. Similarly, I believe that by examining these small-sided groups in action during PE, much can be learned about how the children develop their physical subjectivities within the context of broader structures. Importantly, these stratified interactions are impacted by the different levels of embodied experience that children bring to class. Within these interactions, children then impact the development of each other’s physical subjectivities in explicit and tacit ways. To understand this process required a theoretical framework that combined a micro-sociological approach with a broader macro-structural contextualisation. To achieve this, I combined Randall Collins’s Interactional Ritual (IR) theory with Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual tools.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore these two theorists, linking their work together conceptually, and then detailing how this combined framework was used to underpin the design, analysis and representations of the findings that are presented in this thesis. I begin with an overview of Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical tools of field, habitus and capital. Although I present his tools as separate categories, I acknowledge they are dialectical in nature and inextricably linked together. To highlight this link, I outline the connections between the concepts. Next, I present the micro-sociological concepts of Randall Collins (2004) through his Interactional Ritual (IR) theory. Finally, I

introduce my theoretical framework that combines IR theory and the tools of field, habitus and capital, which was used to analyse and understand the findings of this project. In this section, I pay special attention to the connection and tensions between these two theories and how I combined them. Ultimately, IR theory allowed for an in-depth, analytical examination of the interactions in the PE and the playground spaces, while Bourdieu's tool provided the ability to situate these interactions in the fields which they are affected by and that they affect. To examine this in more detail, I begin by examining the work of Bourdieu and presenting his conceptual tools.

Bourdieu's conceptual tools

Bourdieu was one of the preeminent sociological minds of the post-war area, producing an imaginative and fertile body of social theory and research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). His work has been particularly attractive and useful for educational researchers who have used it to gain great insight within the field of educational research (James, 2014). Bourdieu described his own work as constructivist structuralism (or structuralist constructivism) (Bourdieu, 1989):

'By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought, and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes. (p. 14)

Thus, within the social world, there are objective structures that through explicit or tacit means enable and or constrain human action/behaviour, often below the level of human consciousness. Importantly, Bourdieu railed against the limitations of oppositions of dualism: subject vs object, agent versus structure, mind versus body (Kenway & McCloud, 2010; McDonald, 2005; Reay, 2010, 2015). He was particularly opposed to the 'opposition that artificially divides social science' between

‘subjectivism and objectivism’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.5). In his work, he attempted to overcome these dualisms that were abundant in sociological literature.

Bourdieu’s most significant contribution to sociological thought arguably came in the form of his conceptual tools of field, capital and habitus. They were the conceptual product of his attempt to understand and construct the visible yet invisible social world through social practices that account for both human agency and social structure (Jenkins, 2014). He believed that, through dominant explicit or tacit practices, resources and values (capital) objective structures guide and provide schemes of perception, thought and action (habitus) in social spaces (fields) (Bourdieu, 1989). Bourdieu did not conceive of these conceptual tools as a strict theory, but rather part of a sociological method that could be used to transfer knowledge from one area of inquiry into another (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Crucially, each conceptual tool cannot be used separately to understand the social world. Instead, the connection between the three concepts is relational, temporal and dialectical (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and therefore they must be used together to understand complex social practices. Bourdieu (1984) outlines the relationship between the three concepts through the following formula:

$$[(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$$

Applied together, these concepts provide the opportunity to examine and understand social action as it relates to the agents in a particular social context. Specifically, I utilise these concepts to understand the social actions of children in the context of two early primary physical spaces.

The use of Bourdieu’s tools in my project is important because of how they account for structure and agency. According to McDonald (2005), Bourdieu’s tools allow the individual to have free will while being acted upon by a structured reality. In this way, Bourdieu is able to transcend the opposing schools of thought proposed by phenomenology and structuralism (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Additionally, the use of Bourdieu makes sense because of his focus on the body. The body is a central component of Bourdieu’s theories (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and is a fundamental aspect of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1993). Accordingly, Bourdieu conceptualizes the body as existing

inseparably in nature and in culture, at the same time (Bourdieu, 1984). As he puts it, the ‘body is in the social world, but the social world is also in the body’ (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 152). Put simply, the social world plays a key role in impacting the body, but the body also plays a key role in impacting the social world. Bodies are instilled with culture and an individual’s engagement within that culture, through social practice, plays a profound role in forming an individual’s disposition towards action in specific social fields. This is particularly important in the way that it aligns with Whitehead’s focus on the monistic individual. The use of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools provided the opportunity to understand the social action of the children, but also, the central role that their bodies play in this process. Over the remainder of this section, I attempt to explain and detail the three conceptual tools, ensuring, as much as possible, to highlight the reciprocal nature of the concepts. With that in mind, I begin by examining the concept of the field.

The field

The field holds a key position within Bourdieu’s work as the social space where habitus and capital exist. In this way, the habitus and capital are always subject to the influences and dynamics of cultural fields (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Bourdieu defines the field as:

A network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or situations, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97).

Accordingly, a field cannot function without “stakes and people prepared to play the game, endowed with the habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field, the stakes and so on’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72). Therefore, fields consist of both agents and institutional structures

that are governed by sets of connections that dictate the type and degree of independence for each social actor who enters.

In Bourdieu's use of the conceptual field, he acknowledges that all social spaces and places are fields and play a role in contributing to the broader field of society as a whole (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Therefore, society is made up of a variety of different fields. Throughout his academic career, Bourdieu investigated a number of specific fields, including, but not limited to, educational, economic, governmental, artistic, and religious fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Additionally, his work has been used to examine a number of other fields, including the educational research (Grenfell & James, 2010), sporting (Stempel, 2005) and HPE fields (Evans, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Koca et al. 2009; Jachyra, 2016). In his work, Bourdieu always outlined the connection and commonality between fields. Speaking on the connection between fields, he said:

Thus, we have different fields where different forms of interest are constituted and expressed. This does not imply that the different fields do not have invariant properties. Among the invariant properties is that very fact that they are the site of a struggle between agents or institutions unequally endowed in specific capital (as specific resources or specific weapons for the conquest or domination of the field), or that the fact that these struggles presuppose a consensus on what is at stake in the struggle, etc. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 111)

So, although he argued that each field must be understood uniquely, in time and space, he concluded that every field shared commonality as a site of struggle between agents or institutions over potential capital. In this way, Bourdieu conceived of the field as the site of a game (Bourdieu, 1990)

Conceptually, the field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition, similar to a battlefield, where the game occurs between participants who vie to establish a monopoly over the type of capital that is valued in that particular field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, fields are not a static system of structures that are immovable and unchangeable, rather they are fluid yet structured systems that are much more dynamic and can be constituted in different ways based on how capital is

developed and acquired by the agents that play the game. A specific field can also be affected by changes to other fields or the broader field of power. This fluid and malleable nature of the field is often missed by critiques that argue that Bourdieu's conceptualization of the reproduction of fields is too mechanistic and structuralist (Jenkins, 1992). These critiques somehow miss the very essence of Bourdieu's concept. According to Bourdieu, the very nature of the struggle within a field means that the alteration of the distribution and relative weight of forms of capital can lead to the modification of the structure of the field itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). So, rather than being rigid and inflexible, fields are in a state of constant struggle between individuals seeking to acquire and use capital. Logically, although certain fields have material conditions, 'the field is not and can never be reducible to its built environments, institutions or formal organisations, rules and regulations' (Schirato & Roberts, 2018, p. 163). It is we as agents acting within that breathe life into these fields.

The viability of a cultural field is explicitly based on 'some degree of bureaucratization of people, activities and events within a regime that is specific and universal, changeable and timeless, and above all else reproducible' (Schirato & Roberts, 2018, p.164). Fields are reproducible because they are basically hierarchical in nature. The subject that has internalized the principles of a cultural field has an entirely different relationship with the activities and events within a field than those of a visitor or outsider (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Members gain a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1993) and become intimately entwined with the mechanisms of the field because this is a condition of entry into the field. The outsider is differentiated from the member because the former does not yet possess the necessary dispositions and required capital to be a full-fledged member. Therefore, the hierarchy is established because those members who enter a field with practical knowledge are afforded increased opportunities to acquire and accrue capital. However, it is important to note that when outsiders enter the field as new players, they must pay an entry fee, that consists of recognising the value of the game, which means that the 'whole history of the game, the whole past of the game, is present in each act of the game' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 74). In other words, there is a history to the field that is explicitly and tacitly agreed upon and reproduced by all who enter the field. This is where the concept of symbolic violence is key. Symbolic violence is a gentle violence, imperceptible and

invisible even to its victims (Bourdieu, 2001) because it is exercised upon a social agent with his/her complicity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Crucially, 'symbolic violence accomplishes itself through an act of cognition and of misrecognition that lies beyond-or beneath- the controls of consciousness and will' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 171-172). Therefore, individuals may be subject to singular or repeated acts of violence, that they do not overtly recognize as acts of violence (Jachyra, 2013), because they are acts that are elements of the very nature of playing the game within a certain field, therefore, acts that agents tacitly comply to.

Vital to the re(production) of the field is habitus. According to Wacquant 'the concepts of field and habitus are relational in the additional sense that they function fully only in *relation to one another*' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). Thus, as I argued earlier, the field is not simply a 'dead structure' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19), but a game space which exists only if the players that enter into it believe in its principles and actively pursue the prizes that are up for grabs (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this way, the players internalize the logic and knowledge of the field and carry them wherever they go. Therefore, the body is the outcome of an unconscious process where the perspectives, frameworks, forms of knowledge and values, and relations to the world are slowly learnt, internalized and made to seem natural in the form of a bodily hexis as the habitus (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). This bodily hexis is the physical embodiment of the habitus, and is 'political mythology realized, embodied, turned into permanent dispositions, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 94) This produces certain physical ways of being that are fluid and natural in accordance with the logic of the field. As Bourdieu (2000) puts it:

Having acquired from this exposure [to the field] a system of dispositions attuned to these regularities, it [the body] is inclined and able to anticipate them practically in behaviours which engage a *corporeal knowledge* that provides a practical comprehension of the world quite different from the intentional acts of conscious decoding that is normally designated by the idea of comprehension (p. 135).

The encoding of the habitus occurs through engagement within the field at a level that is below conscious comprehension. This reciprocal relationship between the field and habitus warrants a deeper delve into the concept of the habitus.

Habitus

As noted, habitus is Bourdieu's attempt to overcome the dualism of agency and structure. Habitus exists between the 'objective' realm of social contexts and the 'subjective' realm of individual experience and action (Bourdieu, 1984). Therefore, the key to agency is an individual's habitus (McDonald, 2005). Bourdieu (1993) defines habitus as:

a system of dispositions acquired by implicit or explicit learning which functions as a system of generative schemes, which generates strategies which can be objectively consistent with the objective interests of their authors without having been expressly designed to that end (p. 76).

Basically, habitus is the product of an individual's social experiences in the world, a product of time and history (Bourdieu, 1990), which becomes inscribed in our bodies (Bourdieu, 1993). Important in this regard is that the habitus is history misrecognized as nature (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). So, rather than individuals realising that their tendency to think and act in a certain way is because of their social history, they perceive these dispositions as natural occurrences. Importantly, the dispositions, schemas, forms of knowledge and competencies of the habitus, 'function below the threshold of consciousness, shaping it in particular ways' (Crossley, 2001, p. 93). Therefore, habitus is 'that which one has acquired' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 86) and becomes unconsciously ingrained within an individual through repetitive and consistent exposure to social fields.

The habitus provides agents with an epistemological facility that allows them to understand and negotiate the world in a way that matches with the world, but not as a set of strict rules or formulae (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). That is to say, the habitus exists as set of dispositions rather

than rules, meaning that while there is still a predictive element, (in the way an agent is likely to embody their habitus in a particular way within a particular field), there is still an allowance for a certain level of flexibility in the face of particular moments. Bourdieu calls this flexibility to act within the moment ‘regulated improvisation’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79). Bourdieu justifies this based on the rationalization that no two individuals will come to a situation with an identical habitus. Bourdieu (1993) explains this by saying, ‘just as no two individual histories are identical, no two individual habitus are identical, although there are classes of experiences and therefore classes of habitus’ (p. 46). So, although habitus is constantly (re)produced at the individual level, common experiences of the social world will tend to produce a collective habitus, meaning that people who have similar social conditions will tend to have similar experiences, embodied dispositions and ways of seeing the world (Bourdieu, 1977). Put plainly, although individuals will continue to (re)produce their own individual habitus, the ‘history of the game’ that is present at all time within a field (Bourdieu, 1993), is likely to produce individual habitus that have much more in common than dissimilar.

Considering this, it should come as no surprise that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus has been criticised for being too mechanistic (Rancière, 2004, Reed-Danahay, 2005) with an explicitly deterministic focus on social reproduction (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu always bristled at these critiques. For Bourdieu, habitus is exceptionally productive and adaptive (Schirato & Roberts, 2018), but ‘it is durable, not eternal’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993, p. 209). This is where it is important to differentiate between the habitus as a set of dispositions and what some critics interpret as habitus-as-rule (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). In response to these critics, Reay (2010) argued that Bourdieu’s concept gives more room for social agency than is often claimed. Similarly, Bouveresse (1999) addressed this difference between Bourdieu’s version of habitus and how some critics see it, stating that just because certain behaviours originate from an individual’s habitus, this idea is:

not a threat to the spontaneity of his action, as the action is not the result of an external constraint, but of a disposition whose seat is in the agent himself. But insofar as the exercise of free will includes deliberation, a good part of our actions, and in particular those which are

the result of the habitus, are simply spontaneous and not strictly speaking free. But neither can it be said that they are truly constrained (p. 47)

So, rather than the habitus being a mechanistic concept that guarantees an agent will act in a certain predefined way, instead, an agent has the ability to deliberate and act spontaneously in a way that is still likely in line with the expectations of the particular field they are in. In this way, Bourdieu's conceptualization of the habitus as a 'system of dispositions' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) is particularly important, because it suggests that an individual will have a tendency to act in a certain way, within a certain field, rather than suggesting they will just mechanistically act in predictable ways. Bourdieu sums it up succinctly:

'It is only *in relation to* certain structures that habitus produces given discourses or practices... We must think of it [the habitus] as a sort of spring that needs a trigger and depending on the stimuli and structure of the field, the very same habitus will generate different, even opposite outcomes.' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 135).

Therefore, rather than the habitus mechanistically defining a subject's destiny, it has the ability to adjust to or change in a changing world.

Of particular importance for my study, is the connection Bourdieu makes between the habitus and the body. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is the body and the body is its history: 'we are *disposed*, because we are *exposed*.' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 140). Through this exposure, the body incorporates the habitus-as-dispositions. This means that in most cases when an agent is met with a set of options, little thought is required, and automatic practice can occur: 'the body learns and the subject follows' (Schirato & Roberts, 2018, p. 147). As an agent moves through a variety of fields and social contexts the habitus is gradually socially embodied (Kenway & McLeod, 2010) as a bodily hexis. This is then reflected in how we eat, talk, 'carry' and communicate using our bodies on a daily basis (Evans, 2004). So, for children, as they move through a variety of social contexts (including

school, family, friendship groups and sport, to name a few) the rituals and rules of these institutions will influence the way they engage with their bodies in ways that are commensurate with these fields. For example, through sport participation, some young boys may develop a disposition towards using their bodies as ‘weapons’ (see Messner, 2002) to achieve success. Bourdieu calls this, ‘the appropriating by the world of a body thus enabled to appropriate the world’ (1977, p. 89). Importantly for my study, the earliest experiences of the habitus are the most influential and durable, because they are learned during an important formative period (when an individual is learning about the world) and are therefore likely to provide the basis for dispositions that are likely to persist, in some form, into adulthood and across various cultural fields (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). As discussed, the habitus that an individual develops is intimately linked to the fields they transverse (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Also, central in this are the types of capital that exist in these fields and how this capital is valued. Therefore, it is vital to explore the concept of capital.

Capital

The concept of capital sits at the centre of Bourdieu’s conceptualization of social space (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). The ability to enter a field, and potentially be a dominant member in that field, is determined by the level of capital an individual possesses. Therefore, within a social field, capital can be seen as a resource that is up for grabs for all of the players within the field. In this way, capital is essentially a form of power that is manifested in a variety of forms of varying worth and power depending on the situational context (McDonald, 2005). For Bourdieu (1990), capital is like ‘trumps in the game of cards.’ (p. 128), in that their possession gives you an advantage in the game. Accordingly, the concept of capital is fundamental to the dynamics of any given field. Capital is both the process and product in any given field (Grenfall & James, 2010). By entering the field, agents commit to the validity of the field and compete for the acquisition of capital (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). In this way, positions in a field can be in a constant state of flux based on the ability of agents to accumulate field-specific capital. Importantly, this capital is field-specific because what is valued in one field may not be valued in another. For example, a child possessing linguistic capital in the classroom, due to advanced reading ability, will have a strong standing within the classroom but may

have a weak standing within the PE class because this capital has no value. In this way, each field is embedded with specific types of capital that are sought, accumulated and used by the agents that enter that field.

Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes three types of capital: economic (accumulation of wealth), cultural (embodied, objectified or institutionalized resources such as educational qualifications), and social (reputation, relationships and social networks).²⁷ Various versions of these types of capital are on offer within each social field. However, just acquiring this capital is not enough. To earn the benefits from accumulated capital, it must be converted from a purely symbolic form to a marketable material form (Jachyra, 2005). The habitus plays a key role in this process. In order to convert this capital, it is essential to possess the required habitus that aligns with the valued capital of the field (McDonald, 2005). For example, in the PE context of this study, in order for a child to accrue capital they had to have a disposition towards competition, developed through sport participation. Important in this conversion process is the role of symbolic capital. According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital²⁸ is:

The form that one or other of these species [economic, social, cultural] take when it is grasped through categories of perception that *recognize* its specific logic, or if you prefer, misrecognize the arbitrariness of its possession or accumulation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119)

What is important in this, is that any type of capital can take on the form of symbolic capital when it is perceived by the players as legitimate. It becomes ‘capital endowed with a specifically symbolic efficacy’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 112). Accordingly, symbolic capital can take the form of qualities such as glory, honour, credit, reputation, or fame (Bourdieu, 2000). Therefore, the ‘battle’ for symbolic

²⁷ Each of these ‘fundamental species’ has its own subtypes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119).

²⁸ In *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu highlights that, to be rigorous, it is better to think of symbolic capital as the *symbolic effects of capital* (Bourdieu, 2000)

capital is the quest for recognition and power within a field. In this way, the field is a site of competition for general symbolic advantage. Those who hold the symbolic advantage get to then dictate the terms of the game. They (subjects, groups, institutions, names) become the ‘keepers of the flame’, and for the players entering the field, they accept whether the practices of the field are ‘worth the candle’ by spending time and energy to compete (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). These subjects become the holders of symbolic power and often engage in acts of symbolic violence, which the ‘dominated’ must assent to if they want to succeed in the game.

For Bourdieu (1990), capital is the ‘energy of social physics’ and is stored in the habitus in the form of symbolic capital, before it is converted into other forms (McDonald, 2005). To put it simply, an individual’s habitus provides the ability to utilize and convert capital, allowing for the ability to accrue further capital. The players with the more developed habitus have a ‘feel for the game’ and are able to use practical knowledge and experience to understand how the game is played and play accordingly (Bourdieu, 1990). Thus, their embodied history in the field grants them the ability to understand what capital is on offer and how to get it. Those with a ‘feel for the game’ are then able to ‘anticipate the future of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 25) and set themselves up to receive the lion’s share of the capital. The acquisition of this capital then shapes their habitus, setting them up for further future success. Individuals who enter the field without the same fine-tuned habitus may not understand what types of capital are on offer or how to acquire it. Rather than an explicit acknowledgement of this discrepancy, these individuals are typically perceived as possessing an innate inability to succeed in the field. This process by which capital begets capital leads to a deepening of the divisions between those who have the capital of the field and those who do not (Schirato & Roberts, 2018)

One of the more prominent subspecies of capital is physical capital. Although Bourdieu placed a significant emphasis on the body, it was Shilling (1991) that extended Bourdieu’s idea of bodily capital into physical capital.²⁹ According to Shilling (2003), the body as a system for the

²⁹ It is important to note that Loïc Wacquant also played a significant role in refining and extending Bourdieu’s concept of bodily capital in his work on boxing (see Wacquant, 1995, 2004).

generation of physical capital is a ‘possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms, which is integral to the accumulation of various resources’ (p.127). This is particularly the case in physical environments, such as the playground, the PE class and the sporting field. Essentially, bodies possess physical capital, which can be used within specific social fields to accumulate economic, cultural and social capitals (Koca et al. 2009). This is particularly the case in sport, where a professional athlete is able to use their physical abilities to accrue physical capital and convert it into cultural (recognition and accolades), social (increased networks) and economic (increased personal wealth) capital. As agents move through physical fields there is a struggle to accumulate physical capital, which can then be converted into other forms of capital. Part of this struggle involves defining the social ‘worth’ of a body (Shilling, 1991) and how the body can be used to accrue physical capital within a field. Importantly, for my study, contrary to common educational discourses children begin school with differing levels of physical capital, as a result of habitus developed through sporting participation. According to Evans (2004), the physical capital that children accrue outside schools is inextricability linked to the reproduction of the differences that provide the basis for inequality in education, leisure and health. In later sections, I will explore the impact of this differentiation and the forms of physical capital that are valued within PE and playground spaces.

The three concepts of habitus, field and capital are fundamentally connected. Appropriately, the concepts function fully only in ‘*relation to one another*’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). To sum up, objective structures through dominant explicit or tacit practices, resources and values (capital) guide and provide schemes of perception, thought and action (habitus) in social spaces (fields) (Bourdieu, 1989). The use of these concepts will provide a much-needed understanding of the lives of the children in PE and playground spaces. However, what is missing from Bourdieu’s theoretical principals is a means for a true in-depth micro-sociological examination of the situations where these concepts are (re)produced and negotiated. The use of a micro-lens will allow for an analysis of the situated interactions between humans, which have active and compelling properties that cannot be reduced to individuals or justified through macro-social dynamics (Summers-Effler, 2006). Adding a micro-analytical approach will provide the ability to determine the specific

microsocial dynamics and conditions under which certain Bourdieuean outcomes occur (Spaaij & Schail  e, 2020) Adopting this micro-analytical approach should allow for an examination of the role that children play as agents in the formation of their habitus, engagement in social fields and the pursuit of various forms of capital. To add this extra layer of analytical rigour, I will incorporate Collins's (2004) IR theory.

Interactional Ritual (IR) theory

Randall Collins is one of the most notable North American sociologists currently practising. Within his work, Collins places a focus on micro-sociology. He believes that micro-sociology is the key to understanding processes that are much larger (Collins, 2004). He justifies this approach as follows:

The small-scale, the here-and-now of face-to-face interaction, is the scene of action and the site of social actors. If we are going to find the agency of social life it will be here. Here resides the energy of movement and change, the glue of solidarity, and the conservatism of stasis. Here is where intentionality and consciousness find their places; here, too, is the site of the emotional and unconscious aspects of human interaction (Collins, 2004, p. 3).

To examine these micro-moments Collins developed the theory of Interactional Ritual Chains. This general theory looks closely at the patterns and motivations of micro-social interactions. An Interaction Ritual (IR) consists of all types of interactions between two or more individuals; anything from a conversation during breakfast to a basketball game (Wellman et al. 2014). An individual moves through potentially hundreds of these interaction rituals over the course of a day. As they move through these interactions there is a chaining effect, whereby the outcome of one IR will directly affect the next. Paramount in Collins's (2004) theory is starting from the situation as the primary unit of analysis. Ultimately, Collins (2004) believes that gaining insight at the micro-level will unlock some of the secrets of large-scale macro changes.

In creating this theory, Collins was heavily influenced by the work of Emile Durkheim and Erving Goffman (Collins, 2004). One of the primary influences that their work had on Collins was the

use of the term ‘ritual’ to define social interaction. Although the concept of the ‘ritual’ has a long tradition in anthropology and ethnology, Durkheim was arguably the first to use the term in a sociological sense, by examining how commitment to religious groups through collective religious rituals produces collective effervescence – a shared emotional experience that allows participants to connect to the collective group (Durkheim, 1965). He believed that these religious rituals helped members to collectivize and enshrine themselves within a group. Although his focus was religious rituals, it laid a foundation for examining what social ingredients come together in a situation and result in a ritual’s success or failure (Collins, 2004). This theoretical concept was built upon by Goffman. He broadened the application of the ritual by showing how they are found in everyday life and play a prominent role in shaping both individual character and stratified group boundaries (Collins, 2004). Goffman (1967) conceptualized an ‘interaction ritual’³⁰ as any interaction that occurs in everyday life. Ultimately, Collins (2004) integrated some of the insights drawn from Durkheim and Goffman’s work to build his own intellectual project. So, although there is connective tissue between the work of Durkheim and Goffman and IR theory, Collins uses this influence to present a new way of examining social interaction.

Central to Collins’s theory is the idea that social rituals are the mechanisms that hold society together, by creating and sustaining solidarity between groups (Collins, 2004). According to Collins (2004):

The central mechanism of interactional ritual theory is that occasions that combine a high degree of mutual focus of attention, that is, a high degree of intersubjectivity, together with a high degree of emotional entrainment -through bodily synchronization, mutual stimulation/arousal of participants’ nervous systems- result in feelings of membership that are attached to cognitive symbols; and result in also in the emotional energy of individual participants, giving them feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and desire for action in what

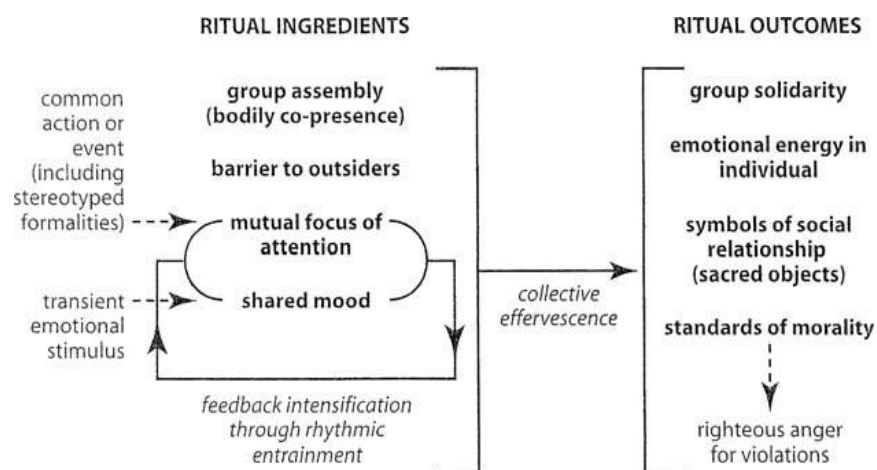
³⁰ This was the title of his 1967 book *Interaction Ritual*. Although, it is important to note that he had been using this term for at least a decade by this point (Fine, 2005)

they consider a morally proper path. These moments of a high degree of ritual intensity are high points of experience. (p. 42)

These high points of collective experience are significant moments. It is in these moments that social change is possible, where old social structures can be torn down or left behind, and new social structures are formed (Collins, 2004). IR theory provides a justification for the movement and motivation of an individual from one situation to the next (Collins, 2004). In this conceptualization, individuals are literally the chains that link situations together. In these situations, humans are seekers of emotional energy, trying to acquire as much energy as they can from a ritual before moving on to the next. These moments of emotional energy are on offer in every ritual. This emotional energy is then carried from one interaction to another, increasing during successful rituals and depleting during failed rituals or when there is a significant break between rituals (Summers-Effler, 2006). In these rituals, symbols are generated which are then internalized in individual minds (Collins, 2004). Everyday life thus becomes the experience of moving through a chain of interaction rituals, charging up some symbols with emotional importance and allowing others to fade (Collins, 2004). Consequently, movements throughout our life are the result of the constant socialising effect that we experience through interaction rituals. To understand this fully, it is important to examine the mechanisms that make up a ritual and the factors involved in the outcome of each ritual.

IR theory depicts an interaction ritual as a set of processes that encompass casual connections and feedback loops among the processes (Collins, 2004). Importantly, each element of the IR process is a variable (Collins, 2004). An interaction ritual consists of four key ingredients and four outcomes. The four ingredients that are required for a successful ritual are: (1) bodily co-presence; (2) barrier to outsiders; (3) mutual focus of attention; and (4) shared mood. Once these ingredients have been established it sets the scene for the ritual. Essential in this process, is the feedback loop between 'the mutual focus of attention' and 'the shared mood', as these two elements reinforce each other (Collins, 2004). As the members of the group become more firmly focused on the reason for their group formation, their focus of attention and shared mood feed off each other. These ingredients

cumulatively generate feelings of collective effervescence (Wellman, et al., 2014): a shared emotional or cognitive experience (Collins, 2004). This collective effervescence leads to four outcomes: (1) group solidarity; (2) emotional energy in the individual; (3) symbols of social relationship; and (4) standards of morality (Collins, 2004). Visually, Collins plots the interactional ritual in the following way:



(Collins, 2004, p. 48)

According to Collins, this formulation provides the groundwork for understanding social interaction.

To understand each of the elements of an interaction ritual it is important to examine them in more detail. The first element of a ritual, 'bodily co-presence', is achieved by people assembling in the same space, affecting each other through their bodily presence. Next, there must be a 'barrier to outsiders', so that participants have a sense of who is taking part and who is not (Collins, 2004). The third element involves a 'mutual focus of attention', whereby, those present pay attention to the same activity or object. The final element 'shared mood' involves the participants sharing a common mood or emotional experience (Collins, 2004). This common mood or emotional experience then feeds back into the 'mutual focus of attention' and results in more of a focus on increasing any common feelings between the ritual participants.

A ritual produces feelings of collective effervescence which leads to four outcomes. First, there is the production of a 'group solidarity', or a feeling of membership (Collins, 2004). Second,

there is the production of emotional energy in the individual participants (Heider & Warner, 2010). High levels of emotional energy can lead to high levels of enthusiasm, confidence, initiative and pride, while low levels of emotional energy can lead to depression, shame (Collins, 2004), fatigue, lack of interest, and a lack of willingness to initiate action (Summers-Effler, 2004a). Importantly, Summers-Effler (2004a), argues that in these situations where all avenues to build EE are closed off, we are forced to engage in defensive strategizing to minimize loss. Third, the symbols (visual icons, words, gestures) (Collins, 2004) of the activity became sacred objects for the participants (Heider & Warner, 2010). Finally, the 'standards of morality' produce a feeling of solidarity in adhering to the ritual, respect for its symbols and defending both against the transgression of outsiders (Collins, 2004). Importantly, as the primary goal of an interaction is to maximize our experience of EE, individuals learn through IRCs what interactions are likely to have the best EE payoffs (Summers-Effler, 2006). So, for some individuals, the successful nature of a ritual is likely to mean they will seek out this type of ritual again in the future. For others, the failed nature of a ritual makes it less likely that they will seek a similar ritual in the future. Significantly, the process of strategizing for EE is not usually conscious (Collins, 2004), meaning that in future situations these individuals will make the decision on the types of ritual to pursue without conscious thought.

Collins IR theory provides a strong foundation for understanding micro-sociological behaviours, but it is not without its critiques, many of which have actively addressed some of the shortcomings of the theory. Gary Alan Fine (2005) criticizes Collins for his neglect in practice of the final phrase of his definition: 'an interaction that generates solidarity and symbols of group membership' (p. 1287). Applying this definition accurately would mean excluding a wide variety of mundane, routine interactions. For example, a routine interaction with a sales clerk over a transaction may not generate any solidarity. Therefore, it is important to re-emphasize Collins's own principle that the ingredients of a successful ritual can be variable, some may be strong and others not so strong, thereby, there can clearly be different levels/types of interactional rituals. An interaction ritual may have degrees of variability in its ingredients which can have an impact on the level of the interaction ritual. It is also feasible to conclude that a successful interaction ritual may occur without

all of the necessary ingredients or outcomes present. For example, an interaction ritual may occur without a sense of group solidarity between the members or a shared mood. This does not guarantee that it will be failed ritual, especially if it is compensated by a strong degree in the other elements.

In line with this reformulation, another strong addition to IR theory was proposed by Heider and Warner (2010), who refine two elements of IR theory: shared mood and group solidarity. First, they critique the notion of shared mood by arguing ‘that the ritual solidarity produced [...] neither necessarily rises on nor requires unanimity of individual feeling’ (Heider & Warner, 2010 p. 90). Simply, they do not believe there needs to be a shared mood or emotion among the members of the group. They suggest an amendment of this element to ‘collective consciousness’ (Heider & Warner, 2010), which suggests that there is a collective acceptance between members of the group and belief in what they are doing without there necessarily being a shared mood or emotion. This is particularly important for my thesis, as I will seek to show that the shared mood or emotional experience of certain group members actually happens at the expense of other group members. Following this logic, Heider and Warner (2010) also critique the outcome of group solidarity by stating that ‘powerful solidarity does not rest on, or even necessarily produce, common ideas or common emotions’ (Heider & Warner, 2010). In other words, there can be a feeling of group solidarity between members of a group without the ultimate production of group ideas or emotions. In fact, Heider and Warner (2010) believe that Collins’s expectation that all of the participants will share identical emotions is excessively limiting. This makes sense considering there is unlikely to always be shared mood or emotion during an interaction ritual, thereby resulting in different levels of emotional energy produced as an outcome. The amendments to IR theory proposed by Heider and Warner align with my idea that members of a group bring different levels of EE to a ritual and accordingly leave with different levels of EE. I will discuss my justification for this assertion in the next section.

Ultimately, Collins’s IR theory provides a sound framework for examining the micro-sociological situations that were observed in my study. It provides the means to analyse these micro-moments rigorously and to examine how interactions are connected and have a flow-on effect. Crucially, it aligns with my assertion that using the situation as the starting point is the best way to

examine³¹ social behaviour. However, in my use of IR theory, I will accommodate the critiques and reformulations suggested by Fine (2005) and Heider and Warner (2010) to apply a more robust formulation of IR theory. As discussed, in my use of IR theory I will incorporate the theoretical tools of Bourdieu. One of the fundamental theoretical principles of Collins's theory is a focus on 'the micro-interaction as the foundation of society rather than historical processes' (Cottingham, 2012, p. 170). This approach argues that macro-structures are an accumulation of micro-level processes but fails to adequately account for how macro-structures play a role in stratifying micro-level interactions. Therefore, similar to Cottingham (2012) I plan to use IR theory as an approach that is complementary to a focus on macro-level, historical processes. To achieve this, I will combine the work of Collins and Bourdieu to provide deep analytical insight into the findings from this study.

Synergies between Collins and Bourdieu

The combination of Collins's IR theory and Bourdieu's conceptual tools provided a powerful theoretical framework for understanding the embodied interactions of the Year 1/2 children in this study. The use of IR theory provided a theoretical model for examining micro-interactions, and the use of Bourdieu built on this by providing macro-level contextualization of these interactions. The two theoretical frameworks share a common primary focus on the agency of social actors within interactions. However, they do not align seamlessly. Primarily, each sociologist has a distinct, contrary epistemological stance in how they view the possible outcomes of social action. For Bourdieu, the ritual (re)produces the cultural and social order, whereas Collins emphasizes the transformative power of the ritual (Collins, 2004). Accordingly, Bourdieu believes that history tends to repeat itself (McDonald, 2005), while Collins believes that interaction ritual is a mechanism of both change and continuity (Collins, 2004). Beyond this fundamental difference, the two frameworks share a number of other smaller differences and similarities. In the remainder of this section, I address these similarities and differences, highlighting an effective way to navigate the difference in their

³¹ I emphasise examine here because I use the situation as the starting point for my analysis. However, I acknowledge that in order to truly understand the situation it is also important to have an understanding of the broader concepts such as the field that the situation is occurring in, specifically the history of the field.

epistemological stances. I finish this section by showing how I combined the two theories to create the theoretical framework that I apply in this project.

As discussed, Bourdieu and Collins have very different views on social action and how social worlds are produced. In his work, Bourdieu placed an emphasis on cultural and social reproduction. He highlighted the role that intersecting social structures - such as the economy, education, and family - have in (re)producing culture, practice, and society at large (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For example, in his work with Passeron, Bourdieu argued for the role that education plays in the processes of class reproduction and symbolic domination (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Not surprisingly, his contention was that the educational system exists to reproduce the culture of the dominant group/s in any society (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). This stance has led to criticism of Bourdieu's work. As discussed, the most common criticism being that Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction is too deterministic (Thorpe, 2009). Critics have argued that Bourdieu's work, rather than providing agency, actually foreclosed agency, and consequently, did not leave any room for cultural change or non-reproduction (Jenkins, 1992; Rancière, 2004; Reed-Danahay, 2005). As argued, Bourdieu's concepts overcome the agency/structure dualism, and through his focus on the habitus of an agent, provide ample room for the agent to engage in 'regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu, 1977), within constraining, structured structures. Bourdieu's concept of constrained agency does not rob individuals of their agency, but rather acknowledges that the outcomes of agency are predictable because of the (historically) self-imposed limit on options within a field (McDonald, 2005). For McNay (1999), Bourdieu's work 'provides a corrective to certain theories of reflexive transformation which overestimate the extent to which individuals living in post-traditional order are able to reshape identity' (p. 113). Therefore, the main value in Bourdieu's work is that it demonstrates the difficulty of change (Thorpe, 2009); without reflexivity we have a tendency to continually reproduce the existing social order.

Collins has been quite vocal in his criticism of this aspect of Bourdieu's work. Collins (2004) believes that Bourdieu's conceptualization of the field, and its structures, misses the transformative power of ritual mobilization. Collins critiques Bourdieu for believing that outcomes are structurally

preordained (Collins, 2004, p. 390). Using this critique as a point of contrast, Collins highlights the transformative power of the interaction ritual. He argues that his theory sits in between postmodernist views, which suggest situational flux of meanings and identities, and culturalist views that fixed scripts are repeatedly called upon (Collins, 2004). Therefore, Collins accepts that there are certain cultural and structural conditions that lead agents to act in certain repetitive ways, rather than others. However, he believes that his theory:

pushes the argument at a more micro-situational level: that the operative structural conditions are those that make up the ingredients of interactional rituals; and that cultural repertoires are created in particular kinds of IRs, and fade out in others (Collins, 2004, p. 43).

Therefore, Collins believes that the structural conditions in our lives are those that make up the ingredients of interaction rituals, rather than being over-arching structures that govern our lives. Consequently, Collins's stance is much more optimistic, dictating that interaction rituals can 'tear up old social structures or leave them behind, and shape new social structures' (Collins, 2004, p. 42). Ultimately, Collins's theory argues for the dynamic nature of human lives, and the possibility for dramatic shifts in their direction (Collins, 2004).

The epistemological stances of the two sociologists are perhaps closer than they appear. Collins is similar to many other North-American sociologists, 'who are uncomfortable with theories that deny individual autonomy and free will' (Reed-Danahay, 2009, p.157). As discussed, Bourdieu's theories do not deny individuals autonomy or free choice, but rather contextualizes their agency within the structures of fields and their own past experiences. Effectively, Collins mirrors this in his work by showing how an IR is impacted by the chain of past interaction rituals, thereby highlighting how we are impacted and likely constrained by our past experiences. According to Bourdieu, these past experiences are largely determined by our interactions within certain structured social fields. Therefore, Bourdieu might argue that the outcomes of interaction rituals would likely reproduce the logic of the field. That does not mean that a field cannot be changed, as I argued earlier, but just that

the change that Collins is talking about is much more likely to happen on a much smaller scalar. Consequently, if you were to try and change the nature of a field, the accumulation of transformative IRs may be the mechanism to make this happen. So, the change to these fields through the accumulations of IR over time would be possible, as long as it acknowledged how these macro-structures tend to reproduce themselves. In my combination of these two frameworks, I acknowledge the epistemological tension between the two works but align with the idea that through current social practices we tend to reproduce the fields, that constrain our agency, rather than change them on an interactional basis.

There is another significant difference between the two theoretical frameworks. They differ in their conceptualization of the social space where interactions occur. Bourdieu focuses on the field as a ‘network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97), and acknowledges that all social spaces are fields (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Collins critiques this by arguing that what Bourdieu is missing from his concept is the idea of a limited attention space, that is to say, there is only room for a certain number of people in a field (Collins in van der Zeeuw et al. 2018). Attention space links closely with the idea of a mutual focus of attention, so accordingly, it is unlikely that everyone within a field will have this same focus. It is much more likely that the attention space consists of a smaller group that is involved in an IR, rather than the broader field of education. Collins’s emphasis on limited attention space aligns with his focus on the micro, but in his own work, Bourdieu tried to overcome the dualistic alternatives of the micro and the macro (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Hence, his concept of the field was not uniquely macro or micro, meaning a field could be as broad as education or as narrow as a group of friends. So, in this way, Collins’ critique of Bourdieu and the introduction of the limited attention space was a misunderstanding that actually backed up Bourdieu’s work. Therefore, Collins conclusion was that, similar to Bourdieu’s thinking, the attention space gets into the unconsciousness of members of the field (Collins in van der Zeeuw et al. 2018). In this way, the attention space and the field are not dissimilar. So, following this logic, there can be a limited attention space between members of a ritual, but this can still conceptually fit within a field.

The two conceptual frameworks also share a number of similarities, and although I will go into these in more depth at the end of this section, a few are covered here. First, both theoretical frameworks place an emphasis on the situation. Collins' emphasis on the situation is clear, but Bourdieu also emphasizes the situation by stating that the 'habitus only reveals itself with reference to a situation... it is in relationship to a certain situation that habitus produces something' (Bourdieu & Chartier, 2015, p. 44). Additionally, according to the situation, the habitus can do contrasting things (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Hence, the situation is an important theoretical focus for both sociologists in understanding social action. Second, both sociologists utilize the concept of capital. I have already outlined Bourdieu's use of cultural capital, but Collins utilizes cultural capital, typically referred to as 'cultural resources' (Collins, 2004), as well to refer to the membership symbols of a ritual. These symbols are 'symbolic possessions that may be invested in further interactions, and are subject to constraints of a market, including deflation in the value of the currency as it becomes more abundant' (Collins, 2004, p. 390). Accordingly, individuals bring this capital into a ritual and potentially are able to convert it into more capital.³² This aligns with Bourdieu's work, but Collins critiques Bourdieu's use of capital for not being micro enough, saying that cultural capital can shift in local significance with situational processes over time (Collins, 2004). This fits with Bourdieu's own conceptualization, as he says that capital can be 'subject to fluctuation in exchange rates, both spatially/synchronically and diachronically' (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Therefore, both agree that capital can fluctuate and change, Bourdieu just acknowledges it can occur beyond just micro-level interactions. In my own framework, I highlight the important role of capital and the link with Collins's concept of emotional energy. Finally, both frameworks place an emphasis on the accumulative effect of history leading into interactions. Collins believes that history plays a key role in the movement between interactional rituals, meaning each ritual will be impacted by the rituals that have come before. Bourdieu believes that through the habitus we embody our past experiences within a variety of social fields, thereby meaning we are likely to think, feel and act in certain ways.

³² It is important to note that in his work Collins (2004) primarily focuses on culture capital and its symbolic effects. Similarly, Collins's protégé Erika Summers-Effler focuses primarily on cultural capital (2004a, 2004b, 2006)

Logically then, it makes sense that these two ideas fit together. So, what we bring to a ritual is our habitus and what is affected during the interaction and therefore becomes the product is our habitus. In this way, the habitus is affected by every interaction ritual we experience within a certain field. Ultimately, the two theories can be used together in a complementary way to understand the social actions of the children in this study.

As I have shown, habitus, capital and field fit as concepts that help to add understanding to what happens before, during and after an IR. They do not take away from Collins's focus on the micro, but rather add an extra layer of context and analytical rigour. Accordingly, I still utilize the micro as the starting point within my analysis, but then build on it to gain a deeper understanding of the fields of PE and the playground and how they impact on the children within them. To achieve this, I developed a combined theoretical framework that integrates the concepts of habitus, field and capital into Collins's IR framework in areas that add to his conceptual outline.

In this combined framework, the field is positioned as the overarching structure that affects the interaction ritual, having an effect on the ingredients and outcomes of an interaction. This makes sense because the ingredients of an interaction ritual within a classroom are likely to be different from a ritual in the PE space. In the classroom, the mutual focus of attention may be getting work done collaboratively whereas in PE it may be competing for individual glory. Therefore, the social structures of the field are likely to play a role in the creation of a ritual. Importantly though, the field is more than just the context for an IR, instead playing an important role in structuring the IR through the habitus of participants, particularly in valuing certain types of habitus over others. Therefore, the field plays an important role in stratifying interactions. Additionally, the act of the interaction ritual is likely to have an impact on the field, likely reconstituting or reproducing the social structures of the field. The habitus, as 'embodied history' (Bourdieu, 1990) is what each individual brings to the ritual. Their past accumulation of interactions (with agents and institutions) will be embodied as the unconscious dispositions, in the form of a bodily hexis, that will affect how they act within the ritual. Accordingly, what happens during the ritual and the outcomes will affect the habitus of each member. They then carry this impacted habitus into future interaction rituals. I conceive of this as a 'habitus in'

and ‘habitus out’ effect. Rather than being mechanistic, this leaves room for the change that Collins emphasizes as the outcome of a ritual in the form of a disjoint between habitus and field. The outcome may not be the radical change that Collins envisions, but more in line with Bourdieu’s concept of reflexivity, where an individual is able to understand the field better and be more aware of their dispositions, thereby working to affect change in the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The emphasis on mutual focus of attention, collective effervescence and collective consciousness³³ is also likely to play a role in the creation of collective habitus within specific fields, as suggested by Bourdieu (1977).

The concept of capital plays an important role in the process. Similar to the habitus, I conceptualize it as ‘capital in’ and ‘capital out’. As Collins has argued, individuals bring capital to interaction rituals in the form of membership symbols.³⁴ Therefore, it makes sense that the capital that individuals bring to an interaction is largely determined by the field. For example, a child may have accrued cultural capital in class because of their ability to read, but this capital may hold no value for an interaction within the PE class. Appropriately, it makes sense that individuals enter an interaction with different levels of field-specific capital. Those individuals with the most-field specific capital, imbued in their habitus through previous experiences in similar fields, are able to play a significant role in determining the ingredients of the ritual. These persons are then able to control the situation (Collins, 2004). During the ritual, there is further capital on offer which leads to the production of emotional energy. The more field-specific capital an individual is able to accrue the more emotional energy they will produce. Their ability to accrue this capital is directly related to their habitus. Therefore, those who have internalized the rules of the field and embodied these lessons in their habitus are perfectly positioned to gain the most capital, and therefore leave the ritual with the most emotional energy. If the field dictates that the most capital can be gained by being competitive, and members structure the ingredients accordingly, then logically this is what individuals must do to produce emotional energy. Accordingly, an individual is unlikely to produce any emotional energy

³³ In accordance with the critique of shared mood by Heider & Warner (2010), I have changed this ingredient to ‘collective consciousness’

³⁴ In his earlier work, Collins (1981) referred to these membership symbols as ‘cultural resources’. In the same way, these cultural resources were acquired from past interactions. A person’s ability to position themselves in a conversational ritual was based on the types and amount of these resources acquired.

from sitting down and not engaging in this competition. As discussed, individuals who produce high levels of EE are likely to leave an IR with high levels of enthusiasm, confidence, initiative and pride, while those with low levels of EE are likely to leave with feelings of depression, shame, exclusion (Collins, 2004), fatigue, lack of interest and a lack of willingness to initiate action (Summers-Effler, 2004a).

In IR theory every individual seeks emotional energy (Collins, 2004), so although every individual may not have the same ability to accrue capital specific EE, they will still accrue varying levels of emotional energy by accepting that the different forms of capital have value and seeking them. The collective consciousness and the standards of morality come from the very act of engaging in ‘the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 74) So, although individuals leave the interaction with different levels of emotional energy, their involvement in the game re-imbues the symbols of membership with the capital that will impact future interactions. Ultimately, emotional energy is a tangible outcome of the capital that an individual was able to acquire during an interaction. If an individual is able to accrue high levels of capital during an interaction than they are likely to leave an interaction with high levels of EE, if they are not able to accrue as much capital than they are likely to leave with low levels or lose EE. Importantly then, this has an impact on how individuals unconsciously perceive a ritual. Those who leave with high EE are likely to consider the ritual a success and pursue similar rituals in the future. Whereas, those who leave having lost EE are more likely to consider the ritual a failure and pursue distinctly different rituals adopt defensive strategies if they must engage in this ritual again.

Ultimately, the combination of these two frameworks provides an effective tool for understanding the social interactions of the children in these two spaces. The micro-situational focus of Collins places emphasis on the embodied interactions of the children and the addition of Bourdieu shows how these embodied interactions are influenced by macro-structures. On a conceptual level, the combination of these theories provides the means to examine the social action in these spaces. Collins provides the process for micro-situational understanding; Bourdieu provides the macro-level contextualization. Consequently, this framework provides a sound basis for examining how children

create their physical subjectivities within the playground and the PE space. Consideration now turns to the methodological means that were used to conduct this project.

Chapter Four - Research Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the methodological approach that underpins this study. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methods that were used to examine the embodied experiences of Year 1/2 children in the PE and playground spaces. In the first section, I outline the methodology used and the emphasis placed on including the children in the research process. The following section provides information about my personality, as the researcher, including my attempts to be reflexive, and the participants. The subsequent sections provide descriptive information on the procedures used for data co-creation and the techniques that were utilized to analyse the distinct data sets and to integrate them together.

Ethnography

To understand what it means to be a member of a social setting, a researcher needs to immerse themselves in that setting as long as possible to achieve a practical understanding of a particular phenomenon (Paulle, 2013). Ethnography involves studying the shared patterns of behaviour, language and actions of a specific cultural group, in their natural setting (Creswell, 2014). As a qualitative methodology, ethnography allows a researcher to spend a sustained period of time with the research participants in their daily setting (Creswell, 2014). For this project, I spent a considerable amount of time with the children in two settings: their PE classes (which they attended once a week) and on the playground (where they spent time every day).

The ethnographic approach also aligned with a desire to include the children as important social actors in the research. The use of ethnography in developing approaches to childhood research has become prevalent, for several reasons. Firstly, it allows the children to be placed at the forefront of the research process (Thomas & O' Kane, 2000). Secondly, it allows children to have a more direct voice (Prout & James, 2014). Finally, it allows the experiences of children, like adults, to be taken seriously (Bhana, 2016). It was important to provide the children with the opportunity to engage with this research in a variety of ways that appealed to them. Through the use of a number of specific

ethnographic methods, they were afforded the opportunity to take charge of how they were represented in the project.

The position of the researcher in an ethnographic project is important to consider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In this study, there were two positionalities that I held that would affect the way that I interacted with the children, and which would impact the data. My position as an adult and a former teacher meant that I could not just try and pass myself off as a child (Fine, 1987). I knew that as an adult, especially a qualified teacher, I would hold a different status in the school and a different level of life experience and authority (Martin, 2011). To address this, I adopted the role of a ‘friendly adult’ (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988), to balance these positions with my goal of immersing myself in the world of the children. The ‘friendly adult’ position was not always easy to maintain and led to a number of tensions throughout the project. I attempted to navigate these tensions by being aware of my different positionalities and focusing on reflexivity, which I will elaborate on in the next section.

Researcher

Unlike other research methods, ethnography is distinct in that ‘the knowledge that is produced depends on the researcher taking part in close social interaction with informants over extensive periods of time’ (Christensen, 2004, p. 166). In this way, I was an important part of the data that I collected. I could not simply remove myself from the interactions that occurred or remove my presence from the data without adversely affecting it. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to outline the significant role that I played in this project, both in co-creating the data and in interpreting and translating it into this document. I begin this section by outlining the reflexive approach I adopted. Finally, I elaborate on the experiences and dispositions that impacted the project and provide examples of how I tried to be reflexive of these positions.

Reflexivity

The role of the researcher is complex as their motivation and vision ‘is inevitably shaped by our theoretical climate, the people and questions that interest us, and our own experiences, predispositions and foibles’ (Madden, 2017, p. 93). The purpose of this section is to acknowledge the significant role that I had in the study, based on my experiences and predispositions, and to outline

how I tried to be reflexive of these variables. The purpose of this ‘reflexive statement’ is to outline how I as the researcher was reflective of the position that I held in the research process and the impact of this role. I tried to remain reflexive throughout the collection, analysis, and write-up phases of this study.

My experiences and predispositions

I am a thirty-two-year-old Anglo-Australian engaged cisgender male from a middle-class background. I grew up in an affluent area of Sydney and attended a Catholic primary school, from Kindergarten to grade four, followed by a private Christian boys’ school, from grade five to grade twelve. I am a qualified teacher and spent five years working as a primary school teacher in the United States.³⁵ At the beginning of this project, I knew that certain experiences and predispositions that I held would have an impact on how I collected and interpreted data. Specifically, I knew that my status as someone who did not enjoy PE as an adolescent; my position as an adult; and my positioning as an experienced teacher were elements that would all impact on this research project. Rather than seeking to limit these elements, I sought to be reflective of them at every stage of the project. I attempted to deploy reflexivity as a methodological tool of rigour that prompted deeper reflection into every element of my project (Jachyra, 2014). In the following section, I will examine how these experiences and dispositions played a role in this project and how I tried to be reflexive of these practices.

A disengaged ex-PE student

As noted earlier, I attended a co-educational school from kindergarten to grade four and then an all-boys’ school from Year 5 to 12. I cannot accurately reflect on my co-educational PE experiences, because we did not have PE at my primary school. The school had no designated PE teacher, so physical education was not conducted as a structured class. Physical activity occurred through two mediums: sports days³⁶ and unstructured free-play sporting sessions with our classroom

³⁵ I worked as a Year 3/4 classroom teacher for three years (this included teaching PE) and as a specialist K-6 PE teacher for two years.

³⁶ These sports days were typically organised and implemented by the few male teachers at the school, where the children being split up into houses for inter-school competition.

teacher.³⁷ As I showed in chapter two, this is a similar experience to what many children in primary school still have with their classroom teacher (Decorby et al. 2005), although the HPE curriculum now provides guidelines for teachers to follow (Dinan Thompson, 2018)

My earliest experiences in PE did not occur until I started at an all-boys school in Year 5. Over the next six years, I engaged in PE approximately once a week. As a researcher, I can reflect back on my schooling experience and conclude that my school, similar to other private institutional educational contexts, reflected and reproduced traditional masculine identities, values and constructions of sporting physicalities (Jachrya, Atkinson, & Washiya, 2015; Shilling, 2004). This was particularly true in PE classes, where those students that engaged in extra-curricular sport (particularly rugby and cricket),³⁸ tended to dominate. This led to a clear hierarchy in the class, with the ‘sporty’ boys at the top, the ‘average’ boys in the middle, and the ‘less-athletic’ students, such as me, at the bottom.³⁹ This production of a hierarchy aligns with the findings of other researchers (Jachyra, 2016; Jachyra et al. 2015, Koca et al. 2009). Some of my most distinct PE experiences include: being picked last for teams; getting knocked over by the ‘sporty’ boys; not being passed to for entire scrimmages/games (and worrying about what I would do if I did receive the ball); failing to master basic ‘sporting skills’; and constantly being worried about embarrassing myself (especially during the performance of difficult sporting skills). As a consequence, my overall PE experience was a negative one.

This negative PE experience was a disposition that I needed to be reflexive of or it could have meant that I was viewing every experience in my fieldwork through a negative lens. On certain occasions, a heightened awareness of the negative experiences that students can have in PE led to a desire to overstep my boundaries as a ‘friendly adult’ and inform the teacher of ‘best practice’ to address these experiences. This likely would have affected my relationship with the PE teacher and adversely affected the field of PE that I was studying. Instead, I decided that the most effective way to

³⁷ My only distinct memory of these physical activity sessions is getting in trouble in Year 2 for shooting a basketball through the bottom of the hoop.

³⁸ Rugby and cricket were the two major sports at the school.

³⁹ This hierarchy was subverted on certain occasions when other sports were implemented. For example, I played basketball outside school, so on the occasions that we played basketball I moved into the ‘average’ group. On these occasions, the ‘sporty’ students still dominated, even if they lacked the skills of a certain sport, by being the most aggressive and only passing to each other.

navigate this tension was to note them, in my field notes, and to act as a supportive figure to those students that were having negative experiences, as shown in the following field note extract:

The students were given a quick demonstration (approximately two minutes) on how to kick a football and they were instructed to find a partner and practice kicking. Jay and Francis worked together as partners. Over the course of 10 minutes, Jay struggled to kick the ball. He missed the ball completely on half his attempts, connected with his knee on some, and only sent the ball forward a few metres on the few occasions that he did connect with the ball. Finally, the instructors blew the whistle and ended the activity. As Jay walked away, he loudly exclaimed, “I hate kicking” and looked dejected (with his head down and his shoulders slumped). I turned around to him and said, “Don’t worry it is okay. I could not kick a ball when I was your age and I still can’t do it now.” This made Jay smile and he enthusiastically walked off to get a drink. I probably should not have intervened in this situation, but I knew that Jay needed to hear an encouraging word after his kicking session.

(Field note, PE Class 1/2 White)

In moments like this, I engaged in and directly impacted the experiences of the students during PE. Nevertheless, these moments were also significant in maintaining my friendly adult role and helped to build rapport with the children.

An adult in the social world of children

My position as an adult was a significant factor to consider in this project. I had to consider how I was going to position myself in the social world of the children and what impact this position might have. I could not completely immerse myself into the world of the children, as has been achieved in other adult-focused ethnographic projects. According to Fine (1987), the difference between adult and children, including size and place in organizational hierarchies, makes it almost impossible for an adult ethnographer to ‘pass’ as a child. Some researchers have argued that the best way to understand children’s daily lives is to take on the ‘least-adult’ role (Mandell, 1988). This purist

role advocates that a researcher should avoid all typical adult-like roles, such as tying shoelaces, pushing children on the swings and fixing toys (Clark, 2011). I knew that trying to establish this 'least-adult role' (Mandell, 1988) would be nearly impossible and keep me as an 'outsider'. Instead, I chose to engage with the children as a 'friendly adult' (Fine, 1987).

This friendly adult role (Fine, 1987) required establishing myself as a trustworthy companion that valued the children's views, strove to build trust, and recognized the inherent power balance that existed between myself and the children (Jachyra, 2014). So rather than making a dubious attempt to be seen as a child (Christensen, 2004), I acknowledged my role as an adult in the social world of the children. Instead of avoiding adult responsibilities I took them on: I tied shoelaces; helped students on and off playground equipment; gave students piggyback rides and provided support to students when they were upset. By taking on this role and accepting that there were a variety of adult responsibilities that I would need to take on, I was able to build a strong rapport with the children. This role provided a high level of access to the children's daily experiences. I participated in games (both structured and imaginary); walked around the playground with children; engaged in daily conversations and occasionally played during sports. By establishing this role, I was able to gain a unique insight into the lives of the children that would not have been possible by adopting a 'least-adult' role (Mandell, 1988).

Adopting this role also meant having an awareness of the inherent power imbalance between myself and the children. The positioning of the adult-child relationship is inherently based upon power, with children primarily positioned as the least powerful in the institutional settings of their daily lives (Christensen, 2004). Hence, adults play a significant role in the lives of children (Birbeck & Drummond, 2007). This is particularly true for research conducted within the primary school, where the adult researcher has a different status and is able to draw on 'adult authority' when needed (Martin, 2011). Although I attempted to distance myself from positions of authority (such as playground monitor), as much as possible, I could not escape my status as an 'adult authority'. Similar to Martin (2011), I found that the children frequently appealed to me as an adult, to help sort out their

problems or discipline other children. When these moments did occur, I made sure to include them in my notes, as evidenced in the following note:

The children are lining up to go into the activity room, at lunch. A few of the children are jostling to be at the front of the line. As I approached the line, Luthor called out to me, “Cameron, can you tell everyone to stop pushing?” This is interesting because Luthor does not treat me like he does other adults at the school. He spends most of his time teasing me and usually does not listen when I ask him to do anything. Yet, when a situation like this occurred, he seeks me out and asks me to use my authority as an adult. He knows that because I am an adult if I ask the students to stop pushing then they are likely to follow my request. I chose not to intervene in this situation because the activity instructor is about to let them in.

(Field note, Lunchtime.)

As this note shows, I attempted to navigate the power imbalance between myself and the children by utilizing my adult power/authority selectively. I called on my adult authority only to intervene in situations that could impact the safety of the children. In this, I followed the logic of Birbeck and Drummond (2007), who stated that “the intervention of an adult to prevent harm is a socially-natural and expected role” (pg. 28). On other occasions, where there was no safety concern, I acquiesced to the behaviours of the children (Clark, 2011) and attempted to soften my adult authority by not disciplining the children. By controlling the desire to intervene at certain times, I was able to observe and let interactions occur naturally on other occasions

An experienced teacher

Going into the field, I knew that my experience as a teacher would play an important role in how I was positioned at the school. I had worked as a teacher for five years and without careful consideration, it would be easy to fall back into this role. In fact, there were numerous times during the project that I had to resist my primary instincts as a teacher, such as, raising my voice and telling a

group of students to be quiet. This was a disposition that I had to navigate on a daily basis, with both the teachers and the students.

My qualification as a teacher helped provide access to the school. I had the legal authority to conduct my research with the children, which made it easier for the principal to approve the project. My status as a teacher also served as a form of social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) with the other teachers. It meant that the other teachers at the school viewed me a pseudo-teacher, who could help out or be relied upon when needed. The Year 1/2 teachers took advantage of my presence at the school, asking me to attend field trips, calling on my help at the athletics carnival, and relying on my presence as an adult helper in their classes.⁴⁰ I ate in the staff office and spent hours talking with the teachers at the school about students and school issues. The PE teacher was particularly aware of my experience as a PE teacher and often asked for advice and relied on my help in class. At times in the class, the teacher and children relied on my presence as a former teacher, to help with disputes and problems, as indicated in the following note:

A group came to me to clarify a rule. They were playing Piggy in the Middle. They were arguing over whether the Piggy had to touch the ball or catch the ball to get out. I suggested they vote on it. Three out of the four children voted for the 'touch' to be able to get the ball. To add a compromise, I suggested they make it a two-hand touch. The group agreed and played on with no problems. In this situation, the children relied on my help rather than their teacher. Instead of solving their problem for them I helped them solve their problem themselves.

(Field note, PE Class- 1/2 Green)

Besides these situations where I was called upon to help, I avoided aligning myself with the teacher as much as possible, instead taking on a role as a helper only if needed.

⁴⁰ For example, the teachers asked for my help in supervising their classes on a number of occasions, including rainy days when a teacher was needed to stay inside to supervise the class.

Similar to Jachyra and colleagues (2015), I attempted to distance myself physically and symbolically from the other teachers in a number of ways. First, I introduced myself to the students by my first name from the start of my time at the school. Considering that all of the other teachers were addressed formally, as Mr, Miss or Mrs, this distinguished my relationship with the children. Secondly, I spent very little time talking with the teachers in front of the children, typically only exchanging greetings on the playground. Instead, I spent all of that time with the children. Finally, I attempted to distance myself from the teachers by dressing less formally. I also avoided wearing sport attire that could have led to an association with the PE teacher. Importantly, I never wore the high visibility vest that teachers were meant to wear while on playground duty. Consequently, I was able to position myself outside the typical teacher-student hierarchy (Jachyra et al. 2015) at the school. In fact, my positioning was closer to the teaching aides that worked at the school, in that I was still an adult but did not possess the same level of influence and authority as the teachers. As a result, I was able to maintain a role as a friendly-adult and step in and out of the adult-helper role when required.

Participants and setting

For my project, finding the right school to conduct this research was a key requirement. The school represents a learning space where children engage in the meaning-making processes of their body experiences and try out their identities in multiple ways (Bettis & Adams, 2005). Although many children are already engaging with their body through ‘physical culture’ in a number of settings (physical recreation, sport and exercise) (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010), for most children, PE is an important site of early physical engagement. For this reason, it was important to embed myself within a school and examine how the children engage in these bodily processes through a variety of interaction rituals. Given the daily nature of these bodily practices and the extensive number of IRs in which they are carried out, it was deemed adequate to focus on one specific school.

The school that was chosen for this project was a primary school called Castle Rock Primary (CRP). The school, located in the West of Melbourne, was predominantly middle class. The school had a diverse cultural makeup, covering 31 different languages and dialects. I gained access to the school by corresponding directly with the principal, and the Victorian Department of Education. The

school had approximately 112 Year 1/2 students, divided into five separate composite classes, containing a mix of students from each grade. The five classes were 1-2 Red, 1-2 Blue, 1-2 Green, 1-2 Yellow and 1-2 White.⁴¹ The students in these classes ranged in age from six to eight years old (to see a breakdown of the ages of the children discussed in this thesis see appendix J). The Year 1/2 population consisted of roughly sixty-eight boys and forty-four girls.

To conduct this project, I navigated a rigorous ethical procedure. Initial ethical approval was granted by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC). To gain this approval I had to adhere to guidelines set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia for working with children. This process required creating a consent form (appendix B), for the legal guardians of the children, and an assent form (appendix C), for the children to decide on their own involvement. To conduct my research in a Victorian Public School I had to gain additional ethical approval from the Victorian Department of Education and Training. As a registered teacher, with the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT), I was exempt from the requirement of a Working with Children Check. These checks provided the legal and ethical approval for my time at the school.

When I started at school, I disseminated information about the project to all of the relevant parties in several ways. Initially, I explained my project to the Year 1/2 teachers. I outlined my role at the school and explained all the methods that would require their support. Next, I explained the project to the parents. I communicated to the parents in several ways: I put a notice in the school newsletter; hosted information sessions; and sent an information for participants/consent form home. Additionally, I spent time explaining my project to the children, by attending each class and conducting an information session. I covered all of the research methods and explained the role the students would play if they chose to be involved. After this explanation, I gave each student an assent form and asked them to print or sign their name if they wanted to be involved.⁴² I made sure to emphasize that they did not have to be involved and could drop out at any time. All of the children signed the assent forms, except for one child who elected not to be involved.

⁴¹ Pseudonyms

⁴² The assent form explained the project in a succinct and basic way.

Data co-creation methods and procedures

The following section will outline the methods that were used in the research and indicate how they align with the theoretical positions previously outlined. The data co-creation methods were selected because they were child-focused, specifically the participatory techniques, and allowed the children to ascribe their own meanings to their actions and interactions. Additionally, the methods aligned with the theoretical approach because they provided a practical way to examine the micro-interactions of the children. Finally, these four methods were selected because they fit together to form a detailed portrait of the physical experiences of children in PE, on the playground and beyond.

Participant observation

The principal data collecting strategy used for the project was participant observation, which involves a researcher taking an active part in the day-to-day activities, rituals and interactions of a group of people (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Participation observation was used to explore the activities, rituals and interactions of the Year 1/2 students in the two physical spaces. The method provided a means to learn the explicit and tacit aspects (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) of the daily interactions of the children in these spaces.

The use of participant observation provided three main advantages for my project. Firstly, it enhanced the quality of data that I obtained during the data co-creation phase (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). By taking part in the daily lives of the children, in these spaces, I was able to obtain witness events that I would not have been privy to if I was standing on the side of the playground. Secondly, it enhanced the quality of data interpretation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). I spent countless hours interacting with and observing the children, mainly on the playground. This provided a level of contextual knowledge about the students that I would not have gained through the other methods alone. In this way, I used participant observation as both a data co-creation and an analytic tool (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Finally, participant observation led to the (re)formulation of research questions based on ‘on-the-ground’ observation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Over the course of fieldwork, the wide range of activities and interactions led to several reformulations of the project scope.

Participant observation has been utilized in several sociological studies. Bowen Paulle (2013) conducted an ethnographic study, primarily through participant observation, at two high schools, one in Amsterdam and one in New York. Paulle took an active role in his research by working as a teacher, as well as a researcher, at both schools. According to Paulle, the main strength of the participant observer method was that most of the time he could not be a spectator (Paulle, 2013). His role as a teacher-ethnographer meant he was never on the sidelines, but rather was entirely present in the research field that he was studying. Paulle's most significant methodological claim was that:

“Participant observation is the most reliable way (1) to reveal what actually goes on in real-time and space across multiple settings and, therefore, (2) to bring to life how limited and potentially misleading reified conceptual constructions, static classification schemes, and reductivist research designs can be.”

(2013, pg. 221)

This provided a methodological backing for my choice to participate in the school community by taking on a variety of membership roles (occasional adult helper and friendly adult), while I observed, rather than standing on the outside looking in

Several researchers have conducted participant observation projects into the lives of young children in primary school. The original pioneering work in this area was conducted by Barrie Thorne in 1993. In her study, *Gender Play: Boys and Girls in School*, she spent a year observing primary school children on the playground, at two separate schools (Thorne, 1993). As a qualified teacher, Thorne took on several roles in her time at the school but spent the majority of her time engaging and playing with the children on the playground (Thorne, 1993). Since this work was published, a number of other researchers have conducted similar projects influenced by Thorne's work. Martin (2011) conducted a study into how children learn gender in pre-school, by observing them at during class and on the playground. Bhana (2016) conducted participant observation in a South African primary school, examining how children construct their gendered and sexual identities. I adopted a similar

approach to these researchers but positioned myself as a friend, (sometime) helper and ‘participant’ in the activities of the children. I took part in usual and unusual activities, hung out, interacted (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) and played with the children, largely without the presence of other teachers or adults.⁴³

At the beginning of my time at the school, I wrote a schedule that allowed for the observation of the five PE sessions and seven/eight recess/lunch sessions per week. For the playground observations, I walked around the playground and interacted with and played with the children. As soon as I entered the playground, I sought out groups of Year 1/2 children. Eventually, it was common for the children to seek me out as soon as I entered the playground space. Sometimes, I stayed with one group for the duration of a recess/lunch period, but more often, I spent time with a variety of different groups. To know when to move on, I utilized Carspecken’s (1996) method of priority observation that suggests a researcher spends as much time with a group as he/she feels is required. I observed in PE by walking amongst the children as they participated in their activities. The typical format of the PE class involved the children engaging in activity stations as four distinct groups; they moved between activity stations every five to ten minutes. I walked back and forth between the stations, talking with each group and participating when necessary.⁴⁴ For all observations, I wrote my recollections as field notes. After each session, I sat down and wrote down as much as I could, while the observations were still fresh in my mind. Later on, I rewrote this note as a formal field note, adding in all the details that may have been missing from the draft version.⁴⁵ These notes were typed up and stored on a research-specific hard drive.

Participatory visual methods

Participatory methods are those that provide participants with the ability to find their own language to communicate what they know and share their understandings of the world (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012). These methods can provide participants with more control over their own

⁴³ Any other teacher or adult on the playground was on playground supervision. This meant they had a section of the playground to walk around and monitor

⁴⁴ Often the children asked me to participate, which might mean skipping, stepping into a game (if they did not have the right number of people), or acting as partner for a skill practice (if a child could not find a partner)

⁴⁵ I typically re-wrote these field notes with an hour or two of the initial observation, but on certain occasions I did not have time because I had to observe or take on another role. On these occasions, I still revisited this note before the end of the day.

involvement in the research process. Participatory methods have been widely applauded for the emphasis that they place on facilitating the active involvement of children in research projects (Thomas & O’Kane, 2000; Clark, 2001; 2005; Clark, 2011; Punch, 2002). These methods align with my recognition of children as important social actors. These methods encouraged the children to feel empowered to communicate and express their thoughts on their lived experiences in important and contextualized ways (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006).

For this project, I choose to incorporate two participatory visual data co-creation methods. Importantly, participatory visual methods place a central focus on the participant and involve the use of image-based techniques to provide participants with the platform to share their understandings of the world (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012). Visual methods position children as ‘experts’ on their own lives (Burke, 2005) and allow them to analyse, understand and critique their positions in the world (Soto & Swander, 2005). The use of visual data provides children with the opportunity to be involved in the creation of a visual representation of their lives, and then elaborate on it in their own words. Through the use of these methods, the children were able to take an active role in the creation of knowledge and explain how they experienced their own world. The two participatory visual methods that were incorporated in this project were map drawing and photo elicitation.

Map drawing

Map drawing is a methodology that provides participants with the opportunity to create visual representations of their social worlds. The use of mapping encourages children to provide their own responses and interpretation by producing information through a visual representation (Thomson, 2008), designed to allow them to express themselves graphically. The children drew maps of the playground space and added their voice to these representations. By creating their own visual representations, students were able to engage in my project as important social actors (Banks, 2001) and detail their lived experiences (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012). Building on this, many of the children were able to add their voices to these maps through interviews designed to elicit discussion, explanation and contextualization. This method is championed by Enright and O’Sullivan (2012), who believe that engaging young people in interpretations of self-produced visual data can be a

hugely powerful experience for the researcher and the participants. This was a significant element of my project and provided a unique insight into the social world of the children; expressed through their own visual, and subsequent, verbal interpretations.

To facilitate this method, I conducted map drawing sessions with all five of the Year 1/2 classes during class time. I started each map session by reaffirming the purpose of my project and explaining how the map drawing fit into the project. I explained to the children that they did not have to be involved in the map-drawing if they did not want to.⁴⁶ For the drawing of the maps, I gave clear but basic instructions. I suggested that the playground should be drawn from a bird's eye perspective⁴⁷ and include the names of all of the people they play with at recess/lunch. I suggested that they only include the names of people that they play with on a regular basis. Finally, I asked them to write or draw themselves in the places that they and their friends spend their time on the playground. Alternatively, they had the option to circle the spaces they played in. They were able to list as many of their regular play spaces as they wanted to. The children were given ample time to work on and finish their maps, including the option to add colour if they chose.

The next phase of this methodology involved interviewing a select group of students about their maps and the creation process. To conduct these interviews, I selected a sample of children, rather than interviewing the entire student body, which would not have been possible because not all of the consent forms were returned.⁴⁸ The sample group consisted of approximately fifty students from across the five classes. Before I conducted these interviews, I examined the maps. I noticed that in each class, many of the students listed each other as friends. I made the decision, where possible, to interview those students in groups with their friends. Accordingly, I interviewed students in groups of two or three, and some as individuals (if their friends did not have consent to be interviewed).

The interviews were conducted in the language education classroom. I tried to ensure that the interview space was a supportive, accepting environment (Birbeck & Drummond, 2007) where the

⁴⁶ None of the children opted out of this element of the project.

⁴⁷ The Year 1/2 students had recently learned what 'birds-eye perspective' meant. I did not have to spend much time explaining, but instead picked a student from each class to explain it.

⁴⁸ I conducted the map drawing with all of the students, as excluding the other students would have been problematic, but only conducted interviews with a select group of students that had consent from their parents.

children were free to express themselves in any way they chose. To achieve this, I explicitly stated that I would be the only one that would listen to the interviews⁴⁹ and that no one would be able to identify their responses in my writing because I would use pseudonyms. I used a digital recorder to record the interviews and always asked for verbal confirmation that I could record the interview. The interviews involved a semi-structured approach. The semi-structured approach required the use of some pre-scripted, guiding questions, but emphasized allowing the respondent's answers to guide the flow of the interview (Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008). The pre-scripted, guiding questions⁵⁰ were:

- Who are your friends that you play with on the playground?
- What spaces do you play in?
- What spaces are you not allowed to play in?
- Do you ever play with the older students?
- What types of activities do you see the older students playing?
- Are there any activities from PE that you play on the playground?
- What thing are you best at on the playground?

These questions were used to provide a sense of structure to the interviews, but they did not dictate the way that each interview unfolded. In fact, many of the most interesting discussions came from following the responses provided by the students and allowing them to speak freely. At the end of each interview, I thanked the students and provided them with the opportunity to listen to themselves on the recording.

Photo elicitation

Photo elicitation involves the process of inserting a photograph into a research interview (Harper, 2002). According to Becker (2002), photographs display social phenomena in context more appropriately than words. Hence, photo-elicitation provides a visual jumping-off point for an individual to provide the true context of their everyday social world. Photo elicitation has been

⁴⁹ On a number of occasions, some of the children asked if their teacher or their parents would hear what they said in the interviews. I verbally confirmed that this would not happen.

⁵⁰ I did not ask the full set of these questions in every interview. Instead these questions were only used if a thread of discussion reached its natural conclusion.

acknowledged as a successful research tool that is appropriate for working alongside young children (Epstein et al. 2006). Photos provided a 'more transparent representation of the life experiences of the participants' (Dodman, 2003, p. 24) that I was working with, showing their 'real flesh and blood life' (Becker, 2002, P. 11). It allowed the children to communicate and explain the physical experiences that they engage in during their lives outside school hours.

The photo-elicitation stage required a more significant commitment, both in effort and in time, from the children that were involved. It required a small group of children, and their parents to elect to be involved in photo-taking outside of school hours.⁵¹ Parents were tasked with taking photos of their children being active over a two-week period. To implement this method, a group of twenty-five students was selected, five students from each class (thirteen girls and twelve boys in total). This sample was based purely on the time commitment, as the implementation to completion process for each child was approximately a month.⁵² All of the children provided their assent to be involved in the photo-taking and had consent from their parents.

I introduced the photo-elicitation concept to the children by spending time with each group of five students (from each class), explaining the process. They were provided with a basic outline of what was required of each of them and their parents (who would be taking the photos). I provided each student with a camera pack that they would keep for the entirety of the photo-taking process. Each pack contained: a disposable camera (that took up to 30 photos); a photo information sheet (that provided instructions); and a business card with my contact details (if they needed to contact me). The photo information sheet outlined specific details for the parents, including:

1. How to take a photo with the camera⁵³
2. A suggestion to take twenty-five photos over a two-week period
3. A definition and examples of the active experiences that I was trying to capture
4. A request to take candid photos during activities, rather than capturing staged photos

⁵¹ The parents were tasked with taking the photos, so that they could capture their children being active outside of the school. The children would not have been able to capture themselves being active with disposable cameras.

⁵² The photo taking was meant to occur over two weeks. It typically took a week for the photos to be processed and then I interviewed the child sometime during the fourth week. For some of the participants this took longer depending on how long they kept the camera.

⁵³ The camera had very specific directions for how and when to use the flash function, so I tried to explain this to alleviate any uncertainty involved in the process.

5. An affirmation that their child would not be identifiable in any of the research that I produce from this project.

I encouraged the children to take the camera home and talk about their involvement in the process with their parents. Additionally, they were encouraged to come back to me at any time if they or their parents had questions. I reiterated that the children, and their parents, could opt out of this element of my project at any time. Finally, I instructed the parents to send the camera back to school once they had captured 20-25 photos.

To follow up on the photo-taking process, I conducted photo-elicitation interviews (PEI). Historically, PEIs have involved the use of photographs to invoke comments, memory, and discussion during semi-structured interviews (Banks, 2001). Similar to Pope (2010), I utilised photo-elicitation to provide the children with a voice to explore their sporting and activity experiences outside of school. The PEIs required the students to think and talk reflectively about what they were doing in each photo. This promoted discussion and critical reflection on the events that were occurring in the photos. It was critical that the interpretation of the photos be driven by the students that appeared in each set of photos. The dialogue between myself and the children and their interpretation of their own lives took the images and their meanings to new places (Pope, 2010).

These interviews were conducted one-on-one with each participant.⁵⁴ I began each interview by explaining the photo interview process and showing each student the recording device that I used to record the interviews. Similar to the mapping interviews, I sought verbal consent from each child to record them during the PEI. Before I started the interview with each student, I spread their photos out on the table. At the start of the interview, I instructed the interviewee to pick five photos that they wanted to discuss. I gave each student complete freedom in picking the five photos. This was the true participatory element of this approach, because each child was able to co-create the data by choosing the photos that best illustrated how they represented themselves. Once each student picked their five photos, we started the interview.

⁵⁴ I only conducted 20 photo elicitation interviews. Five of the students did not return their cameras.

The interviews focused specifically on discussing each of the five photos. Similar to the map interviews I had a number of pre-scripted guiding questions⁵⁵ but allowed the children to guide the flow of the interview (Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008). The pre-scripted, guiding questions were:

- What are you doing in this photo?
- How often do you participate in that [activity]?
- Why do you like engaging in that [activity]?⁵⁶

These questions guided the interviews and led to interesting and detailed discussions about a range of topics. The students were able to speak about their lives outside of school and provide rich context to behaviours and actions that they engaged in during PE and on the playground. These interviews helped bring me closer to the concrete realities of the children's lives (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2011), providing insights that were not possible with the other school-based methods. To finish the interviews, I let the children listen to the recorded interview and keep the photos if they chose to.⁵⁷

Video recording

The use of video recording technology provides the opportunity to record naturally occurring activities as they arise in ordinary environments (Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2017). Video research places a focus on situated performance as it occurs in daily social interactions (Erickson, 1988). As I set out to understand the situated performances that were occurring in PE classes, the use of video technology provided a permanent recording that could be analysed in detail, at my own discretion. The use of analysis software provided the ability to slow these interactions down, replay each one an unlimited number of times (Cowan, 2014; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2017; Knoblauch & Tuma, 2012; Schubert, 2013) and view the interactions in a way not possible in-person (Cowan, 2014). Through the use of video, I was able to achieve a level of micro-analytical insight into the interactions that were not possible through participant observation alone (Knoblauch & Tuma, 2012). This data complemented and extended the findings that were discovered through the other methods.

⁵⁵ I was also able to use insights that I had gained from the observations and map interviews to guide certain lines of questioning. For example, if a boy said to me previously that they did not like to play with girls, I used this to juxtapose a photo where they were playing with a girl outside school.

⁵⁶ I typically asked these questions for each distinct photo, unless we had already talked about the student engaging in that activity.

⁵⁷ The children could keep any of the unused photos, but I scanned and saved the five PEI photos before returning them.

The video recording stage occurred during my second semester at the school.⁵⁸ Only children who had parental consent, and provided their assent, were filmed as part of this project. Before each session, I explained the filming process to the children and told them what the footage would be used for. I also explained that the children could opt out of the filming at any point. All of the children, with parental consent, agreed to participate, except for one student who opted out after the first session. In each class, only a select group of children were filmed:

- Class 1/2 Red had 8 children participating
- Class 1/2 Blue had 12 children participating
- Class 1/2 Green had 11 children participating
- Class 1/2 Yellow had 12 children participating
- Class 1/2 White had 11 children participating.

At the beginning of each lesson, I provided the PE teacher with a list of students and he randomly assigned the children into two activity groups.⁵⁹

The PE classes were facilitated by the school PE Teacher, Mr King. Each class was structured into two sections: a warm-up section (usually consisting of a relay race) and a stations section. The station section was the main skill-based physical activity element of the class. For this section, the teacher divided the class into four groups and assigned each one to an activity in a corner of the basketball court. After five to ten minutes in each station, the teacher blew the whistle and the groups moved to the next activity. The stations were relatively consistent each week and included activities such as Piggy in the Middle, Skipping and Lever Catch.⁶⁰ PE classes were conducted in this format for most of my time at the school. This was different in the last few weeks, as two representatives from the Australian Football League (AFL) came in to teach the children football skills. During these lessons, the children mainly worked in partners and learned how to handball and kick the ball, before participating in skill games.

⁵⁸ I spent the first semester building rapport with the students and observing the PE lessons. I wanted to gain an insight into how the PE classes worked before I started filming.

⁵⁹ Except for a three-week period where the students, from four out of the five classes, were taught football skills by two AFL instructors. During these sessions I provided a list of students that I was allowed to film, and they stuck to one end of the court for filming.

⁶⁰ Each student was provided a lever and a ball. They put the ball on one end of the lever and were supposed to step on the other end of the lever, to launch the ball into the air for them to catch.

I filmed the lessons using two Sanyo cameras. To determine the most effective way to film the groups in each class I conducted two pilot sessions, one by myself and one with class 1-2 Red. There were three considerations to factor in. First, it was important to film each activity using a wide-angle shot, to ensure that I could capture how the children interact and respond to each other (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002). Second, it was necessary to set up the camera unattended, on a tripod, to minimize any further distraction and disruption to the children (Barbash & Taylor, 1997). Finally, the cameras had to be set up, so that they were focused only on the children with consent, minimizing any chance of capturing other children. To accommodate all of these considerations, each camera was set up slightly outside the activity space, focused only on these children, and left unattended while I walked around and observed the class. This was beneficial because I was able to continue to observe and interact with the children while the cameras were recording (Knoblauch, 2013). The implementation of these two-pilot sessions allowed for the completion of the video recording in a rigorous and ethical way.

Each filmed lesson followed this same basic structure: video explanation; confirmation of assent; separation into groups; and the filming of activities. At the start of the station activities, I set up a camera to record each of the two filming groups. Once I started recording, I left the cameras unmanned and roamed the class to observe. I checked on the cameras periodically and moved them between activities to follow each group. During this transition phase, I stopped recording (to ensure that I did not accidentally record any children that did not have consent) and moved the camera to each new station and set it up to record again. Eventually, I was able to complete this process relatively quickly and was able to capture activities in their entirety. Thankfully, the students became used to this transition process, so, the implementation of the video recording did not impact the integrity of the lessons.

Data Analysis

Unlike quantitative research, there are several ways of analysing qualitative data (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). For this project, I had four distinct data sets that needed to be analysed and integrated to create one cohesive set of findings. To achieve this, two distinct analytical approaches were

implemented. I utilized an inductive thematic analysis approach to analyse the map interviews, photo elicitations and observation notes and built codes and themes from a ‘bottom-up’ approach (Creswell, 2014, Pg. 186). The use of thematic analysis was beneficial because it provided an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to my qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006; Howitt & Cramer, 2011). It allowed for a theoretically sound transition from utilizing initial codes to understand the raw data, to the eventual development of themes that helped to guide the interpretation and analysis of the data in the sense making process. To analyse the video footage, a systematic observation program called Observer XT (created by Noldus Information Technology), was used to code the observed behaviours (verbal and non-verbal) into pre-defined categories (Snell, 2011). In utilizing this program, I still followed the guidelines of the thematic analysis approach to make sense of what I discovered. In this section, I outline how I analysed each set and the integrated analysis strategies that were administered to bring together the distinct data sets.

Observation field notes

As stated, I approached the analysis of the interviews and observation field notes from an inductive thematic approach. I let the categories emerge from the data and constructed key codes and concepts as I read through (Schreier, 2012). This began with an initial reading of the raw field notes. As I read, I noted down all of the interesting categories of behaviours, actions and conversations that the children engaged in. Logistically, the field notes were the easiest data set to start with, as I was able to analyse while I was still collecting data.⁶¹ At this early stage, I attempted to account for and note down everything that seemed relevant. This was time-consuming but ensured that I did not miss anything important. Once I had an extensive list of categories, I sorted through them and created a coding framework using MAXQDA qualitative software. The use of this program helped with thematic analysis and the identification of patterns between the field notes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Over the course of this analysis, I constantly reshaped and added news codes. Eventually, I conducted a secondary analysis of these field notes, which will be discussed later in this section.

⁶¹ The interviews needed to be transcribed first and the video analysis was much more time consuming.

Map interviews and photo elicitations

I utilized a similar thematic approach for the analysis of the two interview data sets. It is important to note that I analysed the interviews as two distinct data sets, beginning with the map interviews and finishing with the photo elicitations. I analysed the two sets inductively, allowing the themes to emerge from the data (Creswell, 2014). However, the analysis was also deductive, as the codes and themes that emerged from the observation notes guided how I created and framed the codes for the analysis of the interviews. Similar to the analysis of the observation notes, I began by reading through the data and noting down all the interesting actions and interactions that occurred. This was easier because I knew what types of data to omit, based on the analysis of the field notes. Next, they were sorted into categories and I created a distinct coding framework for each data set, although there was a crossover for certain codes between both the interviews and the field notes. I analysed each data set, the map interviews and the photo elicitations, separately and refined and added codes as I went. The analysis of these interviews was unique, from the observation field notes, because they both had a visual element.⁶² I constantly checked back and forth between the visual data and the interview transcripts as I analysed each data set. Similar to the observation notes, I conducted a secondary analysis that integrated all of the data together.

Video analysis

The analysis of video data provides a researcher with the resources to examine how participants are orientating to each other's conduct, and to develop some insights into the complex and organized character of the interactions that are occurring (Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2017). As mentioned, I used Observer XT to analyse the video recordings. Observer XT is a tool designed to aid in the coding, management and analysis of observational data (Snell, 2011). The Observer XT set up provided several benefits. Primarily, it allowed for the creation of multiple coding schemes for each of the distinct activities, each with discrete groups of pre-defined behavioural codes. Additionally, the use of Observer ensured that there was a high level of coding reliability and offered the ability to

⁶² I had the maps open on a separate screen while I analysed the map interviews. For the photo elicitations, I embedded the photos within the interview transcripts so that I could keep track of each photo that we discussed.

quantify the results of the coded behavioural categories (Mosselman et al. 2018). Finally, the use of Observer provided the ability to select and justify the critical nature of certain interactional episodes, which allowed for comparison with other elements of the larger data corpus (Snell, 2011).

I filmed the distinct activities of two groups in each PE class, over the course of 6 weeks. This led to a total of 107 distinct videos, or 12 hours and 21 minutes of total footage. Video data is among the most complex data in social science research (Knoblauch, Schnettler & Raab, 2009); therefore, analysing all the data would have been time-consuming. Instead, I decided to analyse a smaller representative sample of the video data. I watched all the videos and selected a sample of videos. I picked this sample of videos based on two criteria:

1. An equal number of videos for each class
2. A range of activities for each class

This led to a sample of 25 videos. This worked out to be five videos for each class. The videos for each class covered four distinct activities: Piggy in the Middle; Lever Catch; Skipping and Football kicking.⁶³

The next step was to create coding schemes. The purpose behind creating a coding scheme was to focus on identifiable bodily movements or behaviours that could be clearly identified by watching the videos of the children engaging in the PE activities. I created the coding scheme by watching the videos multiple times. While I watched the videos, I generated a list of identifiable movements and behaviours for each of the four activities. I turned these movements into the codes and grouped them into categories for each distinct activity. Ultimately, I created four distinct coding schemes, one for each activity.⁶⁴ I refined these coding schemes over multiple viewings (Snell, 2011). As I coded the movements, I added notes to each code through the XT setup. This provided the opportunity to add important context to each code, including what the students said as they performed certain movements. This was essential to ensure that all the important verbal and non-verbal observed behaviours were coded.

⁶³ Class 1/2 White did not participate in the three weeks of football lessons.

⁶⁴ This was essential because each distinct activity required distinct movements, although there were some movements that were similar between activities

Integrated analysis

These four methods were selected because of the way that they complemented each other and fit together to provide a detailed portrait of the experiences of the children. The participant observation and video recording allowed for an examination of the micro-interactions that were occurring on the playground and in PE. The child-centred participatory methods, the map drawing and photo interviews, allowed the children to add their voices to the project and provide the necessary context to what was discovered through the micro-sociological examination. Therefore, it was important to find a way to integrate all of the data sets during the data analysis phase.

To achieve this, I made the decision that the findings from the video analysis were the primary source of data. It was in these micro-interactions that I could see the children engaging in the unconscious embodied actions (Collins, 2004) that I was primarily seeking to understand. Therefore, the findings from the video analysis determined how I would interpret the rest of the data. Armed with these findings, backed by a strong theoretical underpinning, I conducted a second round of analysis for the other data sets. This second round of analysis was much more focused on finding moments that provided backing or interesting points of comparison to the findings from the video analysis. This led to the development of the core themes that will be presented in the following chapters.

Chapter Five -

‘Welcome to the school’: The structure of Castle Rock Primary

In order to understand the processes that impacted the development of the children’s physical subjectivities, it was important to gain an understanding of the field, and sub-fields that contextualized this process. I wanted to understand how the field of Castle Rock Primary (CRP) acted as an overall structure for the Interaction Rituals (IR)⁶⁵ that occurred, but also how the field structured rituals by valuing certain types of habitus. Like all schools, the field at CRP was a structured system of social relations between the educational authority (the Victorian Department of Education), the administrators, the teachers/aides, the parents, the school space (including the playground and the PE space) and the children. Entering the school, I wanted to understand how the unique mixture of these social relations worked at CRP. So, I found myself asking, “How do the objective relations that underpin CRP (particularly in PE and the playground) structure the field and the rituals that occur?” To understand how the children developed their physical subjectivities, I needed to understand the objective relations that provided structure to the rituals that occurred in the fields of PE and the playground at CRP.

Therefore, this chapter will investigate how the fields of the PE and playground are structured, within the broader CRP field, relationally, through a mixture of objective structures and the agency of the children. The examination of these two fields is intentionally addressed as the first inquiry theme to provide the necessary context for the reader. This will lay the contextual groundwork for the two spaces that are essential to understand the themes explored in subsequent chapters. Additionally, this chapter will begin to establish the connection between the playground and PE space that will be built on in later chapters. Beginning with this focus provides insight into how the relationship between the objective structures of the field and the subjective practices of the children construct the PE and playground spaces as ‘battlefields’ where participants vie to establish the types

⁶⁵ An IR consists of all types of interactions between two or more individuals; anything from a conversation during breakfast to a basketball game (Wellman et al. 2014).

of capital that are valued (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) through interaction rituals that have a meaningful impact on the development of the children's physical subjectivities. To begin, I focus on examining how the broader field of CRP is structured.

The field of Castle Rock Primary School

The school space plays a significant role in the school lives of children, particularly for primary school children who are almost entirely cut off from the outside world during the school day, by an outer boundary usually formed by a wall or fence (Armitage, 2005). These outer boundaries are then reinforced by an unspoken mantra that children must not leave the school ground unless accompanied by an adult (Thomson, 2007). Once primary school children enter the school grounds, they are contained within a regulated social world, structured by rules and regulation. At CRP, the school is surrounded by a high metal fence,⁶⁶ to heighten the sense of safety for the children. During school hours a school has a duty of care over every child (Victorian State Government, 2019). So, although a parent plays a significant role in impacting the habitus of their child before and after school, they have very little explicit involvement during school hours. Instead, the children exist as pupils (James & James, 2004) within the school.

At CRP, like other schools, adults were concerned about the potential safety issues (Little & Eager, 2010; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018) that could arise if children were able to move freely around the school. To address these safety concerns, rules were created that divided the school into segregated zones. There were spaces that were clearly signified as out of bounds for children. The division of space at CPR is best illustrated through my map of the school space (see fig. 1). Spaces such as the staffroom (located in building B), the office and the library (located in building A) were explicitly out of bounds for children, with access only granted in the presence of an adult or by adult permission. At CRP, the expectation was that the children would internalize the practical knowledge of the structured school space. As Wacquant puts it, "it matters that individuals have a practical knowledge of the world and invest this practical knowledge in their ordinary activity." (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.

⁶⁶ During the day, the school's five entrance gates were locked. Only one gate was left unlocked, which funnelled visitors through to the main office. However, this fence did not completely separate the school from the community. The unlocked gate meant anyone could enter the school, they were just expected to head straight to the office to sign in.

9). To enter the field of the school, children were expected to develop a practical knowledge and understanding of the various spaces that structure their everyday practice.

As a school space, CRP had concrete structures (buildings, rooms, playground equipment), however, as discussed, a field cannot be reduced to its built environment, institutions, or regulations (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). So, rather than the school being a monolithic space that physically divides and segregates the children, it is the agents within (the adults and the children) who 'breathe life' into the space and through an accumulation of IR's enforced the division of the school space. The school was divided by invisible barriers⁶⁷ that helped to regulate the divisions and social hierarchy of the school. The regulation of these invisible barriers was then enacted by the teachers and children as if they were natural, rather than existing in the mind of the players in the field. At CRP, the notion of space was closely linked to capital. By engaging with these invisible barriers, children were able to acquire cultural and social capital. One way that children were able to gain these forms of capital was by enforcing the division of these invisible barriers:

The argument started because the Year 1/2 group had told the Year 3/4 girls they weren't allowed on the gymnastic bars. The younger group informed me that they tell this group all the time that this area is only for the younger kids.

(Field note, playground, recess)

Alternatively, on certain occasions children were also able to acquire capital by overcoming the invisible barriers and similar to what Thomson (2008) saw, disobeying the rules of space:

Carl's ball rolled out of playground A into the playground C (see fig.1). This front section of the school is meant to be only for the Year 5/6 students. They are allowed to sit on it and talk. No other students are supposed to use it. Carl runs to get his ball. He picks it up and shouts

⁶⁷ For example, the staffroom doors were usually kept wide open, but students did not enter the room. If they needed to see a teacher, the students waited at the door and knocked. Only if they had been given express permission by an adult would they enter without waiting or knocking.

out to Jake, 'Hey, I'm in the Year 5/6 playground. We should play here.' Jake says, 'No, Carl. We will get in trouble!' Carl reluctantly comes back.

(Field note, playground, recess)

By engaging with the invisible barriers of the school space the children gave these barriers value and played a role in the (re)production of these divisions and the regulation of the school space. Ultimately, the objective relation between the agents and the physical space of the school played a significant role in structuring the field. Beyond the impact of physical structures, the relations between members of the field also played a key role.

The social hierarchy of the school

Like any field, the primary school environment is structured by the objective relations between overarching structures and the agents within. These objective relationships between the agents are structured according to a social hierarchy that is historically defined before a child starts at the school. That there is a hierarchy within primary schools make sense since as Bourdieu says, a field is defined by an unequal distribution of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Within the school, the principal was at the top of the hierarchy,⁶⁸ above all of the administrators, teachers and children. At CRP, the children saw the power of the principle as almost absolute, as illustrated through the following interaction:

Cam: So why aren't they allowed on those bars?

Condoleza: Because the principal said so. He made the rule a few weeks ago and said only years 1 and 2 can use that area of the playground?

Cam: So those girls cannot use the bars?

Condoleza: No, but they always try to. So, we have to tell them not to.

Cam: What happens if they break the rule?

⁶⁸ In the case of public schools, like Castle Rock Primary, the principle reports to the Victorian Department of Education. However, the department has virtually no day-to-day presence at the school, and therefore does not exist in the minds of the children. In this regard, the principal is given the power and autonomy from the department to run the school.

Condoleza: Then they have to go to the Principal's office. That is what he said. Then he will call their parents.

(Field note, playground, recess)

The children enforced the power of the principal by assuming that he has power over everyone in the school, including me.⁶⁹ However, as this note shows, the principal was also a connection between the parents and the school, so informing the principal meant that the misbehaving child was in trouble at school and also at home. Next, in the hierarchy were the administrators (including the vice-principal and educational co-ordinators), followed by the teachers and finally the children at the bottom.⁷⁰ Important in this was that the history of this field, particularly the emphasis on the hierarchy of power, was present at all times. So, the power differential between the adults and the children did not naturally occur, rather it was reproduced because all parties entered the field and 'play(ed) the game' (Bourdieu, 1993), thereby giving value to these relationships as an important ingredient of any IR.

As a result of this hierarchical structure, the adults within schools became the gatekeepers of much of the capital that the children could acquire.⁷¹ This included capital from academic success, by conforming to the idea of what a good student should be. Through interactions with adults, the students learned to embody a 'schooling habitus', a set of dispositions that allows them to succeed within the schooling field. The children learned a set of embodied responses to the field, such as sitting and listening quietly and putting your hand up to speak (Hunter, 2004). In this way, these acts of bodily control were the ingredients of IRs through which the children could gain cultural capital, and emotional energy, from the teachers. The children learned to embody these forms of bodily control in their 'schooling habitus' and followed the 'social rules' of the adults to gain cultural capital. Rather than the adults being the only distributors of capital the children were actually able to tap into this adult power to accrue symbolic capital. For example, the children were able to gain capital by

⁶⁹ During my time at CRP, several children told me they would tell the principal on me and get me fired, if I broke a school rule (such as not wearing a hat)

⁷⁰ At CRP, there were also adults working as teaching aides. These teaching aides were given all the same power and responsibilities as the other teachers, except that they were not assigned to one distinct class and were referred to by their first name.

⁷¹ Teachers were also able to gain capital in this process. For example, the more symbolic capital that teachers were able to hand out for academic success, the better it reflected on them. By having a successful, or well-behaved, class a teacher was able to accrue symbolic capital and then convert it into other forms.

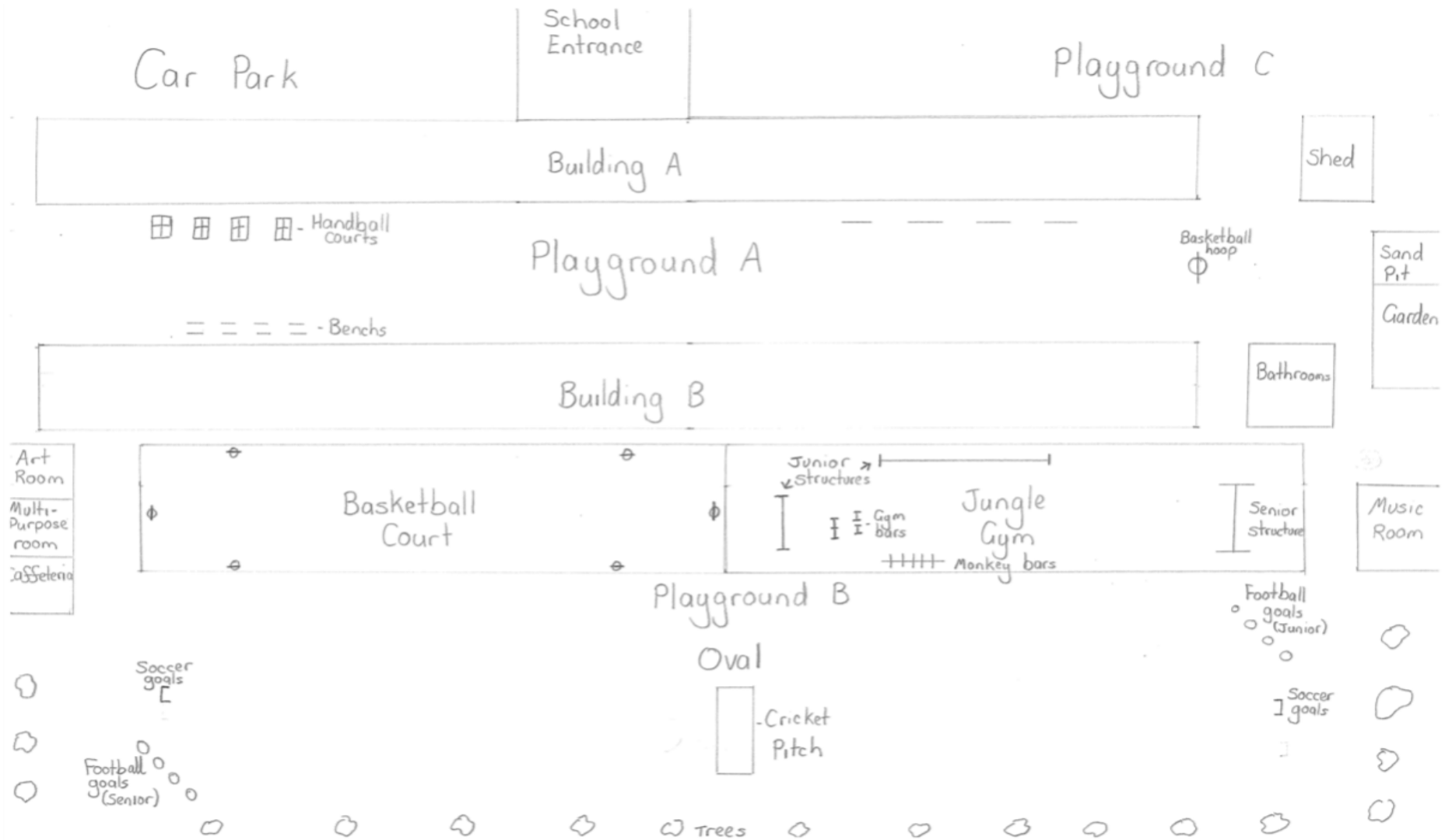


Figure 1- Map of Castle Rock Primary

acting as teachers and helping in class or by pretending to be teachers, as illustrated in the following interaction:

One group of students played ‘School’ at the front of the class. These students each took on specific roles- for example, teacher, helper and student. Each participant acted out their role based upon what they see in classrooms every day. The teacher gave instructions/orders to the students to follow and used the pointers. The helper provided help and support to the teacher, asking the teacher what the instructions should be. The students did their best to act like a perfect student- sitting up straight and listening. Additionally, the student misbehaved at times so that the teacher/helper would have to use discipline to get the student back in line.

(Field note, lunchtime, Classroom)

Also, the children were able to accrue capital by enforcing the rules established by the adults (as shown in the examples below). By engaging with each other in this way, the children were able to accrue some capital that would normally be granted to the teachers.

The children were able to acquire cultural and social capital by taking on adult roles, enforcing adult rules and consequently putting themselves in a heightened position above their peers. To acquire this capital, they had to have a schooling habitus that was fine-tuned to the structures and the hierarchies of the school, which determined the ingredients of any IR. Often this meant being more aggressive in enforcing the adult rules of the school:

The children are participating in a relay in PE. The teacher has told them that they need to run all the way to the cone and back. Monty keeps turning around just before the cone. Eventually, Jake

gets so annoyed at Monty's 'rule-breaking' that he walks over towards Jake and shoulder charges him. He tells him to 'stop cheating!'

(Field note, PE Class 1/2 Blue)

There were also numerous examples of children enforcing the rules on others, only to break them themselves:

Mae: Eric, stop cheating!!

Cam: Why is he a cheater?

Mae: Because he went early.

(I watch Mae for the next few minutes. During this period, I witness her break the same rule she was enforcing earlier, by leaving early).

Cam: Mae, I just watched you leave early. Isn't that cheating?

Mae: No.

Cam: But you called other people cheaters for doing the same thing?

Mae: Yeah, they are.

Cam: So, it is cheating when other people do it, but it isn't cheating when you do it?

Mae: No, it isn't (She says this with a smile on her face)

(Field note, PE Class 1/2 Green)

This makes sense since 'playing with the rules is part and parcel of the rule of the game' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18) and by engaging with the rules in this way these children were trying to gain cultural and social capital by breaking this rule but also by enforcing it on others. In this way, children were able to acquire social and cultural capital in these interactions directly from each other, as opposed

to only gaining capital through their interactions with the adults. Clearly, the objective relationship between the adults and the children provided structure to the field and determined the social hierarchy of power. By accepting this hierarchy and working within its boundaries, the children were able to acquire different types of social and cultural capital, sometimes by playing by the rules and sometimes by breaking them. In this way, the adults often existed as gatekeepers to capital within the broader school context, but importantly, the children learned how to ‘play the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993) from the adults. They learned from the adults, the structures of the field, the types of capital on offer and how to embody this capital in their habitus. Accordingly, empowered with this practical knowledge of the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) many of the fiercest battles for capital occurred during IRs free from the purview of the adults.

“You are cheating”: The children play the game

Due to their heightened position in the school hierarchy the teachers were often able to play a crucial role in determining the ingredients of IRs with the children, particularly for what must be done to acquire capital. Typically, this occurred in situations where the hierarchy of power was reinforced, and the teachers were clearly in charge, such as in the classroom or the main school buildings. For example, at the end of recess, the children were expected to line up in two lines (often boys’ lines and girls’ lines) and stand quietly before they could go in. Students who were especially quiet would be praised and those who were talking would be sent to the back of the line or told to compose themselves before they could enter the school. The distribution of this adult bestowed capital was based on the history of the field, in that the ability of the adults to distribute capital in this way was unquestioned because it the way that ‘things have always been done’ (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). Therefore, it appeared to occur naturally. It was up to the children to internalize this history and embody it through their ‘schooling’ habitus to acquire this adult conferred capital. As discussed, entering into and valuing this hierarchy was part of entering the field and ‘playing the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993). However, the adults were not the only distributors of capital. In

fact, within the structured structures (Bourdieu, 1977) of the school environment, the children learned that there were ample opportunities to acquire capital in IRs free from the supervision of the adults.

At CRP, there was a clear hierarchy between children themselves. This hierarchy was backed by developmental discourses (Gieshaber & Canella, 2001) to rationalize the different levels within this hierarchy. This hierarchy put the older students (Year 5/6) at the top and the younger students (Year 1/2) at the bottom. This separation went beyond simple developmental differences. The older students were higher in the hierarchy because they had typically developed a more finely tuned schooling habitus. They had spent more time at the school and therefore, had more time to internalize the dispositions necessary to acquire and accrue capital within the school environment. They understood the rules of the field and how to play them to achieve the best results. They displayed this schooling habitus at a bodily level in the way they walked (with ease where they wanted to go), talked (they were given much more leniency to talk in class) and the way they owned space (discussed later). Most importantly, they did not have to work as hard as the younger children to earn capital. The Year 1/2 children were constantly enforcing and policing the rules on the playground. In fact, on numerous occasions, they tried to police the rules on older students. In contrast, the older kids very rarely enforced the rules, only enforcing them when challenged by the younger students. These older students were secure at the top of the student hierarchy and so did not feel the need to enforce the rules and attempt to acquire capital in the same ways as the younger students. They had served their time in the same position as the younger students and were now in a position where the structure of the school benefited them. They had a more developed 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1993) as their schooling habitus had developed through years of acquiring capital and playing the game. Therefore, any IRs that they engaged in with the younger students were likely to be stratified in their favour.

This social hierarchy placed Year 1/2 children squarely at the bottom. At CRP, they did not have the same level of schooling habitus that their older peers. They did not have the same 'feel for the game'

(Bourdieu, 1993) so they could not acquire certain types of capital to the same degree as the older students. In order to develop the necessary habitus to accrue this high level of capital, they were expected to internalize the dispositions of the school and work harder to accrue the capital on offer. The hope is that this will set them up for future success at the school. Hence, there were a number of ways that the Year 1/2 children could acquire capital. As touched on, some of these forms of capital were available by conforming to the adult regulation of the school, such as following rules, embodying the dispositions of an ‘ideal’ student and adhering to the invisible barriers of the school. Additionally, the children could accrue capital by enforcing the rules and invisible barriers of the school on their peers. In these instances, children accrued this capital, based upon a well-developed school habitus, at the expense of their peers. This makes sense since Bourdieu dictates that a field is not made up of infinite amounts of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), meaning that capital is likely to be distributed unevenly. So, if within spaces where the adult-child hierarchy are reinforced, and the adults are the main distributors of capital, where are the spaces that children can compete (free from constant adult supervision) for the other forms of capital that are on offer? As discussed, within the primary school, two spaces that are structured by adults, but populated and largely socially enacted by the children, are the playground and PE space. Accordingly, at CRP, these two spaces were the sites of numerous IRs defined by conflict between the children, where those with valued habitus often acquired capital at their peers’ expense, free from the supervision of adults. Importantly, as two significant physical spaces in the lives of children, this often meant going beyond the schooling habitus and relying on habitus developed through other fields (particularly the sporting field) to acquire and accrue capital, which I will elaborate on in subsequent chapters. To examine these two physical spaces in more detail, I begin with a focus on the playground at CRP.

The Playground

The playground is significant within the school in that it is a space that affords the children a degree of autonomy (Knowles et al. 2013; Thomson, 2005), providing greater freedom for the children because they are subject to less control than in school buildings (Paechter, 2006). It is intentionally emphasized as different from the regulated classroom space.⁷² Within educational discourse, there is a significant focus on allowing children to engage in free play on the playground (Martin, 2011). Therefore, it makes sense that play is seen as important for children's social, physical and emotional development (Glenn et al. 2012; Knowles et al. 2013; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Tranter & Malone, 2004, VCAA, 2016). This positions the playground as a key learning site. This was on display at CRP, where the playground was positioned by the adults, as a space where kids should be free to be themselves, unrestricted by the structure and regulation of the classroom. However, similar to other schools, the playground at CRP was not entirely a free-space, instead, it was meant to be governed by a loose set of rules, that were actually enforced by the children.

'We might get hurt': the structure of the playground

In Australia, primary schools are given relative freedom in the construction of their playground spaces, with the main stipulation that all the playgrounds and equipment meet current Australian Safety Standards (Chancellor, 2008). This level of freedom in design, often means that many playgrounds are actually constructed by default, rather than specifically designed (Armitage, 2005). In this way, the school buildings are carefully planned, and the playground is a secondary concern (Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018). This was clear at CRP, where rather than being its own designated open space, the playground existed around the school buildings. As the school map (see fig. 1) shows, the school consisted of three distinct buildings. The playground was then comprised of three distinct sections that existed between and around

⁷² This was particularly the case at CRP. In the 1/2 classrooms the children all had assigned desks, which were arranged in row or clustered in groups. Unless they were doing group work, the children sat at their assigned desks.

the school buildings. Playground A⁷³ was situated between the two main school buildings, while playground B, the larger playground area, was south of the main school buildings.⁷⁴ Playground C was located at the front of the school.⁷⁵ CRP's playground was similar to other traditional playgrounds in that most of the space was devoted to sports fields and space for organized games (Thomson, 2005). Playground A consisted of a sandpit, multiple down ball courts, a mini basketball hoop and hopscotch positions (see fig. 1). Playground B consisted of an oval (which had two soccer goals, a cricket pitch and two football posts), a jungle gym area (with multiple play structures) and a basketball court (see fig. 1). The construction of the playground in this way emphasized play through sport and organized games. This led to an emphasis on performing and using the body in specific ways, which will be touched on in subsequent chapters.

Similar to the findings of Thomson (2005), the CRP playground was bounded by a framework of rules and regulations to divide the playground space. As discussed, these rules and regulations were justified based on concerns over the children's safety (Chancellor, 2013; James et al. 1998; Knowles et al. 2013; Little & Eager, 2010; Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018; Thomson, 2005, 2007). Similar to other schools, at CRP, the playground was supposed to be segmented and delimited to prevent problems (Thomson, 2005), based on 'ideologies of care and protection' (James et al. 1998, p. 5). At CRP, there were a loose set of rules that were meant to separate children, to prevent safety issues, but they were rarely enforced on the playground.⁷⁶ The teachers did not spend their time on the playground actively enforcing this separation on the playground, but rather, dealt with general behavioural issues as they arose, which I elaborate on in the next section. Instead, it was the children themselves who maintained and enforced the separation of the playground in a number of ways.

⁷³ The playground area was quite large. So, I make the designation between Playground A and Playground B to allow the reader to follow.

⁷⁴ The third building (consisting of the multi-purpose room, the art room and the canteen) was located near the oval.

⁷⁵ Even though Playground C was at the front of the school, it was still bordered by the school fence, thereby separating it from the street.

⁷⁶ In my time at the school, I never witnessed a teacher enforcing these rules. On a number of occasions, children complained to a teacher about someone else playing in 'their' area, but the teachers chose to enforce or ignore these requests on a case-by-case basis.

The first level of separation, enforced by the children, was enacted along grade lines. This rule that the children enforced, designated who they were allowed to play with. It reinforced the separation of the students into their composite grades and limited the ability of children to play with anyone outside of their group.⁷⁷ However, since there was no strict enforcement by the teachers, the children interpreted this rule in a number of different ways, as shown in the following interview excerpts:

Cam: So, but Grade 2s can't play with Grade 4s?

Evan: Yes, they can.

Dimitri: Because only... one/twos are allowed to play with one/twos, three/fours are allowed to play with three/fours, five/sixes are allowed to five/sixes.

Cam: OK. So why do you think there is that rule? Is that a school rule?

Evan: Because the bigger children might like hurt the little children.

(Dimitri/Evan, playground map interview)

Cam: Oscar, why don't you play with any of the older kids?

Jimmy: Because we're not allowed to.

Cam: OK, so it's a school rule?

Jimmy: Yeah, it's a school rule. But if they know you and you are their friend, you're allowed to play with them. But if you're playing with them and they're being mean to you, you're not allowed to play with them.

Cam: OK, so that's how the rule works?

Jimmy: Yeah, so you can still play with them, but if they're been mean to you, you can't.

(Jimmy, playground map interview)

⁷⁷ I never explicitly heard this rule from an adult, but the children mentioned the rule on numerous occasions.

Cam: So, you're allowed to play with kids who are only one grade older than you

Willy: Yes.

(Willy, playground interview- see fig. 16)

These interviews show that how the children interpreted this rule involved subjective variations. Evan and Dimitri interpreted it is a strict rule that you could only play with students in your own composite grade. While, Jimmy and Willy showed that they thought that there were exceptions to this rule, in that under certain conditions they were allowed to play with older students. In his response, Evan touched on the justification for this separation: safety. The creation of a rule like this is meant to ensure that the bigger, stronger students do not play with and hurt the younger students, but this rule was not explicitly enforced by the teachers. Instead, it was the children themselves who enforced the separation of the grades on the playground.

The playground was also separated into graded zones according to who was supposed to use what area. Once again, even though there may have been a suggested division of the playground, from the school, this was never explicitly or consistently enforced by the teachers on playground duty. So, it became the children that enforced the division of the playground. For example, the two sets of football goals were divided up according to grade level and seniority, as Tim talked about:

Cam: OK, so do you ever play... you play football down at these goals: do you ever play at the other set of goals?

Tim: No.

Cam: How come? Who plays at the other set of goals?

Tim: Five/sixes and three/fours.

(Tim, playground map interview)

So, the two sets of football goals were divided up according to who was supposed to use which set. There were no differences between the two goals, except that the younger kids knew they couldn't use them because the older children owned this space. There were similar practices in other areas, such as the basketball court, as Dimitri highlights:

Dimitri: Yeah, so I only like... because all the five/sixes they use all the hoops, and then there's only the netball hoops.

Cam: And you can't play on those ones? (see fig.1- the side hoops)

Dimitri: Yeah.

(Evan/Dimitri, playground map interview)

Even though the basketball court was a big space, with multiple hoops, the Year 5/6s took up the whole space, meaning the that younger students, such as Dimitri, learned through IRs that these spaces were not for them.⁷⁸ The owning of these spaces helped to perpetuate the idea that the playground was a divided space, as the following interview shows:

Cam: So, are there any areas of the playground that you're not allowed to use, that you're not allowed to go in?

Evan: Yeah, five/six and three/four playground, it's the green equipment.

Cam: So why do you think you're not allowed to use those areas?

Evan: Isn't it red?

Dimitri: No, it's green. Red and green. Because that's bigger. And the little kids might fall.

(Evan/Dimitri playground map interview see fig. 26)

⁷⁸ During my time at the school, the Year 5/6s went away on camp for a week. On these days the younger children quickly took over the basketball court and used it freely

Even though the playground separation was suggested by the teachers, it was the children themselves who enforced any division that occurred. Importantly, this didn't mean that children could not go anywhere they wanted on the playground, it just meant that the children enforced these rules when they wanted to own or dominate a space. So, even though there were suggestions about how the space should be governed the teachers largely left the children to play wherever they wanted, which meant that it was the children themselves who enforced the divisions that did occur. The role of the teachers on the playground then meant that the separations that occurred became normalized.

'We hardly see them': the role of the teacher on the playground

The playground is generally perceived as a child-centred space (Thomson, 2005), where the children will learn from each other by engaging in free-play together (Chancellor, 2008, 2013; Martin, 2011; Thomson, 2005, 2007). In fact, according to Chancellor (2013), the majority of teachers describe the playground as a key learning space of physical and social skills. This emphasis on the playground was echoed at CRP, where many of the teachers perceived the playground as a key space for children to learn how to play, work together, interact, and develop physically.⁷⁹ However, at CRP there were few efforts to ensure this happened, instead, the logic was that these lessons would be learned naturally by the children spending time in these spaces. Although a few teachers echoed the calls, outlined by Armitage (2005) to intervene and ensure that children were learning on the playground in the right way, these types of interventions were rarely made. This makes sense because teachers are taught to think that intervention into children's play is wrong (Martin, 2011). This was similar to Chancellor (2008), who found that many schools focus on the classroom learning of students and neglect the learning on the playground. So, at CRP, children were expected to learn many of the important physical and social lessons simply by spending time on the playground. The teacher perceived that their interventions into play would negatively impact the natural development of these skills.

⁷⁹ These sentiments came out during informal conversations in the staffroom.

Accordingly, the main role of the teachers on the playground at CRP was focused primarily on monitoring behavioural and safety concerns (Thomson, 2007) Hence, the role of the teachers/aides/administrators on the playground became that of a safety monitor, mainly there to react to any potential safety or behavioural problems. This is illustrated in the following example:

At one point, Dimitri was lying down on the ground and Jay sat on him. Dimitri got annoyed and tells Jay to, 'get the hell off me.' Johnny reacts in shock and exclaims, "You said the H-E-L-L word. I am going to go and tell on you. 'Johnny runs off and tells on the boys because they had said 'hell' and 'sex'. The teacher comes back and tells the boys not to say inappropriate words. The teacher tells the boys to pick up 20 papers each because of the bad words they said. She never checks back in on whether they did or not (they did not)

(Field note, playground, lunch)

At CRP, approximately three adults were on duty at any given time on the playground, one assigned to playground A and two to playground B. The teachers circulated their designated area, interacting mainly with the children they knew, and only reacting if problems occurred. Consequently, although there was an adult presence on the playground, the children were mainly left to their own devices, with the school and playground rules meant to govern their behaviour. Therefore, in the IRs that occurred the children themselves largely determined the ingredients that defined the interactions, albeit influenced by the broader structures of the school. This led to the playground becoming a highly contested space.

'We want to play there!': The children on the playground

As I have shown, the discourse underpinning the playground at CRP was for the children to develop through free play. They tried to provide the students with the essential sense of freedom by taking on the role of a safety monitor and only reacting when necessary. As a result, the playground

became a highly hierarchical space that was constantly contested between the Year 1/2 children (Karsten, 2003). Of particular concern was that these contests led some groups of children to dominate certain spaces, which pushed their peers to the margins and led them to feel excluded (Ndhlovu & Varea, 2018). Importantly, these moments happened largely free from the purview of the adults, meaning they typically went unnoticed. Although the teachers focused on the positive aspects of playground learning, they were often unaware of some of the negative dispositions that the children were embodying, particularly in the way that certain children used their advanced physical subjectivities to dominate and exclude.

The combination of these factors (the hierarchy between the children; the reluctance of the teachers to intervene into play behaviours; and the enforcement of separation) placed a distinct emphasis on space on the playground. This was particularly true for the Year 1/2 children, who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy.⁸⁰ This meant that space became a key form of cultural capital. Children could accrue this capital by owning, protecting and governing space. If you owned a space, you could play what you wanted and determine the ingredients for any IR that occurred in the space. This led to numerous conflicts over space, as shown in the following example:

The boys eventually decide they want to use the monkey bars and so they invaded the girls' space. The girls try to tell the boys that they are using it, but the boys wouldn't move. Kitty even alluded to the fact that the boys have invaded their space on a number of occasions (not highlighting whether it was these boys or boys in general). Even with my prompts, the boys wouldn't give up space to the girls. Eventually, the girls gave up and ceded their 'ownership' of the monkey bars.

(Field note, playground, recess)

⁸⁰ Importantly, this did not mean that the Year 1/2 children tried to own spaces, such as the oval, over the older students. If they did, the older students enforced the 'separation rules' and sent them away. As they were at the bottom of the playground hierarchy, it meant that certain students tried to own and dominate the 'Year 1/2 spaces'

This did not mean that just anyone could take any space, in fact as I will show in subsequent chapters, in order to ‘own’ certain spaces you had to possess a particular habitus and be able to engage in certain embodied actions. If you didn’t, you were often left to play in whatever spaces were left over.

Ultimately, this meant that many of the children who had positive experiences on the playground had these experiences at the expense of others. Typically, it was those who excelled at certain embodied actions in PE that were able to translate these ways of being onto the playground to own and govern certain spaces. In this way, many of the outcomes of ‘battles’ for space on the playground actually were already predetermined before the children entered the playground, and often the areas that the children valued were a result of IRs that occurred during PE. For example, Carl and Aaron, who both had previous experience with sport and therefore typically experienced successful rituals in PE, valued ⁸¹ the oval (see fig. 2), and the basketball court (see fig. 3), respectively. Meanwhile, Tessa, who had less experience and typically engaged in failed rituals in PE, valued the non-sporting spaces of the garden⁸² and the area with trees (see fig. 4). To continue to connect this thread between the two spaces, I will now examine the CRP PE space.

⁸¹ Literature on map drawing shows that it is a tangible form of meaning making and allows children to express what means the most to them (Clark, 2001). In this way, the children used scale to highlight which areas of the playground held the most significance for them. In all three of these maps, the children have drawn the mentioned spaces much larger than the others.

⁸² The garden was off limits to all children during recess and lunch. However, one of the teachers ran a gardening club once a week. Tessa was a member of this club, so she got to spend time in the garden during lunch on Tuesdays.



Figure 4 - Tessa's map (emphasizing the garden & trees)

The PE class

According to Hunter (2004), the field of PE is 'a structured system of social relations between the educational authority, PE teacher educators, PE curriculum writers, health and sport professionals who have influence over curriculum and practices, individual school administrators, PE teachers and PE students' (p. 176). Similarly, the PE space at CRP was structured by a set of objective relations between these parties. It was the history embodied in these social relations that defined many of the structures that structured CRP PE. Many of these objective relations had a historical basis in the field and therefore were established before the children began participating in PE. However, as discussed, the structures did not operate on the children in a deterministic way, instead, through their engagement in the field, the children were influenced by the structures but also has played a role in constituting the structures (Hay & lisahunter, 2006). As I will illustrate, the objective relations within the field of CRP early PE structured the space in a way that allowed the children to have a tremendous impact on each other's PE experience and the subsequent development of a physical subjectivity. As a mandatory part of the Year 1/2

curriculum, PE at CRP was impacted by structural constraints imposed by the broader school environment.

Unlike most other primary schools (Garret & Wrench, 2008; Kirk, 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Petrie & lisahunter, 2011; Telford, 2017; Whipp et al 2012), CRP was fortunate in that it had a PE specialist, Mr King, who taught all of the grades. However, similar to other schools, PE at CRP was impacted by the positioning of the subject and the space within the school environment. As Kirk (2010) points out, institutional assumptions underpinning timetable arrangement often limit the time allocation for PE, typically, due to the view of the subject as non-academic (Dinan & Thompson, 2013; Morgan & Hansen, 2008). This was true at CRP, where only one hour of PE was allocated in the time table for each Year 1/2 class each week.⁸³ So, the PE teacher only had one hour with each class to cover all of the content. Factoring in the movement to and from the class⁸⁴ and equipment set-up, the teacher did not actually have much lesson time with each class. These factors were exacerbated by the lack of a specific PE space. Instead, Mr. King had to use the playground, or on certain days a community basketball centre across the street. The lack of a designated PE space meant that the teacher had to carry the equipment with him to the class and spend time setting it up and packing it away in each class.⁸⁵ This clearly had an impact on the amount of delivery time with each group. Similar to other PE settings, these constraints impacted the type of curriculum and pedagogy that was administered.

‘All we do is rotate’: CRP Early PE curriculum

As discussed, a number of researchers have highlighted the close link between PE and sport (Green, 2008; Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2011; Walseth, Aartun, & Engelsrud, 2015, Wright, Macdonald, & Burrows, 2004). In fact, as Lawson (1998) argued ‘physical education’ and ‘sport’ have become synonymous, in the minds of the public and PE teachers. As such, the interests of sport pervade and

⁸³ Class 1/2 C and Class 1/2 E actually had less than one hour. Their PE class occurred right before lunch, and so the PE teacher had to take the students back to class 10 minutes early, so they could eat lunch. As a result, their PE classes were only 50 minutes.

⁸⁴ PE was designated as a free lesson for each groups’ classroom teacher. The PE teacher had to go to the class and collect the class to take them to PE. This cut into PE time, especially for class 1/2 E as they walked across the street to the community centre.

⁸⁵ He could not leave the equipment set up on the basketball court because students used it during recess and lunch.

dominate the discourse of PE in PETE and schools in many countries (Evans et al. 2004). As I have argued, this is particularly true in Australia where sport holds a position of cultural significance (Cashman, 2010; Stewart, Nicholson, Smith & Westerbook, 2004; Zakus, Skinner & Edwards, 2009). This emphasis on sport was on display at CRP, through events such as the swimming and athletics carnivals, sports day, inter-school sports for Year 5/6, and the general enthusiasm for the Australian Football League (that was shared by teachers and students). This association between sport and PE is reflected in the pervasiveness of sport, particularly team sports, in PE curriculum (McCaughy & Tischler, 2010). As a result, PE curriculum often involves a 'one-size fits all' traditional sport-based approach (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014). This approach was similarly adopted at CRP, where the emphasis placed on sport led to a narrow focus on sport within PE. As such, the curriculum was structured to include multi-activity introductory level units of work in a variety of sports, in relatively short and frequently changing units (Kirk, 2010). Similar to findings from other studies (Cothran, 2001; Jess, Atencio & Thorburn, 2011; Kirk, 2005, 2010), curriculum time was structured according to this multi-activity approach, as the academic year was divided up to deliver a number of team sports for years three to six PE. For Year 1/2, the curriculum delivered aligned with the national curriculum by focusing on the learning of the FMS (Pickup, 2011; Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016).

As touched on earlier, the learning of the FMS is said to play an essential role in impacting future physical activity levels (Okley & Booth, 2004; Fisher et al. 2005; Wrotniak et al. 2006; Lawrence, 2011). The mastering of these skills is thought to set the stage for the children to become proficient in the skills and movements (Ward, 2012), that are perceived as essential to participate in the sporting activities (Ward & Griggs, 2018), that are often a primary focus in the later years of PE. Unsurprisingly at CRP, similar to other studies (Flintoff et al 2011; Jones & Green, 2017; Ward & Griggs, 2018), there was a focus on a narrow set of movement skills, primarily the object control skills of throwing, bouncing, catching, kicking and striking. The children learned these skills through small-sided games or individual practice. The main

body of a PE lesson consisted of a small range of activities: piggy in the middle (see fig. 5); piggy in the middle (with a bounce pass);⁸⁶ piggy in the middle (with a kick);⁸⁷ skipping (see fig. 6) and a ball and lever catch (see fig. 7). The children engaged in these activities every lesson, except for the last three weeks when they learned football skills (see fig. 8). A number of children spoke about the repetitive nature of the activities that they participated in during PE:

Cam: So, do you guys like the things that you do in PE?

Aaron: Yes.

Daniel: Yeah.

Cam: Yeah?

Daniel: Well kind of.

Cam: Yeah. What do you mean kind of?

Daniel: Because like it's not really like, probably like... well for me, I don't really kind of like it, because like all we're doing is rotating, and it's like quite boring.

Aaron: Yeah, it is quite boring.

(Aaron & Daniel, playground map interview)

Despite these comments, these students did not overtly display this same sense of displeasure when they were engaging in these activities. Instead, they were mutually focused on engaging in these activities and producing emotional energy by acquiring the capital on offer.

⁸⁶ This version of Piggy in the Middle required the children to play with a basketball and utilise a bounce pass

⁸⁷ This version involved a soccer ball and the students had to kick instead of throwing the ball.



Figure 5 - Piggy in the Middle



Figure 6 - Skipping



Figure 7 - Ball and lever catch



Figure 8 - Football skills

‘This is how kids learn’: Pedagogy at CRP

Within the class, there was a focus on learning through active play and minor games (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2016, Ward, 2012). Accordingly, activities consisted primarily of active play and small-sided cooperative games (Ward, 2012). However, influenced by changes in education, there was an emphasis on child-centred (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Kirk, 2010) and self-regulated learning (Marzano, 2009; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). The children were typically taught through a skill demonstration (Kirk, 2010) and then provided with the opportunity to learn and practice the skill at their own pace with their peers. Hence, the main section of Year 1/2 PE classes consisted of the students practising these sporting skills through self-guided practice, active play and minor games. How this pedagogical practice was implemented is illustrated through the following field note:

After the warm-up, the students were split up into four activity groups and sent each one to a station already set up in one corner of the basketball court. The activity stations were self-regulated by the students, with the teacher walking around. There were very few instructions provided for each station, but the children were able to engage in each activity, meaning they have likely done them many times. The children stay in each station for 8-10 minutes and then Mr King would blow the whistle for them to move on.

(Field note, PE Class 1/2 Gold)

These activities were set up to be child-centred and transformed Mr King’s role into that of a facilitator while the children participated. As such the children were left to learn from each other (Morgan et al. 2013), working through activities at their own pace and according to their specific ability level.

Similar to practice at many other Australian primary schools (Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011), PE at CRP was occasionally taught by EPs. Similar to Powell’s (2015) example, these instructors

were from a national sporting organization, in this case the AFL, and were relied on for their sport specific expertise (Blair & Capel, 2011).⁸⁸ These two instructors, Jenny and Susanne,⁸⁹ regularly visited the school for a three-week period, teaching football skills to the children during these PE lessons. However, as I will show later, while they may have been experts in sport, their pedagogical approach consisted largely of skill practice and class-games. In this way, they implemented a ‘one-size-fits’ all approach (Powell, 2015), that did not connect with those students with low-skill levels or that learn in diverse ways (Dyson et al. 2016). Importantly though, their pedagogical approach also emphasized child-centred (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Kirk, 2010) and self-regulated learning (Marzano, 2009; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). Similar to their typical PE lessons, the children were shown a skill demonstration and then provided the opportunity to learn from each other at their own pace. This student-centred, self-regulated pedagogical practice meant that the children were largely left to engage in activities during PE class by themselves. Consequently, the PE space becomes similar to the playground space in that many of the children’s IRs occurred free from the presence of adults. For these activities, they were left entirely to their own devices and as a result considerably impacted each other’s PE experiences.

‘It’s me vs you’: Children in PE class

In practice, this focus on a child-centred, self-regulated approach, implemented in this way, was problematic. Similar to the playground, it turned PE into an arena for continual conflicts between the children. So, rather than these activities emphasising collaboration, they turned into battles to gain capital. Since these interactions occurred within a PE field that was heavily influenced by sport, only certain types of physical capital were given value. As a result, not everyone was able to easily acquire and accrue the symbolic capital that was on offer. Instead, of existing as a space where the children could collaborate and learn together, this environment accentuated the difference in the levels of sporting experience between the children. Those children who had already engaged in sport, particularly team sports, that aligned with

⁸⁸ This engagement with sporting EPs further emphasized the importance of sport and moved the field of PE at CRP closer to the field of sport.

⁸⁹ Pseudonyms

the make-up of the PE field, and had a sporting habitus, brought higher levels of physical capital to PE class. They were then able to use this sporting habitus to help determine the ingredients of the IRS that occurred, understand which types of capital held the most value and accrue further levels of capital, often at the expense of their peers. These students experienced these interactions as successful rituals, leaving with high levels of emotional energy, sapping it from their peers, who left these failed rituals having lost EE.

The curricular and pedagogical approach in these classes had unintended consequences. The emphasis on sporting skills and the student-centred approach during activities played a significant role in stratifying the IRs that occurred in favour of those with the most developed sporting habitus. The facilitator role that the teacher took on in this type of approach meant that these students dominated activities with very little intervention. This is particularly problematic for those children who had very little experience in sport. They had to try and learn these sporting skills and accrue any capital they could while their peers committed habitualised acts of symbolic violence. The outcomes of these IRs created a hierarchy within the PE class, often along gendered lines. Rather, than being the outcome of a variety of social factors, this hierarchy was seen to occur naturally. The outcomes of these IRs also spilt over into and impacted the rituals that occurred in the playground. Over the two next two chapters, I examine two of the mechanisms that allowed those children with a sporting habitus to dominate in these rituals and directly impact the development of the other children's physical subjectivities.

Chapter Six -

‘The ball always gets thrown over my head’: Competition between the children

PE lessons at CRP consisted of the children engaging in a range of embodied physical interactions, many of which occurred below the level of consciousness. In other words, the children were not always consciously aware of the physical acts they were engaging in. In these moments (when they were collectively focused on the ‘ritual’ they were engaging in) they acted in ways that embodied their individual habitus at the level of a bodily hexis. This process was particularly important for those individuals who had already engaged in sport and therefore had learned to use their body in certain ways to acquire the capital that was valued in PE. Alternatively, there were children who were engaging in sport and structured physical activity for the first time and had very little understanding of the types of physicalities that were valued in PE and how to acquire capital. The embodied interactions of those children that already had a ‘sporting habitus’ often meant they engaged in PE in ways that adversely affected the learning and experiences of their peers. So, rather than existing as a space for everyone to learn, early PE classes tended to reproduce already existing hierarchies. Sometimes, these embodied interactions were affected by rituals that occurred on the playground and sometimes the rituals on the playground were continuations of embodied interactions that had already occurred in PE. The outcomes of these rituals had significant effects on the way that the children developed their physical subjectivities. Ultimately, these moments of significance tended to reproduce pre-existing levels of physical differentiation, which came to be seen as natural, rather than socially produced. The outcome being that PE and the playground space reproduced, rather than challenged, already established physical ways of being.

The analysis of these embodied physical interactions presented a challenge because they can be hard to spot with the naked eye. The process of video analysis allowed for a more focused, nuanced

interpretation of the micro-moments during which these embodied interactions occur. The use of this analysis revealed a number of significant moments of embodied interaction that were missed by those in class. This analysis revealed two key themes: competition and skill mastery. These two themes showed a number of ways in which the children were impacting each other's experiences in PE - which then spilt over on to the playground. The first theme, competition involved the constant comparison of performance between the children. This competition was introduced and constantly reinforced by the children themselves. The second theme, skill mastery, involved the children engaging in acts that displayed their advanced understanding of how to perform certain skills. The performance of these skills required strength and a level of expertise that was beyond the expected capabilities of children of this age. These two significant types of embodied interactions had a substantial impact on the experiences of the children in PE (which was closely connected to playground experiences) and had a cumulative effect on the development of their physical subjectivities. I examine these two themes in more detail in this and the next chapter.

To give the reader the best possible insight into the embodied interactions that are occurring, I draw on the situation as the scene of social action (Collins, 2004). Therefore, within the following chapters, I position the situation as the continual starting point for the presentation of my findings. Through these micro-moments, I reveal the embodied physical interactions that were occurring during ritual activities between children in PE.⁹⁰ Then, I peel back the layers and attempt to add extra analytical detail by weaving in other forms of data, including observations and interview responses. Through this presentation of findings, I attempt to show how the different habitus that children bring to rituals in the fields of PE and the playground, lead to the (re)production of certain types of habitus. I begin this effort by focusing on the competition that occurred between the children in PE classes.

⁹⁰ I cannot include the video data within this text. To overcome this, I try to provide the video data as close to actuality as possible, by including screenshots of the videos and providing details of the embodied interactions.

Competition

Competition is a significant element of the dominant, traditional model of PE (Kirk, 2010; Paechter, 2003). Logically, as discussed, this is due to the dominance of competitive sport within popular culture (Paechter, 2003), particularly within Australia (Zakus, Skinner & Edwards, 2009). As Kirk (2010) stated, in sporting activities, the competitive contest is a central, defining feature. The focus on competition is one of the key elements that underpins sport. Efforts to symbolically differentiate PE from sport mean that official PE curriculum do not typically emphasize competition (Paechter, 2003). For example, the national curriculum for HPE does not emphasize competition, instead prioritizing communication, problem-solving and cooperation (VCAA, 2016). At CRP, competition was not explicitly emphasized by Mr King during PE class. He did not explicitly encourage competition between the children, nor did he encourage competition as a motivating factor for the children to engage in activities, as shown in the following field note:

Each class always started with a warm-up relay. Mr King set up five cones and divided the children into five groups. He briefly explained the parameters of the relay and then let the children go. The relay was student centred in this way. The relays typically went on while Mr King set up the activity stations. Mr King ended the relay by blowing his whistle and calling all the children into the middle. He never announced a winner of the relay, instead, moving on to the next activity.

(Field note, PE, Class 1/2 Red)

As this shows, the children were never explicitly encouraged to compete as a group, nor were they acknowledged for beating another group.⁹¹ However, the unconscious focus on competitive team sport through the curriculum implemented meant that there was a strong emphasis on competition between the children. That this competition still crept into class make sense. As discussed earlier, the lines between PE and sport have become blurred, so when left to their own devices, as part of the child-centred pedagogy, the children, particularly those children with well-developed ‘sporting habitus’ embodied this competition during activities.

This focus on competition was embodied in the form of individual competition between the children. The children that had already developed a ‘sporting habitus’, through sporting experience (either through junior sport or on the playground) wanted to show what they had learned, while the other children wanted to learn and show that they could live up to this standard. This embodiment of competition was present across all activities. Even activities that should involve a sense of co-operation, such as piggy in the middle, became about competition between the individual children. As a result, engaging in this competition and achieving victory over an opponent (Paechter, 2003) become a key form of symbolic capital in PE. As I hope to show, engaging in this competition provided capital to anyone (and in fact was a key parameter of the group assembly), but only those with a sporting habitus, and the accompanying high levels of physical capital, could acquire and accrue high levels of this symbolic capital, often at the expense of their peers. As a result, these children experienced these rituals as successful rituals, leaving with high EE and feelings of confidence, initiative, enthusiasm and pride (Collins, 2004). While for the other children, the actions of these students meant that they experienced these rituals as failures, leaving with low EE and feeling of fatigue, lack of interest and a lack of willingness to take action (Summers-Effler, 2004a). Due to the constant nature of this competition, each activity consisted of a number of micro-moments of competition. Over the remainder of this chapter, I present a number of examples of

⁹¹ This was not the case for the football lessons which were run by two representatives from the AFL. They played a number of games with the children that emphasized both individual and team competition. However, this unit only consisted of 3 lessons for each class.

these micro-moments of competition. Utilizing the other data sets, I attempt to explain the contextual factors that preceded and resulted from these moments, particularly how these moments affected ritual choice on the playground. I begin with a moment of competition between four members of 1/2 Red.

‘You can’t leave the game space’: Everyone for themselves.

The following micro-moment of competition occurred during a game of piggy in the middle in a PE class for 1/2 Red. The four participants in this activity were Willy, Sissy, Bart and Thompson. This micro-moment occurred midway through this activity (for a complete collection of pictures see appendix D):

Bart leaves the game space to go and get the ball. Thompson is watching him do this, with an eye on the ball. He is the piggy and is standing in the middle of the game space. Willy has already enforced the game-space rule⁹² on Thompson multiple times in the last two minutes. Although his head down and he is trying to show his displeasure at being piggy this long, he is bouncing on his toes. Bart chooses to kick the ball, instead of throwing it. He kicks it hard towards to Sissy’s feet and she misses it. It rolls past her into the corner. Thompson is watching this and starts moving as soon as Bart kicked the ball. Sissy does not react as quickly, although she is still in front of Thompson. Thompson lumbers across the court. Sissy and Thompson enter contested space.⁹³ Thompson gets in front of Sissy and uses his body to block Sissy from getting the ball (see fig. 9). Sissy becomes aware that continuing to run will put her on a direct collisions course with Thompson, an outcome that would likely see the bigger Thompson knock her over. Sissy stops and jumps up and down on the spot, avoiding the confrontation (see fig. 10). As Thompson comes back up with the ball, she bounces back to her space. Thompson’s victory is short-lived.

⁹² This rule dictates that the Piggy is only allowed to intercept the ball if it is between the cones. The piggy is not allowed to leave the game space to get the ball.

⁹³ This space is contested because neither Thompson nor Sissy have the ball, so possession is up for grabs.

Willy immediately walks over to him, pointing at him shouting, 'No!!' (see fig. 11) Thompson has broken the rules by going outside of the space. Willy grabs the ball out of Thompson's hands and points back to the middle. Sissy (who is back at her spot on the cone) chimes in and says, 'no one is allowed to go past the white line.' Thompson walks back to the middle with his head down.



Figure 9 - Thompson gets in front of Sissy to get the ball



Figure 10 - Sissy stops and jumps in the air (as a defensive strategy)



Figure 11 - Willy enforces the rules on Thompson

This moment occurred during a game of Piggy in the middle and unfolds over the course of seven seconds. Leading up to this there had been some smaller moments of competition, but the game had been largely dominated by Bart, Thompson and Willy. Sissy had been actively involved, competing to get the ball on a number of occasions, but not as involved as the boys. At this point, Thompson had been Piggy for a while and spent the preceding minute trying to show that he was not happy about being stuck in the middle. His shoulders were slumped, his head was down, and he walked in circles and kicked the ground. Despite his posture, he was still highly engaged, as in the seconds before this moment unfolds, he leapt out of the square and grabbed the ball, only to have the game-space rule aggressively enforced on him by Willy. Although this moment was brief, it still had a significant impact on each of the children, particularly affecting the habitus that they brought to this IR.

Each of the children brought an individual habitus to this game that embodied different levels of sporting experience. These different levels of sporting experience were particularly important for piggy in the middle, because it relied on sporting skills such as throwing, catching, movement without the ball and

movement in space. Out of the four players, Willy had the highest level of sporting experience, because he participated in a number of junior sports including soccer, Auskick and Milo cricket. He also regularly played sport, with a group of boys from 1/2 Red (including Bart and Thompson), on the playground and outside of school with family (see fig. 12). Bart also had extensive sporting experience, playing on a local soccer team and spending all of his time on the playground engaging in sport (see fig. 15). Unlike Bart and Willy, Thompson did not engage in junior sport. Instead, he stayed active outside of school by riding his scooter (see fig. 13) and playing at the park (see fig. 14). However, at school he played sports with his friends every day, as he talked about:

Cam: So, on the playground, you'd rather be doing active things like soccer and other sports?

Thompson: Yeah! I also like running, because you check, check (he pretends to run very fast, pumping his arms)

(Thompson, playground map interview)

Sissy did not have the same level of sporting experiences as the boys. She had not participated in any sports outside of school and did not engage in any sport on the playground. For Sissy, PE was her first exposure to sport and structured physical activity. This mixture of sporting experience set the stage for the IR that occurred.



Figure 12 - Willy plays cricket on the street



Figure 13 - Thompson rides his scooter on the street

As this ritual occurred within the field of CRP PE it was affected by two significant factors: an implicit focus on sport and the child-centred approach. This micro-moment had all the ingredients of an IR. The activity had a strong sense of bodily co-presence between the four participants, as their close proximity meant they were affecting each other with their bodily presence. There was a very clear barrier

to outsiders. The four participants were assigned to this group, so had to stay together for the entirety of the PE lesson. Within this micro-moment, there was a mutual focus of attention on competition. This focus on competition was clear through the actions of the children. Willy, particularly, had been emphasizing this competition from the start in his enforcing of the rules of the game, which the other children picked up on. Bart wanted to beat Thompson by kicking the ball straight past him to Sissy. Sissy and Thompson both unconsciously engaged in their battle for the ball without thinking about how the rules of the game constrained the outcome. The major rule that the children played by was that if the ball was intercepted the passer goes in the middle. Hence, since Bart threw the ball to Sissy, if Thompson won, Bart would end up as the Piggy. For Thompson, he was not supposed to leave the game space, so he would not benefit from getting the ball in this contest. Regardless, their mutual focus on competition drove them to compete outside the space. Willy followed this contest by entering into his own and used the rules, as the primary enforcer, to beat Thompson. Despite the differing moods of the players, they were all motivated to seek the emotional energy that would come from accruing symbolic capital through competition. This drive for emotional energy created a collective consciousness between the members of the group, in that there was a collective acceptance of the rules of the game and that engaging in competition was the purpose of this ritual.



Figure 14 - Thompson plays at the park



Figure 15 - Bart's map of the playground

With all of the necessary ingredients present, a sense of collective effervescence was achieved. There were four main outcomes of this ritual. There was a sense of group solidarity in that all of the participants played a role in this ritual. However, this group solidarity did not solidify this group beyond the parameters of this enforced group formation in PE. It did (re)produce a strong sense of group solidarity between Thompson, Willy and Bart, who regularly play different sports together on the playground (see fig. 15). The competition they engaged in was similar to their playground activities, so it strengthened their feelings of membership. For Sissy, who did not regularly play with these boys, she felt like an unessential member of the group and her membership with these boys did not extend beyond this PE lesson. Instead, Sissy chose to play with friends that had similar interests to her, as she explained:

Cam: Do you or any of the girls ever play football and soccer with Willy, Bart and Thompson?

Sissy: Not much.

Cam: Why do you think that is?

Sissy: Because us girls like to do other stuff than boys.

Cam: And what do you like to do instead?

Sissy: Like being around in the playground, sandpit, stuff like that.

(Sissy, playground map interview-see fig. 19)

The ritual (re)produced a number of symbols, closely tied to the capital on offer. This micro-moment re(produced) the focus on competition that was a significant element of the field of PE. Even though each child experienced this competition in different ways, and derived different levels of emotional energy from it, their engagement in the competition meant that it continued as a significant symbol of this activity, and the broader field of PE/sport. Additionally, the ball continued to exist as a symbol, particularly for the boys, of the capital that they possessed and the emotional energy that could be derived from future rituals that involved this symbol. The ball was also imbued with the focus on competition and the rules that sporting activities must contain to allow for this competition. Engaging in this competition and the enforcing of these rules created a strong sense of morality for the members of the group. Any violation of these symbolic representations violated the solidarity of the group (Collins, 2004).

As a stratified interaction, this ritual resulted in an unequal distribution of emotional energy. As discussed, the main form of symbolic capital on offer was available by successfully engaging in competition. For Willy, this was a successful ritual. As the student with the most developed sporting habitus, he was uniquely positioned to accrue the most symbolic capital in this activity. Through his sporting experience, he had a strong understanding of how to use his body to acquire this capital. In his actions, he was able to acquire symbolic capital by enforcing the rules on Thompson. The physical capital that he brought into this ritual meant that he was uniquely positioned to govern the rules of the game. He did this in an aggressive, dominating way by committing acts of explicit violence against Thompson

when shouted and grabbed the ball. So, even though Thompson beat Sissy in their competition, Willy ultimately came out on top. He left this ritualized moment overflowing in emotional energy, with a strong sense of confidence, enthusiasm and initiative (Collins, 2004). Thompson did not have the same level of sporting experience as Willy but had still learned how to use his body to gain a competitive advantage. He used his size to cover the space to the ball quickly and put himself between Sissy and the ball to block her off. Hence, Thompson was able to accrue high levels of symbolic capital by beating Sissy to the ball, although he lost some emotional energy for violating the rules. Importantly, this did not outweigh the positive energy that he got from beating Sissy.

For Bart, although his role in this micro-moment was quite small, he was still able to accrue symbolic capital by initially beating Thompson and then staying out of the ensuing moments. He utilized his soccer experience to kick the ball straight past Thompson but kept it outside the game space. If Sissy had missed the ball and Thompson has grabbed it before he left the space, Bart would have ended up in the middle. However, since he ‘understands the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993) he was able to kick it past Thompson and know that he was protected by the game space rule. He left this moment with a feeling of confidence in his own skills. Sissy, was unable to accrue the same level of capital as the other three students, meaning she left this ritual with much lower levels of emotional energy. At the beginning of this moment, she missed the ball (because Bart kicked it instead of throwing it) and then unconsciously engaged in a competition with Thompson for the ball. During this competition, she realized that Thompson will knock her over if she continues, which would likely lead to a significant loss in EE, so she engages in defensive strategy to minimize loss (Summers-Effler, 2004a). She jumped up and down on the spot and tried to play it off like it was not a big deal. This moment was important because it showed that even though she stopped, she did not want to draw attention to it, she was unconsciously aware of the consequences of withdrawing from the competition. However, by disengaging from this ‘battle’ she did not accrue any capital from this moment of competition. If she had competed and lost, she would have

still gained capital. This is one of the key differences between the members of the group, whereas the boys (who embody their sporting experience) competed whenever they could, Sissy made a choice to withdraw rather than getting hurt. Her lack of sporting experience meant that for Sissy this is a failed ritual, and she, therefore, left with much lower levels of emotional energy, and a lack of interest for this type of ritual (Summers-Effler, 2004a)

Although this micro-moment only counted for a tiny fraction of time, it still had an impact on the habitus of each child. For Willy, he left this ritual emotionally charged and imbued with capital. On the playground, he continued to seek out similar IRs where his sporting habitus could allow him to produce high levels of emotional energy. Logically, he valued the sporting spaces on the playground (see fig. 16⁹⁴), and after this ritual, he continued to spend most of his time on the playground playing sport in these spaces. He was able to convert his symbolic capital to more physical capital, which granted him a sense of privilege on the playground, as he had the status to be able to play anywhere, he wanted, which he summarized in his assertion that he and his friends ‘play everywhere.’ He used this privilege and his level of physical capital to typically dominate the games he played in the sporting spaces:

Over the course of the recess period one boy in particular dominated. The boy’s name was Willy. Willy was easily the most skilled and competitive player. As a result, he dominated the game. While the other boys bickered over the rules and argued if one person had the ball too much, they allowed Willy to dominate. There was never any discussion about Willy getting to kick too much or that he should share the ball around.

(Field note, recess, playground).

⁹⁴ In his map, the basketball court, cricket pitch and football oval take up 2/3rds of his map. By creating his map in this way, he missed entire sections of the playground. Although, Willy wrote on his map ‘we play everywhere’ he used his privilege to play primarily in the sporting spaces.

He also continued to dominate activities in PE class:

Willy is holding the ball and trying to figure out who to pass to. He decides to kick the ball to Sissy. As soon as he kicks the ball, he realizes that it is going to go straight to Ren (who is the Piggy), so he runs in, knocks her to the ground, and grabs the ball (see fig. 17). He walks back to his spot with the ball and starts looking at who he should pass it to. No one questions him, because he is typically the most dominant player. He was also acting within the rules, as there are is no rule that stops a passer from entering the game space or catching their own ball. Ren gets back up off the ground, sheepishly, and the game continues.

(Video, Class 1/2 Red)

In both examples, he committed acts of explicit and symbolic violence, against his peers, to accrue the capital on offer. In contrast to these moments, he was able to speak reflexively about sport and the need for other students to be able to practice sporting skills to learn:

Cam: Yeah. If we had two really good cricket players and one was a boy and one was a girl, would one be better than the other?

Willy: No because if they were trained like together, they would both be really good.

Cam: OK, so if they started learning together and they both learned at the same time and practised same amount they'd both be really good?

Willy: Yeah, as long as they get the chance to practice, anyone can be good.

(Willy, photo-elicitation interview)

Despite this reflexivity, within the moment, his embodiment of the sporting habitus meant that he

negatively impacted other students' ability to learn and accrued the majority of the capital for himself, draining the emotional energy of his peers in these IRS.



Figure 16 - Willy's map of the playground



Figure 17 - Willy knocks Ren over to get the ball

Thompson left this ritual moment with EE and capital from beating Sissy. Predictably, this translated to him continuing to seek out more sporting moments at school. He spent the majority of his time on the playground playing sport:

Cam: And so, do you like to play with the boys on the playground because they play sports?

Thompson: Yeah, I play sports a lot and I like running. I'm kind of an action boy.

Cam: You're an action boy. What do you mean by an action boy? What types of things do you like to do?

Thompson: I'm very active.

(Thompson, photo-elicitation interview)

Interestingly, this did not translate to Thompson's home life where he did not play sport, instead riding his scooter, as he discussed:

Thompson: On that one, I'm scooting on my scooter. I like to scoot in my shoes because I go really fast.

Cam: How often do you ride your scooter?

Thompson: Pretty much a lot in the weekend. I ride to my school. I actually ride to the park and it's just really fun.

Cam: Why do you like it so much?

Thompson: Well because I just really like going really fast, zooming, zooming. And it really gives my... I get very energetic and it's really fun.

(Thompson, photo-elicitation interview)

So, even though he did not have the same sporting experience as the other boys, by playing with them on the playground he developed a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993). Accordingly, this also led to him committing more acts of symbolic violence against his peers during PE activities:

Thompson has the ball. He spins and does a behind the back throw to Sissy (fig. 18). It rolls along the ground and she is not able to get it. She has to run outside the space to get it. Thompson shouts at her, “Sissy!” and throw his hands up in the air. Willy gets the ball and Thompson has to be Piggy. He glares at Sissy as he walks into the middle.

(Video, PE Class 1/2 Red)

He shouted at Sissy, because even though he threw the ball incorrectly,⁹⁵ her not catching it means that he lost and had to become the piggy. In this situation, it was easy to blame Sissy because she did not have the same skills as everyone else.



Figure 18 - Thompson throws the ball behind his back to Sissy

⁹⁵ This was an example of skill mastery, because Thompson tried to jump and throw it through his legs. Thompson was trying to gain capital through this act.

Bart also left this moment with a high level of emotional energy. Similar to the other boys he sought out this emotional energy by continuing to play sport on the playground. The value that he placed on sport is clear in his playground map (see fig. 15). Although he included the monkey bars, he left out large sections of the playground to place the focus on the sporting spaces. He summarized his playground activities in his own words:

Cam: So, what type of games do you guys like to play at recess and lunch?

Bart: We like to play soccer a lot.

Cam: Just soccer?

Bart: Yeah, we like to play a lot of soccer.

(Bart, playground map interview)

Although Bart did not have the same level of sporting experience as Willy, he was still able to use his sporting habitus to accrue high levels of capital, which mean he often committed acts of explicit and symbolic violence in this pursuit.

Sissy left this ritual with the lowest levels of both capital and emotional energy. Although the symbolic acts of violence played a key role, so did her choice to withdraw from competition. Sissy's lack of sporting experience made it harder for her to produce high levels of emotional energy from these types of IRs. So, for Sissy, this was a failed ritual. Unsurprisingly, on the playground, Sissy sought out rituals that provided her emotional energy. Instead of engaging in sport, she spent time in non-sporting spaces such as the sandpit and jungle gym (see fig. 19). She sought situations where her habitus allowed her to gain capital, through games with her friends:

Sissy: We like playing as a team and we have some people and they usually play with us, but not that much. I just wanted to add the main people who I play with and yesterday we were playing in the sandpit. Last week we were playing in the big playground and then we usually run inside the basketball court. We go to the oval and run in the side, in the trees. We just play stuff we like.

(Sissy, playground map interview)

Unfortunately, Sissy then saw sport as a domain that was not meant for her. She perceived her inability to succeed as natural, rather than as a product of the different levels of experience that the boys she played with possessed. Most importantly for Sissy, she saw the division between her and the other members of the group along gendered lines:

Cam: What sort of games do you see the boys playing on the playground?

Sissy: Like football, soccer, like that.

Cam: Do any of the girls play football and soccer with them?

Sissy: Not much.

Cam: Why do you think that is?

Sissy: Because girls like to do other stuff than boys.

Cam: And what do the girls like to do instead?

Sissy: Like being around in the playground, sandpit, stuff like that.

Cam: And the boys just like to play sports?

Sissy: Yeah.

(Sissy, playground map interview)

In this excerpt, she talked about the difference in sport for boys and girls, basically, that boys like sport and girls do not.⁹⁶ By doing this, she spoke as if her inability to acquire and accrue capital in sporting situations was preordained, rather than understanding that the sporting habitus of the boys allowed them to use their body in ways that guaranteed them capital through competition. She also did not understand that the three boys accrued this capital at her expense. This gendered division that is (re)produced in these moments, is something that I will return to over the course of the next two chapters. Importantly, these types of contests were not unique to the one class. As I will show in the next ritual, sometimes the different levels of experience caused the other students to actively exclude a peer, rather than let them make mistakes.



Figure 19 - Sissy's map of the playground

⁹⁶ Sissy's map does not show this same gendered division. It shows boys and girls playing together on the basketball court. However, when Sissy is asked about sport, she unconsciously embodied what she has picked up from PE and discussed the 'natural' divide between boys and girls, in regard to sport participation. Importantly though, her map does show that the oval is the exclusive domain of the boys.

‘She always drops it and we end up in’: Kelly gets excluded

The following micro-moment of competition occurred in a game of piggy in the middle during a PE class for 1/2 Blue. There were five participants: Carl, Evan, Kelly, Mack and Dimitri. The moment unfolded four minutes and eighteen seconds into this activity (for a complete collection of pictures see appendix E):

Kelly stands up (she has been sitting on the ground). She is one of four passers on the outside, including Mack, Carl and Dimitri. Evan is the piggy. Kelly waves her arms, showing she is ready to catch (see fig. 20) Carl has the ball, he fakes throwing it to Kelly and throws it to Dimitri instead. Evan falls for Carl’s fake attempt and goes the wrong way. Kelly had braced herself to be ready to catch. She says, “No one is throwing to me. I get sad.” Dimitri catches it and throws it back to Carl. Carl is looking at Mack and Kelly, trying to figure out who to pass to. Kelly waves her arms again, to show she wants the ball. Carl fakes to Kelly again and throws it to Mack. Kelly drops her head. She walks up to me (I am standing behind the camera). The boys have continued playing without her. She says to me, “No one, wants to throw it to me.” I interject into the game and ask the boys, “Why aren’t you passing the ball to Kelly?” Carl, Dimitri, Mack and Evan all respond (see fig. 21):

Evan says, ‘but Kelly always gets out’.

Dimitri shouts, “but, Kelly always drops it when you throw it to her and we end up in”

Carl says, “Kelly always does this.”

Evan adds, “and she is slow to get the ball.”

Mack shouts, “She just always walks forward and loses the ball. She always sits down.”

I listen to these comments and respond, “she sits down because you do not give it to her.” I

suggest that they pass the ball to Kelly. Mack passes the ball to Kelly she catches it and passes it

to Carl (see fig. 22). The game continues for the next few minutes with Kelly catching and throwing in the same way as the boys.



Figure 20 - Kelly (back right) waves her arms to try and get the ball



Figure 21 - The boys argue about excluding Kelly



Figure 22 - Kelly is finally included

This moment occurred during an eight-minute game. The game started with a moment of competition between Carl and Dimitri. Carl had been trying to dribble the ball, but lost control and the ball went to Dimitri. They argued about whether Carl should be in or not until I suggested that they re-do the play. With this tone set, the emphasis on competition drove this ritual. As this moment showed, the four boys were so driven by a focus on competition that they cut Kelly out of the game rather than potentially losing to each other. Instead of giving her a chance to catch the ball, they assumed that her involvement would reflect poorly on them and impact their ability to compete. They unconsciously engaged in this competition by tacitly, rather than explicitly, excluding Kelly in a collective way. Eventually, they voiced their justification for this exclusion when questioned. This was a significant moment for all five participants.

Each child brought a different habitus to this activity based upon their differing levels of sporting experience. In this group, Carl had the highest level of sporting experience. He had been playing football regularly outside school for the last few years, as he explained:

Cam: Do you play Auskick or do you play on a team?

Carl: I play on a club team

Cam: Is it under 9s?

Carl: Yeah.

Cam: Oh, you play on that... was this your first year playing on that team?

Carl: Yeah, I played Auskick for two years and now I play on a team. We played our grand
final on the weekend

Cam: How'd you go?

Carl: Good. Yeah, we won against... we won by five points.

(Carl, playground map interview)

He exclusively played sport on the playground. During my time at the school, I saw him play football, cricket and basketball. The way he valued these sporting spaces was clear in his map (see fig. 2). Dimitri also had sporting experience outside school, engaging in Taekwondo and playing basketball at home with his brothers (see fig. 23). Through his Taekwondo participation, he had already internalized dominant ideas about competition:

Cam: But what was the competition and what did you have to do? Did you have to verse
someone, did you have to...?

Dimitri: I versed my friend and I really beat him.

Cam: Yeah.

Dimitri: Yeah, I beat him 70 points to zero.

Cam: OK, and so this is Taekwondo, isn't it?

Dimitri: Yeah.

(Dimitri, photo-elicitation interview)

He did not play sport regularly on the playground but did play Down ball⁹⁷ often, as he explains:

Cam: Yeah. OK, anything you want to add Dimitri?

Dimitri: I play Down ball a lot.

Cam: Who do you play Down ball with?

Dimitri: Mostly Francis, and Jay, and Jimmy.

(Dimitri, photo-elicitation interview)

Neither, Mack or Evan engaged in sport outside school or on the playground. Instead, Mack played with his group of friends on the oval (see fig. 24), while Evan played with his friends on the jungle gym (see fig. 25). Compared to the boys, Kelly had a much lower level of sporting experience. Although she did not engage in any extra-curricular sport, she was still quite active outside school. She regularly played at the park (see fig. 26) and rode her scooter to and from school (see fig. 27). For Kelly, PE was her first time engaging in sport. Each of the children brought their embodied experience of physical culture into this ritual.



Figure 23 - Dimitri plays basketball at home

⁹⁷ Down ball is the new name given to hand ball. It contains a bouncy ball rather than a tennis ball.

This ritual had a very clear bodily co-presence between the children. They were in a space that was clearly marked as ‘theirs’, for the purposes of this game. There was a very clear barrier to outsiders that prevented anyone from joining this group. Similar to the last group, there was a mutual focus of attention on competition. Although, in this moment, the mutual focus of attention led to four of the group members excluding Kelly. They made the tacit agreement that Kelly could not participate because she did not have the required physical capital. More importantly, her involvement was deemed to impact their ability to compete. For the boys, the ultimate form of losing in this competition was to be stuck as the Piggy, something which they believed passing to Kelly would guarantee. Therefore, the four boys made the collective decision to exclude Kelly to ensure they did not lose to each other. Early on, this was easy because Kelly started the activity by tying her shoelace. However, when she finished and stood back up the boys simply did not pass to her. After a while, she decided to sit down and watch. When she stood back up, she actively sought the ball (waving and shouting) but the boys had already made their mind up to cut her out. Sharing this same desire to engage in mutual competition, she sought my help to be able to compete. Although I tried to stay out of these games, I decided to involve myself in this case, which meant Kelly was finally able to compete in the game.

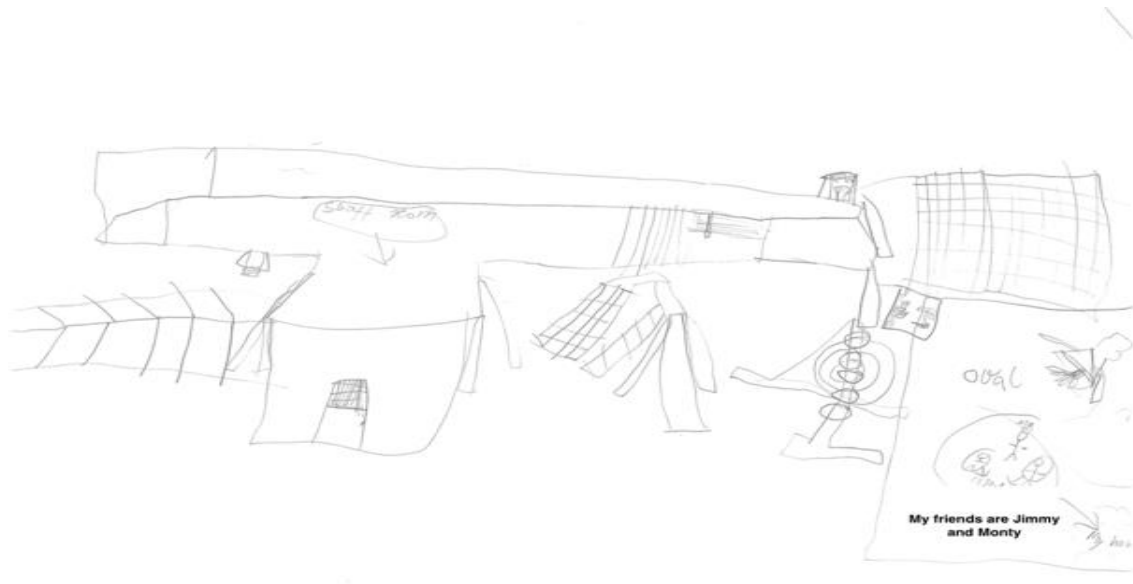


Figure 24 - Mack's playground map

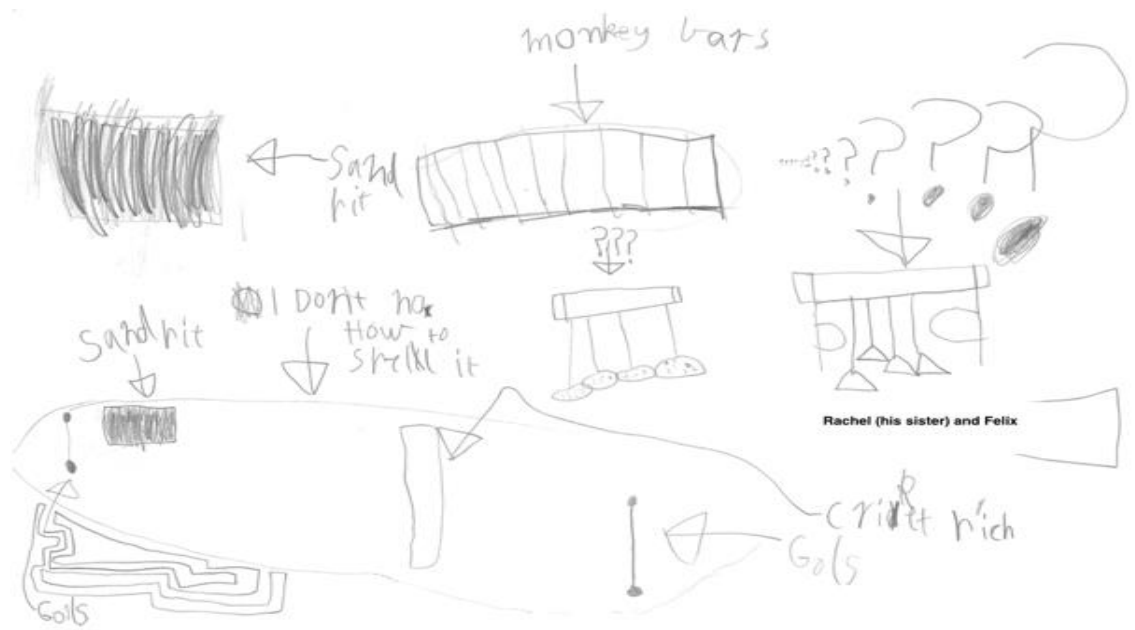


Figure 25 - Evan's playground map

Similar to the findings of Heider & Warner (2010), there was a feeling of group solidarity between the group but there were no shared identical emotions. In fact, within this moment the group solidarity came at the expense of Kelly. According to their embodied logic, Kelly had shown in past PE lessons (or on the playground) that she did not have the necessary sporting skills, not only to compete with them but to help them compete. The boys were unconsciously aware that Kelly's underdeveloped sporting habitus meant that she did not bring in the same level of physical capital as they did. So, they unified and played the game at her exclusion. This group solidarity made it hard for Kelly to join in the activity, and when I questioned this exclusion, and therefore their group solidarity, they responded as a united front to defend their solidarity against Kelly, and me as a transgressor. Each of them challenged my request for Kelly's involvement and outlined why she shouldn't play. Despite this, my adult authority meant I was able to convince them, reluctantly, to let Kelly re-join the activity. She showed over the next few minutes that she was just as capable as the rest of the group to participate in this activity. However, she was never really able to overcome the sense of group solidarity that they created without her. As a result, there were different levels of emotional energy produced.



Figure 26 - Kelly plays at the park



Figure 27 - Kelly riding her scooter before school

Clearly, the separation between Kelly and the boys meant that this was a successful ritual for them and they were able to soak up the most emotional energy by accruing the most valued capital. Within this solidified group there was still a disparity between the levels of capital that the boys were able to acquire. As the player with the most developed sporting habitus, Carl was able to accrue the most

symbolic capital. In order to accrue this capital, he committed a number of acts of symbolic violence, including being physically aggressive, faking throws, and aggressively governing the game:

Evan is holding the ball and trying to figure out who to pass to. Carl shouts out to him, “hurry up and pass the ball!” Evan still hesitates, because Dimitri is moving around, ready to intercept, as piggy. Carl shouts out again, “Just throw it already!” Evan throws it quickly and Dimitri catches it. Evan has to go into the middle.

(Video, PE Class 1/2 B)

Next is Dimitri, who was able to acquire capital because of his experience competing in Taekwondo. Similar to Carl, he knew how to use his body to acquire the capital on offer and valued competition. As the individual with the second-highest level of sporting capital, he battled with Carl on several occasions for symbolic capital, and the ability to govern the group, as shown in the following moment:

Dimitri is holding the ball. He is trying to figure out who to pass to. Carl shouts out at him, “Hurry up!” Dimitri turns around and says back, “Stop screaming at me.” Carl responds back by shouting at him twice more. Dimitri reluctantly gives in and throws the ball quickly to Carl

(Video, PE class 1/2 Blue)

Carl tried to enforce his will on Dimitri and Dimitri argued back. Ultimately, Carl won this battle by repeatedly screaming. He sapped Dimitri of emotional energy and maintained his position as the recognized governor of the group. Despite this, Dimitri was still able to accrue high levels of capital by engaging in competition, meaning he left the group overflowing with emotional energy (Collins, 2004).

Mack and Evan had much lower levels of sporting experience and therefore were not able to accrue the same level of capital as the others. However, by following the lead of Carl, and Dimitri, they were able to accrue capital by engaging in the competition of the game. Additionally, by tacitly agreeing not to pass to Kelly they were also able to accrue symbolic capital, meaning they left this moment with emotional energy and feelings of pride and confidence (Collins, 2004). Conversely, Kelly was not able to accrue much symbolic capital from this moment. She came in with the lowest level of sporting experience, and therefore, the lowest level of physical capital. As shown, Kelly was active outside of school, but not in ways that were valued within PE or on the playground. As a result, the boys were unconsciously aware of her lack of physical capital. So, they cut her out and committed acts of symbolic violence against her by ignoring her and faking throws to her, further highlighting her exclusion. She was able to gain some capital by showing her ability to participate and compete at the same level as the boys but was only able to participate for the final minute. Importantly, although she was able to re-join the group some of the boys continued to commit acts of symbolic violence against her, particularly Carl:

Kelly misses the ball and has to run away to get it. Carl shouts out to her, “Doodlehead, get the ball, Doodlehead!” Dimitri starts laughing and turns to me (I had come back from watching another group) and says, “Cameron, Carl is calling Kelly, Doodlehead!” He continues to laugh. I tell Carl to stop saying that. Kelly walks back slowly with the ball, with her head down. She throws the ball to Mack.

(Video, PE class, 1/2 Blue)

Even though Kelly was participating, she was still treated poorly. As a result, the capital that Kelly had accrued for this moment was not enough to help her later on, or really change how the boys perceived her.

Ultimately, this was a failed ritual for her and she left this group with very little emotional energy, and feelings of depression and shame (Collins, 2004).

The outcomes of this IR had an impact on each child. For Carl, this was another sporting activity where his sporting habitus allowed him to accrue more capital, meaning he left this moment charged with emotional energy. This meant that when he was on the playground and had autonomy over what he played, he sought similar rituals. Additionally, he was able to convert the symbolic capital he had acquired into more physical capital. On the playground, he dominated several sporting spaces, including the basketball court and the lower football goals, governing the rules and space. On several occasions, this meant committing acts of explicit and symbolic violence against those who tried to use one of these spaces or join in on one of his games:

At the beginning of recess, the lower football goals were not being used. So, Danai and Uma decided to kick a football back and forth. They each had several turns kicking at the goals. Eventually, a couple of boys joined the game and began to get aggressive with the two girls. Uma came up to me and complained that Carl had pushed her out of the way, on to the ground, when she was going for the ball. This affected the girls' interest in playing and eventually, the two girls stopped and ceded the space to Carl and the other boys.

(Field note, playground, recess)

As this field note shows, his sporting habitus allowed him to dominate spaces and send away anyone he believed didn't belong in that space, keeping the spaces exclusively for those who knew how to use them properly, typically the boys.

Dimitri also left this moment imbued with capital and emotional energy. He continued to dominate PE activities (unless someone possessed more physical capital than he did) and committed acts

of symbolic violence against his peers. For example, in the previously mentioned video moment, although Carl is the one who calls Kelly a ‘doodle head’, Dimitri reinforces the act by laughing and trying to point it out to me. Moments such as these also drove Dimitri in his desire to gain emotional energy from competition, as he explained:

Cam: Yeah, but were you still happy with getting a silver medal?

Dimitri: No. Because my brother went, I don’t like your medal because your medal has to be really gold.

Cam: Your brother told you that your medal... your older brother told you that?

Dimitri: Not my older brother. This kid, this kid right here (He points at his brother in a picture)

Cam: He said, your medal isn’t good enough because it’s not gold?

Dimitri: Yeah. That’s exactly what he said.

Cam: Uh-huh. But are you happy with silver or would you prefer gold?

Dimitri: I’d prefer gold for beating everyone.

(Dimitri, photo-elicitation interview)

Beyond participation, Dimitri was driven by a desire to compete and win over everyone. Although Evan and Mack left this moment with emotional energy, neither one of them expressed a desire to start sport outside school. They continued to play a variety of games on the playground but did not seek out sporting activities in the same way as Dimitri and Carl. Maybe this is due to the lower amount of emotional energy they acquired in comparison to these two boys. They did, however, continue to engage in this competitive competition during PE activities.

For Kelly, her inability to accrue much symbolic capital meant that this activity did not produce much emotional energy. The symbolic violence committed against her by the other boys made it hard for

her to acquire capital within these moments, thereby leaving with very little emotional connection with these types of rituals. Consequently, on the playground, she did not seek out these same types of rituals. Instead, she sought out rituals that would provide her higher levels of guaranteed emotional energy. This meant she played games that she valued with her friend Lupita (see fig. 28). This included playing imaginary games or playing with toys:

After this, I moved on to spend time with Lupita, Kelly, Katie and Selma. They were sitting as a group, in the shade, playing with some toys. They had 4 toy girls, with different hair colours and funky outfits on. Lupita brought these toys from home. Lupita and Kelly spent the whole break playing game with theses dolls.

(Field note, playground, recess)

Outside school, she continued to engage in a variety of physical activities, but as these activities were not valued at school, she very rarely engaged with them on the playground, instead choosing to play in ways that provided emotional energy.

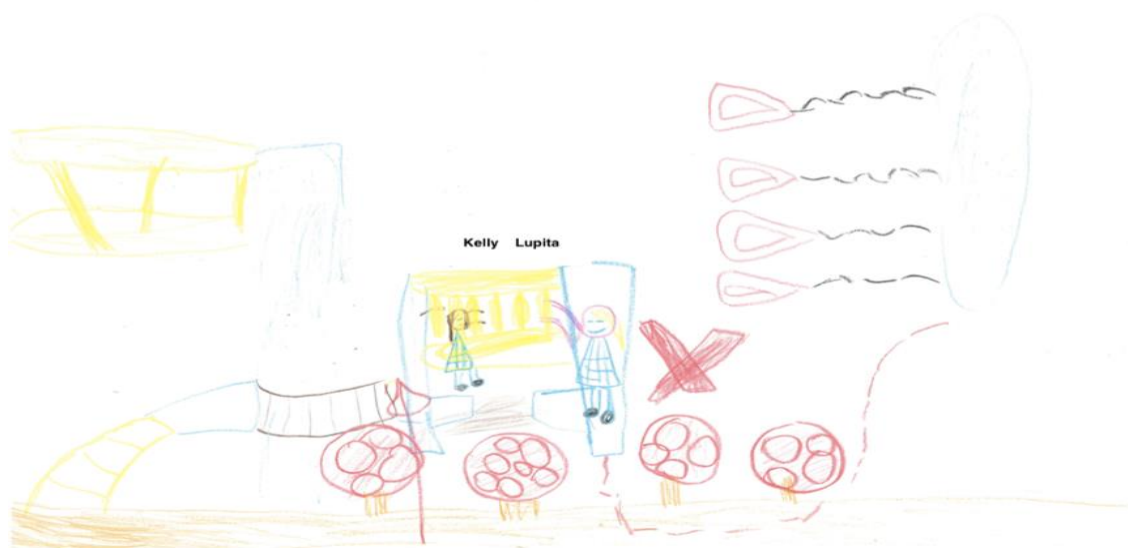


Figure 28 - Kelly's map of the playground

Similar to the previous ritual, this moment had a significant underlying emphasis on gender. The division between the members of the group occurred along gender lines. The collective consciousness of the boys led them to cut Kelly, the only girl, out. The video showed that the boys all dropped it multiple times, and besides Carl's calls for the others to hurry up, there was no rebukes or attempts at exclusion based upon these mistakes. The boys allowed each other to make these mistakes. They did not, however, give Kelly the same privilege. She was cut off before she was even given a chance to prove herself. Which begs the question, was this exclusion purely based on Kelly's individual attributes or did her status as the only girl also play a role? For many boys, their socialisation into sport is based on the notion that sport is the almost exclusive domain of boys (Bhana, 2016; Drummond, 2016; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Messner, 2000, 2011; Mooney & Hickey, 2012; Musto, 2014), which they learn both through participation and sport in the media (Cooky, Messner & Musto, 2015). As a result, by this age, most boys have already internalized ideas about boys and girls, and sporting participation. Unsurprisingly, each of the boys talked about the different associations that boys and girls have with sport:

Cam: So, the girls don't really like footy?

Carl: Nah.

Cam: So, what do the girls do instead?

Carl: They just walk around.

Cam: Just walk around, or do they walk around and talk, or do they do anything else?

Carl: They walk around and talk.

Cam: And so, they stay away from the footy and the soccer?

Carl: Yeah. They normally walk around here (he points to the playground)

(Carl, playground map interview)

Cam: Is it just the boys playing, or boys and girls?

Mack: Boys and girls.

Cam: Boys and girls? So, they're both pretty good at footy and soccer?

Mack: Yeah, but the boys are more.

Cam: Why do you think the boys are better?

Mack: I think because they like footy and the girls like soft games.

Cam: So, why do you think they don't like playing footy?

Mack: Some girls like playing footy if they like getting dirty, but the other girls don't like getting dirty.

Cam: So, they prefer not to play footy because they might get dirty?

Mack: Yeah.

Cam: Is that why they play softer games?

Mack: Yeah

(Mack, playground map interview)

Cam: Mainly the boys or mainly the girls?

Evan: Mainly the boys.

Dimitri: Mainly the boys.

Cam: Why do you think it's mainly the boys?

Dimitri: Because boys play rough games like soccer's like really rough.

Evan: And like football.

Cam: Is really rough? So, is it really rough for the girls to play?

Evan: In football or soccer, girls, they don't play.

Cam: How come?

Dimitri: Because the ball is really big, sometimes they might have a really big ball that has those prints. And then if I kick it and the girl has to mark it, then they fall on their face and start crying.

Cam: So, the girl would get hurt and start crying?

Dimitri: Yeah.

Cam: And do you think the same thing wouldn't happen to the boys who are playing?

Dimitri: No, because I've got hit in the face twice with the footy.

Cam: Why do you think the boys would be OK to play like that?

Dimitri: Boys are more tough.

(Evan & Dimitri, playground map interview)

So, was Kelly destined to fail from the start? As part of their sporting habitus, these boys have internalized the idea that there is a natural difference between boys and girls in sport, rather than the product of a variety of social factors. As a result, they believed that Kelly, as the only girl in the group, was naturally not as good at sport and therefore destined to fail at this activity. So, rather than lose against each other, based upon Kelly's natural inability to engage in this competition, they cut her out, thereby acting out the embodied nature of their own sporting experiences. As a result, they directly impacted Kelly's ability to learn these sporting skills- and develop a sporting habitus- thereby, effecting her interest in sporting activities. A similar separation between the children occurred in the next moment. However, this moment was particularly interesting because it was an activity that focused on individual skill practice; therefore, a competitive element was not readily apparent. Similar to the two previous moments, this focus on competition defined the IR that occurred.

‘Did you see my catch?’: Bob takes on everyone

This interaction ritual occurred during an activity called the ‘Ball and Lever catch’, in a PE class for 1/2 White. Although this activity focused on individual practice, competition still became a key defining feature, so, it is significant in that it contains a number of micro-moments of competition between the five participants, Stan, Paul, Bob, Amy & Jackie (for a complete collection of photos see appendix F):

Each of the children is practising catching at their own lever. Stan begins the competition by launching the ball into the air as far as he can and then running to try and catch it. Stan catches the ball and celebrates. Bob also starts engaging in this competition. He launches the ball into the air, runs and catches it. He celebrates by posing for the camera. Paul launches his ball, catches it, and runs back to tell Stan about it. Bob launches it again, runs out and barely makes the catch. He celebrates by running back in with his arms out wide like a plane. Jackie and Amy, who are standing at their levers, react to Bob’s catch by saying, “Oh my god!” and applauding him. Bob finishes his aeroplane run and dances in front of the camera. Amy and Jackie celebrate with him by pumping their fists into the air and starting to dance as well. Jackie and Amy start to engage in this competition as well. They do not have the same skill level, so end up chasing the ball off-screen on multiple occasions. Jackie is able to catch it once, when the ball bounces up off the ground. All the children are now participating in this competition. Bob and Jackie stop and start talking in the middle. Amy launches her ball and turns to chase it. Bob steps out to kick Amy’s ball, but Amy grabs it in time, just missing getting kicked by Bob (see. Fig 29). Bob and Jackie finish talking. As Bob walks back to his space, he kicks Paul’s ball away, which Paul was chasing (see fig. 30). Paul has to leave the game space to get the ball. Everyone keeps practising. Jackie launches her ball up and chases it. The ball goes to Bob and he kicks it away (see fig. 31). Jackie

tries to chase it but Bob kicks it again. Jackie stops and decides to go with Amy to the bathroom. Bob, Stan and Paul continue to engage in this competition. Stan launches his ball and chases it, Bob kicks it when it comes near him (see fig. 32), almost hitting Paul who was nearby. Stan is unable to catch the ball and so must get the ball off-screen. Eventually, Jackie and Amy come back from the bathroom. Jackie goes back to her lever. She stomps on it but makes no attempt to go and get the ball. She and Amy walk over and sit down (in seats) and spend the final two minutes of the activity talking.



Figure 29 - Bob tries to kick Amy's ball



Figure 30 - Bob kicks Paul's ball away



Figure 31 - Amy chases her ball and Bob kicks it away



Figure 32 - Bob kicks Stan's ball away

From the start of this ritual, competition was the driving force.⁹⁸ The purpose behind this competition was to launch the ball and then run and see if you could catch the ball before it hit the ground. There was never a declaration by any player to start this competition, instead, each of the participants gradually joined this competition, until all were participating. As stated, this ritual was significant because the individual nature meant that everyone should have been practising separately, but the unconscious focus on competition and lack of a teaching presence meant that there were a number of moments of competition between the participants. Bob's actions in this activity were of particular importance because he embodied the competitive nature of sport by impacting the participation of all of the other players. For Bob and Stan, this did not deter them, but for Jackie and Amy, it eventually drove them out the activity. Predictably, this moment had an impact on the habitus of each participant.

Similar to the previous examples, this IR was stratified based on the differing levels of experience that participants brought in. Sporting experience was particularly important for this activity because it relied heavily on catching, which is a key skill in most team sports activities. Going into this ritual, Bob had the highest level of sporting experience. He had played soccer at a local club for the last two years, and although he did not play sport on the playground, he did play competitive games with his male friends on the monkey bars (see fig. 33), as he explained:

Cam: What do you and your friends play on the playground

Bob: We play Attackers and Defenders

Cam: How do you play that?

Bob: There's three defenders and there's three attackers. So, the three defenders they have their side of the monkey bars they have to protect but the three attackers have to come, and they have to try to, all of them have to try to get to our place. If they get there then we lose and

⁹⁸ Stan started this competition on his first attempt, approximately two seconds into the video.

if we go, if they attack, if we get them off the monkey bars while they try to attack by grabbing them with our legs and they fall off that means they're out like we've killed them.

(Bob, playground map interview.)

Through these experiences, he had learned to embody certain actions that would help him compete, including aggressiveness. Paul and Stan do not have the same level of experience as Bob, but both have participated in Auskick for a year. At school, Stan and Paul exclusively spend their time on the oval (see fig. 34), primarily playing football, as they explained:

Cam: So, you two mainly play football at the goals?

Stan: Yeah.

Paul: Yeah

Cam: So, do you two just kick it back and forth to each other or play a game?

Paul: Play a game.

Stan: Play a game.

Paul: We always play a game.

(Stan/Paul, playground map interview)

This sporting experience meant that Stan and Paul brought physical capital to this activity. Through their sporting experience, they had learned to engage in certain actions that would help them to compete. Conversely, Amy and Jackie had a very different level of sporting experience compared to the boys:

Cam: So, do you two do any sport outside school?

Amy: Ah, I don't do anything really.

Jackie: Well, I do gymnastics and swimming.

(Amy/Jackie playground map interview)

So, although Amy did not participate in any sport, Jackie did engage in gymnastics every week. However, unlike the boys, her gymnastics experience did not directly translate to this lever and ball catch activity.

On the playground, Jackie and Amy rarely engaged in any sporting activities. For Amy and Jackie, PE was their first experience with structured sports, and particularly this type of activity.

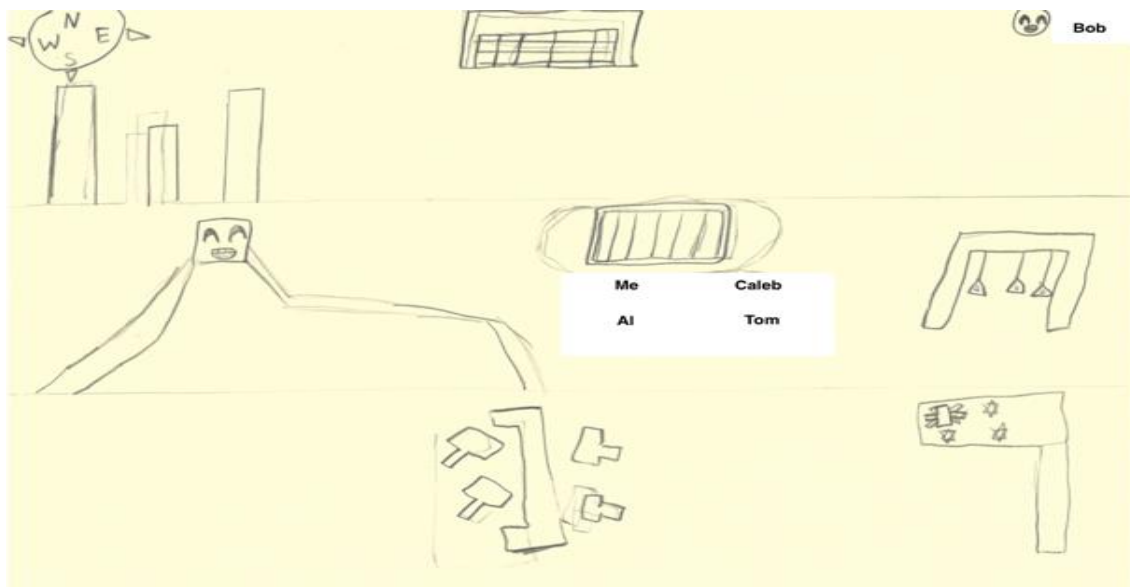


Figure 33 - Bob's playground map



Figure 34 - Stan's playground map

Although each of the participants had their own lever and ball and were encouraged to practice individually, there was a strong sense of bodily co-presence between the participants. The close proximity of the levers to each other, and the engagement of the children in this competition, which sent them running all over the space, meant they impacted each other's experience. This group was also defined by a clear barrier to outsiders. Within this ritual, there was a mutual focus on competition. This competition involved stepping on the lever to launch the ball into the air and then turning and running to catch the ball before it hit the ground. By doing this, the children tried to compete with each other to see who could catch the ball like this; the more challenging the catch the better. This competition was not introduced or encouraged by the teacher.⁹⁹ Although the participants never explicitly commented on it, they all encouraged this engagement to the point that they eventually were all participating. Stan was the first one to engage in this version of the activity, followed subsequently by Paul and Bob. Bob made a number of successive, impressive catches which were acknowledged and celebrated by Amy and Jackie, which drove them to join in on the competition. There was a collective acceptance in carrying out the activity in this way between members of the group. Importantly, although Bob, Stan and Paul were elated at every attempt, whether they caught in or not, Amy and Jackie did not share this same feeling because they had to work harder and were rarely able to catch the ball.

The engagement in this ritual led to a number of outcomes. There was a sense of group solidarity during the activity, which reached its peak during the period of time that all of the participants were engaged in the competition. However, this sense of group solidarity eventually eroded over the course of the activity. This was mainly due to the actions of Bob. As the photo collection (see appendix F) shows, Bob, interfered in the competitive efforts of all of the players. He committed an act of symbolic violence against all of the other players, by kicking their ball when they were attempting to catch.¹⁰⁰ Although this

⁹⁹ The only instruction the teacher provided was that this activity required standing on the lever and launching the ball up to waist height for an easy catch.

¹⁰⁰ He did not actually succeed in kicking Amy's ball, as she caught it at the last second, but he almost kicked Amy in his attempt. She was able to duck to avoid his kick.

act did not deter Stan and Paul, it did impact Jackie and Amy's desire to continue competing. As a result, by the end, the group solidarity was fractured, with the three boys continuing to participate, while Amy and Jackie sat down. A number of symbols were created as a result of this IR. These symbols were closely tied to the capital of the group. First, the lever was imbued with symbolic capital. It became the symbol of the competition that the children continued to participate in whenever they were assigned this activity. Importantly, it was the symbol through which those with the most advanced sporting habitus were able to accrue high levels of symbolic capital, at the expense of their peers. Second, the ball also continued to exist as a significant symbol. It became a symbolic way to separate those with sporting experience and those with limited experience (who therefore struggled to learn the skills). The symbolic meaning of the ball was important and extended beyond this activity. The capital associated with the ball became a way to for the students to segregate each other, especially on the playground, which I will elaborate on later in this section.

The break down in group solidarity led to a division in the distribution of emotional energy. As discussed, Bob directly impacted the ability of the other four participants to engage in this competition. So, in addition to accruing capital by engaging in this competition with his teammates, he was also able to accrue capital by interfering in their efforts, impacting their ability to compete. As the player with the most well-developed sporting habitus, he left the ritual activity with the highest level of emotional energy. As a result of Bob's interference, Stan and Paul were not able to accrue as much symbolic capital as Bob. Even though they came into this activity with physical capital, they did not aggressively compete in the same way that Bob did. Even though they lost capital due to Bob's interference this did not deter them from continuing to engage in this competition. Through their past experience in sport they are aware that these acts of aggressive competitiveness are 'part of the game' (Bourdieu, 1993). Accordingly, both Stan and Paul left this activity with emotional energy and feelings of enthusiasm and confidence (Collins, 2004). Conversely, Amy and Jackie lost emotional energy by engaging in this ritual. Both Amy and

Jackie came into this activity with lower levels of physical capital. So, while the three boys were able to engage in this competition with ease, Amy and Jackie struggled with the skill and were unable to engage in the same way as the boys. As a result, Bob's interference had a bigger impact on Jackie and Amy because they were trying to learn the skill. Additionally, they were not used to the acts of aggressive competitiveness that Bob displayed. Therefore, Bob's acts of violence resulted in their eventual disengagement.

Predictably, this ritual activity had an impact on all of the children. For Bob, his ability to accrue a high level of emotional energy through competition meant he sought more of these types of ritual activities. However, this did not mean he constantly sought out sporting activities, like Carl and Willy. He rarely played sport on the playground, instead choosing to play competitive games with his friends, usually Attackers and Defenders or Tag. Importantly though, he emphasized that he and his friends play games that are not suited for everyone:

Cam: Attackers and defenders. Do any of the girls play attackers and defenders with you?

Bob: No, it's only us four boys.

Cam: Why is it only the boys and not any girls play?

Bob: Well because the game, girls don't play because the game's more kind of rough and you know how girls like to play their little games but, yeah, so it's a little rough for, the girls don't usually play with us.

(Bob, playground map interview)

So, although he did not play sport on the playground, he still chose to engage in a game that required the sense of aggressive competitiveness he brought to the ball and lever catch. In contrast to the games he engaged in at school, Bob participated in different types of physical activities at home, like riding his

scooter (see fig. 35), going on family walks (see fig. 36) and playing where his little brother, where there was no emphasis on competition. Accordingly, this disjoint between his habitus at home and his sporting habitus, allowed him to speak reflexively about competition in PE:

Cam: Do you think, who do you think is better at PE?

Bob: Nobody's better because sports are not meant to be a winning type unless it's the Olympics, yeah. It's not meant to be a winning type, it's meant, you're meant to have just fun.

Cam: Fun and learn together?

Bob: Yes. So, there's no better or worser in PE, there's just, PE's meant to be there to have fun, to be active.

(Bob, photo-elicitation interview)

Despite this moment of reflexivity, Bob continued to embody the competition that he had internalized through sport participation and commit acts of explicit and symbolic violence which impacted the experiences of his peers in PE.



Figure 35 - Bob riding his scooter



Figure 36 - Bob walking with his family

For Stan and Paul, the emotional energy they produced through their participation in this ritual meant they continued to seek out similar rituals. For Stan and Paul, the symbolic capital that was imbued in the ball held significant value for them. They continued to seek out sports that involved mastering the use of a ball. This was clear in the way they engaged in non-ball related activities such as skipping:

Stan and Paul are meant to be skipping. Instead, they both keep falling over and pretending that they could not skip. They would either fall on the floor or jump and throw their rope away. Eventually, Stan went and sat out. I tried to coax him back, but he told me loudly, “I don’t like skipping.” Paul eventually came over and joined him and they sat out for the rest of the skipping station.

(Field note, PE class, 1/2 White)

So, even though they valued competitive competition, they only valued it in relation to ball sports. Not surprisingly, this meant they played football with Carl and played a key role in deciding who could join them in playing in this space. Typically, this meant excluding those who did not have the same level of capital as them, or only letting them play in limited roles:

Cam: So, you guys play mainly play football. Do any of the girls ever play with you?

Stan: Yeah, Hiyab and Urma. Sometimes we let them be the goalies and kick the ball out.

Cam: Do you ever let them play?

Paul: No, they are just the goalies.

(Stan/Paul, playground map interview)

For Stan and Paul, they were able to use the symbolic capital they obtained by engaging in this competition to acquire more physical capital on the playground.

Jackie and Amy were negatively affected by their experience in this failed ritual. As discussed, Bob's acts of symbolic violence impacted their ability to engage in this competition, and ultimately learn the skills of this activity. So, rather than continue to participate they decided to sit down and talk. Unsurprisingly, on the playground they choose not to participate in sporting activities, and sought out other types of rituals:

Cam: Okay, what games do you play on the oval?

Amy: Umm we talk.

Jackie: Ah, I can tell it. We talk. We normally play chasey sometimes and yeah.

Cam: What types of things do you talk about?

Amy: We talk about what we are playing and that.

Jackie: Yeah, like if we are doing something at night. We normally talk about all those things.

Exciting things and when you might be going out at night etc

(Jackie/Amy, playground map interview)

Similar to what happened in this activity, on the playground Amy and Jackie choose to play with each other and spend their time talking rather than playing sport with the boys. Beyond the playground, Amy chose not to engage in sport at all. Jackie did engage in sport outside school, mainly through regular gymnastics participation. She loved doing gymnastics but rarely got the chance to do it at school. She also occasionally engaged in soccer at home, often at her brother's request (see fig. 37), although she did not typically enjoy playing:

Cam: So, what's going on in this one [photo]?

Jackie: I'm playing soccer with my brother.

Cam: Yeah. So, do you play soccer with your brother very much?

Jackie: No, not really. I don't really like soccer it's just that he had no-one, and I just kicked the ball with him.

Cam: So, if you're playing with him in this photo is it only every now and then you play with him?

Jackie: Yeah, but sometimes we, it's fine at the start but then it just doesn't end well.

Cam: What do you mean it doesn't end well, do you end up arguing?

Jackie: Yeah.

(Jackie, photo-elicitation interview)

This interview highlighted that even on the rare occasions she engaged in sport at home with her brother, she was unable to accrue much capital through competition. So, for Jackie her participation in this activity likely reinforced her inability to accrue symbolic capital through the sporting activities of PE, thereby meaning when given a choice she chose to engage in activities that would allow her to gain the most emotional energy. If gymnastics were valued within PE, this would be different for Jackie, but this was not the case.



Figure 37 - Jackie playing soccer with her brother

Similar to the other two examples, there was a gendered element to this interaction ritual. For the boys, their previous sporting experiences were closely aligned to the team sports that are valued within the PE space (Hickey, 2008). As a result, the separation in sporting experience and the choice by the girls not to engage in sport on the playground was often seen as natural, as Stan and Paul explain:

Cam: What types of things do they [the girl] do on the playground then?

Stan: They just play on the monkey bars and we don't like doing that. We like playing more grown-up (games) like football.

Paul: They just play around on the oval.

(Paul/Stan playground map interview)

Therefore, the boys thought that the outcomes of these types of stratified interactions were natural. The inability of the girls to succeed in the same way that they did and their eventual choice to sit out reaffirmed these beliefs, as Bob discussed:

Cam: So, who is better at sport?

Bob: The boys 'cause boys are, I don't want to, girls can be really active and can do stuff all the time but I'm just saying boys might be better because, I don't have any reason to prove that boys are better but I can, I just think boys would be better.

Cam: So, you were saying that girls aren't as active, do you think they're maybe not...?

Bob: They might not be as, they can be active, really active, but I just, I have no reason to prove that girls can be worser and boys can be better, or girls can be better, or boys can be worser, I have no proof but I just think boys are more, they like to get out there more. So, I just, don't have any proof but I just think boys.

(Bob, playground map interview)

In his answers, Bob was trying to be reflexive but fell back on the idea that boys and girls are just naturally different. Unfortunately, the boys, particularly Bob, could not see that the girls brought different levels of experience to this activity (experience which is often not valued), and the embodied actions of the boys, him in particular, directly impacted the ability of the girls to learn. As a result, rather than wanting to learn these skills the girls chose to sit out and gain their emotional energy through talking. The

boys saw this as a natural separation, they are good at sport and the girls are not, rather than the product of their own embodied actions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the embodied actions of a number of children were explored as they engaged in micro-moments of competition. These moments revealed a hierarchy between those students who had high levels of sporting experience and those who had very limited experience. Although the children engaged in a variety of physical activities outside of PE, the crossover between sport and PE meant that only certain types of physical activities were valued. The students who had developed a sporting habitus through participation in valued activities brought the highest levels of physical capital into the class and were uniquely positioned to accrue symbolic capital through competition. In embodying their sporting habitus, these children committed a variety of acts of explicit and symbolic violence against their peers, which further impacted the ability of these students to acquire and accrue capital. Consequently, these students with a sporting habitus left these rituals with high levels of emotional energy and typically sought out similar rituals on the playground. In contrast, for those students who were not able to accrue much capital, these moments existed as failed rituals, meaning they left with very little emotional energy. As a result, they tended to avoid these types of rituals on the playground, instead pursuing rituals that were more likely to provide emotional energy. There was a clear gendered element to this process, as the separation typically occurred along gendered lines. The boys were more likely to participate in sports that were valued within the PE space, which meant that they were much more likely to accrue symbolic capital, often at the expense of the girls. This process came to be seen by the children, both in PE and on the playground, as natural.

The next chapter continues the examination of embodied interactions within the IRs of the PE class. While this chapter focused on the children's engagement in competition, the next chapter focuses on certain children's engagement in feats of skill mastery. Whereas all the children engaged in

competition to some degree, only a select number of children engaged in acts of skill mastery. Similar to the concepts explored in this chapter, certain children embodied their sporting habitus at the level of a bodily hexis to engage in acts that displayed their sporting prowess. Once again, the engagement in these embodied actions created a social hierarchy within the PE space that carried over to the playground.

Chapter Seven -

‘Look how far I can kick it!’:

Children engaging in skill mastery

As discussed, In PE, there is central and fundamental importance placed on skill learning (Kirk, 2010, Portman, 1995; Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014). This emphasis placed on skill acquisition is justified on the belief that learning and mastering certain skills is necessary for future motor performance (Lounsberry & Coker, 2008; Pickup, 2011) and sport participation (Kirk, 2010; Ward & Griggs, 2018). The mastery of these skills is expected to ensure that children are lifelong physical activity participants. Although this view has been debunked by a number of researchers (see Fairclough et al., 2002; Jess, Atencio & Thorburn, 2011; Kirk, 2005, 2010, 2013; Powell, 2018; Telford, 2017; Tinning, 2017;), the focus on the skill continues to play a key role in how PE is practised. As outlined, in the early years this is translated into a significant focus on the FMS. However, there has been a move away from the skills and drills of the past (Pill, 2010b), to a child-centred and egalitarian approach to PE practice (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Kirk, 2010; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013). Whereas the previous format emphasised isolated, individual skill practice and repetition, the newer format focuses on co-operative learning through play and modified games (Kirk, 2010, Ward, 2012)¹⁰¹. In this way, the children are expected to learn from each other (Morgan et al. 2013) through modified games that often involve the application of multiple skills.

Although there has been this shift in the pedagogy through which these skills are taught, there has been very little shift in the overall philosophy of skill progression. The emphasis on progressing from generalisation to specialisation still lies at the heart of PE (Kirk, 2010) Children are still expected to progress through the acquisition of these generalised skills in a linear fashion. Accordingly, this approach

¹⁰¹ At CRP, although Mr King implemented the use of modified and small-sided games, he also implemented more traditional, individual skill-based practice activities. Both skipping and the ball and lever catch were supposed to involve the children practicing by themselves.

assumes that all children begin Year 1 as blank slates and will progress at the same rate through early PE until they are collectively masters of all the FMS. As discussed, this fails to take into account the differing levels of physical experience that children bring to early PE. As Evans (2004) pointed out, the physical capital that children acquire outside school is fundamentally involved in the reproduction of differences in PE classes. So, rather than being an open, level playing field, early PE is defined by the differing levels of experience, and therefore differing levels of ability, that children bring to class. Some children have extensive sporting experience, through which they have learned skills and certain physical ways of being that are valued within PE. Other children have learned certain skills through sporting or physical activity experience, which are not valued within PE. In contrast, there are many children that have had very little sporting and come into PE hoping to learn these skills. This division was reflected at CRP, where the different types and levels of sporting and physical activity experience stratified the IRs that occurred in the space.

At CRP, the focus on skill acquisition was the key learning outcome that drove PE practice. As discussed, this practice has become the norm within early PE, with the main outcome expected to be the acquisition of the FMS. In 1/2 PE classes at CRP, there was a particular focus on the practice of object control skills such as catching, kicking and throwing. Accordingly, in-line with the student-centred approach, during these skill sessions, the children were largely left to work together and learn through repeated practice with their peers. This led to micro-moments where certain children sought to display advanced mastery of these skills. Although these moments were rarely encouraged or acknowledged by the teacher, they were often unconsciously engaged in by a certain group of children and encouraged and validated by others. Primarily, the children who engaged in these displays of skill mastery were those with a 'sporting habitus', and the displays that they embodied were largely those which were valued in class. Their engagement in this skill mastery often came at the direct expense of their peers, particularly those children who were trying to learn the skill. On other occasions, if the skills were not valued within

PE, these students would overtly show that they did not value the skills, committing acts of explicit and symbolic violence against their peers who tried to display any type of mastery. Hence, these acts of skill mastery were devalued, which impacted the ability of the less experienced children to gain any symbolic capital. As I will show in this chapter, the moments in which those children with a sporting habitus engaged in these acts of skill mastery, or explicitly chose not to, directly impacted the experiences of their peers. Ultimately, these outcomes of these rituals reproduced the hierarchy that contextualized them and further established these hierarchies on the playground. I begin by examining the feats of skill mastery displayed by a group of children practising the football kick.

‘I kicked it so hard, that it went so far!’: Skill mastery during kicking practice.

This ritual occurred during a football skills lesson for class 1/2 Red. There were eight participants: Bart, Willy, Thompson, Roger, Lana, Renny, Mary and Sissy. The children were all practising their kicking with a partner (Bart & Willy; Thompson & Roger; Lana & Renny; Mary & Sissy) (for a complete collection of photos see appendix G):

The activity starts with the children spread out, approximately five feet apart, practising their kicks. At this point, all the children are attempting to kick it back and forth to each other. Renny kicks the ball to Lana, but it bounces off the side of her foot. She walks off-screen to get it. Bart and Willy are kicking to each other with ease. Willy starts to move backwards and begins kicking harder and higher to Bart, who does the same. On the other side of the court, Roger and Thompson start to kick in the same manner. Thompson kicks it high into the air to Roger. Roger misses the ball but picks it up and kicks it back (without much control). Thompson says, ‘Wow!’ Roger turns to Thompson and exclaims, ‘I kicked it so hard, that it went so far!’ In the middle, Mary is struggling to kick the ball. She makes four kick attempts and misses the ball each time. She eventually gives up and walks over and hands the ball to Sissy. Willy is moving back with

each successive kick and kicking harder. It is becoming more difficult for Bart to catch. Roger and Thompson are doing the same, but with less accuracy. Lana misses a kick attempt, but the ball rolls to Renny. She tries to kick the ball to Lana but accidentally kicks it high up in the air. She and Lana cover their mouths and react in shock. Willy has moved all the way back on to the jungle gym (outside the practice space) and is taking a run up on every kick. Willy boots the ball in towards Bart, but it hits the roof above Lana. She hears the ball hit the roof and instinctively covers her head and ducks. Thompson boots the ball and it goes sailing past Roger. It flies past Sissy's head and she ducks down and covers her head to avoid getting hit (see fig. 38). Sissy and Mary keep practising their kicking but struggle to perform the skill, continuing to miss the ball completely or connecting with the wrong part of the foot. None of the boys are prioritizing catching any more, meaning they have to run all over the space to collect each other's kicks. Bart kicks it right past Willy and he has to chase the ball. He runs right through Lana and Renny's space (see fig. 39). On the other side, Thompson boots the ball high up in the air to Roger, who misses the kick. The ball almost hits Mary, who ducks her head. Roger chases the ball right through Sissy and Mary's space (see fig. 40). The activity ends, and the instructors calls the students back in.



Figure 38 - Sissy ducks to avoid getting hit by a flying ball



Figure 39 - Willy runs through Lana's space



Figure 40 - Roger runs through Mary and Sissy's space

It is important to note that this session was conducted by two instructors, Jenny and Susanne, from the AFL. As discussed, these AFL representatives were sought out because of their sport-specific

expertise (Blair & Capel, 2011). In their instruction of the class, Jenny and Susanne emphasized the development of the specific skills of their sport (Dyson et al. 2016). They taught the children in a 'one-size-fits' all approach (Powell, 2015), by providing a brief demonstration and then sending the children to practice the kicking. Similar to Mr King, the instructors circulated the class, but only intervened occasionally, preferring to let the children learn from each other.¹⁰² The children picked partners and found a space to practice. Without any explicit agreement, the two groups of boys begin to kick high and far to each other, displaying their advanced experience with this skill. This is in direct contrast to the girls, who had less experience and were trying to learn and perform the skill effectively. Eventually, the boys begin to take up more space, forcing the girls to move closer and closer together and committed acts of symbolic violence which made it even harder for the girls to learn the skill. The cumulative effect of these micro-moments had a significant impact on the habitus of each child.

In this activity, each child embodied their distinct levels of sporting experience at the level of a bodily hexis. Once again, Willy brought the highest level of sporting experience to this activity. His primary sporting experience for this activity came from Auskick. Bart also had a high level of sporting experience, and although he had little experience playing football, his experience playing soccer directly translated to his ability to kick the football. As discussed, Thompson did not play sport outside of school, instead, staying active in a variety of other ways. However, he did regularly play soccer with his friends on the playground, which similar to Bart, meant he had experience kicking a ball. Similar to Thompson, Roger did not play sport outside school. On the playground, he spent most of his time playing with a group of other 1/2 Red boys (see fig. 41), but his friendship with Willy did mean he joined in on games of football occasionally:

Cam: OK. Are there any games that we do in PE that you like you do on the playground?

Willy: Football.

¹⁰² During this session, Mr. King walked around bouncing a football and occasionally kicked it to one of the students.

Roger: Football on the playground.

Cam: Oh, that's right you play sometimes as well, don't you Roger?

Roger: Yeah, with Willy.

(Roger & Willy, playground map interview)

So, he did play enough that he had reasonable experience kicking the ball, although not to the same level as the other boys.

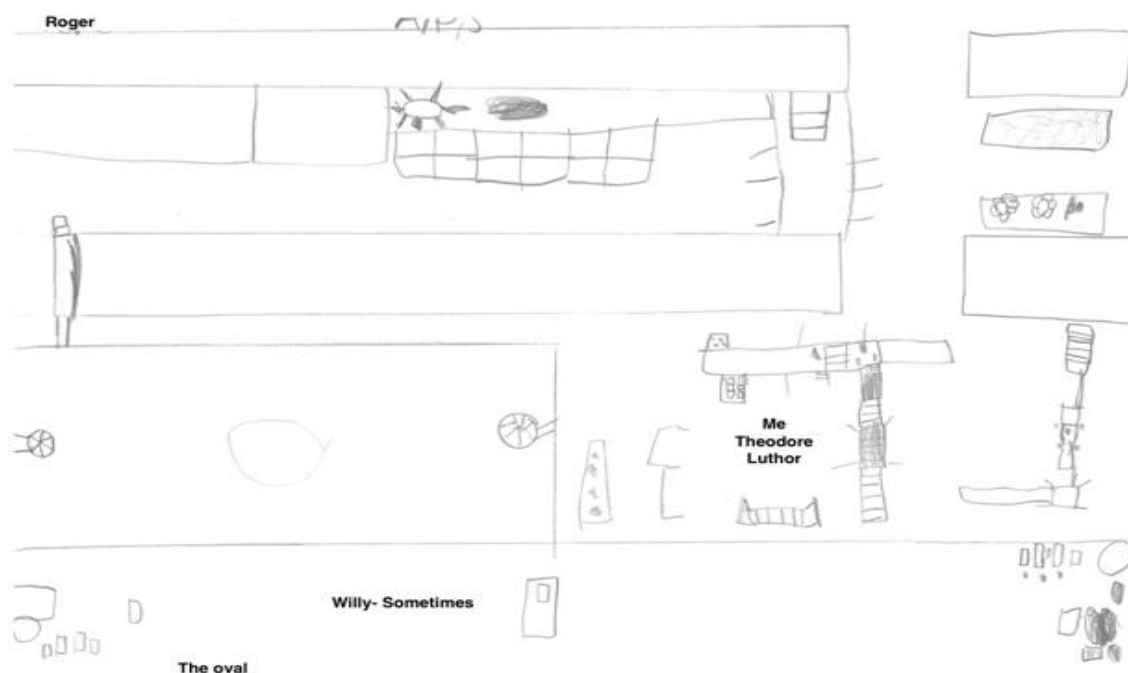


Figure 41 - Roger's map of the playground

The girls in this activity had very different levels and types of sporting experience to the boys.

Lana and Renny both participated in sport outside of school, as they discuss:

Cam: Is that because you two do gymnastics outside school?

Renny: I do acrobatics.

Lana: I do gymnastics but not acrobatics.

(Renny & Lana, playground map interview)

So, Lana did gymnastics and Renny did aerobatics. As a result, they had learned a number of specific gymnastic skills that they practiced and valued. As discussed, these skills were not valued within the PE class and unlike the experience of the boys did not directly translate to the football kicking activity.

Beyond her participation in gymnastics, Renny did participate in other sports for fun:

Cam: So, do you play any other sports outside school, like soccer?

Renny: Yeah, I play with my dad and my dad's friends.

(Renny & Lana, playground map interview)

In fact, she almost joined a soccer club but chose to stick with gymnastics instead:

Lana: You know what, she signed up to the soccer club, she isn't even in it.

Cam: That's good.

Renny: I didn't sign up for it, I wanted too but you guys made me forget, you're like gymnastics, gymnastics.

(Renny & Lana, playground map interview)

So, although Renny enjoyed playing soccer for fun, her main form of physical capital came from participating in gymnastics. Her experience from soccer gave her some ability to kick a ball, but she still lacked the ability to kick it effectively. Mary had a low level of sporting experience, as she has not participated in any formal junior sport. She was, however, still quite active outside school, regularly

riding her bike (see fig. 42) and her scooter (see fig. 43). She also played soccer with her family at the park (see fig. 44), however, as she explained the focus of these games was not on skill acquisition:

Cam: So what type of game did you play that day?

Mary: We were playing... we were playing for fun. Like I was getting the ball into the goals.

We weren't keeping score. Just having fun, like we always do.

(Mary, photo-elicitation interview)

So, although she played soccer with her family, the lack of emphasis on skill acquisition meant that she did not possess much physical capital going into this activity. As a result, she did not have much experience in kicking a football. Sissy did not play any sport outside school, so brought little physical capital to this activity. Similar to Mary, this was her first experience kicking a football.



Figure 42 - Mary rides her bike



Figure 43 - Mary rides her scooter



Figure 44 - Mary plays soccer at the park

Although the students were spread out, working in pairs, there was a strong sense of bodily co-presence between the children. They were not isolated to their own individual spaces. Their close proximity and the varying skill levels meant that the balls travelled. The focus of attention in this ritual was on performing the football kick. The expectation was that all of the children would pick up this skill so that it could be applied in subsequent lessons. However, this was where the group division began. The advanced experience of the boys meant that simply practising the skill in its basic form was not enough. As a collective, their attention was focused on kicking the ball towards¹⁰³ each other as high and as hard as possible. As a result of the focus on skill acquisition, engaging in this advanced display of the kicking skill became the key form of symbolic capital that was available. Correspondingly, this mutual focus on this type of kicking meant that catching was less valued. For the girls, their lower level of experience meant that their focus remained on being able to kick and catch effectively with their partner. Despite the acts of symbolic violence committed by the boys, the collective conscious of the girls remained focused on trying to attempt the kicking skill. Over the course of this activity, the division between the groups only increased.

This division meant that there was no overall sense of group solidarity between the children. Instead, the larger group was fractured into two smaller groups. In a way, the actions of the boys solidified the sense of solidarity among the two distinct groups. Nowhere is this division more apparent than in the following moment:

The girls have been pushed closer and closer together. The boys are running all over the space to fetch their balls. Mary, Renny and Lana are standing next to each other. Suddenly, Lana does a high kick, lifting her foot up next to her face. Renny copies her. Mary is impressed by this and tries to do a high kick as well (see fig. 45). She can't do it as well but still tries.

(PE video, class 1/2 Red)

¹⁰³ As I will show, although they were kicking it in each other's direction, the focus was not on kicking it to each other.

Prior to this moment, the girls had been struggling to learn and perform the football kicking skill effectively. The boys had already committed numerous acts of symbolic violence against them and spread out over the game space. Without any encouragement, Lana and Renny decided to display their own mastery of a gymnastics high-kick. Mary appreciated this display enough that she tried to imitate it. However, this moment was over quickly, and the girls had to go back to trying to learn the skill of kicking, within the context of the boys' embodiment of their sporting experience. This moment displayed a clear divide between the two groups. This moment also showed two symbols that hold symbolic capital for each group. For the boys, the football was imbued with symbolic capital. The skilled manipulation of this ball became the manifestation of the levels of physical capital that each child possessed. It also became a way for them to continue to accrue this capital. For the girls, the high-kick was their symbol of the physical capital that they possess and value. However, since this high kick was not valued within this activity or the broader field of CRP PE, it stayed as a symbol just for them and did not allow them to accrue much symbolic capital within this context.



Figure 45 - Mary, Lana and Renny perform high kicks

This separation between the two groups had a direct impact on the levels of emotional energy that the children left the group with. Once again, Willy left this group overflowing with emotional energy. As the most experienced participant, he was able to display his skill mastery at a level that was beyond the other participants. He was able to kick the ball high and far with relative ease, which reinforced his confidence in his ability. He also sapped energy from the girls by committing acts of symbolic violence against them. Interestingly, he also committed an act of symbolic violence against Bart, as illustrated in the following moment:

Willy is continuing to move further and further back. He is starting to put more and more strength into each kick. Predictably, it is getting harder and harder for Bart to catch. In fact, Bart is getting quite scared of catching the ball (see fig. 46). On a number of occasions, he turns away rather than getting hit.

(PE video, 1/2 Red)

Despite these moments, Bart continued to engage in the same acts of skill mastery. He never asked Willy to go easy or slow down, despite his fright of Willy's kicks. Instead, he kept kicking it straight back to Willy, as hard as he could. As a result, although he was not able to gain the same level of symbolic capital as Willy, his continuing participation meant he accrued enough capital to ensure that he left this activity with feelings of elation and confidence (Collins, 2004). For Thompson and Roger, their lower level of experience meant that they were not able to accrue the same level of symbolic capital, but just by attempting to engage in this mastery they did accrue this capital. Their inexperience meant they were not able to kick with the same skill level as Bart or Willy. However, on the occasions they did display a mastery of the kick, they praised each other:

Thompson kicks the ball high up into the air and over Roger's head. Roger watches the ball and says 'Woah!'" as it goes flying. Sissy ducks as the ball almost hits her (see fig. 42). Roger runs off to fetch the ball.

(PE video, 1/2 Red)

Ultimately, despite their ability to display their skill mastery consistently, by engaging in these acts Thompson and Roger left this activity with high levels of emotional energy



Figure 46 - Bart is scared of trying to catch Willy's kick

The girls did not leave this activity with the same levels of emotional energy. As discussed, through their engagement in displays of skill mastery the boys committed numerous acts of symbolic violence against the girls, including restricting and invading their space and almost hitting them. This adversely impacted the ability of the girls to learn and perform the football kick. Hence, a lack of experience and the actions of the boys made it difficult for the girls to accrue any symbolic capital. For Renny and Lana, having some experience in kicking meant that they were able to kick the ball

successfully on a number of occasions. However, their lower level of experience meant that they were far more likely to miss a kick attempt than the boys. Renny and Lana left this activity with very little capital, and therefore low levels of emotional energy and a lack of confidence in their kicking skills. Sissy and Mary struggled to make any progress on the kicking skill. Both had little to no experience. As a result, they rarely connected with the ball, often missing it completely (see fig. 47) or just letting it roll along the ground. As shown, on one occasion, Mary walked the ball over after numerous failed attempts, rather than continuing to try and kick it. Consequently, Mary and Sissy's inability to acquire any symbolic capital meant that they left the activity with low levels of symbolic capital and a lack of emotional connection to this type of ritual.



Figure 47 - Mary misses the ball

The outcomes of this moment had an impact on each child. Importantly, this moment reproduced the hierarchy and levels of experience that the activity started with. Predictably, the boys continued to seek sporting rituals, where these skills were valued, and the girls did not. As discussed, for Willy and Bart, this meant continuing to play sport, both during and outside school. Although Thompson's mastery

meant he continued to seek sporting opportunities during school, it did not lead to him participating in junior sport. Unlike the other boys, Roger did not primarily seek sporting rituals, on the playground or at home. As he discussed, he primarily played other types of games with his friends:

Cam: So, what types of games do you guys like to play at recess and lunch?

Roger: Tiggy.

Cam: You just play tiggy.

Roger: Maybe some other games but I don't know which games.

(Roger & Willy, playground interview)

However, because of the emotional energy that this type of ritual provides, he did seek to play soccer or football with the 1/2 Red sporty boys intermittently. This is where he was able to benefit from the symbolic capital that he gained from engaging in displays of skill mastery. He was able to convert the symbolic capital to physical capital, to show that he had the ability to play soccer or football with this group. Though he did not possess a well-developed sporting habitus, by engaging in displays of skill mastery in PE, and doing as the sporting boys do, he was able to show that he could hang and play with them on the playground.

This ritual clearly had an impact on the girls. None of the girls showed much desire to seek out similar sporting rituals on the playground. As shown, Lana and Renny displayed the value they placed on gymnastics skills. For Lana and Renny, this moment was the emotional peak of the ritual. Unsurprisingly, they continued to participate in gymnastics on the playground:

Cam: So, what types of things or games do you two play at recess and lunch?

Renny: Cricket pitch.

Cam: What do you mean by the cricket pitch? What do you play on the cricket pitch?

Renny: We do gymnastics mostly.

Lana: We do gymnastics with our friends.

(Lana & Renny, Playground map interview)

When they were not doing this, they played and talked:

Renny: We usually play... what do we play? We go on the monkey bars.

Lana: Yeah, we love the monkey bars. We usually walk together; we usually like to talk together.

Cam: What types of things do you talk about?

Lana: We talk about gymnastics and stuff.

(Lana & Renny, Playground map interview)

Lana, also continued her gymnastics practise outside school, working on her moves at home (see fig. 48) and practising her jumps on the trampoline (see fig. 49). Interestingly, Renny primarily played with her friends, but on occasion, she joined in to play soccer with the boys (embodying the experience she has from playing with her family). However, on these occasions the boys still made the division between them and her clear, and made it known that they did not want her to play regularly:

Cam: How come you don't play very much inside school then?

Renny: 'Cause like I play rough, every boy would be like no she hit me, this, blah, blah, blah.

Cam: So, they complain if you play rough, the boys?

Renny: Yeah.

Cam: How come do you think?

Renny: They complain, saying I tripped them over when I hadn't even done it.

Cam: So, the boys don't like you playing?

Renny: Well kind of. But mainly it is they annoy me by complaining about me. So,
that's why I don't play with them.

(Renny and Lana, Playground map interview)

So, although she would play under the right circumstances at home, she did not show much desire to play with the boys at school. She was clearly unconsciously aware of the types of actions that the boys would engage in if she played.



Figure 48 - Lana practices her gymnastic moves



Figure 49 - Lana practices her jumps on the trampoline

For Sissy and Mary, their lack of emotional connection with this sporting activity did not motivate them to seek these activities out. Instead, Sissy played with her friend in the sandpit, as discussed. Similarly, Mary played primarily with her friend Jordan on the oval (see fig. 50), as she discussed:

Cam: And so, who are your friends that you put on there and where do you play?

Mary: Well I usually play in the sandpit, like there's like a little circle sandpit here.

Cam: And so, you play with Claudia?

Mary: Uh-huh.

Cam: And what types of games do you and Claudia play?

Mary: Well we usually make some sandcastles or try to dig for wet sand and dig big holes.

Cam: What do you do with the wet sand?

Mary: Like... well because wet sand sticks more so that's why we dig for wet sand because dry sand sometimes.

(Mary, playground map interview)

Despite this lack of sporting participation on the playground, she did continue to play soccer with her family on the weekend. This decision clearly had to do with the environment. Playing with her family was much more fun and supportive, with no focus on skill mastery or competition. Through these rituals, she was able to accrue symbolic capital, which resulted in an emotional connection, unlike sport at school.



Figure 50 - Mary's playground map

The division that underlined this activity was gendered, based on a gendered division in the levels of sporting experience. While the boys had extensive experience in sports, either outside school, on the playground, or both, that directly translated to this activity, the girls either had no experience or experience that was not valued. As a result, this activity reinforced the gendered division. By engaging in acts of skill mastery, the boys reaffirmed their belief that they were better at sport:

Cam: So, if... say if we had like a boy and a girl and they both did the same exact amount of time soccer training, who'd be better?

Willy: Mostly it would be the boy 'cause he... I don't know how to explain it.

Cam: That's OK, just do your best to explain it.

Willy: Well... this is hard to explain.

Roger: I know it's very true

Willy: So, they would both be good because if they get the same amount of practice, they would both have the same skill and stuff.

Cam: Yeah, so there wouldn't be one that would be better, the boy and the girl would be exactly the same?

Roger: Yeah and then I think there will be a draw where they would just verse one on one.

Cam: But what we're saying then is that boys... girls don't really practice and train as much as boys at sports?

Willy: Yeah.

(Willy & Roger, playground map interview)

So, though Willy's first thought was that boys are better, despite not being able to explain it, he was able to think reflexively enough to show an awareness that sometimes boys' superiority is based on the different levels of experience. What he was not consciously aware of is the role that he and some of the other boys played in impacting the ability of the girls to practice these skills. In their interviews, Lana and Renny were able to speak reflexively about this belief from the boys:

Cam: Do you think the boys think they're better than the girls at most things?

Lana: Yeah

Renny: Yeah

Cam: Why do you think the boys think they are so good?

Renny: They show off, like, 'I can do a kick.'

(Renny & Lana, Playground map interview)

Renny and Lana were aware of how the boys thought of their sporting abilities and were explicitly aware of how the boys often show off. However, they were unaware of the real impact these acts had on their own PE experiences. Unlike Roger, by not engaging in these acts of skill mastery the girls show that they were not ‘worthy’ to play with the boys on the playground. Then, as a result of the low EE these activities yielded, the girls typically avoided playing sport with the boys at school, which only furthered the division between the boys and the girls. However, it was important to note that this divide did not necessarily extend beyond the school. As the example of Mary and Renny show, both girls were able to successfully participate in sport outside of school in more positive environments, where their levels of experience were accounted for and their participation was valued. This focus on skill mastery was not exclusive to isolated skill practice. As I will show, in the next section, these displays also occurred during small-sided co-operative games.

‘I’m allowed to do it!’: Skill mastery during piggy in the middle

This ritual consisted of a game of piggy in the middle, during a PE class for 1/2 Yellow. The game had six participants: Aaron, Rick, Adele, Shooki, Nat and Danny. The game started with Danny, Nat, Aaron and Shooki as the passers, with both Rick and Adele inside (as the piggies) (for a full collection of photos see appendix H)

Aaron starts by throwing it high to Natasha. She drops it and Adele gets it and swaps out with Aaron. Aaron, now a piggy, runs up and gets in Adele’s face, he spreads his hands and tries to block Adele’s throw. She moves the ball around, but he moves with her, trying to block any of her throwing paths (see fig. 51). Adele is not able to throw it very far, Ric catches her ball and she has to go into the middle. Aaron and Rick laugh at Adele because she lost the ball. Rick ends up with the ball on the outside. Aaron runs and tries to block him off with his defensive stance. Ricks

pushes him and says, “stop it, Aaron”. Aaron responds, “I am allowed to do it!” Ric is not able to throw it very far, so Aaron gets it. Rick and Aaron argue about whether Aaron was allowed to do that. Aaron wins this argument and so Rick has to go into the middle. He turns around to Aaron and says, “bossy as!” Rick now does the same thing to Aaron. As a result, Aaron makes a bad pass and Adele gets the ball, swapping with Aaron. As piggy, Aaron immediately runs up and tries to block Adele from throwing, he reaches in and tries to knock the ball out of her hands. Rick runs in and tries to do the same thing as Aaron, jumping and smacking the ball in her hands (see fig. 52). This makes it difficult for Adele to throw. She throws it to Shooki, who says, “I finally get the ball for the first time”. Rick and Aaron both run over. They spread out wide and try to block Shooki’s throw. She holds it and they start jumping up and down, ready to intercept (see fig. 53). Shooki throws it and Aaron gets it, meaning Shooki has to go in. On the next throw, Rick uses this strategy to intercept Nat’s throw. For the next couple of minutes, Aaron and Rick throw the ball high over Nat and Shooki’s heads. Danny joins in throwing the ball high over Nat and Shooki’s heads. Adele is not able to throw it as high and so Nat eventually catches one of Adele’s throw.

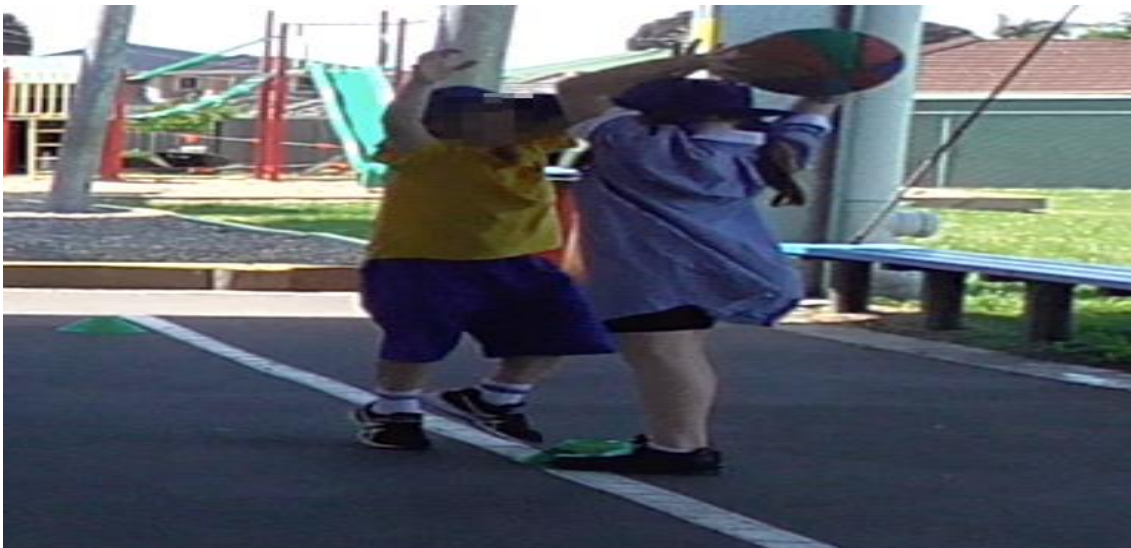


Figure 51 - Aaron tries to block Adele from throwing the ball

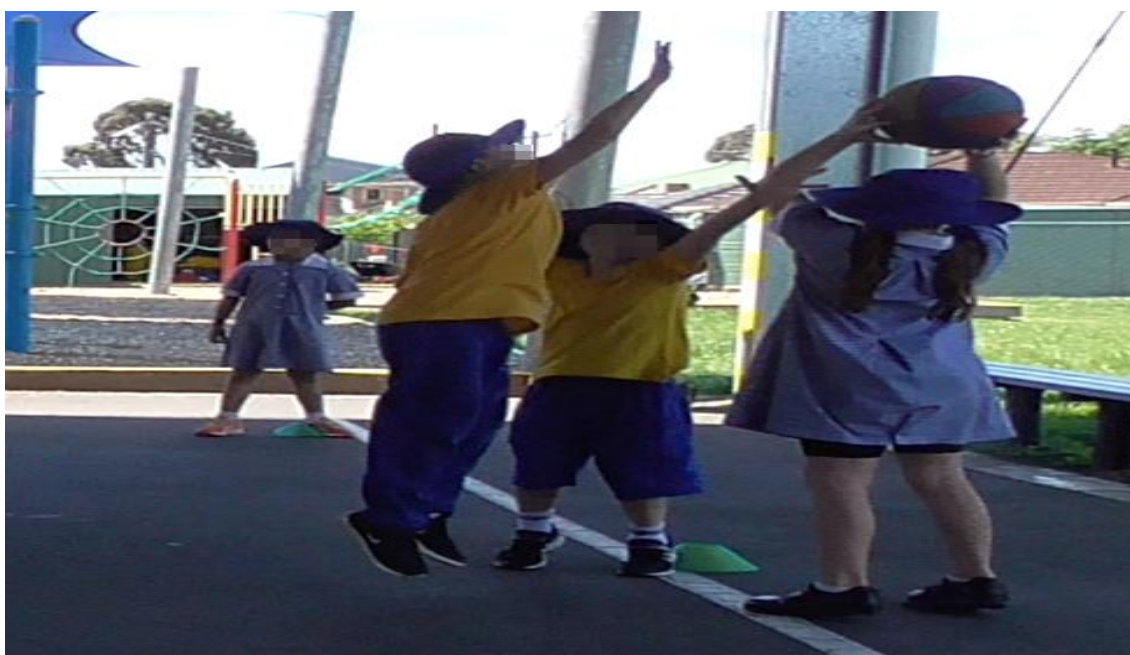


Figure 52 - Aaron and Rick jump and try to knock the ball out of Adele's hands



Figure 53 - Aaron and Rick invade Shooki's space

Unlike the previous activity, this activity did not place a strong emphasis on individual skill practice and display. As a result, the displays of skill mastery were not as overt as in activities that involved individual practice. However, the piggy in the middle activity still placed a strong emphasis on

skills. In order to succeed in this activity students needed to throw, catch, move in space and implement a defensive stance (while stuck as piggy). Within this activity, displaying a mastery of these skills allowed an individual to be successful. Hence, this activity relied on the mastery of object control skills that were specifically sport related. Accordingly, it made sense that the two children with the most sporting experience, Rick and Aaron, were able to display the highest levels of skill mastery. This allowed them to dominate the activity.

There was a range of sporting experiences that underpinned this activity. Aaron had the highest level of sporting experience. Outside of school, Aaron played cricket, football (see fig. 54) and basketball (see fig. 55). In fact, he played on multiple basketball teams, as he explained:

Cam: So, you play on the same team as your brother?

Aaron: Yes. And also, another team.

Cam: So, you play on two teams?

Aaron: Yes.

(Aaron, photo-elicitation interview)

On the playground, he did not exclusively play sports but did play basketball whenever possible.¹⁰⁴ Rick did not have the same level of sporting experience as Aaron but had played for a junior basketball team for the last couple of years. He and his friends also occasionally played basketball on the playground, as his map shows (see fig. 56). In contrast, Adele did not regularly participate in a junior sport, but did occasionally participate in an acrobatics class, as she explained:

Cam: So, do you go to, you said you have a coach, do you go to Bounce every week?

¹⁰⁴ As discussed earlier, the basketball court was primarily zoned for use by the older students. Therefore, Aaron and his friends typically played only if there was a free hoop or if the older students were absent, like when the Year 5/6 students were away on a camp.

Adele: Not every week just like sometimes, on special occasions.

Cam: And what does the coach do, teaches you different tricks and stuff to do?

Adele: Yeah.

(Adele, photo-elicitation interview)

At home, she also stayed active by riding her bike (see fig. 57) climbing trees (see fig. 58), and rollerblading (see fig. 59). Nat did not participate in any junior sport, but regularly skipped (see fig. 60), played Down ball (see fig. 61) and rode her bike (see fig. 62), at home. Danny did not participate in a junior sport but regularly played games with Rick on the playground, including when Rick played basketball. Shooki did not play any sport, either at school or outside of school. For Shooki, PE was her first exposure to organized sport and physical activity. Despite the range of physical experience that the children brought to class, the activity heavily favoured the sporting experience of Aaron and Rick. Consequently, they were able to embody their sporting habitus to display skill mastery in the object control skills that this activity required.



Figure 54 - Aaron playing football



Figure 55 - Aaron playing basketball



Figure 56 - Rick's playground map

The group nature of this activity meant that there was a strong sense of group assembly. As I will show, the bodily co-presence of the children meant that their individual actions impacted each other. The mutual focus of attention of each individual was on the successful performance of the skills that the

activity required, and the symbolic capital this provided.¹⁰⁵ Each of the children wanted to display their skills to be successful in this activity. For each child, this meant showing your skills as a passer and a piggy (if you ended up in the middle). As a result, there were a number of displays of skill mastery that would grant symbolic capital. As a passer, you could throw the ball high over the head of the piggies. As a piggy, you could use a defensive stance to limit a passer's ability to throw or try to knock the ball out their hands. Performing the skills at a basic level provided capital, but not to the same degree as these acts of mastery. The group all collectively accepted this focus on performing the skills effectively. However, the boys also collectively accepted that performing acts of skill mastery, even if they were at the expense of the girls, was where their focus should be.



Figure 57- Adele rides her bike at home

¹⁰⁵ There was also a mutual focus on gaining capital through competition. However, for the purpose of this chapter, I will focus specifically on the focus of attention on skill mastery.



Figure 58- Adele loves to climb trees

The mixture of these ingredients played a key role in the outcomes of this ritual. There was a sense of group solidarity between all the members, as they all continued to place an emphasis on executing the skills effectively. However, there was a deeper sense of group solidarity between Aaron, Rick and Danny. This was particularly the case for Rick and Aaron, as they often completed acts of skill mastery in tandem, without explicitly communicating to each other what they should do. They also committed multiple acts of explicit and symbolic violence, including laughing at Adele's inability to throw the ball correctly, even though Aaron affected her throw. Initially, Aaron performed these acts first and Rick copied or joined in, but by the end, they worked almost as a unit. Although, it is worth noting that Rick did not like it when Aaron performed these actions on him. At the end of the activity, Danny unconsciously joined in, by working in tandem with Rick and Aaron to continually throw the ball high over Nat and Shooki's heads. They only threw it to Adele on a number of occasions, and eventually, she lost the ball as she was not throwing it as high as the boys. For Danny and Rick, the ball was already a significant symbol. It was a symbol of their previous sporting experience, particularly for the team sports they had participated in. Accordingly, they understood how to use their bodies to control the ball when it

was in their hands, and how to try and get it back when it was not. This ritual reproduced the significance of the ball as a symbol, and the symbolic capital it could provide. Danny did not have this same connection with the ball, but engaged in similar behaviours to the other boys, which meant he was able to accrue capital. Hence, the symbol of the ball likely held future significance for him. Similarly, Nat, Adele and Shooki did not have the same level of experience in playing ball sports. Nat did have some experience through Down ball, but she mainly played for fun with her brother. Through this ritual, the ball took on some significance, as it was a means to gain capital through skilled displays. However, the ball also becomes a symbol of the acts of symbolic violence that the boys performed against them. Therefore, the inability of their girls to accrue as much physical capital meant that the symbol of the ball did not hold as much significance for them.



Figure 59 - Adele riding her rollerblades



Figure 60 - Nat loves skipping at home

As a product of this ritual, the children left with different levels of EE. As the student with the most physical capital, Aaron was able to acquire and accrue the most symbolic capital. He displayed his skill mastery on a number of occasions. Early on, he had to be the piggy, but was able to use his sporting experience to get out of this position by using his body to impact the throwing ability of his peers. In doing this, he committed acts of symbolic violence which contributed to his success. As a result, he left this activity overflowing with emotional energy, confident in his own skills and with a high sense of enthusiasm (Collins, 2004). Rick was also able to display a number of acts of skill mastery, based on his sporting experience. In these acts, he followed the lead of Aaron, committing acts of symbolic violence, including hitting Adele multiple times while trying to get the ball. However, he did not enjoy it when Aaron used these same skills to impact his performance. As a result, he and Aaron argued, until Aaron eventually won, and Rick called him 'bossy'. This sapped Rick of some EE but he still left the activity with confidence, initiative and pride (Collins, 2004). Danny did not start the activity with the same levels of physical capital as Danny and Rick. However, by following the lead of Rick and Aaron, and throwing the ball high over the heads of Nat and Shooki, he was able to accrue some symbolic capital. This display

of skill mastery also meant he was able to avoid ending up in the middle. At the end of this ritual, Danny left with a feeling of confidence (Collins, 2004) in his skills



Figure 61 - Nat playing Down ball



Figure 62 - Nat riding her bike

Adele, Nat and Shooki left this ritual with a loss of EE. All three children were able to display proficiency in the skills of the activity, but they were not able to display the same levels of skill mastery

as the boys. Also, their ability to proficiently execute the skills was often impaired by the acts of skill mastery and violence committed by the boys. For example, Adele's ability to throw was directly impacted by Aaron and Ric's defensive stances and slapping attempts. Additionally, Nat and Shooki's ability to catch or intercept the ball as piggies was constrained because the three boys threw the ball high over their heads. Despite this, Adele's ability to perform the skill effectively on a number of occasions meant she was able to accrue some symbolic capital. However, the EE she produced was impacted by the actions of the boys. Nat and Shooki were unable to accrue much symbolic capital from this ritual. Rick and Aaron's displays of skill mastery sent both girls into the middle and they got stuck there. They chased the ball but were unable to get close to it, until Nat finally caught Adele's throw. As a result, this ritual did not produce much emotional energy for Nat and Shooki, which meant that it was a failed ritual and they likely left with feelings of exclusion, a lack of interest and a lack of willingness to initiate action (Summers-Effler, 2004a).

This ritual had an impact on the habitus of each child. Predictably, as Aaron's acquisition of capital meant that he left this ritual overflowing with emotional energy, he sought similar rituals. He continued to participate in a variety of sports outside school, including football, cricket and basketball. At school, he did not always play sports on the playground, but he did highlight how important he thought the sporting spaces were through his playground map (see fig. 3). His choice not to play sport had more to do with the interest of his friends, as he explains:

Cam: So you play in two different basketball teams, and we'll talk about that one a little bit later, how come you don't ever play basketball at school?

Aaron: Well because it's usually a bit too hard to like, because like my friends aren't really into basketball, and so I also really want to play with them. And so that's why.

Cam: OK. So, if those guys played basketball you might play basketball at school?

Aaron: Yes, for sure!

Cam: Yeah, but because they don't, you play other things with those guys?

Aaron: Yeah.

(Aaron, photo-elicitation interview)

So, because his friends did not want to play, he played other things, such as the monkey bars. In PE, however, Aaron continued to dominate, committing similar acts of symbolic violence against his peers. In his interviews, Aaron talked about the importance of everyone getting the opportunity to learn and practice skills:

Cam: OK. So if you were to play basketball in PE, do you think the boys and girls would be able to play together really well?

Aaron: Yes.

Cam: So, you think both boys and girls could learn at the same time and play basketball together?

Aaron: Yeah.

Cam: Who would be the best?

Aaron: I'm not really sure, because like, because if we're like all learning at the same time, we might have like the same experience.

(Aaron, photo-elicitation interview)

Despite this moment of reflexivity, Aaron continued to dominate in PE classes and impact the ability of the other children to learn, thereby negatively impacting their development of a physical subjectivity.

Rick's experience in this ritual did not motivate him to seek out similar rituals on the playground, as he chose to play other games with his friends (such as Danny) instead:

Cam: So, what type of games do you guys play on the playground?

Rick: Tiggy, Hide and Seek, Octopus, Basketball, Tiggy.

Danny: *Zombie Rush*.

Rick: Yeah, *Zombie Rush*.

Danny: Ninja.

Rick: Ninjas, *Pirate's Cove*.

Danny: Duck, Duck, Goose.

(Rick/Danny, playground map interview)

Importantly though, similar to Willy, the levels of capital he was able to accrue did provide the feeling that he could play anywhere he wanted on the playground, although he did not always use this privilege. Rick continued to play sport outside of school and embody these experiences in his PE practice. He was not always successful, as the following example shows:

After a few throws, he got angry at Johnny, saying "Stop tricking me, it's cheating". Johnny wasn't doing anything tricky, or that could be considered cheating, she was just throwing the ball high, out of his reach. Ricardo was annoyed because he couldn't get the ball. After a few more throws, he threw the ball down and announced, "I hate being Piggy!!". He sat out for the rest of the activity.

(Field note, PE class 1/2 Yellow)

In these moments, when other students displayed skill mastery at his expense he did not react well, but this did not stop him from committing the same acts to accrue capital whenever possible. Danny's lower level of emotional energy meant that he did not actively seek sporting rituals outside of school or on the playground. This is likely based on his inexperience in sport and therefore his inability to accrue high levels of physical capital. He did, however, continue to follow the lead of the sporty students and accrue physical capital, often at his peers' expense, whenever possible in PE activities. As a result, PE tended to be a positive experience for him.

For Adele, this activity did not have enough of an emotional impact to motivate her to seek similar sporting rituals. Instead, she and her friend Tessa engaged in different types of activities on the playground:

Adele: We play Tiggy, we go on the monkey bars.

Tessa: We play with the...

Adele: Huh? We play Tiggy with the boys on the oval.

Tessa: Yeah. And...

Adele: We do skipping on the asphalt court. We don't do stuff in BER. We sometimes sit here and talk to each other.

Tessa: Yeah.

Cam: So, you said you play tiggy sometimes, tiggy with the boys, is that all the time, or only sometimes?

Tessa: Sometimes.

Cam: occasionally.

(Tessa & Adele, playground map interview)

They played a variety of non-sporting activities, even occasionally playing tiggy with a group of boys from their class. Adele continued to be active outside school, but her activities did not translate to school:

Cam: OK, that sounds like a lot of fun. OK, one thing obviously that comes out is that you love to exercise, you love to do active things, so do you think you do the same types of active things when you're here on the playground?

Adele: Not really.

Cam: Why do you think that is? Why aren't you doing as many active things on the playground?

Adele: Well I do active things on the playground, but I don't do the sports on the playground

Cam: How come?

Adele: Because like we're not allowed to climb trees and I don't think it would be appropriate for me to ride my bike at the school.

(Adele, photo-elicitation interview)

As Adele points out, there is a disconnect between what she can do to be active at home compared to school.

For Natasha, this activity did not produce enough emotional energy to motivate her to seek similar rituals. Accordingly, she did not seek these types of rituals on the playground, as she chose instead to play with her friend Karina in the jungle gym area (see fig. 63), as she explained:

Cam: What is your favourite thing to do on the playground?

Natasha: My one's monkey bars.

Cam: Yours is monkey bars. What about you, Karina?

Karina: Monkey bars.

Cam: Monkey bars. What do you like about the monkey bars?

Natasha: Because we get to like flips, and like do stuff on there.

(Natasha & Karina, playground map interview)

There was, however, one skill in PE that she valued enough to practice outside of school (see fig. 60):

Cam: Is skipping your favourite thing to do in PE as well?

Natasha: Uh-huh.

Cam: So, you enjoy doing it in PE?

Natasha: Yeah.

Cam: So how often do you think you skip at home?

Natasha: Maybe every day.

Cam: Every day, so you love it that much?

Natasha: [No verbal response]. Nods

(Natasha, photo-elicitation interview)

However, as discussed previously, this is not a skill that is highly valued in this context. Similar to Nat, Shooki's low level of emotional attachment meant she did not seek similar rituals, as she chose to play with friends instead:

Cam: OK. Are there any games from PE, that you learn in PE, that you play on the playground, like skipping, or piggy in the middle, or anything like that? No? OK.

Shooki: Oh, in PE we... you see us play in PE.

Cam: I know. So like things that we do in PE, like piggy in the middle, do you ever play them on the playground? No? How come?

Shooki: I'm not really into sports.

(Shooki, playground map interview)

In this statement, Shooki made her views on sport well known. However, as I have shown, her views on sport are likely strongly impacted by her experiences during these activities. Her lack of sporting experience, the acts of symbolic violence by the boys, and her inability to learn and master the skills made this a failed ritual and therefore not one she would choose to engage in during her own time. How is she expected to foster an emotional attachment to sport if these are the types of experiences she has?



Figure 63 - Nat's map of the playground

Ultimately, this micro-interaction showed again how the division between the children can become reproduced and exacerbated. The hierarchy of sporting experience set the stage for this IR and was ultimately reinforced. Those children with the most sporting experience displayed their advanced skills to the detriment of the other students' learning. The boys, particularly Aaron and Rick, with bodies

already reasonably well-developed through sporting experience, were able to embody this development to accrue more capital in PE and continued to develop along the path to sporting dominance. The emotional energy these rituals produced for the boys motivated them to seek similar situations, further advancing this development. For the girls, they struggled to learn the skills, specifically within the context of the boys' actions, gained very little emotional connection, and therefore did not seek these rituals in their own time. Adele and Natasha still stayed active in other ways, but their activities were not valued at school. The previous two rituals show what happens when the children with a well-developed sporting habitus get to display skills that are valued in the field. However, this was not always the case. In the next example, I will show what happens when the skill being practised is one that is not highly valued.

‘I forgot how to skip’: Skill mastery in skipping

This ritual occurred during a skipping activity for a group of students in class 1/2 Blue. The ritual had six participants, Lupita, Tim, Quincy, Preston, Jay and Jimmy (for a full collection of photos see appendix I):

This activity starts with everyone skipping individually. Despite some failed attempts, everyone continues to try to skip. After a few failed skips, Tim groans and walks off to get a drink. Preston starts skipping fast and counts how many skips he can do in a row. After a few failed attempts, Jay looks to the camera and says, “I forgot how to skip.” He says, “this is how skipping is” and pretends to skip incorrectly (see fig. 64). Quincy joins in by saying ‘this is how I skip’ and then throws the rope behind his head during an attempt. Jimmy does the same. The boys laugh at each time. After spending a minute at the drinking fountain, Tim walks back and sees a ball roll along the ground. He chases it and boots it a couple of times. Carl comes looking for it and Tim boots it away from him. Jay gets bored and decides to play Helicopter. He whips the rope around almost hitting Lupita. She says, “Ahh” and runs away to practice skipping somewhere else. Jay still tries

to do a helicopter, but Tim stands in the way and stops him from spinning (see fig. 65). Lupita tries to do her own Helicopter, but no one joins in, so she stops. Preston and Quincy continue to try and skip as fast as they can. Eventually, Quincy starts doing a helicopter with Preston, but Jimmy joins in and disrupts the game by stamping on the rope multiple times (see fig. 66). This has disrupted Lupita's skipping again, so she moves away to practice her own skipping. Quincy tries to play Helicopter again, but Jimmy runs over and pushes Quincy out of the way, grabbing the rope, so that he can do the helicopter instead. Quincy is forced to skip until Jimmy gets bored and gives up. Jay again says, "I have forgotten how to skip" but then tells me that he wants to show me how to criss-cross, because 'he has done it a million times'. Tim sits down for a while and although he does come back, he does not put much effort into skipping. Eventually, after all these interruptions, everyone starts skipping again although, by the time the whistle is blown, they have all given up except for Preston and Lupita.

(PE video, Class 1/2 Blue)



Figure 64 - Jay pretends not to be able to skip



Figure 65 - Tim blocks Jay from spinning his rope



Figure 66 - Jimmy stamps on Preston's rope

As an activity, skipping places a major focus on individual skill acquisition and practice. Accordingly, it was common to see acts of skill mastery during the skipping station, including speed skipping, backwards skipping and criss-cross. However, it was also interesting because, as discussed, it was not a skill that was particularly valued within the context of CRP PE. It was given some value as an

FMS and therefore given a reasonable time allocation in class as an activity station, but it did not hold much significance beyond this. Besides helping the children learn to jump, it was not a skill that strongly linked to sport, which made it difficult for some of the sporty children to recognize the value it held. At CRP, the skill was dropped entirely by third grade, to focus on sports. Importantly, it was also a highly gendered skill (Boyle, Marshall & Robeson, 2003, Connolly, 2003; Renold, 1997; Thorne, 1993), with many of the children thinking it was mainly for girls:

Jay: Do you want to see how a man skips?

Cam: How is that?

Jay: Like this (He skips completely wrong, as if he doesn't know how to do it).

Cam: Why is that how a man skips?

Jay: Because men don't know how to skip properly.

Cam: So, is skipping only for girls then?

Jay: Yeah.

(Field note, PE class 1/2 Blue)

Ultimately, the combination of these factors meant that many of the children were unconsciously aware that the skill did not hold much value within the class. So, while some children, who possessed physical capital in skipping, tried to display skill mastery to obtain symbolic capital, others made no effort at all to master the skill. How this played out was directly influenced by the children's previous sporting experiences.

Each of the children had differing levels of sporting experience. Tim had the most extensive sporting experience. In his own words, he had played football for the 'last two years and the year before

that.’ At home, he also rode his bike regularly (see fig. 67) and played tennis with his family (see fig. 68).

At school, he spent the majority of his time playing football with his friends, as he discussed:

Cam: OK. So where do you and your friends play?

Tim: Oval.

Cam: On the oval. So what types of games do you play?

Tim: Football, all the time.

Cam: Uh-huh.

Tim: Football, and that’s it.

(Tim, playground map interview)

Jimmy also had experience playing junior sport, primarily soccer and basketball. As a result, he often displayed his sporting skills while playing in PE. Additionally, he was a big kid for his age, so towered over some of the smaller children in the class. For Jay, his main sport physical activity outside of school was swimming lessons (see fig. 69). He had not engaged in any other junior sporting activities, but interestingly, loved to skip at home (see fig. 70). Preston did not participate in any sport outside school, nor did he play sport on the playground. Instead, he played games with his friends, including Jimmy, as they discussed:

Cam: OK, so who did you put on your map as your friends?

Preston: I put Ryan and Jimmy.

Cam: Yeah, and so where do you play?

Preston: We play anywhere.

Cam: Mm, so what do you play now?

Jimmy: We just play Tiggy, and video games, we just pretend that we're in the video games.

(Jimmy/Preston, playground map interview)

Quincy did not play any sport outside of school either. On the playground, he occasionally played cricket¹⁰⁶ (see fig. 71), but primarily spent his time playing on the monkey bars. He did not have much experience playing organized team sports. Finally, similar to Preston and Quincy, Lupita did not play sport outside of school either. Although, she was quite vocal about how much she loved to skip at home:

Cam: So, what is one of your favourite things to do to be active at home?

Lupita: You mean like skipping. I love to do skipping.

Cam: So, tell me about skipping, what do you like to do when you skip?

Lupita: I just like to skip fast.

(Lupita, playground map interview)

At school, she played almost exclusively with Grace, in a variety of non-sporting spaces around the school. The different sporting experiences of the children set the stage for the embodied interactions that occurred during this activity.

¹⁰⁶ In my time at the school, I only saw Quincy play cricket on two occasions. His map drawing session was conducted on one of these days, which might explain why he placed the cricket pitch so predominantly on his map.



Figure 67 - Tim rides his bike



Figure 68 - Tim plays tennis with his family

Similar to the football activity, although the children practised their skipping individually, there was a strong sense of bodily presence. On multiple occasions, they dropped their individual ropes and

played Helicopter¹⁰⁷ collectively. The video showed that there was a clear focus of attention on the skill of skipping. No matter what else occurred, all of the children did practice their skipping on multiple occasions. However, unlike other activities where the mutual focus of attention of all players was driven by the type of capital on offer, this was different. This division was driven by the divisive nature of skipping. There was still an unconscious focus on skill mastery, as some of the children tried to show off their skipping skills. However, the embodied experience of some of the students, particularly those with a sporting habitus, meant that they did not value skipping and so made very little effort to skip correctly. In fact, on multiple occasions, these students actively sought to show that they could not skip. Consequently, the group was divided between those children who sought to display skipping mastery and those who sought to display no mastery. Each group of students collectively accepted that this was the best way to obtain emotional energy from this ritual.



Figure 69 - Jay at a swimming lesson

¹⁰⁷ Helicopter involved one child spinning their rope around on the ground in circles, while the other children tried to jump over it as it came around.



Figure 70 - Jay practices his skipping at home

The structuring of this ritual in this way directly impacted the outcomes. As discussed, this activity divided the children into two distinct groups, those who valued skipping and those who did not. The children who valued skipping (Preston, Lupita and Quincy) tried to display their skipping mastery on a number of occasions. The children who did not value skipping in the same way (Jay, Tim and Jimmy) actively tried to show that they did not like skipping, occasionally exaggerating an inability to skip. Their efforts to display their lack of enthusiasm for skipping meant that they committed acts of symbolic violence that disrupted the practice of their peers. Although the embodied actions of the children divided the children into these two groups, there were still moments of overlap. The primary example of this was Jay, who on a number of occasions overtly showed that he did not value skipping, but then, alternatively, on other occasions tried to display his skipping mastery.

For the children, the skipping rope was a strong symbol of this ritual. For Quincy, Preston and Lupita the rope was a symbol for the symbolic capital that they could acquire and accrue by showing off their skills, including skipping as fast as they could. The rope was also a symbol for the capital that could be gained by joining in on a game of helicopter and performing successfully. For Tim, Jimmy and Jay the

skipping rope did not hold this same level of significance. Their actions, in attempting to skip, showed they acknowledged that rope was imbued with capital, but they also embodied the lack of value that this capital held for them (for Jay, this was exclusive to PE). This was particularly true for Jimmy and Oscar, who had the most developed sporting habitus, and therefore embodied this experience to show that skipping did not offer the type of capital that aligned with their habitus. This is particularly apparent in the way that they both, separately, stamped on the rope and disrupted a game of Helicopter. By committing this act of symbolic violence, they overtly showed that skipping did not hold significant value for them. In this act of symbolic violence, they also disrupted the ability of the other children to skip. Tim also showed that a significant symbol of symbolic capital for him was the ball. During the activity, he dropped his rope and went out of his way to kick Carl's ball, showing more enthusiasm for this act than skipping. In doing so, he committed an act of symbolic violence by kicking it away, rather than giving it to Carl. Jay's actions during this activity are particularly interesting. He primarily showed that he did not value skipping, by pretending on multiple occasions that he could not skip. He either fell to the ground or threw the rope out of his hand. However, later in the activity, he tried to show how fast he could skip, and outside of this ritual, talked about how much he valued skipping. In many ways, Jay's embodied actions were the most reflective of the lack of value that was placed on skipping in this PE context.

The combination of the ritual ingredients meant that the children left this ritual with varying levels of emotional energy. The children's individual habitus played an important role in this process. How they embodied this habitus, and therefore the type of capital they valued played a key role in their production of emotional energy. Unlike other activities, for some children the lack of value they placed on the skill meant that their emotional energy came from explicitly not exhibiting skill mastery. For Quincy, Preston and Lupita they were able to accrue some symbolic capital from skipping fast and successfully skipping during helicopter. However, because the skill was not widely valued their efforts were tacitly acknowledged by their collective consciousness, but never explicitly acknowledged or valued.

Additionally, their efforts to engage in skill mastery were impacted by the acts of symbolic violence committed by Jimmy and Tim. So, although they had a feeling of confidence in their own skills, they still left this ritual with low levels of emotional energy. For Lupita, who valued the skill of skipping and kept practising (despite the interventions of the boys), she left with enough emotional energy that she sought to skip in the future.

As discussed, it is clear that Jimmy and Oscar did not value skipping. Predictably, they did not make any attempts to display a mastery of skipping. Instead, they left their ropes on the ground on multiple occasions and spent periods of time not skipping. On two separate occasions, where each of them could have displayed skill mastery by participating in a game of Helicopter, they jumped on the rope and stopped the game from being played. Thus, based on their embodied experience of sport they did not seek the symbolic capital available from skipping skill mastery. For Jimmy and Oscar, displaying skill mastery, for a skill they did not value, would not have produced much emotional energy. Instead, they left this failed ritual with feelings of confidence, pride and enthusiasm (Collins, 2004) because they chose not to engage. In a sense, Jay played both sides. Within the context of this activity, he tried to display his mastery of skipping, but also acknowledged that skipping was not valued. As a result, he overtly tried to show that he could not skip. Interestingly, by doing this he was able to produce emotional energy by both displaying his skills, but also showing that he did not care about skipping. As a result, he left this ritual with confidence in his own skills and feeling of elation in going along with the broader view of skipping within PE.

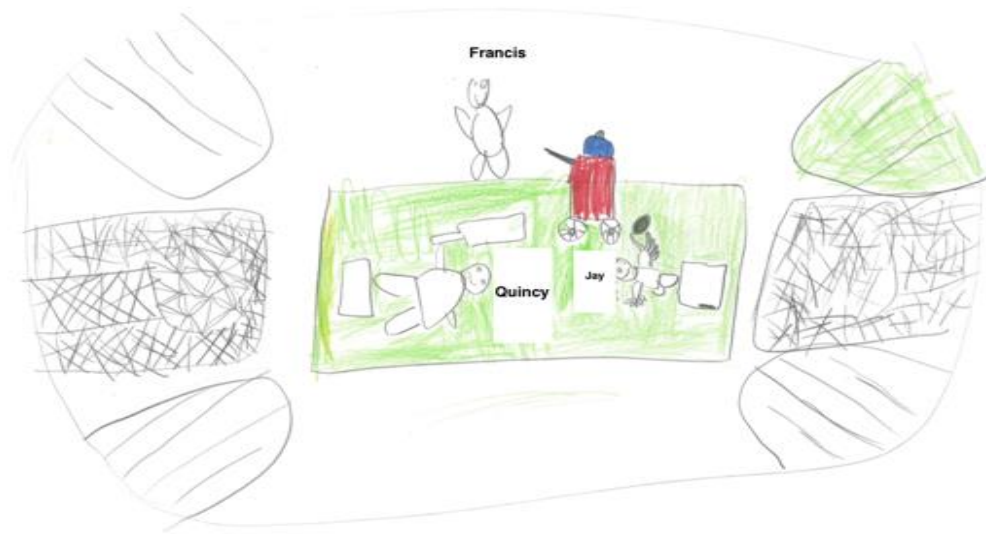


Figure 71 - Quincy's playground map

This ritual had an impact on the habitus of each of the children. As this was a failed ritual for Tim, he continued to seek rituals where his sporting habitus would allow him to produce high levels of emotional energy. In other PE activities he displayed his skill mastery to the determinant of other children:

Lupita and Kelly find a space and start practising their kicking. Tim and Carl run over and shout, "No, this is our space!" Lupita and Kelly walk away to find a space. During this activity, Tim boots the ball, as hard as he can, from where ever he gets it. Quincy is struggling, so Tim decides to show him how to kick. He chases Quincy and tries to steal his ball off him (see fig. 72). Quincy says, "no, man" and runs away to another space

(Video, PE class 1/2 Blue)

On the playground, he continued to play sport as much as possible, converting symbolic capital to physical capital to dominate these games:

Carl, Jake and Timothy argued by the football goals. Carl and Jake told me that every time Tim got hurt or pushed, he gave himself a free-kick. Whereas, he wouldn't let them get a free kick if the same happened to them. As a result, he was dominating the game. They pointed out that it wasn't fair, and that Tim always played like this. Jake said, "If you added it up, he has done it a thousand times this year".

(Field note, recess, playground)

For Jimmy, although he continued to play soccer outside school, he did not typically pursue similar rituals on the playground. He did, however, continue to dominate in PE activities, often displaying skill mastery or engaging in competition (typically committing acts of symbolic violence in these pursuits), as shown through the following example:

Jimmy has the ball, and Preston and Lupita are in the middle. He dribbles up to Preston and holds the ball out to him. When Preston tries to grab the ball, Jimmy pulls it back and dribbles it back to his spot laughing (see fig. 73). Later, Jimmy holds the ball and mocks Lupita and Jay, by making silly faces, then he fakes throwing it to Jim and launches it over their heads to Jay.

(Video, PE Class 1/2 Blue)

In these situations, he often soaked up EE and left these rituals with his strong feels of pride and initiative.



Figure 72 - Tim tries to steal Quincy's ball

For Preston and Quincy, their acquisitions of some symbolic capital produced a small amount of EE. However, since this capital was not valued, they were not able to convert it into much physical capital. Accordingly, this did not encourage Preston or Quincy to seek similar rituals on the playground, nor did it provide unconditional acceptance to play sport with the sporty kids on the playground. Quincy was only able to play sport on the playground if an area was free:

Carl and his friends brought a bat to play cricket. After five minutes of play, they decided to play football, so they left the equipment there. Eventually, Quincy, Jay and Kevin found the equipment and played for a bit (see fig. 71). At lunchtime, Carl and his friends had moved back to play cricket and Quincy, Jay and Kevin had to play somewhere else.

(Field note, lunch, playground)

While Preston only played sport occasionally:

Cam: So, do you two ever play football on the playground?

Preston: I play with James sometimes, when he lets us, but not a lot.

Jimmy: Yeah, sometimes we'll play footy with James.

(Jimmy & Preston, playground interview)

In other PE activities, their lower levels of physical capital often meant they were not able to accrue much symbolic capital. For example, in the activity that highlighted Jimmy's dominance, Preston ended up stuck in the middle for a significant proportion of the game, as he struggled to intercept the ball. Similarly, the example highlighting Tim's dominance showed that Quincy struggled to master the skill of kicking, particularly compounded by Tim's interference. As these examples show, this low level of capital meant that the sporty children committed acts of symbolic violence against Preston and Quincy. However, it is important to note that Preston and Quincy typically followed the lead of the sporty kids and tried to get capital by committing lesser acts of symbolic violence against their peers, typically the girls.



Figure 73 - Jimmy dribbles away from Jay

Similarly, for Lupita, the symbolic capital that she gained by displaying her advanced skipping skills did not convert to much symbolic capital. This was similar to other activities in PE, where her lack of physical capital often meant acts of symbolic violence were committed against her. For example, it was common for Lupita to get stuck in the middle during piggy in the middle. The boys faked passes to fool

her and routinely threw high over her head. Hence, although her skipping provided some capital, she did not possess the necessary physical capital to play sports on the playground. Importantly though, she made the choice to avoid these types of ritual on the playground, playing with Grace instead. As she explained, she valued skipping, so despite the actions of the boys, she continued to seek EE by engaging in similar rituals:

Cam: OK. Are there any games that you play in P.E. that you play on the playground? Is there anything that we do in P.E. that you and Grace play on the playground?

Lupita: Only skipping.

Cam: Only skipping. How come you don't do anything else?

Lupita: Because.

(Lupita, playground map interview)

Lupita's valuing of skipping is likely due to her experience level and ability, but it also is likely linked to the gendered nature of skipping, as she touches on:

Cam: Do boys like skipping?

Lupita: No.

Cam: How come, do you think?

Lupita: Because.

Cam: Because why?

Lupita: Boys are too sleek and lazy.

(Lupita, playground map interview)

So, although Lupita cannot accurately explain why, she was explicitly aware that boys do not like skipping. If anything, the actions of some of the boys during this activity only reinforced this gendered notion in Lupita's mind.

Jay is unique within this activity. His choice of pictures (see fig. 70) and the way he talks about skipping show that he valued it as an activity/skill:

Cam: So, what are you doing in that one?

Jay: I'm skipping.

Cam: So how often do you skip?

Jay: Every... every... nearly every three days.

Cam: Nearly every three days. And what type of things do you do when you're skipping?

Jay: Crisscross, I skip backwards. I can skip on one leg.

(Jay, photo-elicitation interview)

He also made a comparison between skipping at home compared to PE:

Cam: Do you prefer to skip at home or skip in PE?

Jay: Skip at home.

Cam: Why?

Jay: Because there's more space.

(Jay, photo-elicitation interview)

At home, he was happy to skip but in PE, where he knows skipping was not valued, he did not make the same effort. This showed the disconnect between his habitus at home and his habitus within PE. At home, he loved to skip, but at school, in PE, he did not make the same effort. This is odd because there were many activities where his lack of physical capital made it difficult for him to succeed:

After 10 minutes of practice, Jay wasn't getting better at kicking the football. He missed the ball on most of his kick attempts. No one was working with him or intervening to show him how to actually kick properly. Eventually, Jay announced, 'I hate kicking' and gave up.

(Field note, PE, Class 1/2 Blue)

Consequently, Jay did not typically seek these types of sporting rituals on the playground. Nor did he practice his skipping at school, although he continued to practice regularly at home. What this shows is that if skipping was encouraged and valued at PE, a student such as Jay would happily participate and display their skill.

There is a gendered underpinning to this activity which clearly impacts how the children perceive skipping, but there is more going on. The emphasis placed on sport within the PE class combined with the embodied sporting experiences of the dominant children means that skipping does not fit. For the children with a sporting habitus, it is unlikely that they have performed much skipping in their sporting endeavours, therefore, they were unlikely to see a connection between skipping and sport. As a result, they placed very little value on skipping, which ultimately affected how it is valued by the other children as well. Those students who had skipping experience (typically those who did not play much junior sport), wanted to display it, but this did not produce the same level of symbolic capital that the sporty children got for displaying their skills in other activities. Additionally, the symbolic capital they did receive for these skipping displays did not translate well beyond the skipping activity. Ultimately, the

actions of the dominant children within the field are likely to continue to impact how the other children perceive skipping, likely leading to these children choosing not to skip at all, or only skipping in safe spaces such as the home.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the embodied actions of a number of children were examined as they engaged in micro-moments of skill mastery. There was a strong focus on learning and mastering skills in CRP PE classes. Importantly, the focus on sport in this PE context meant that ‘object control’ skills were emphasized and valued, which discounted any sporting or physical activity experiences that did not include these skills. Consequently, similar to the previous chapter, these moments reproduced existing hierarchies between those children who had valued sporting experience and those who did not. Therefore, those students who had developed a sporting habitus were uniquely positioned to accrue symbolic capital by displaying acts of skill mastery. Alternatively, if it was not a skill that had a connection with their sporting background, and therefore was not valued, they made very little effort to display the appropriate skills. In both situations, these dominant students committed acts of symbolic violence against their peers. Both situations reproduced the emotional connection these students had with their valued sports, which led them to seek similar rituals on the playground, allowing them to further develop their sporting habitus. In contrast, for those children who had lower levels of physical capital, these activities were often the first opportunity to try and learn some of these skills. Their ability to learn and practice these skills was negatively affected by the dominant children. They had to try and learn in an environment where they also had to contend with the symbolic violence from those with a sporting habitus. Even if it was a skill that aligned with their experience, such as skipping, they still had to contend with the violence of these students. Accordingly, they developed little emotional connection with these sporting activities and typically chose not to pursue these types of rituals on the playground, where the same boys dominated the sporting spaces. Importantly, many of the children did choose to continue to engage in these activities, but

only in the safety of their own homes. The division in skill level is particularly significant because it is often perceived as a natural divide between students. Moments such as these reproduce and even justify, the idea of natural differences between children, particularly between boys and girls. However, as I have shown, what is seen by outsiders as the ‘natural’ differences is, in fact, the product of a number of micro-social factors. This means that children’s progression along seemingly pre-defined physical paths becomes naturalised as well. In the next section, I combine the significant findings from the last three chapters to show how these micro-moments of competition and skill mastery play a key role in impacting the development of children’s physical subjectivities

Chapter Eight - The impact of these micro-moments

Overview

This study originated with the purpose of examining children's development of their physical subjectivities in early PE and on the playground. Understanding this process is particularly important considering the importance that is placed on PE in the lives of young people. As discussed, PE is underpinned by the desire to achieve multiple aspirations, including promoting interest in sport, addressing public health concerns and a desire to promote lifelong physical activity engagement. According to Penney and Chandler (2000), these aspirations set goals that PE cannot realistically hope to achieve. PE fails to connect with all children (Kirk, 2010) and, therefore, is largely failing to achieve these lofty goals. This is particularly the case for primary PE, which numerous scholars have labelled as broken (Griggs, 2007; Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Tsangaridou, 2014). Despite this contradiction, PE continues to be seen as the suggested vehicle for addressing these concerns, with many physical educators calling for a doubling down on the current traditional, sport-focused model of physical education (Kirk, 2010). This logic implies that increasing the sport focus, and the hours of delivery, will increase the likelihood of children enjoying sport, thereby helping all children to engage in lifelong physical activity involvement. However, this is problematic because the process through which children embody their different sporting experiences and act them out during IRs often goes unnoticed. Hence, the very nature of PE then has an unintended impact on the development of children's physical subjectivities. The structuring of PE at CRP meant that the rituals that occurred also influenced the children's ritual choices beyond the PE class. This was particularly the case on the playground, where children made activity choices depending on the levels of EE, they produced during PE rituals.

In chapters six and seven, I attempted to show how the rituals that occurred in PE had an impact on the individual habitus of each child. That is to say, how these rituals played a role in creating a durable

system of dispositions for each child, which is likely to shape, not only the types of activities they engage but also how they engage with their bodies in future contexts (Hunter, 2004; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This development is especially likely to occur as the children chain together similar IRs over time (Collins, 2004). The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to explore the individual impact of these moments in more detail and to examine their broader effect. To achieve this, I focus on four key topics. I begin by examining how these moments reproduce the field of PE. That is to say, how the embodied interactions of the children play a key role in reproducing the field in its current form. Next, I examine how the experience hierarchies that contextualized these rituals were reproduced by the children. So, rather than addressing this hierarchy, the outcomes of these rituals allowed them to be reproduced as if they were naturally occurring. Subsequently, I outline the strong connection between the playground and the PE space that emerged from my analysis. In this effort, I examine how PE rituals were impacted by and continued to impact the ritual choices that children made when given a certain level of autonomy on the playground. Finally, I examine the disconnect between the school and the home environment. This section focuses on investigating the disconnect between home and the school, and how this leads some children to value and engage in certain activities at home that they choose not to engage in at school. In addressing these four key areas, I seek to create a number of narratives that underpin the multiple types of experiences that children have in these two spaces. I will then tie all of these threads together in my final and concluding chapter.

Reproduction of the field

In chapter five, I presented an in-depth examination of the field of PE at CRP. As discussed, a field consists of both agents and institutional objective structures that are governed by sets of connections that dictate the type and level of independence for each social actor who enters. As outlined, PE at CRP is defined by the relations between the Victorian Department of Education, the influence of sport, the curriculum, school administrators, the PE teacher and the children (Hunter, 2004). These objective

relations are etched in the history of each field (Bourdieu, 1993), and as a result, are largely defined before any of the children at CRP enter the PE space. That is to say, the focus on sport (Flintoff et al. 2011; Jones & Green, 2015; Mooney & Hickey, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018), and the teaching of sport-focused FMS (Tinning, 2017; Ward, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018) through child-centred (Jefferson-Buchanan, 2016; Kirk, 2010) and self-regulated (Mazarno, 2009; Morgan, Bryant & Diffey, 2013) small-sided cooperative games (Ward, 2012) was the context that the children stepped into. At this point, it would be easy to argue, from a structuralist perspective, that these practices are so ingrained that the field will never change. However, as discussed, fields are not a static system of structures that are immovable and unchangeable. Instead, children, as agents of the field, play a key role in acting upon these structures and constituting the field of PE. This was echoed in my findings, where it was clear that the children are constantly negotiating and structuring the field of PE at CRP. In this section, what I hope to show is how the hierarchal nature of the field typically meant that the children reproduced the field in its current form.

As discussed, there is significant overlap between the field of sport and the field of PE. So much so that, many in PE continue to believe that the aspiration of fostering lifelong physical activity engagement (Beni et al. 2017; Gard, 2010; Kirk, 2010; Powell, 2018; VCAA, 2016), can be achieved by prioritizing the aspiration of encouraging children to enjoy sport (Kirk, 2010). As a result, the field of PE places a significance on sport, particularly competitive team sports (Hickey, 2008; Kirk & Kinchin, 2003; McCaughy & Tischler, 2010). This is particularly evident in the ongoing outsourcing of PE time to sporting specialists (Blair & Capel, 2011; Dyson et al. 2016; Petrie, 2011; Powell, 2015; Williams et al. 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015) Therefore, it makes sense that PE and sport have become synonymous in the minds of the public (Drummond & Pill, 2011). Accordingly, sport, outside of the PE context, is the most influential defining element of PE, because the defining features are so similar (Hay & Isahunter, 2006). Despite numerous critiques of the dominant-sporting model of PE, this approach continues to be the hegemonic approach. The importance of sport in Australia, the broader field of PE

(including curriculum and pedagogy), the school and the discursive history of the PE teacher, including his use of sporting EPs, played a significant role in contextualizing PE and the dominant sporting approach. However, as Bourdieu argues, a field only exists only if the players that enter into it believe in its principles and actively pursue the prizes that are up for grabs (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). That is to say, fields are internally structured, ‘as individuals and groups constantly struggle to transform or preserve the configuration of power’ (Thorpe, 2009, p. 496). So, although the broader objective relations were important in contextualizing the field, it was the children themselves who played the most significant role in reproducing the focus on sport in the field of PE.

The focus on sport in PE does not translate to full-scale sport participation in early PE; rather, early PE is identified as a period of ‘pre-sport’, where children are expected to learn the skills for later sport participation (Kirk, 2010; Ward & Griggs, 2018). The focus becomes on mastering these skills to succeed in the PE sporting classes of the future. Therefore, this period is meant to allow for IRs where all children can acquire the skills needed to gain this capital. Instead, the narrow-sporting focus of PE at CRP meant the boys with the most well-developed sporting habitus were able to establish a monopoly over the types of capital that was valued in IRs in this field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It was the previous sporting experiences of these dominant boys that set the rules and the stakes that the other players had to follow to play the game. Through their sporting experiences, these boys had learned how to embody, reify, and express sporting physicalities onto the corporeal (Jachyra, 2016). As individuals that had already internalized the principles of the culture field (embodied through their sporting habitus) through an accumulation of IRs, these boys had an entirely different relationship with the activities of the PE field than those of the other students (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). This set the stage for the dominant boys to govern the rituals that occurred.

The dominant boys were able to embody this experience at the level of a bodily hexis to talk, walk and act in ways that many of the other children did not have the practical knowledge to emulate

(Bourdieu, 1990). In embodying their sporting experience, they drove the quest for symbolic capital, through engaging in competition and displays of skill mastery. This makes sense since competition (Beni et al. 2017; Hay & Lishauter, 2006; Walseth et al. 2018) and skill displays (Hunter, 2004) are also significant forms of capital in the team sports that define their experience. So, even though competition was not explicitly emphasized, and the skill emphasis was on learning, the sporting habitus of the dominant boys led them to pursue similar forms of capital within this sport-focused environment. Hence, the sporting habitus of the dominant boys meant that they set the stakes of the game. The sporting experience of some of the boys (outside of school or on the playground) informed their choice to follow along with the lead of the dominant boys, while the lack of experience of the other children (some of the boys and most of the girls) meant that believing in the principles of the game and actively pursuing the prizes that are for grabs (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), was the easiest choice to make. For those with little experience, their lack of practical knowledge meant that they entered as new players and therefore had to pay an entry fee that consisted of recognising the value of the game (Bourdieu, 1993, p.74). Importantly, in the embodying of their sporting habitus, these dominant boys committed numerous acts of symbolic violence, which increased their ability to acquire and accrue capital but directly impacted on the ability of their peers to do the same.

By examining PE classes through a micro-lens, I was able to show that these acts of symbolic violence occur regularly throughout a PE class. So, why are the acts of symbolic violence never addressed? Primarily it is because many of these moments are happening below the level of consciousness (Collins, 2004), and the acts of symbolic violence are often imperceptible even to their victims (Bourdieu, 2001). So, the children are not explicitly aware that these acts are happening, nor is the teacher. More importantly, these embodied moments are closely tied to the dominant boys' sporting experiences and are therefore not seen as abnormal acts within the field of PE. For example, when Willy aggressively enforces the rules of an activity this is seen to be a part of his competitive nature,

internalized through sporting participation.¹⁰⁸ That these acts are committed by the dominant students against their peers with less sporting experience also make them harder to spot. This is where the meritocratic rhetoric of the ‘natural’ plays a key defining role in sport (Hay & Lisahunter, 2006). This is based on the idea that there are those with natural sporting abilities that allow them, as individuals, to perform better than their non-sporting peers. Therefore, sporting success becomes based on that assumption there are those who can ‘naturally’ succeed and those who cannot. The children in class who aren’t as able, or challenge what is deemed as legitimate, are then seen to be lacking the required effort or unable (Hay & Lisahunter, 2006). So, rather than based on the complex social processes that I have discussed, the hierarchy of ability that exists in a PE class is seen as a natural occurrence. So, the teacher does not intervene because the actions that occur in these rituals are seen as ‘natural’.¹⁰⁹ Beyond this, these moments also play a role in reproducing the gendered nature of sport that underpins this division between students.

A sizeable body of research has identified many aspects of PE and sport as key vectors in the reproduction of gendered patriarchal discourse and practices within the school (Gorely, Holroyd, & Kirk, 2003; Hickey, 2008; Thorne, 1993; Wright, 1995). Accordingly, PE is typically underpinned by a ‘naturalization’ of the gendered order (Hickey, 2008; Oliver & Kirk, 2016; Wright & King, 1990). That is to say, PE is underlined by an assumption that when it comes to sport, boys and girls are naturally different. This ‘naturalised’ gender order is supported by powerful gender profiling that takes a ‘common-sense’ view that boys are naturally more active and physical than girls (Hickey, 2006). Consequently, sport comes to be seen as the primary domain of boys (Bhana, 2016; Drummond, 2016; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Messner, 2000, 2011; Mooney & Hickey, 2012; Musto, 2014), and therefore, if girls are not as able at sport, then this is rationalized under that predisposing discourse. Over the course of this

¹⁰⁸ Alternatively, Sissy’s withdrawal from a competitive moment with Thompson is rationalized based on her lack of a competitive drive

¹⁰⁹ In this, it is important to note that PE teachers are not the villains (Kirk, 2010), they do not make a conscious decision to see these rituals in this way, instead their own discursive experiences of sport and PE (Garret & Wrench, 2008; Tinning, 2011; Taplin, 2013; Richards & Andrew, 2015; Jess et al. 2016) and their alignment with elite sports performance (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk, 2014) predispose them to embody their own habitus to see the outcomes of these rituals in this way

thesis, I have sought to undermine this flawed logic and show that this separation between boys and girls is based on a number of complex social processes. The intersection of a number of contextual factors (including a male-focused sporting PE field and advanced levels of sporting experience) meant the dominant boys were uniquely positioned to use their habitus to acquire and accrue higher levels of capital and achieve success. The devaluing of their experiences, or often a lack of experience, and the acts of symbolic violence that were committed against them made it harder for the girls to succeed.

Subsequently, their lack of emotional connection typically meant that many of the girls chose not to seek similar sporting rituals in their own time at school, choosing instead to actively resist and seek fields in which their subjectivities were valued (Hay & Lisahunter, 2006). Instead of a cause for intervention, the outcomes of these rituals were seen as naturally occurring; a reaffirmation of the ‘common sense’ gendered discourses that underpin PE. Subsequently, these discourses are then uncritically reproduced. Instead of addressing these problems, the self-regulating approach means these moments reproduced the gendered division between the boys and girls. Ultimately, early PE then acts as a moment where this gendered divide, which has already begun before primary school (Bhana, 2016; Martin, 2011; Murphy, Dionigi, & Litchfield, 2014), actually increases. This means that boys and girls continue to be ushered along very different physical paths.

My findings show that the accumulation of these rituals reproduce the field of PE as it is. Rather than the product of unchangeable structures, the rituals presented show how the embodied actions of the children play a key role in reproducing the field of PE. The interrelation between sport and PE put those children with the most developed sporting habitus, in a position to govern and establish a monopoly over the type of capital that is valued in the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) of PE. They were able to embody their sporting experience at the level of a bodily hexis, putting them in a position to continually reify their higher status position within PE and to accrue high levels of capital. Their actions then played a prominent role in reproducing the focus on sport in PE. This also plays a key role in reproducing the

‘naturalized’ gender order that is assumed to be intrinsic in sport and PE. Boys and girls are assumed to be naturally different, therefore, those who should intervene see the differences as natural, rather than a cause for intervention. Ultimately, fields are reproducible because they are basically hierarchical in nature (Schirato & Roberts, 2018). The field of PE, in its current, form allows this hierarchy to be established before class, and then reproduced during it. Consequently, the narrowly-focused sporting, gendered, child-centred approach (that is clearly not addressing the needs of all children), which defines the field of PE, becomes reproduced through the embodied actions of the children (players) who enter the field. As a result, instead of being an inclusive space where all children can learn together, early PE continues to operate as a field that ushers children along seemingly pre-determined physical pathways.

Reproduction of the hierarchy

As discussed, mainstream PE has been critiqued for failing to provide adequately differentiated programs of instruction for teaching skills in the early years (Goodway et al. 2013). Problematically, these programs often fail to address the differing levels of physical experience that children bring to early PE (Evans, 2004, Ward, 2012). This was reflected at CRP, where the rituals that occurred in PE were stratified based on the hierarchy of valued sporting experiences that children brought to the field. Similar to other researchers (Jachyra, 2016, Koca et al. 2009), what I attempted to show in previous chapters, and examine in more detail here, is how these rituals tended to reproduce the hierarchies that contextualized each ritual.

The differing levels of sporting experience played a significant role in contextualizing each of the rituals that I presented. Although the children brought different types of physical capital to class, based on a variety of sporting and physical activity experiences, not all of these types of physical capital were valued equally.¹¹⁰ Instead, valued physical capital was based on an emphasis on competitive team sport experience, which was further narrowed to an emphasis, and valuing, of three specific ‘object control’

¹¹⁰ For example, the physical capital that some of the children (Lana, Renny, and Jackie) brought to the class, from gymnastics, was not valued and therefore did not convert to higher levels of physical capital.

skills- throwing, catching and kicking.¹¹¹ This provided the highest level of physical capital to those children that had developed a sporting habitus through participation in sports that emphasized these skills, such as football, basketball and soccer. Through their sporting participation in these team sports, these children had also internalized a number of sporting dispositions such as competitiveness, spatial awareness and aggressiveness. The possession of these dispositions meant these children had ‘a habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field, the stakes and so on’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72). Consequently, these children, with the most developed sporting habitus, played a significant role in establishing a monopoly over the type of capital that was valued in the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Although the symbolic capital that was on offer, through competition and skill mastery, was largely informed by the field of PE, it was these children with a sporting habitus that drove the pursuit of this capital. This dominant group consisted exclusively of boys. In fact, as discussed, the hierarchal separation between the experienced and inexperienced typically, but not always, occurred along gender lines. This makes sense since PE practice is often based on a narrow set of valued sports, typically those aligned to the stereotypical characteristics of boys (Hickey, 2008). Hence, the boys’ sporting experiences are typically valued in PE, while the girls’ sporting experiences typically are not. The five boys with the most advanced sporting habitus (Carl, Tim, Willy, Harvey, and Bob) drove the pursuit of capital in each of their respective classes. These five students already had a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993) and entered the field with practical knowledge that provided increased opportunities to acquire and accrue capital. Their practical knowledge of the field meant they were unconsciously aware of the valued capital that was available. Therefore, it was these boys who played a role in determining the ingredient of the IRs and drove the mutual focus of attention of their specific group towards the pursuit of these forms of symbolic capital. This fed back into the collective conscious of the group and led to each child pursuing

¹¹¹ During each class, there were other activities such as skipping or relay races, but the majority of PE activities included one or more of these object control skills.

these forms of symbolic capital to some degree. As a result, all of the children unconsciously accepted these acts as the mechanisms of the field, because this is what they were expected to do as a condition of entry.

The collective acceptance of these forms of capital did not guarantee an equal distribution of this capital. As discussed, these sporting boys were uniquely positioned to gain the symbolic capital on offer, which often meant they dominated IRs in the quest for this valued capital.¹¹² In their quest to accrue this capital, they committed a variety of acts of symbolic violence against their peers. Importantly, these acts were directly linked to the sporting actions of the boys and often occurred below the level of consciousness.¹¹³ Rarely, if ever, did these boys have the same acts committed against them. As a result of their dominance and symbolic acts of violence, these boys produced high levels of emotional energy and finished with a strong emotional connection to these types of rituals. Predictably, they sought similar rituals on the playground, which provided even more opportunity to accrue physical capital. Ultimately, the field of PE provides opportunities for these ‘sporty’ boys to continue to develop their sporting habitus and improve at sport.

For the rest of the boys, their lower levels of physical capital meant that they were not able to accrue the same levels of symbolic capital as the dominant boys. However, some of the boys did still bring varying levels of physical capital to PE. Some of them (Jimmy, Bart, Dimitri, Stan, and Paul) engaged in sport outside school, but not to the same degree as the dominant boys. For the other boys (Mack, Quincy, Thompson, Evan, Roger, Preston, Jay, Danny), although they did not play sport outside school, time spent playing sport on the playground or success in previous PE lessons was converted to a certain level of physical capital. However, their lower levels of capital meant they did not have the same

¹¹² In fact, on most occasions their sporting habitus allowed them to acquire accrue both types of symbolic capital at the same time. Although I presented them distinctly in chapters 6 and 7, they are actually closely linked and were on display in most lessons. The sporting habitus of certain children allowed for the collection of both types. For example, in Bob’s engagement in competition during the ball and lever activity, he would have also accrued symbolic capital by the successful display of skill mastery in launching and catching the ball.

¹¹³ This was evident in the way that both Harvey and Bob spoke, separately, about the importance of people learning and practicing in a positive environment, without having any awareness of how their embodied actions impacted on the ability of other children to do just this.

‘feel for the game’ as the dominant boys, so were not able to carry themselves in the same way. This meant that they were also victims of the symbolic violence of the dominant boys, but rather than shying away from these acts, these boys often followed the lead of the dominant boys and committed similar acts. Ultimately, although the level of physical capital these boys possessed was lower than the dominant boys, it was enough to provide them with opportunities to accrue further capital within the class. They still had to contend with the symbolic violence of the dominant boys, but they possessed enough practical knowledge to know that these acts were an essential part of the quest to accrue symbolic capital, so occasionally committed these acts themselves, typically against the girls. For some of the boys, the emotional energy that they produced from these rituals motivated them to pick similar rituals on the playground, and the symbolic capital they had acquired could be converted to physical capital to gain entry to these rituals. This is not to say that all of the boys chose this option, in fact, some of the boys (Jay, Preston, Mack, Quincy, Danny), who were often victims of the dominant boys and therefore produced lower levels of emotional energy, only selectively made the choice to engage in similar rituals on the playground. However, they were able to convert the symbolic capital that they had gained into physical capital for future PE lessons. Importantly though, any physical capital they gained was linked directly to the types of activities that were repetitively practised in PE. If a new skill was taught, these boys would bring low levels of physical capital and move right back to the lower end of the experience hierarchy. Ultimately, these less-experienced boys were provided opportunities, although limited in some cases, to learn and enjoy elements of PE.

The girls were typically at the bottom of the experience hierarchy for each ritual. Typically, the girls either had physical capital that was not valued or had little to no experience at all. Either way, they entered these rituals with much lower levels of physical capital than most of the boys.¹¹⁴ As a result, it was much harder for the girls to acquire capital and succeed in these activities. As I have discussed, they

¹¹⁴ As I have discussed, there were exceptions to this. For example, in the lessons devoted to football kicking there were also a number of boys, such as Jay and Quincy, who did not have much prior experience and therefore brought low levels of physical capital

were also victims of a variety of symbolic acts of violence, which further impacted their ability to acquire symbolic capital.¹¹⁵ Consequently, these failed rituals meant the girls lost emotional energy and left with possible feelings of depression, shame, exclusion (Collins, 2004), fatigue, lack of interest and a lack of willingness to initiate actions (Summers-Effler, 2004a). Predictably, many of them had almost no emotional connection with these types of rituals. Unsurprisingly, when given some autonomy on the playground, the girls made the choice not to engage in similar sporting rituals. Instead, they talked, played games or, in the case of Renny and Lana, engaged in sporting activities that they valued, but were not valued within PE. This did not mean that all of the girls avoided sport entirely on the playground, but if they did play, their lower level of physical capital meant that were either treated like Renny or only given a very limited role. As a consequence, the girls only engaged in sport on the playground sparingly. Importantly, some of the girls still chose to seek similar sporting ritual outside of school, but as the example of Mary and Renny shows, only in fields where their subjectivities were valued. So, ultimately, while the boys' emotional connection to these sporting rituals typically lead them to seek out similar rituals, and thereby continue to develop their sporting habitus, the girls often made the choice to avoid these rituals, which further reinforced the hierarchy that was brought into the PE class.

This shows early PE is defined by a hierarchy of experiences. My findings have shown that the stratified rituals that occur during PE tend to reproduce this hierarchy. The experienced get better, while the majority of the girls, and some of the boys, struggle to learn at all. Then the lack of emotional connection with these rituals means that the less experienced students chose to engage in other activities, which further reinforces the division between the children. Ultimately, what this means is that early PE experiences play a significant role in sending children down seemingly pre-defined physical pathways. Instead of providing the chance to upend these hierarchies, they become further established. The

¹¹⁵ Although I have presented numerous examples, the most poignant may be the example of Kelly, where the boys collectively accepted her lack of physical capital and therefore cut her out completely, meaning she had no chance to acquire symbolic capital. Only my intervention was able to address this and ensure that the boys involved Kelly.

accumulative effect of similar rituals, along their path through physical culture, is likely to encourage the experienced to continue to engage in sport, while simultaneously pushing the less experienced towards disengagement.

‘We don’t do anything from PE on the playground’: The connection between the spaces

The playground space is a significant space in the lives of children. It is a space that can exert a powerful influence on their daily school lives (Thomson, 2007). Numerous researchers have shown how it is a highly segregated space, often divided by age (Thomson, 2005) and gender (Clark & Paechter, 2007; Martin, 2011; Paechter & Clark, 2007; Pawlowski et al. 2018). As shown in chapter five, this was particularly true at CRP. This separation is not natural. As I have shown, the outcome of rituals in PE play a role in the separation of the children on the playground. In this way, there is a strong connection between PE and the playground space. There is a strong chaining effect, whereby the outcomes of rituals in PE directly the impact types of rituals that children choose to engage in while on the playground. The impact of these choices further separates children along pre-determined physical pathways.

A key point in my findings was that the high levels of emotional energy that some of the children produced during rituals in PE, served as a motivation to seek similar rituals on the playground. This makes sense since individuals ultimately desire emotional energy and will seek to participate in rituals where they can obtain it (Collins, 2004). The higher levels of emotional energy that many of the boys produced through their engagement in PE rituals meant that they chose to seek out similar rituals on the playground. For these boys, once they have experienced this type of emotionally heightened moment, they want to repeat it (Collins, 2004). This does not mean that all the boys sought these same types of sporting rituals. The lower levels of physical capital that some of the boys brought in limited their ability to accrue capital, also meaning that they were sometimes the victims of acts of symbolic violence from the dominant boys. Hence, not all of the boys produced the same high levels of emotional energy. As a result, some of the boys only played sport occasionally (Jimmy, Roger, Preston, Ric), while

others chose to continue not to play sport at all on the playground (Jay, Preston, Mack, Quincy, Danny). However, as I will touch on later, the gendered nature of sport (Adams, Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Kehler, 2016; McDowell & Shaffner, 2011; Messner, 2000, 2002, 2011; Musto, 2014) and the expectation that boys are naturally better (Hickey, 2008), often acted as motivation for these boys to succeed in PE. In contrast, when given their own choice they unconsciously chose not to play sport, which limited their ability to succeed in future PE classes.

Similarly, as a result of a lack of emotional connection, the girls typically chose to not to engage in similar sporting rituals on the playground. Instead, they chose to play games in non-sporting spaces and engage in a variety of other rituals. This did not mean none of the girls ever played the 'valued' sports on the playground, but, if they did, they had to join in on the boys' games. The boys were able to use their physical capital to dominate these sporting spaces. The lack of physical capital the girls brought to these games often meant they were not allowed to play or were only allowed to play in a limited role. In Renny's case, she was allowed to play soccer, based on her experience playing outside school (which meant that she was able to embody some of the necessary physicalities to play), but was not treated very well. The boys committed various acts against her, including policing her for behaviours that they regularly engaged in. Considering this, it makes sense that the girls rarely joined in with the boys in the sporting spaces. For the girls, these rituals were likely to be a continuation of sporting rituals in PE, so why would they want to join in? Beyond, the lack of an emotional connection, the girls must have an unconscious awareness of how they are treated during PE rituals and understand that playing with the boys on the playground will mean more of the same. Accordingly, they make the choice not to engage in these activities and instead pursue rituals that they value, which are more likely to produce high levels of emotional energy.

Outsiders see the outcome of these choices, but incorrectly perceive it as the children naturally separating, with the boys naturally gravitating towards sport and girls naturally gravitating to non-

sporting activities. This was particularly pronounced at CRP, where the Year 1/2 children only had limited play options. The sporty boys dominate and govern the available sporting spaces (the lower football goal, the soccer goal and the playground A basketball hoop), choosing who can play, and in what role, based on that individual's level of physical capital.¹¹⁶ As Paul says, "they play adult games" and therefore, the childish girls cannot easily join. The girls, therefore, make a specific decision not to play in the sporting spaces with the boys. Interestingly, as shown, there were multiple boys that chose not to regularly engage in sport, and numerous girls who chose to engage in non-valued sporting activities (such as gymnastics), however, the actions of these children did little to challenged gendered perceptions on the playground at CRP. Instead, it was the dominance of the sporting boys (and some of the other boys who regularly played) in the sporting spaces, and the choice of many the girls not to play with the boys, that provided a rationale for the 'natural' discourse that underpins this separation. This allowed the playground to continue to function in its current form and meant that the teachers and administrators at CRP saw very little need to intervene in the playground choices and actions of the children.

The 'natural' separation on the playground means the boys are allowed to dominate these spaces and structure the IRs that occur according to their sporting choices and habitus. Therefore, the playground choices of the girls at CRP, which are already limited within the 'segregated' playground, are further constrained by the way the boys dominate these spaces. As a result, on the playground, the boys have even more opportunities to acquire and accrue physical capital, that is then valued within PE. In this way, these rituals on the playground act as an extension of the PE class. The boys are afforded more opportunities to get even better at the competitive team sports that are valued in PE, which means they enter PE classes with even higher levels of physical capital. In contrast, the girls do not acquire and accrue this same capital from the activities that they choose to engage in. They still acquire capital that they value, which is not necessarily valued in PE. Even if they do choose to play sport with the boys, they

¹¹⁶ Importantly, as their responses showed, for some of the boys this translated to a sense of privilege in that they could 'play anywhere', whereas, many of the other children talked only about playing in select areas.

must ‘play the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993) and try to acquire capital in rituals where the boys are uniquely positioned to succeed. Importantly, some of the boys choose not to engage in these activities and therefore fall behind their more experienced peers as well. Therefore, the divide between those children with a well-developed sporting habitus and those with very little sporting experience continues to widen, which impacts future PE classes. As discussed, this division of the playground is seen to be a ‘natural’ part of the freedom given to the children on the playground and intervention would go against the dominant discourse of ‘free play’ (Chancellor, 2008, 2013; Martin, 2011 Thomson, 2005; 2007). So, from the teacher’s perspective, why intervene if there is no problem?

This division is a problem. At CRP, the separation that the children enforced on playground meant that this problem becomes more complex as children progress through their time at the school. In the early years, the children had a number of spaces, including a variety of sporting spaces (such as the football goals, the soccer goals, and a basketball hoop) and a number of non-sporting spaces (such as the jungle gym and the sandpit) (see fig. 1). Therefore, the children have a number of different areas where they could engage in the types of rituals that provided emotional energy. This is particularly important for the girls, and some of the boys, who do not want to seek similar sporting rituals and so can play in other spaces. However, this changes as the children get older, so that by the time they enter Year 5/6 there are fewer play options¹¹⁷ on the playground. They have access to a number of spaces, but they are mainly the sporting spaces, which limits their ritual options. Once again, this separation adversely affects the girls and those boys who have not developed a strong emotional connection with the sports valued in PE. The sporting boys still have multiple options to pursue the rituals that they emotionally connect with, but the options for other students are limited. So, although the chaining effect of a multitude of failed rituals between Year 1 and Year 6 play a key role in sport choices, the field of the playground also plays an influential role. This is particularly pronounced for the girls whose only options for playing sport on the

¹¹⁷ Mainly the bigger football goals, the basketball courts and an area at the front of the school that were enforced as their spaces

playground is to play with the boys, in spaces they dominate, and to unconsciously consent to the acts of symbolic violence which are likely to occur. Therefore, the girls and some of the non-sporty boys are condemned to a dilemma, to choose between two solutions, which are both equally bad from a certain standpoint (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). They can choose between joining in sporting rituals, where they do not have the required habitus to succeed or engaging in non-sporting rituals, which will put them further behind in PE classes. For some of the children, the outcomes of these rituals also had an interesting impact on the activities that they engaged in at home.

‘There is more room to do it at home’: The disconnect between the school and home

The analysis of my findings allowed for an examination of the types of activities that the children engage in away from CRP. Many of the children engaged in a variety of organised sports, while others stayed active in a variety of other ways. There were some commonalities in the types of activities that children engaged in, such as bike and scooter riding and playing at the park. For many of the children, who did not participate in organized sport,¹¹⁸ these alternative physical activities provided pleasure and excitement. These activities were not valued in PE, and therefore did not afford the children much valued physical capital, but the children still enjoyed these activities for the intrinsic meaning that they provided. Interestingly, my findings show that for some children there was a disconnect between the home and school environment. That is to say, for some children, there was a disconnect between the types of rituals that they would engage in freely at home but avoid entirely or engage in reluctantly at school.

That there was a disconnect between the fields of home and school for some students makes sense. Although each field operated similarly, as ‘a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions’ (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the make-up of each field was distinct. Although there were a number of differences between the home and school, the key difference, for the purpose of my research, was the focus on sport. This focus on sport (particularly competitive team sport)

¹¹⁸ There are a variety of reasons that children were not able to participate in junior sport, including, but not limited to, class and culture (Kirk, 2005)

that defined the fields of the playground and PE, was not always a defining feature of the children's lives at home.¹¹⁹ That fundamental difference meant that for many of the children there was a wider range of valued activities that they could engage in at home. Importantly, this provided some of the children the opportunity to engage in activities that either weren't valued during PE; or valued activities where the difference in the field meant that the same constraints on habitus and capital were not present.

For these children, the home space¹²⁰ was a safe space, where there was a sense of freedom to explore and embody a variety of different physicalities in activities that they often chose not to engage in at school. I presented a number of examples of this disconnect in the previous chapter: Jay skipping at home with his sister, Mary and Sissy playing soccer with their families, and Adele enjoying activities that would not be 'appropriate' at school. The children all talked about how much joy they derived from engaging in these activities at home. Although they produced high levels of emotional energy from these rituals at home, this did not translate to motivation to engage in them freely at school. So, how can we understand this disconnect and link it to PE and the playground? Noticeably, at home, the forms of capital are different and therefore the habitus a child must possess to acquire and accrue this capital is also distinct. In some instances, this meant that the level of physical capital that each child embodied was rewarded in an activity that was not particularly valued at school. In others, these children could play a more significant role in determining the ingredients of these rituals, therefore their habitus did not preclude them from acquiring and accruing more capital, thereby, building a strong emotional connection. Either way, the children were able to engage in these activities in a field that was uniquely different from the field of the school.

As a field, the home still acted as a game space (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), but the stakes were uniquely different. To illustrate this, I elaborate on two examples: Jay skipping and Mary playing

¹¹⁹ Clearly, there were still families where these types of sports were valued. In fact, many of the dominant boys talked about the socializing effect a parent or a sibling had in influencing their sporting choices.

¹²⁰ Importantly, the field of home did not always relate directly to the physical space of the house. I conceptualize it to include related spaces such as the neighbourhood (which can include the street, the local park) where the members of the family unit are present or close by.

soccer. For Jay, skipping was a key example of an activity that he had a disposition towards engaging in at home but would not make much effort to do at school (where it is not valued). In his PEI, he talked about how much he enjoys skipping at home and how he does it regularly, often skipping with his sister Natasha. In contrast, during PE he tried to overtly show that he did not like skipping and is not good at it. He tried to rationalize the difference between skipping at home and school, by saying that there is more space, but a simple observation of the PE space shows that there is an abundance of space to practise. Instead, this shows a disjoint between his habitus at home, where he has a disposition towards skipping, and his habitus at school, where he unconsciously accepts that lack of value that is placed on skipping, particularly as a boy. For Mary, her willingness to play soccer at home is based on the distinct difference in the valued capital on offer. As Mary says, her family ‘didn’t keep score’ and only ‘played for fun.’ As a result, there was no obvious emphasis on the same types of valued capital, which dominated PE classes, and excluded students like Mary based on low level of experience. An exclusion which led Mary to unconsciously accept that, as a girl, sport just was not for her. In the games her family engaged in, the main objective was to play and have fun (a much more subjective type of capital), not to compete or display skill mastery. Mary’s lack of a sporting habitus did not preclude her from engaging in this game and there were likely very few acts of symbolic violence committed against her. By simply playing the game Mary was able to accrue capital. So, as children, such as Mary and Jay continue to engage in these types of activities during their free time, are they likely to be able to manage this disjoint between their school habitus and their home habitus indefinitely? The more time they spend in PE, especially as it continues to place a stronger emphasis on the types of rituals that they do not have a strong emotional connection with, the harder it will be to manage this disconnect.

For many of the children at CRP, the home was a safe space, where they could engage in IRs that they were reluctant to try at school. The distinct nature of the home, and the difference in the types of capital and the ease with which the children could embody their habitus to acquire and accrue this capital

made the home much more appealing. This led to a disconnect for some children between the habitus at home and the habitus at school. As argued, it is unlikely that the children will be able to manage this disconnect forever and one dominant physical way of being is likely to emerge. Especially as they get older and PE becomes their primary opportunity for physical activity participation, and the focus of PE continues to narrow to concentrate almost exclusively on sport. So, how do we reconceptualise PE to align closer to the field of the home for these types of children? If the home is where some children truly feel free to express themselves physically and explore a variety of physical activities, something that they do not feel comfortable doing at school, then we must take steps to align PE more closely with the home environment.

Conclusion

Early PE is contextualized by the variety of valued learning experiences that children bring to class. Instead of being an inclusive space, the narrow sport focus of PE means that those children with the most valued experience are uniquely positioned to succeed, often at the expense of their peers. As a result, the accumulative effect of these rituals in PE tended to reproduce the experience hierarchy that was already established. The experienced get better, the inexperienced continued to struggle. The reproduction of this hierarchy also meant that the field of PE was reproduced in its current form. This meant that the sport discourses, including a focus on meritocratic rhetoric, and the gendered discourses that underpin PE were also reproduced. Consequently, rather than encouraging children to explore and use their bodies in a variety of ways (Hunter, 2004, Shilling, 2010), the processes through which these mechanisms were reproduced, also regulated the physicalities of the children (Datta, 2008) and ushered them along seemingly pre-determined physical pathways.

This division along pre-determined physical pathways was further established on the playground. As shown, the outcomes of the rituals in PE spilt over on to the playground and directly impacted the types of rituals that children pursued in their 'free' time. When given some autonomy on the segregated

playground the children sought out rituals that were likely to yield the highest emotional energy. For many of the sporty boys, this meant pursuing similar sporting rituals. For most of the girls, and some of the less experienced boys, this meant seeking out a variety of other activities. As a result, the division between the experienced and inexperienced continued to widen. This division is likely to intensify as the children get older and their ritual options on the playground become more constrained. Fortunately, my examination of the children's lives also showed that children are continuing to stay active in a variety of ways outside of school. In fact, many of the children engaged in sporting rituals that they typically avoided at school. This disconnect is unlikely to continue unless we make significant changes to the field of PE. Changing PE to more closely resemble the 'safe space' that many of the children had at home may be the first significant step in this process. In the following chapter, I seek to bring together all of the threads that I have laid out and highlight how we can take this significant step.

Chapter Nine - Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how children embody and develop their physical subjectivities in two significant physical spaces, the PE class and the playground. To examine this process, I used a variety of child-centred and ethnographic methods to examine the experiences of children within these two spaces. Theoretically informed by a combination of Bourdieu's conceptual tools and Collin's Interactional Ritual theory, I have argued that the outcomes of rituals during PE class have a profound impact on children's connection with physical culture. Rather than a 'blank slate' learning space, these rituals are stratified by the different habitus that children bring to class. The outcomes of these rituals then impacted the habitus of each child and played a role in their dispositions towards sport and physical activity participation. The dominant boys, who brought a relatively well-developed sporting habitus to class, were afforded more chances to acquire and accrue capital (producing high levels of emotional energy), which led them to actively pursue similar sporting rituals on the playground, and in their own time. In contrast, the lower-skilled children (most of the girls and some of the boys), who were often the victims of explicit and symbolic violence from the dominant boys, were unable to acquire much capital, with their lower levels of emotional energy motivating them to pursue distinctly different rituals on the playground. Importantly, this process did not fully predetermine children's ritual activity participation, but it did play a significant role in influencing the children's choices. In this final chapter, I conclude this study by summarizing the major findings, highlighting how they add to current knowledge and providing recommendations to address these issues. Additionally, I address the limitations of this study and provide some suggestions for future research. I will finish this thesis with a call to rethink some of the practices that are uncritically employed in early PE and on the playground.

Summary of findings

At the beginning of this thesis, I outlined three separate, yet linked, research questions that were designed to guide my examination of the process through which children embody and develop their physical subjectivities. In this section, I present and summarize my findings in relation to each question.

The primary question was designed as a foundational question to understand the role that children play in embodying and developing their physical subjectivities within these two significant physical spaces. The findings show that there is no clear answer to this question, instead the process of children embodying and developing their physical selves is a complex one, impacted by a variety of social influences. The children brought their own habitus to the PE class, impacted by differing levels of sport and physical activity experience. They embodied their habitus, and the differing levels of physical capital, to varying levels of success in the rituals that occurred during PE; the outcomes of which impacted their own and the habitus of their peers. The emotional energy that the children produced in these rituals then influenced the type of habitus the children brought to the playground, which impacted the types of rituals they chose to pursue on the playground. This naturalised many of the actions that occurred on the playground, which fed back into PE and continued to further define the types of habitus that children brought to future PE classes.

As discussed, the children embodied their habitus within PE to varying degrees based upon the levels of physical capital they brought to class. Within the narrowly-defined sport focus of PE at CRP, the boys who had developed a sporting habitus through participation in valued competitive team sports, brought the highest levels of physical capital to class. For these 'sporty boys', the conventional form of PE closely matched the values, dispositions and tastes that they had already internalized through sporting participation (Kirk, 2006). They were able to embody this practical knowledge at the level of a bodily hexis, in the way they talk, act and move (Evans, 2004), to set the 'stakes of the game' (Bourdieu, 1993) and govern the quest for valued capital. Their 'sporting habitus' also uniquely positioned them to acquire

and accrue the highest levels of symbolic capital. In this quest, they often committed acts of symbolic violence against their peers. Those with slightly less experience brought lower levels of capital but were able to embody their previous sporting experience to acquire and accrue more, often committing the same acts of symbolic violence that the dominant boys enacted upon them. The girls, and some of the boys, who either had little sporting experience or engaged in non-valued sports/activities, brought lower levels of physical capital and therefore struggled to acquire capital, struggling to learn the skills. They were also the most likely victims of the symbolic acts of violence that their peers enacted. The outcomes of the rituals spilled over on the playground, impacting how children embodied their physical subjectivities there as well.

The amount of capital the children accrued in these rituals was directly linked to the emotional energy they produced, which impacted the rituals they chose to engage in on the playground. As Collins (2004) emphasizes, humans are primarily motivated by the desire to pursue rituals that will provide the highest level of emotional energy. For the dominant boys, the success of these rituals meant pursuing similar sporting rituals on the playground. Fittingly, the dominant boys were then able to continue to embody their sporting habitus to govern and establish a monopoly over the valued capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) in the sporting spaces on the playground. The boys with less sport participation were able to embody their developing sporting habitus to play with the dominant boys in these spaces. This meant playing by the 'stakes of the game' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72) and thereby conforming to the rules set out by the dominant boys. For the girls, and a small group of the boys, their lower levels of emotional energy (combined with the sporty boys' dominance of the sporting spaces) meant they chose to pursue different rituals to the failed rituals they experienced in PE. For some of the girls, this meant embodying their habitus to engage in physical activities which they valued but were not valued in class. For the other children, this meant engaging in different rituals, through which they could embody their own experience

to produce emotional energy. These choices that children made on the playground served to further define the distinctions in the experience hierarchy that defined the PE class.

Society has a momentous impact on young people's bodies, influencing their acts of embodiment in their daily engagement across different physical culture spaces (Azzarito & Kirk, 2013). Consequently, in these two spaces, young people's physicality is emplaced, displayed, constructed and regulated by the range of micro-practices their bodies must perform on a daily basis (Datta, 2008). In chapters six and seven, I presented a number of the micro-practices through which children embody and develop their physical subjectivities on the playground and in PE. In these rituals, children's previous experience plays a key role in determining how they interact and the embodied actions that occur have a strong impact on their physical development. Rather than children being able to express themselves in a variety of physical ways, these spaces tend to reproduce the narrow developmental pathways that exist within society. Children are already deeply embedded within this process at the start of primary school, but their time in PE and the playground acts to rapidly increase this development and the children are ushered along seemingly pre-determined physical pathways. Those who are good at sport are provided with every opportunity to get better, while others who have very little physical activity/sporting experience are afforded fewer opportunities to embody and develop their physical subjectivities in meaningful ways. To paraphrase Brown (2006), the structures, in PE and on the playground, that encourage some students to embody a high level of physicality, means they explore the world in a profoundly different way compared to other students who have had their physicality discouraged by these same structures. If one of the primary goals of PE is for children to develop a positive connection with physical activity, then addressing how current structures influence how children develop their early relationships with physical culture is vital.

The second question focuses on examining the significant embodied micro-interactions that occur in this space and how they impact the children. As discussed, these micro-interactions can be grouped into

two categories: competition and skill mastery. Engaging in these acts was the most significant way to acquire capital within class, so it makes sense that the embodied actions occurred in the quest for this capital. The quest to acquire and accrue this capital was driven by the previous experiences of the children. This was influenced by the overlap between sport and PE because those boys with the most well-developed sporting habitus were able to govern the rituals that occurred and drive the pursuit towards forms of capital that directly aligned with their habitus. Accordingly, these children were uniquely positioned to be able to acquire and accrue the highest levels of capital. This then had an impact on the other children within the class.

The focus on competition and skill mastery was driven by the focus on sports that underpinned PE at CRP. The sporting experience of the ‘dominant boys’ was defined by participation in team sports. So, these ‘dominant boys’ brought and embodied an emphasis on competition and skill mastery through their habitus. As a result, the ‘dominant’ boys embodied their ‘sporting habitus’ to engage in a number of specific embodied actions, including acting aggressively, using their bodies to gain possession, loudly enforcing the rules and overt displays of advanced skill. They engaged in acts of symbolic violence against their peers, including faking throws, making physical contact and kicking opposing player’s balls away. As these dominant players ‘set the stakes of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1993), the other children unconsciously followed these energy stars (Collins, 2004) in their efforts to engage in similar acts. However, their lower levels of physical capital, combined with the acts of symbolic violence they endured, made it more difficult for them to succeed to the same degree. As a result, the levels of capital they acquired and the emotional energy these dominant children produced ensured they had positive experiences, while they negatively impacted the experiences of their peers. Importantly, this process was not entirely contained within the PE space, instead, spilling over and continuing in the playground as well.

The third question served to unpack the connection between the PE and the playground spaces. That is to say, how both spaces exist as important spaces in the physical development of children, and how the chaining effect between rituals across both spaces has a significant effect on how children develop their physical subjectivities. As discussed, both spaces exist as important physical culture spaces in the lives of children providing a multitude of opportunities for children to develop and embody their physical subjectivities (Azzarito & Kirk, 2013). While Drummond and Pill (2011), touch on the notion that the outcomes of PE may affect the playground, few other studies have looked at these effects in more detail. The findings from this study add to this knowledge by showing that there was a clear connection between the playground and the PE space and that the playground allowed for a continuation of the rituals that occurred in PE.

As a continuation of the PE space, the children made choices about which types of rituals to pursue on the playground based on the outcomes of rituals in PE. Previous research has shown that a number of factors¹²¹ play a role in children's activity choices, but as my findings show the pursuit of EE also played a significant role. The levels of EE that the children produced through these rituals impacted the types of rituals that they chose to pursue on the playground. The children who produced meaningful levels of EE, mainly the 'sporty boys', sought similar rituals on the playground, providing more opportunities to acquire and accrue symbolic capital, which could be converted to physical capital for use in future PE lessons. Meanwhile, those students who lost emotional energy from these failed rituals (due to lower levels of valued capital combined with the acts of symbolic violence that were incurred against them), made choices to engage in distinctly different rituals. As a consequence, the valued experience hierarchy that contextualizes the field of PE at CRP was further established. This makes it continually harder for the inexperienced children to engage in successful rituals in PE and subsequently establish a strong emotional connection with physical culture.

¹²¹ These factors include bodily self-esteem and ability; gender; gendered school culture; peer influence; conflicts and exclusion; space and play experiences (Pawlowski et al. 2018)

Contribution to knowledge

The findings presented in this thesis contribute to knowledge in four different areas. First, this research answers Kirk's call for a renewed focus on early PE (2005). As discussed, the majority of PE literature has focused on the adolescent years, because this is the age where the highest levels of physical activity drop out occur (Kirk, 2005). In his work, Kirk has highlighted how early PE experiences are particularly significant for children (Kirk, 2005). The findings presented in this study answer Kirk's call by highlighting the importance of early PE for children, particularly the role the space plays in shaping and constraining the development of children's physical subjectivities. My contention is that many of the problems that emerge in the later years of PE are because we are not doing enough to encourage all children to develop positive physical subjectivities early on. My findings add to the current literature by showing what impact current practices in early PE are having on children.

Second, this research adds a critical perspective to the studies that seek to understand the high levels of PA dropout in the adolescent years (Barr-Anderson et al 2008; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Garret, 2004; McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010). This study highlights the impact that the accumulation of failed rituals is likely to have on children's physical subjectivities over time. Based on what is occurring during early PE, many children are already choosing not to engage in sport or physical activity. So, rather than an abrupt decision to disengage from physical activity during adolescence, many of the children are already developing dispositions that make it much more likely they will drop out of physical activity during adolescence. Therefore, if intervention is still the main priority, adolescence is too late.

Third, this research adds to the literature that highlights the importance of the embodied dimension (Maude, 2010; Whitehead, 2007, 2010, 2013; Wainright et al. 2018). In particular, this study highlights the need to help children understand the significance of their embodied selves. While Whitehead (2007, 2010, 2013) and others argue for the importance of helping children to understand and develop their embodied selves, I would go a step further based on the current findings. In this study, I

showed how children's embodiment of their experiences and dispositions can mean they adversely affect each other's PE and playground experiences in explicit and tacit ways. So, I show that we must go beyond simply teaching children about their embodied selves, adding a focus on communicating how their embodied experiences can have unintended consequences. Also, rather than highlighting the need to foster each child's physical literacy journey, I highlighted the need to teach children how they can impact each other's development.

Fourth, the findings of this study highlight the connection between the PE space and the playground. As discussed, there has been an extensive body of literature focused on children's experiences of the playground, however, these studies have not touched on a possible connection between the PE space and the playground. My findings show that there is a clear connection between the playground and PE space, with the rituals that occur in one space impacting rituals in the other space, and vice-versa. Importantly, it also highlights the role that PE plays in the gendered segregation of the playground. Both the PE space and the playground emphasize the sporting interests of boys, which is seen to justify the domination of the boys in these spaces. The findings presented in this study show how this process actually occurs based on the chaining effect of IRs that occur in PE.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Based on the findings from this study, a number of recommendations can be made to address the diverse needs of all children in PE and on the playground. The findings covered many embodied actions that occurred below the level of consciousness (Collins, 2004) and as Bourdieu argues, you cannot make change simply by making the unconscious conscious. Instead, it requires structural changes to the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, I propose changes to the fields through the mobilization of key social agents, the hope being that these changes will allow for more successful rituals for all children, which when chained together will improve the lives of the children, but also lead to broader structural

improvements. It is important to note that while the recommendations outlined are specifically based on the context of CRP, they can also be implemented outside of this context as well.

First, based on the findings, I suggest a re-conceptualization of early PE. I suggest moving away from the current ‘one-size-fits-all’ (Kirk, 2006) curricular approach, which focuses on sporting skills (Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2017, Ward, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2018) and places value on the sporting experience of a narrow group of students (Hickey, 2008; Koca et al. 2009; Jachyra, 2016). Instead, I propose an approach that aligns with calls made by Oliver and Kirk (2016) and Powell and Fitzpatrick, (2018) to develop PE so that it enhances the interests and meets the needs of all students. Hence, I acknowledge the essential role that children must play in the curriculum-making process (Walseth et al. 2018), and therefore, recommend that the curriculum in early PE should be created in conjunction with the children. This will entail working with the children to incorporate their voices and their different types/levels of experience into account. Importantly, this student-driven practice does not just mean only listening to those students who speak the loudest (Oliver & Kirk, 2016). The danger in this is that some of the children will perceive certain forms of human movement, such as dancing, riding bikes, skipping or chasing friends, as frivolous and less valuable and therefore may speak loudest to shun these activities (Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Therefore, this form of student-driven practice should involve intentionally seeking input from all students (Kirk & Oliver, 2016). Hence, PE practice will evolve to work with all of the children ‘to determine the kinds of physical activities that they find enjoyable and meaningful’, rather than just privileging the experiences of a select few (Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2015, p. 481).

This will open up the curriculum and mean the children are exposed to a variety of physical activity opportunities, rather than narrow focus that has become the norm (Walseth et al. 2018). This still means that there will be experience hierarchies, but by acknowledging the different experiences of all children this will likely mean that these hierarchies will be continually changing over a range of activities. To address this, I also propose implementing a critical and reflective approach by working with the

children to help them understand the role of their embodied selves. This would involve specifically working with the children to understand that they bring in different levels of experience and how they embody this experience can mean they impact each other's experience. Hence, this also means helping the children to understand how their experiences have led to the development of certain types of habitus, and helping them to develop a more reflexive habitus to address the reproduction of the problems discussed in this study.¹²² Importantly, this requires helping teachers to move away from the non-interventionist role and helping them to understand what types of embodied actions can have adverse effects and teaching them how to intervene in these situations. Also, it requires that schools adopt a critical approach to PE and rely more on their teachers that have expertise in children's learning (Dyson et al. 2016; Petrie, Pennery & Fellows, 2014; Powell, 2015) than sport-focused EPs (Dyson et al. 2016; Griggs, 2007; Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2008; Petrie, Penney & Fellows, 2014; Powell, 2015; Whipp et al. 2011; Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011). In implementing this student-driven approach both specialists and non-specialist will develop their knowledge of the curriculum with the children.

An important element to this will be changing the PE space to make it a positive environment for all of the children (closer to what some of the children experience at home). Essential in this is de-emphasizing the importance placed on competition and skill mastery. Instead, as in Mary's case, there should be more emphasis on fun and co-operation.¹²³ It is essential to recognize that there will still be dominant boys who embody their 'sporting habitus' to focus on competition and skill mastery. However, it is important to acknowledge that the habitus is durable, but not eternal (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993), so making changes to the field and helping these students to develop new types of habitus (which involve valuing a range of activities), which they can be reflexive of, is essential. Additionally, best practice should involve acknowledging that children bring different levels of experience into PE, and therefore,

¹²² Although there is the possibility that this will put additional pressure on the children and their role in class, the outcomes will benefit all of the children and create a better PE environment for all.

¹²³ Both of which have been identified by multiple authors as key contributors to children's active engagement in PE (Almond, 2013b; Beni et al. 2016; Hay & Iisahunter, 2006; Kirk, 2005; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Wainright et al. 2018)

splitting the children up into skilled level groups when necessary. A similar approach has been adopted to address literacy in recent years, and PE would benefit similarly, with research showing that children enjoying playing with peers of the same ability (Walseth et al. 2018). Clearly, this will be mean more work for the teacher, so I also propose providing teaching aides to the PE teachers, similar to literacy lessons, so that the teacher and the aide can work more closely with the different skill level groups. These aides would provide crucial benefits to both specialist and non-specialist teachers. If implemented correctly these changes are likely to make PE a more positive environment, where children will have more freedom to learn, acquire capital and produce emotional energy free from many of the current constraints of current PE practice. This is likely to have a positive impact on how all children develop their physical subjectivities in PE, rather than privileging a select few.

Making changes to the field of PE is not enough; it is just as important to make changes to the playground. Throughout this thesis, I have highlighted safety concerns as the primary motivation for the segregation that is supposed to occur on the playground (Thomson, 2005, 2007). The children showed how they had internalized this rationalization for the separation on the playground. I propose a move away from this type of segregation.¹²⁴ Instead, the playground space should be utilized to provide the children with the ability to engage in a variety of different activities.¹²⁵ It is vital to work with the children and include their voices to figure out how the playground space can be structured to achieve this goal. This would mean structuring the playground in more a democratic way to open the space up to everyone. This should increase the ability of all the children, particularly the least experienced children, to play in areas that may not have been open to them before. Crucially, this will require the teachers taking more of an active role on the playground. For example, teachers can organize play activities with less focus on competition and skills as an opportunity to reduce play hierarchy and conflicts (Pawlowski et al. 2018).

¹²⁴ Research has not shown that this segregation has not led to a decrease in harm or injuries. Even in my time observing on the playground I still saw a multitude of children getting injured.

¹²⁵ An essential element to this, will require working with teachers and children to critique idea that the separation on the playground is 'natural'. This will not be easy, but must be addressed adequately.

So, girls who typically are excluded, or choose not to play because of the dominance of the boys, might choose to play if a teacher is controlling the game instead of the dominant boys. Critically, teachers must also learn when to intervene in the play of the children, particularly if the ‘sporty boys’, are dominating an area and playing in a way that excludes other children. Teachers must intervene to make sure separation on the playground is not allowed to occur ‘naturally’. This also requires empowering the children to intervene themselves if the games are becoming exclusive. By taking these steps, the playground space should allow children to continue to develop along the multiple physical pathways that would be possible through the changes to PE. In this way, the playground can operate as both an extension of the PE space, but also as a site of resistance, when needed¹²⁶, where the children can engage with creativity, to develop broader types of physical subjectivities without the same degree of regulation.

Limitations

Despite the notable contributions that emerged from this study, as one of the first to examine the embodied interactions of children in early PE and on the playground through a micro-sociological lens, there were still a number of limitations that need to be considered. The first limitation that needs to be addressed is the location of the study: a public primary school in a middle-class area of Melbourne. Since the school is located in a higher-socio economic location, many, but not all, of the children were afforded multiple opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports and physical activities outside of school. This likely means that the experience hierarchy that contextualized PE was particularly pronounced in this area. Given that social-economic status is strongly linked to the ability to participate in organized junior sport (Kirk, 2005), there is a possibility that the contextual factors would have been slightly different if the study was conducted at a school in a lower socio-economic status area. Meaning that there likely would have been fewer children with prior sporting experience, possibly resulting in a different experience hierarchy. However, it is important to remember that class is not the only barrier to junior

¹²⁶ For example, if a teacher does not make any changes to the PE environment then the playground can act as a site of resistance to develop broader subjectivities. Particularly if the changes that I proposed are made to the playground space.

sport participation, gender, family history, and culture can also be strong barriers to sporting participation (Kirk, 2005). Therefore, although a different context is likely to lead to some significant contextual differences, research shows that there are still likely to be similar sporting experience hierarchies (Evans, 2004; Koca et al. 2009; Jachyra, 2016)

Another limitation is the sample size of interviews that were conducted in this study. It would have been beneficial to conduct more of the mapping and photo-elicitation interviews to further explore the experiences of more of the children in these spaces. Unfortunately, the ability to conduct more interviews was constrained by both time¹²⁷ and ethical¹²⁸ concerns. Despite the interview sample size (approximately 45 map interviews and 20 photo elicitations) consisting of a minority of the student body, the findings presented in this study are significant because of the comprehensive, thorough, in-depth approach that was applied in all of the interviews. Importantly, this in-depth approach led to data saturation, where no additional themes were emerging and therefore there was no need for further interviews (Creswell, 2014). Despite the smaller sample size, the use of multiple data co-creation methods provided a rounded examination of the children's experiences.

Additionally, it would have been ideal to return to the school and follow-up with the children. The interviews that the children participated in provided a wealth of interesting findings. When combined with the video analysis data, these findings took on even more significance. It would have provided an extra layer of analytical depth to go back and follow up with the children based on the findings from the analysis stage.¹²⁹ However, this study design was unattainable given the lengthy analysis process, and the time constraints required to finish this project. Additionally, the ability to follow up on the events of PE lessons would have also been impacted by the time between the events and any proposed follow-up

¹²⁷ As discussed, the interview protocol, particularly for the photo elicitation, was time consuming, which made it difficult to conduct more interviews within the restricted timeline.

¹²⁸ Many of the parents did not return the consent forms, meaning I was unable to conduct any of the interviews with their children.

¹²⁹ For example, following up with some of the girls to learn how aware they were of the acts of explicit and symbolic violence that the boys committed against them. This would have provided the opportunity to show the children footage from PE classes and ask follow-up questions.

interviews (approximately one and a half years). Thus, conducting follow up interviews with participants would not have been feasible within the time constraints of this research project.

The next limitation that needs consideration is the combination and the application of the two theoretical frameworks utilized in this study. To understand what was occurring in these spaces I combined two theories from two distinct ontological bases. The ontological differences between the two frameworks meant that there was not a perfect synergy between all of their concepts. However, from a theoretical sense, this study was designed to be exploratory, so despite the ontological issues the combined framework provided an effective means to understand the data that was co-created. Ultimately, in combining the two theories I acknowledge that there are some unresolved ontological issues which require further attention in future publications.

The final limitation that needs consideration is the generalizability of the findings proposed in this study. Given that the research was an in-depth examination of the children experiences at one primary school, the ability to generalize these findings to all PE classes across Australia is limited. However, as discussed, both spaces at CRP shared some similarities with the broader field of the playground and PE, as noted by many of the scholars cited throughout this thesis. Therefore, there are likely to be some distinct commonalities between the embodied actions and practices in these fields at other schools, as echoed in the work of multiple authors (Koca et al., 2009; Jachyra, 2016; Jachyra, et al, 2014; Kirk, 2006). Although, it must be noted that the distinctions between contexts is likely to lead to minor differences in these actions and practices as well. So, although the findings are specific to this school, the commonalities with other school settings leave room for these findings to be explored and elaborated upon in future research.

Future directions

The research questions and findings of this research project have provided a close examination of the embodied interactions of Year 1/2 children and how these interactions impact their development. To

further expand on the findings of this project, more studies need to be conducted focusing on the interactions of children in these physical spaces. Expanding the scope of this research to conduct similar projects at a variety of different schools, would add a range of different perspectives to this research. For example, there are likely to be different perspectives and variations in valued activities among children who attend private or catholic schools compared to CRP. In a different schooling context, there are also likely to be variations in curriculum and pedagogy which can impact the experiences of the children. Furthermore, within each different schooling setting, there are likely considerable differences in the socio-cultural characteristics of the children (geography, class, race, gender, disability). The intersection of the socio-cultural characteristics, within a different context, could influence children's interactions in a variety of interesting ways, adding further insights to these findings.

There is also more scope to continue to address Kirk's call for an emphasis on early PE (Kirk, 2005). The findings from this study show that this is arguably the most significant period in children's compulsory physical education participation. Continuing to conduct studies focused on this period of time will hopefully add to the overall understanding of the importance of PE. This means continuing to emphasize that there is more importance to early PE than just focusing on the multiple aspirations that currently underpin PE. Therefore, it should be not just be framed as an introductory period to teach skills that are important to be able to achieve these aspirations in the later years. This means acknowledging the limited role that PE may have on affecting PA levels outside of school (Fairclough et al., 2002; Kirk, 2005, 2010, 2013; Powell, 2018; Telford, 2017). Instead, our goal should be to ensure that all children develop their physical subjectivities through enjoyable and meaningful experiences. Therefore, future research should continue to emphasize and explore the importance of early PE in the development of all children. This also means continuing to flesh out the connection between the playground and the PE space and communicating this connection to the major stakeholders within education.

Finally, a key future consideration for this project is to find a way to work with children to empower them to address the issues that were proposed in this research. As touched on, a key recommendation is to work with children and include their voices to reconceptualise the playground and the PE space. In addition, a future direction would involve going back and working with participants on a project to translate their experiences into a storybook or graphical novel for the benefit of other children. As discussed, there is a growing need to conduct projects that involve children as co-researchers (Gallagher & Gallagher, 2008). This follow-up study would allow the children to translate their experiences, beyond the academic contribution that this study will make. It will provide the opportunity to tell their PE and playground stories to other children. In this way, the experiences of the participants can be used to speak directly to other children to help address similar problems that they might have in these physical spaces. Beyond this, I am interested in continuing to work with children to help improve their experiences in PE and on the playground.

Concluding thoughts

This study has provided valuable insights into the embodied experiences of children in PE and how these experiences impact children's development. As shown, the habitus that children bring to PE has a significant impact on how they embody their physical subjectivities within this space. Early PE tends to privilege the previous sporting experience of a small group of children (Evans, 2004), meaning they often succeed at their peers' expense. This process spills over into the playground, where the outcomes of PE rituals play a role in the separation of children by impacting the types of rituals that they pursue. Rather than encouraging all children to engage with physical culture in a variety of ways, this process tends to narrow the physical pathways that are available to children. Therefore, by the time they reach adolescence, the accumulative affect is likely to affect how they engage with physical culture. At this time, when the children are empowered to make their own choices, they choose whether to engage/disengage based on an accumulation of successful/failed rituals. If we truly want to address this

issue than early PE is the time. Hence, we cannot continue to undervalue the importance of early PE.

Rather than serving as a means to end, early PE should be emphasized as significant based on the impact that children's embodied actions can have on the development of each other's physical subjectivities. To address this, we must make changes to implement a true-student-driven, critical approach to PE practice that will allow all of the children to develop a positive physical subjectivity through meaningful and enjoyable experience. In this way, the focus of PE should be on 'teaching the young people rather than the activity' (Whitehead, 2010, p. 161). To close this thesis, I align with Hickey (2008) in stating that the question we should be asking is not, 'how much sport and PE?', but rather, 'what sort of sport and PE?' To answer this conceptual question, we can and must make radical changes to early PE for the benefit of all children.

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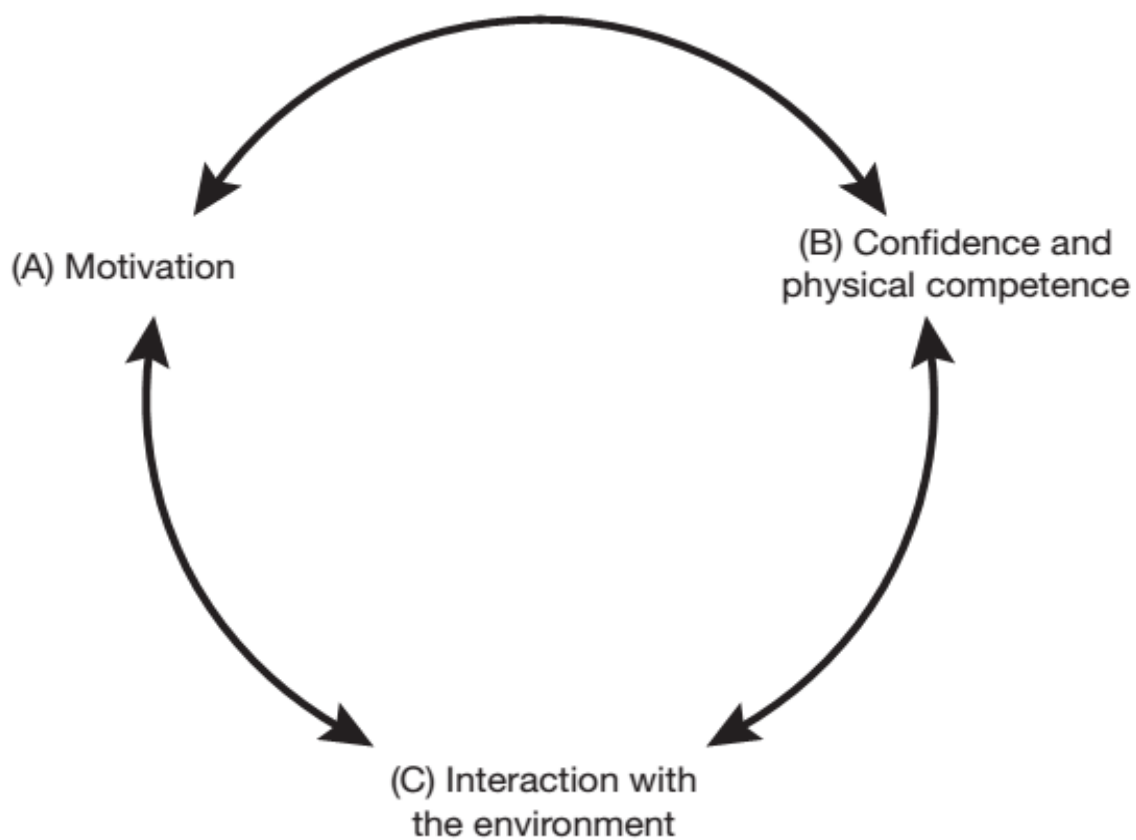
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Appendix A

The relationship between the three attributes of physical literacy



(Whitehead, 2010, p. 15)

Appendix B

Parent/ Guardian Consent form

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

Your child is invited to participate

Your child is invited to participate in a research project entitled:

Children, Play and Sport

This project is being conducted by student researcher Cameron Smee as part of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Brent McDonald and Professor Ramon Spaaij from the College of Sport and Exercise Science.

Project explanation

The aim of this study is to examine how children create a sense of self, through interaction, in two spaces, the PE classroom and the playground. The information gained through this study will provide unique insight into how children develop a sense of who they are, through constant interaction with each other. Additionally, it will provide insight into the role that children play in including or excluding each other during PE classes.

What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be invited to participate in the three phases of this project. The first phase of the project will involve observing the children both on the playground and during PE classes. The second phases will involve filming a select number of PE classes. It is not a requirement for all children to be filmed in a PE class. Alternative arrangements will be made for children who haven't opted in or and haven't been provided consent to be involved. These arrangements will not impact the children's PE experiences. Finally, there will be a photo elicitation/mapping phase. This phase will require more involvement from any child that participates. A select group of children will be asked to draw maps of the playground, highlighting which groups occupy which areas. The children will then be asked to explain how they drew their map and the rationale behind their divisions. Additionally, a select group of parents and children will be involved in a photo elicitation activity, based upon the willingness of both parties to be involved. The parents will be provided a disposable camera and tasked with taking photos of their child being active. The photos will then be developed and the child will be asked to explain what is happening in each photo.

What will my child gain from participating?

Although we cannot promise direct benefit to you or your child, your child's involvement will contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding that will raise awareness on the role children play in influencing the creation of each other's sense of self.

How will the information I give be used?

With your permission, all of the collected information (observations, recorded PE lessons, maps and photos) will be kept and transcribed. The collected data will be analysed and written up in a report for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. Information from the project may also be presented in written form (such as articles and reports) and verbally (for example, at conferences). In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that no participant will be personally identified. All data will be stored securely at VU.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

The observations will be conducted in a flexible, non-intrusive way. The researcher will observe children as they normally interact. Nothing will be asked of the children in these observations, nor will they be coerced to behave any differently. Similarly, the video recordings will involve children behaving normally. These video recordings will only be used for analysis purposes, and won't be seen by anyone outside of the research team. The mapping and photo elicitation will provide children in an active role in the project. This phase will only involve children that decide to be involved, and have parental consent. The photos and maps will also only be seen by members of the research team. If the children are distressed about their involvement in the project, they can opt out at any time.

For further information, please contact:

Cameron Smee
(Student researcher)

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Dr Brent McDonald
(Principal researcher)

Office: 99194656

Professor Ramon Spaaij
(Associate researcher)

Office: 99194683

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite your child to be a part of a study exploring the construction of children's sense of self in two sporting spaces, the physical education (PE) classroom and the playground. The study will focus on how children construct their identity (who they are), through interaction, in these spaces.

The project will consist of three phases. An observation phase, a video recording phase and a map drawing/photo elicitation phase. All of the data collected from these methods will be used primarily for analysis purposes; no child will be identified in the final thesis. Additional information on these methodologies can be found on the 'Information for participants form'.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, _____ (Name)
of _____ (Suburb)

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving consent for my child to participate in the study: **Children, Play and Sport** being conducted at Victoria University by Chief Investigator, Dr Brent McDonald, and student researcher Cameron Smee.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Cameron Smee

and that I freely consent for my child to participate in the below-mentioned procedures:

- Observations
- Video-recorded PE classes
- Map drawing
- Photo elicitation (taking photos with disposable cameras).

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw my child from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise my child in any way.

I have been informed that anything my child does as part of this study will be kept confidential.

Signed:

On behalf of:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to:

Chief Investigator: Dr. Brent McDonald, College of Sport and Exercise Science: Phone: (03)9919-4656, Email: brent.mcdonald@vu.edu.au

Associate researcher: Professor Ramon Spaaij, College of Sport and Exercise Science, Phone: (03)99194683, Email: Ramon.Spaaij@vu.edu.au

Student researcher: Cameron Smee, College of Sport and Exercise Science: Phone: [REDACTED], Email: Cameron.Smee@live.vu.edu.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix C

Assent form



Children, Play and Sport

Cameron Smee

I am here to do a research study about children playing.
My study will focus on how boys and girls play.

Here are a few things you need to know:

- I will spend a semester at your school as a researcher/teacher
- I will observe you playing on the playground and in PE.
 - I will film a few of your PE classes.
- I will ask some of you to be involved in map drawing and photo taking.

When I am finished with the study, I will write a report. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study.

You don't have to be in this study if you don't want to. If you want to stop later on that's okay too. Your parents know about this study as well.

If you decide you want to be in the study please sign your name

Signed _____



Appendix D

Everyone for themselves



Thompson is the Piggy in the middle



Thompson watches as the ball bounces along the ground.



Thompson and Sissy both run to get the ball



Thompson gets in front of Sissy and uses his body to block her from getting the ball.



Sissy avoids the confrontation and jumps up and down on the spot.



Willy enforces the rules on Thompson



Willy sends Thompson back to the middle



Thompson walks back to the middle with his head down

Appendix E

Kelly gets excluded



Evan starts as the Piggy



Kelly waves her arms to show that she wants the ball



Karl fakes throwing to Kelly and throws to Dimitri instead



Karl, Mack, Dimitri and Evan argue about throwing the ball to Kelly



The boys finally include Kelly and she catches the ball

Appendix F

Bob takes on everyone



Stan launches the ball into the air and catches it



Bob celebrates his own catch



Bob makes another difficult catch and celebrates as he runs back in



Bob finishes this celebration by dancing, which Jackie and Amy join in on



Jackie joins in and is able to catch the ball off the ground.



Bob tries to kick Amy's ball and narrowly avoids missing Amy



Bob kicks Paul's ball away



Amy chases her ball until Bob kicks it away.



Bob kicks Stan's ball away



Jackie stamps on the lever a final time but gives up on chasing the ball.

Appendix G

Skill mastery during kicking practice



Willy moves back to kick the ball further



Mary hands the ball to Sissy after multiple failed attempts



Willy is now kicking from outside the game space



Sissy ducks to avoid getting hit by Thompson's kick



Willy runs straight through Lana's space to get his ball



Roger runs through Sissy and Mary's space to get his ball

Appendix H

Skill mastery during piggy in the middle



Aaron throws the ball high to Natasha



Aaron tries to block Adele's throwing path



Rick pushes Aaron away



Rick and Aaron attack the ball in Adele's hands



Rick and Aaron invade Shooki's space



Danny throws the ball over Nat and Shooki's heads.

Appendix I

Skill mastery in skipping



Preston tries to skip as fast as he can



Jay pretends that he can't skip correctly



Tim boots Carl's ball away



Tim blocks Jay's rope



Jimmy jumps on Preston's rope



Jimmy grabs Quincy's rope and pushes him away

Appendix J

Children's name and ages

Class	Student	Age
1/2 Red	Willy	7
	Sissy	6
	Bart	7
	Thompson	7
	Roger	6
	Lana	8
	Renny	8
	Mary	6
1/2 Blue	Carl	7
	Evan	6
	Mack	7
	Dimitri	8
	Kelly	6
	Lupita	6
	Tim	6
	Quincy	6
	Jay	7
	Preston	6
	Jimmy	8
1/2 Yellow	Aaron	7
	Rick	7
	Danny	7
	Adele	8
	Shooki	6
	Nat	7
1/2 White	Stan	6
	Paul	6
	Amy	7
	Jackie	7
	Bob	8