

## **Chapter Five**

### **Using critical discourses as intellectual resources in a pre-service unit**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the principles and processes that comprised the undergraduate unit, Pedagogical Studies in Physical Education (PSPE). It will describe how socially critical discourses were sensitised to accommodate discursive elements of their 'local and particular' context. More specifically, the promulgation of critical discourses within a university program had to comply with the institutional constraints associated with certification, and accommodate the concerns and commitments of the students. The implementation of PSPE in 1994, was therefore constructed and executed in light of a range of structural and ontological impediments. Built on a pedagogy of questions rather than answers, the four stages that comprised PSPE sought to provide 'pedagogically useful' intellectual resources to help students affiance the critique and transformation of their practices and beliefs. The chapter will begin with an overview of the program before providing a more detailed account of the principles and practices that inscribed the unit's pedagogy and curriculum. Conscious of the perils associated with rehearsing artificial binaries the separation of pedagogy and curriculum is undertaken for reasons of clarity and simplification, and is done so with caution.

Guiding the development of PSPE, at least partly, were the knowledges and insights that had been gleaned from the preliminary study of student-teachers' constructions of physical education pedagogy. This initial interrogation provided a useful, but limited, elucidation of some of the influential forces that might reasonably be expected to militate against the introduction of critical pedagogies at the pre-service level. Not least of these was the students' strong sense of compliance and tradition. Indeed, the students' revealed a favourable disposition for outcomes that were readily recognisable and demonstrable. At a pedagogical level, behaviours that were ratified as 'effective' discourses and substantiated through practical referents were particularly persuasive. What had also been revealed through Fay's (1987) metatheoretical lens was an increased awareness of a range of ontological influences on students' pedagogical thoughts and practices. In seeking to introduce critical social discourses in a physical education teacher education program PSPE would inevitably encounter and consequently be forced to mediate a range of embedded and embodied forces.

### 5.1. Background and rationale

PSPE was introduced into the undergraduate physical education program in 1994 as a third year elective unit in the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary). Its cohort was comprised of twenty-four students that had completed at least one previous full-year physical education unit. In fact, all but two of the 1994 cohort had completed five physical education units across first and second year of their degree program. PSPE was the only physical education unit offered at the third year level. Successful completion of this unit entitled 1994 graduates of the Bachelor of Teaching to promote themselves as having a 'major study' in physical education and therefore able to assume specialist teaching duties in this curriculum area. The assumption was, and still is, that these students are able to develop and deliver a comprehensive and contemporary physical education program in primary schools. However, given the almost exclusively technical and bio-physical nature of their undergraduate physical education training the merit of this assumption was being questioned. In redesigning the third year physical education program a strong case was mounted for PSPE to offer students a more problematic view of curriculum and pedagogy.

The reconstruction of PSPE was not the result of student disquiet. Rather, as an active researcher in physical education pedagogy the unit was conceived largely from my personal theorising about the lack of critical insight and independent thinking displayed by pre-service physical education students. This was not a phenomena I based solely on my own work (as presented in chapter four), but rather appeared to have considerable citational support (see Crum, 1993; Tinning, 1991b). Pivotal in it's reconceptualisation was my interest in promoting a more critically self-reflective physical education teacher. To this end the unit was unashamedly initiated to nurture greater critical consciousness in the way student-teachers thought about, conceived of, theorised, and practiced their teaching. Accepting the fundamental critical precept that heightened consciousness can be a catalyst for transformative action, PSPE was framed within a praxis intentionality. The recruitment of critical discourses to guide the construction and implementation of PSPE was guided by an 'activist' epistemology. To be sure, the appropriation of a critical theory as an intellectual resource to ameliorate teaching in physical education was to have its primacy in practice.

Underpinning the construction of PSPE was the knowledge that the bulk of the pre-service physical education program was oriented around the biological sciences. Of the five discrete units offered in the first two years of the undergraduate program four were only incidentally related to the construction of pedagogy in physical education. These were Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, Anatomy and Studies in Recreation. The

remaining Unit, titled Curriculum Studies in Physical Education, was overwhelmingly concerned with what Shulman (1986) would describe as "pedagogical content knowledge". In this unit emphasis was placed on the transfer of content knowledge (in the form of teaching progressions) deemed essential to the teaching of sport-related skills. Focussing on athletics, ball-handling, gymnastics, swimming, dance, racquet sports and navigation the unit sought to prescribe technically efficient practices.

Guided by Fay's (1987) metatheoretical tempering of the critical social sciences PSPE was designed to investigate the utility of a critical theory of physical education in ways that were 'practical and non-ideal' (p. 26). In the interest of promoting praxis PSPE sought to better connect teacher theorising with teacher action. To make overt the sovereign discourses that were informing student involvement in PSPE the unit's aims were communicated to students in the following way (see appendix 3). It is projected that through your involvement in PSPE you will:

- recognise and interpret the problematic nature of teaching in physical education.
- develop greater reflective insight into the consequences of your values and practices.
- recognise that personal experiences are central to the creation of individual subjectivity, that is, values, attitudes and practices.
- recognise that not all learners have the same opportunities to succeed in physical education and sport.
- critique the social construction of health, fitness, elitism, self-image, race and gender.
- consider practical ways of better catering for different learner's needs and abilities.

Some of these objectives were given different degrees of focus at specific stages in the unit, while others were relevant across a number of stages. Although viewed as potential agents of change, student's theories and actions were illuminated through the intellectual recognition of Fay's 'limits to rationality and change' thesis.

## **5.2 Teaching for empowerment**

The goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change. (Shor, 1992, p. 15)

Guided by the paradigmatic principles of critical theory the pedagogy that underpinned

the delivery of PSPE was built around an egalitarian ideal. Although committed to the critical idiom of empowerment the pedagogy employed in PSPE also sought to be 'practical and non-ideal'. Guided by Fay's metatheory the pedagogy in PSPE aimed to provide empirical evidence of its theory and practice, critique the social construction of knowledge and practice, develop pathways for the transformation of theory into practice, and encourage the fullest participation within the world we ecologically and non-idealistically live. The construction of a pedagogy that was to be true to the fundamental principles of an empowering education and yet practically and non-ideally located in a political, social and ecological setting, required a degree of compromise.

The introduction of socially critical discourses in PSPE were framed, as much as practically achievable, within a dyadic power construction. That is, the educational process was seen as a two-way interchange between participants, namely, teacher and learners. This does not imply that teachers must deny themselves of all facets of responsibility and authority. Rather, the appropriation of a critical framework brings with it an altered leadership role for the teacher. Within this charter they are expected to explore strategies that involve participants in learning processes that are democratic and dialogic. The particular and contingent nature of this self-evolving process means that it is not possible to present this process in a standardised format. What critical educators are clear about, however, are the principles that guide the construction of an empowering practice. Indeed, the uncritical imposition of a new pedagogy would run counter to the underpinning ideal of a critical orientation, being emancipation. As Fay (1977) points out:

One cannot impose on another person a new attitude of belief, or create a situation in which the person has no choice but to accept this new belief, and at the same time claim that his acceptance is due to critical reflection. This is just a straight-forward contradiction between the objective and the method. (p. 227)

While the discursive practices that convey the critical message will vary considerably within and across educational settings, the fundamental principles of practice are generalisable.

Borrowing from selected features of the work of Gore (1990), Peterson (1991) and Shor (1992) the pedagogy employed in PSPE was both experimental and contingent. Experimental in that it was volatile and shifting, and contingent in that it had to exist in the political, social and ecological milieu of teacher education licensure. Indeed, these descriptors convey the hypothetical and unstable nature of the critical pedagogical process. Influenced by Shor's principles of empowerment, Peterson's dialogic approach

to nurturing self-responsibility and independence, and Gore's textual representation of subjectivity, the implementation of PSPE could be reasonably described as pedagogical collage. Although these authors are fundamentally committed to the same foundational principles the subtle nuances of their respective interpretations influence the way they construct their practice. As a collective resource, their lead provides a myriad of techniques and strategies through which to explore pathways to integrate critical-social discourses in physical education teacher education programs.

Ira Shor's (1992) description of an 'empowering education' contains much intellectual and practical direction for educators who have are seeking to engender critical thought and action. As characterised in his introductory remarks, Shor is firmly committed to the critical maxim that people can be social critics and agents of change. Rather than view learners as recipients of a unilateral transfer of knowledge, Shor argues that the educational process is predominantly a socialising enterprise through which its audience are prepared for life. Of the pre-conditions he depicts as integral to achieving an empowering pedagogy I found particular utility in his "participatory, desocialising, research and activist" constructs (Shor, 1992, p. 34). His participatory ideal enshrines a commitment to include all participants in decisions relevant to their education. In PSPE this ideal was implemented by inviting student opinion and comment on most issues pertaining to their involvement in the unit and by questioning students about their understanding's and interpretations of issues. Where institutional impediments prevented collective decision-making, students were given full disclosure of the processes and decisions pertinent to their involvement. For their contribution to the participatory ideal the students endorsed a commitment to respect the views of others no matter how disparate (see appendix 3).

Shor's notion of 'desocialisation' was particularly useful in the development of PSPE. Having accepted the ontological precepts that inscribe people as embedded, embodied, historical and traditional creatures, the introduction of an alternative framework was reasonably expected to encounter resistance. The desocialising process was undertaken to question and make problematic many of the taken-for-granted elements of institutionalised teaching and learning. Phillip Jackson's work, 'Life in the Classroom' (1968), was particularly powerful for depicting the schooling process and recognising generalisable habits, routines, power relations, patterns of discourse and behaviours. Jackson points out that having been inducted into particular ways of thinking and acting from a young age, the 'habitus' of classroom life is typically met with passive compliance. It was therefore anticipated that the principles and practices that were proposed in PSPE might create some discord with students. The process of desocialisation involved a critical rethinking of the structures, values and relations

experienced in what Lortie (1975) referred to as a student's 'apprenticeship of observation'. This was undertaken through open discussion, the removal of punitive testing measures, the reflective critique of socialisation patterns, student-centred learning approaches and cultivating a climate of shared and negotiated responsibility.

Shor's use of "research" was also recruited to guide student learning in PSPE. Within this construct Shor uses the research process to create a thinking, questioning and probing environment. Following Shor's lead a research protocol was employed in PSPE to explore and test possible solutions to particular problems. Initiated through a problem-posing approach students were encouraged to discuss, critique and investigate a range of issues related to the construction of pedagogy in physical education. The research quantum for PSPE was that students be involved in some 'deep scrutiny' of subject matter (see appendix 3). By engaging in research processes it was hoped that students would form the habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change thought paradigmatic of a critical uptake. Throughout the year the research process was encouraged across a range of themes. Where research themes were initially determined through group discussions, the selection of issues and themes for investigation was later devolved according to individual interest. As the teacher I was determined to promote and nurture this progression.

In his role as a classroom teacher Peterson (1991) adopts a dialogic approach to his teaching with a view to generating increased self-responsibility. He does this through deliberate strategies which focus on creating a positive and encouraging environment in which he seeks to build self-esteem, encourage respect, co-operation and interaction, and locate dominant social practices in history. Importantly, Peterson reveals that his strategies are not received with linear success. As was the case in Peterson's class, a number of the students in PSPE initially floundered under the responsibility of becoming more self-directed in their learning. Expecting greater injunction from me in my position as teacher, these students were initially critical of the approaches and practices employed PSPE. Learning from Peterson, I imposed greater directional influence on the class when I felt there was obvious confusion and/or dissonance. During these phases I involved the students in discussions, peer presentations and problem-solving tasks. After several cycles of this process the students became increasingly familiar and confident with their roles. In developing his version of a dialogic education Peterson also describes his manipulation of physical structures in the classroom. Rearranging seats into a circle formation for discussions was one such technique I employed throughout the year.

Gore's (1990) construction of "pedagogy as text" also provided valuable direction to the

teaching and learning processes that comprised PSPE. Following Gore's lead the students were encouraged to view the subjective and individual formation of meaning. Recognising the varied construction of meaning that can emerge within a similar set of experiences helped to unveil the problematic nature of learning and knowledge. Throughout the unit the students were encouraged to explore the different ways people internalise their involvement in what is, to all intents and purposes, the same event. Gore also acknowledges the way particular discourses and ideologies impinge on individual meaning-making. By linking social experiences to issues of knowledge and power, as Gore does, students in PSPE were encouraged to contextualise particular understandings within their social and political contexts, or 'regimes of truth'.

The principle of activism is sacrosanct to the critical project. Like Giroux (1983, 1988 & 1992), Shor's (1992) approach to facilitating transformative action rests with a participant's ability to question and contest status quo. However, rather than rely on rationality to generate change Shor proposes a range of principles that precipitate action. Empowering education is, from Shor's perspective, a way of viewing the world and human enterprise. With greater particularity, the testimonies provided by Gore (1990) and Peterson (1991) describe the enactment of critical teaching strategies and the various trials and tribulations they experienced. In their respective projects they give notable prominence to the need to 'engage' with the students. Through the empirical record of their lived experiences, both Gore and Peterson illustrate the pedagogical intricacies of teaching to challenge personal values and assumptions. Indeed, the in-situ demands placed on these critical educators provides a valuable bridge between rhetoric and reality. In seeking to transform physical education pedagogy in ways that were practical and non-ideal, the principles of a critical pedagogy had to be sensitised in the local and particular demands of PSPE. To this end, transformative practices were developed around the student's personal theorising about the nature of quality teaching in physical education. Within PSPE students were invited to explore (*albeit partially*) strategies that might better facilitate their teaching objectives.

### **5.3 Pedagogical studies in physical education**

The following is an outline of the four developmental stages that comprised PSPE and the way in which they were framed as meaning-making experiences for the students. As interacting knowledge domains the organisation of the unit content into discrete stages was somewhat of a compromise. However, the stages were convenient developmental structures around which to focus students on particular issues and themes in some form of logical sequence and progressive order (see appendix 3).

Although the sequenced format portrays an artificial boundarying of themes and issues,

the collective content of PSPE was clearly coherent across a number of foundational critical reference points.

The sequential experiences that comprised PSPE aimed to problematise and critique the construction and enactment of physical education as a cultural practice in schools. An important factor in the representation of the unit in a pre-ordained sequence, were the institutional demands for rigour and licensure. Prior to gaining institutional ratification the unit had to articulate clear learning sequences and a logical and defensible assessment procedure. Further, students' proposing to enrol in any unit offered in the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) have a legitimate claim to know the details of their participation prior to their enrolment. Prior to describing the specific make-up of each stage it is worth briefly over-viewing the entire sequence of PSPE. Through this lens the integrated nature of the unit content is clearly recognisable.

Beginning with the notion of subjectivity the introductory stage sought to locate the formation of personal attitudes and commitments in a biographical pathway. Building on this, the students were asked to locate the personal construction of knowledges and values in their broader social and political context. From this position questions were raised about successful participation in physical education and the unexamined consequences of particular assumptions, values and practices. Students were then asked to critique dominant values and practices in physical education in terms of how they might privilege and oppress different social groups. In the culminating stage of the unit, students planned and conducted a number of teaching sessions in local primary schools. In these sessions students were invited to experiment with teaching strategies that might better facilitate their educational goals and the perceived needs of learners. Rather than recruit critical social discourses to prescribe alternative versions of good practice, PSPE proposed to use the students' personal theorising about a perceived crisis to redeem aspects of their practice. To this end, PSPE sought to engage practices that were 'local and hypothetical'.

To facilitate the introduction of critical intellectual resources, PSPE incorporated a wide range of support material. Prominent in these was the ongoing use of 'Learning to Teach Physical Education' (Tinning, Kirk & Evans, 1993) as the course text. The selection of this text was consistent with the intention to develop student's personal theorising as a means of promoting more thoughtful and considered practice. The underpinning philosophy of Learning to Teach Physical Education is, as stated by its authors, "not so much about what and how to teach as it is about how we should think about what we teach and how we teach" (p. 23). To this end the text is predicated on a dialectic relationship between theory and practice. Taking up this charter the authors'

present a range of issues and challenges around which students can examine their own teaching assumptions and practices. While clearly critical (*in the paradigmatic sense*) in its orientation 'Learning to Teach Physical Education' locates its normative commitments in the practical world of teaching physical education in schools. Other resource materials will be discussed in the context of their appropriation. It is worth noting that some of the resource material used in PSPE was initiated and/or requested by students. This was particularly prevalent in the third stage of the unit where students' selected issues of interest to investigate.

### 5.3.1 Stage One: Understanding self and others in physical education

The initial stage of PSPE focused on the formation of subjectivity through the construction of a personal biography. This focus sought to help students better understand their own histories in physical education and how personal experiences shape the formation of one's values, commitments and understandings. Students were asked to construct a biographical time-line connecting notable influences in their development in physical education and sport. On reading chapter two of the unit text the students were then asked to locate their personal commitments within the discourses that inscribe them.

The construction of individual subjectivity was further examined through a series of activities that brought into focus the experiences and commitments of 'others'. After interviewing a number of people across a range of age groups the students began to explore the way different experiences contribute to personal understanding. The presentations of a number of guest speakers, who discussed their personal experiences in physical education and sport, further exposed the students to the contingent nature of human experience. Presenters in this series included a parent, a teacher educator and a classroom teacher. As well as discussing their personal participation in sport and physical education, the speakers talked about relevant connections in their professional and family lives.

As a science educator Ray discussed the difficulties he frequently experienced having to evaluate student-teachers' physical education sessions. Jenny revealed that she had not liked physical education as a student but had taken up walking as a form of regular exercise, in later years. Jenny also confessed her lack of serious commitment to physical education with her own class. She blamed her lack of confidence and competence in the physical area and the increased demand on curriculum time for her lack of affiliation. As a parent Maureen was particularly critical of the practice of making children run around the block at the start of the school day. She also confessed

that she didn't really care what assessment her children received for physical education. Despite these criticisms Maureen strongly valued her childrens' involvement in a range of sporting and recreational endeavours within the local community. In their forty minute discussions with the students the presenters challenged many of the students' previously taken-for-granted perspectives about the inherent worth of sport and physical education.

During this stage of the unit, and all other stages, the students were encouraged to record their views and reactions in their personal journal. They were not compelled to write about everything that happened but rather could select issues of interest to comment on. To facilitate greater critical reflection a debriefing exercise was undertaken at the end of each class. During these group discussions students were invited to comment on issues emerging from the unit and any other concerns or interests they thought were relevant. Promoting an invitation to speak, students were encouraged to openly discuss their thoughts and interpretations without fear of rejection or reprisal. The debriefing process was not undertaken to resolve issues but simply to stimulate discussion and expose different viewpoints. Further individual interpretation and /or resolution was to be carried out in their personal journals.

Further resource material presented in this stage included a number of vignettes, videos and a range of biographical expositions. As well as my own contributions in these areas (see appendix 5), extracts from Sparkes and Templin (1992) and Tinning (1991b) were particularly useful. Tinning's (1991b) vignettes of Danny's and Natalie's experiences in physical education provided an excellent medium through which to locate personal subjectivity in a broader social context. Although consensual in their criticism of the physical education programs these children were receiving, the students were dispersed in locating the cause of the problem and with whom they lay blame. Viewing the Four Corners program 'Fools' Gold' (ABC, 1993) served to further endorse the disparate experiences and commitments of individuals. This program provided a salutary insight into the political nature of the contemporary crisis in physical education. In their comments and writings many students expressed pessimism, helplessness and anger at the way physical education was marginalised in the school curriculum. The revelations of physical education teachers, as presented by Sparkes and Templin (1992), added a further dimension to the marginal role of physical education in the school curriculum. These readings provided an opportune time to connect the formation of personal interests and commitments with the induction processes experienced during schooling.

### 5.3.2 Stage Two: The problematic nature of teaching

Stage two of PSPE facilitated a shift from the individual, in the form of personal biography, toward a more general look at the construction and maintenance of mainstream practices and beliefs. Underpinning this inquiry was a commitment to help students recognise the problematic nature of teaching and learning in physical education. Borrowing from Evans and Clarke's (1988) assertion that 'physical education makes friends and enemies', students were invited to explore the consequences of many previously taken-for-granted aspects of physical education as a cultural practice in schools. This involved students' identifying and critiquing the discursive practices that they individually and collectively characterised as paradigmatic of good teaching in physical education. A range of readings and activities were introduced during this stage to bring into question mainstream assumptions about the inherent worth of physical education and the traditional roles of teachers and learners in physical education classes. Video recordings of physical education sessions and a practical field placement were also used to problematise the teaching process.

Using the 'friends and enemies' metaphor, students were required to examine the provisional and contingent nature of individual experiences in physical education and sport. These categories provided a useful heuristic for challenging the unproblematic acceptance of dominant assumptions about teacher efficiency and student outcomes. The question, 'what is good teaching in physical education?' provided the catalyst for students to discuss and debate the beliefs and commitments that underpinned their teaching. While they were collectively unable to reach a definitive answer to this question, there was general agreement that an efficient use of time and environment was the most important variable in determining good teaching. To unsettle this view the students were then exposed to a range of resources and activities, including a teaching session conducted by myself in which I modelled efficient teaching practices while deliberately only catering for the most able participants. Although the students agreed that my session was well executed, from a technical perspective, a number of the students confessed their lack of interest and involvement in the session. Ultimately over half the class revealed that they really "did not get anything out of the session" (C.H. f.n: 7). This experience was prominent in advancing the problematic nature of teaching in physical education.

To further facilitate a problematic view of teaching and learning in physical education the students were introduced to a variety of readings and video recordings. The readings included extracts Gore's (1990) account of a pre-service volleyball session,

Tinning's (1987b) characterisations of 'Fat Albert' and others, and a vignette I wrote depicting the experiences of "Sally" a student-teacher (see appendix 5, worksheet 16). All of these readings render as problematic a teacher's role in physical education. Video-recordings of previous undergraduate teaching experiences and extracts from the movies 'Kess' and 'Dead Poets Society' provided further intellectual fodder through which to examine frequently taken-for-granted relationships between teaching and learning. Chapters three, four and five of 'Learning to Teach Physical Education' (Tinning, Kirk & Evans, 1993) were also used during this stage of the unit.

In seeking to decentre the teacher as the arbiter of participant experience the students were invited to investigate the accuracy of assumptions about the unproblematic relationship between the 'means and ends', in a practical way. This process engaged students in a teaching practicum in which they were required to teach a sequence of three physical education sessions in local primary schools. Guided by Tinning's (1987a) use of a 'critical friend' the students selected a partner with whom they would negotiate a number of practical and analytic tasks to examine student learning. In this way participating schools were used as social laboratories for students to observe and evaluate various dimensions of childrens' participation in physical education. In particular students were encouraged to examine the multifarious readings that may emerge from any given class. To achieve this, the students were encouraged to explore ways to find out how children internalised their involvement in each session. By examining many of the assumptions which underpin notions of quality teaching in physical education under the guise of 'friends and enemies', the focus switched from teacher efficiency to learner experiences and understandings. Within this critique issues of teacher management, efficiency and control were separated from issues of learning.

In seeking to locate the problematic nature of teaching in a 'local and particular' context the students were encouraged to develop an action plan through which they may better cater for the needs of different learners. This process was undertaken following the practicum placement so that students had a context in which to construct an action plan. Based on a personal diagnosis of teaching practices in physical education the students' action plans were to propose deliberate and targeted strategies to facilitate their version of a more equitable distribution of learning outcomes. Individual action plans were then discussed and refined with their critical friend, and later in larger groups. The sharing of ideas, while fraught with conflict and debate, was an overwhelmingly generative process. While many students appeared compliant in class discussions, they steadfastly defended their personal theories of improved practice in the privacy of their journals.

### 5.3.3 Stage Three: Issues of equity and equality in physical education

The third stage of PSPE sought to raise students' critical consciousness about the accessibility and distribution of learning outcomes in physical education. Central to this process was an endeavour to expose some of the inequities and injustices thought to pervade physical education (Crum, 1993; Dodds, 1993; McKay, Gore & Kirk, 1990; Tinning, 1990b). Of particular importance were accusations that much of what takes place in mainstream physical education uncritically (re)produces elitist, sexist, technocratic, mesomorphic, individualistic and meritocratic values. Time did not permit each of these issues to be dealt with separately so they were grouped together under the appellation of 'privilege and oppression'. This lens provided a useful heuristic through which to explore the ideological consequences of unexamined values, commitments and practices. The cornerstone of this developmental stage were group research projects, which culminated in class presentations.

To initiate the development of critical awareness, students were encouraged to explore both the intended and unintended learning outcomes associated with a range of physical education practices. Drawing on chapter six of Learning to Teach Physical Education, students' employed Dodds' (1985) official and unofficial curriculum catechisms, namely, 'overt, covert, null and hidden', to examine disjunctions between intended and unintended learning outcomes. In particular, Dodds notion of the hidden curriculum was used as a heuristic tool to expose some of the concealed, and potentially harmful, learnings that frequently take place in and through physical education. Within this construct students were encouraged to investigate hidden messages that are frequently, albeit unwittingly, transmitted to learners through their participation in physical education and sport.

Accepting the foundational critical precept that hidden learnings are mischievously transported in ideological, PSPE endeavoured to provide students with some intellectual resources through which they might begin to unveil these messages. Given the slippery nature of ideology as a theoretical construct this process was introduced through practical examples. Focussing on 'the body' as a vehicle through which social meanings are (re)produced, I introduced the concept of 'mesomorphism' as a means of examining ideological work. Here, students were invited to explore the way body shape is thought to unproblematically represent a person's values and commitments. Given that these learnings are advanced at the somatic level they are frequently undiscernible to an uncritical gaze. Drawing on Tinning's (1985) account of the 'Cult of Slenderness' and aspects of his book Improving Teaching in Physical Education (1987b), the students participated in a number of activities that helped them to identify

and critique some of the assumptions that are manifest in contemporary constructions of the body.

Building on this example, the students were presented with a number of assumptions that conceal ideological messages in physical education. In groups of five, students were asked to research one such assumption and prepare a fifteen minute presentation around the issue. As well as providing an overview of the assumption students were asked to reveal practical manifestations of its existence and describe ways in which they may begin to redeem its proliferation. As an introductory exercise undertaken in class students' discussed aspects of ideology within the following assumptions:

- boys are physically more able than girls and therefore deserve higher profile in physical and sporting arenas;
- weaker performers only have themselves to blame for their lack of success;
- strength, determination and aggression are the most important attributes in successful athletic performance;
- in sporting competition everyone has the same opportunity to succeed;
- more able performers earn the right to more opportunity than less able performers.

As well as providing foci for a classroom workshop, students were invited to follow-up on any of these issues in their group research projects or out of individual interest.

During the three week period that the students had to prepare their presentations I was available to visit each group on request. Whereas demand for my input was high for the first week, this dependency had abated substantially by week three. To avoid time-wasting, the students were informed that they did not necessarily have to agree on all facets of their collective response. Rather, where different views and commitments existed the students were encouraged to cater for these in designing their presentation(s). Indeed, rather than view lack of consensus as a philosophical and/or practical impasse, the assimilation of non-convergent views was to reflect a mature and conciliatory approach. In keeping with the democratic ideal that underpinned the unit, students were encouraged to acknowledge alternative viewpoints and not use the critique of ideology as a victim-blaming exercise.

The critique of ideology was undertaken to advance the students awareness of teaching as a value-laden process in which the sovereign discourses militate against other forms of reason. Initiating this process was the collective assertion that they (*the students*) would always reject practices that were unjust or inequitable. To facilitate the difficult process of engaging in some level of auto-critique (critique of one's self), the students were encouraged to consider the ideological dimensions of their own values and

practices. To achieve this the students were encouraged to identify particular historical and social influences that influenced their way(s) of thinking about the nature of quality provision in physical education. Drawing on Fairclough (1989) the students were encouraged to realise, "that the institutional practices which people often draw upon without thinking, often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimise existing power relations" (p. 33). In co-operation with the person who had acted as their critical friend during the previous practicum placement, the students were required to look below the surface of their own practices to reveal any instances that may have, albeit unwittingly, privileged some participants over others.

In an effort to foreground the contingent nature of human action this stage of the unit culminated with a discussion which juxtaposed and counterposed humanist and determinist descriptions of the human enterprise. Favoursing the formation of a dialectical arrangement between agency and structure, the students were asked to consider the extent to which they could practically and non-ideally be expected to subvert or redeem dominant social values. Taking up Fay's (1987) limits to rationality thesis, this discussion proffered the difference between recognising ideology and transforming it.

While the students were generally able to describe the altered practices that they believed would restrict the uncritical proliferation of dominant social values these became increasingly problematic when they had to interface with real people in real settings. The students were asked to consider the sorts of resistance(s) they might reasonably expect to encounter when introducing alternative practices in an institutional setting. This exercise encouraged students to recognise the social, historical, political and ecological conditions that might impinge on their action. Indeed, the notion of participants rejecting or resisting what was perceived to be good for them was a difficult one for them to resolve.

#### 5.3.4 Stage Four: Using critical intellectual resources to reconceive practice

The final stage in PSPE was guided by an epistemology of 'activism' in the interest of developing more inclusive pedagogical practices in physical education. This involved students constructing and implementing a series of four physical education sessions in local primary schools. As a culmination to the unit, this experience was to provide students with an opportunity to experiment with any reconceived notions of quality practice that they may have (re)constructed through their exposure to critical intellectual resources. This praxis intentionality intended to ameliorate their personal theories about the quality provision with the formation of complementary practices. As

a frame of reference for constructing a more equitable pedagogy, students were asked to consider practices that would complement their personal theories of good teaching.

To facilitate the experimental and hypothetical nature of this 'self-directed' (*while recognising the limits to this position*) pedagogy, the students were not graded on their teaching performance. Rather, the students were encouraged to critique their own performance with the help of a critical friend. As an institutional demand, they were to be assessed on the depth and scope of the written reflections that accompanied their teaching sessions. Collated in their personal journals, these entries were meant to reveal how they thought about, justified, interpreted, reflected-on and evaluated their pedagogical practices. To facilitate a reconceived practice that was local and specific the students were expected to mediate their personal theorising about physical education pedagogy in the context of its implementation. To support the exploratory nature of the practicum placement all participating schools were informed of the experimental and hypothetical nature of the program. Further to this, each student was obliged to meet with the class-teacher of the grade they had been allocated, to discuss their ideas and the needs of the children.

Drawing on the previous three stages of PSPE, students were encouraged to critically reflect on the ideological and discursive dimensions of their teaching. In seeking to provide students with some practical conduits through which they may examine the effectiveness to which they achieved this goal, the notion of 'discourse' was introduced. Through a series of class discussions discourse was understood to contain all the forms of meaning that are communicated during the teaching and learning process. A non-prescriptive form of analysis was also designed to provide students with various sets of lenses through which they might examine aspects of their teaching. Incorporating teacher pre-suppositions with the discursive patterns of interaction this analytic tool was meant to provide students with some investigative and reflective foci. Indeed, the introduction of discourse as an analytic construct did not impose a specific version of desirable practice.

Blending Fairclough's (1989) account of the ideological dimensions of teacher action with Cazden's (1988) mapping of the interactive processes, the model of discourse analysis devised for PSPE was intended to be practical, critical and scientific. Through these analytic lenses, and with the help of their critical friend, students were potentially able to observe and critique the meaning-making processes that comprised their teaching. This model had its conceptual usefulness in helping students' analyse the discursive interaction patterns within their physical education classes and the knowledges and values they regulated and (re)produced.

The model of discourse analysis presented to students during the final stage of PSPE consisted of five key categories. These categories were chosen to accommodate both the ideological and practical considerations thought necessary to give an comprehensive account of practice. The categories were:

- a. *The tripartite structure of teacher initiation, student response and teacher evaluation, (hence known as IRE).* This category implored students to recognise the patterns of interaction in physical education classes and the role of the teacher and learner within them. It was argued that the verbal role of learners in physical education classes is often reduced to 'recitations'. This category of analysis encouraged students to observe the extent to which participants are engaged in genuine discussion as a means of developing new understandings (Cazden, 1988).
- b. *Subject-specific vocabulary.* This was thought of in terms of the specific languages that are endorsed as indicating knowledge and understanding within physical education classes. It was claimed that only those comments that comply with the languages of the field are deemed relevant and noteworthy in physical education classes. Most other comments are rejected, corrected or ignored (left 'off the record').
- c. *Teacher assumptions or presuppositions.* These were to be reflected in the way the students' viewed the teaching and learning process. A teacher's presuppositions communicate their most fundamental assumptions about the nature and form of quality practice and participant outcomes (Fairclough, 1989). These were reasonably thought to reveal a teacher's commitments to issues such as distribution, equity, equality and access in physical education.
- d. *Turntaking patterns.* These were represented in terms of who controls the discursive possibilities within a lesson. If particular participants, namely the teacher, control the agenda in terms of which people speak, when they speak and what is said, their actions (re)produce a dominant discursive pattern which establishes and maintains asymmetric power relations.
- e. *The broader structural patterns of interaction.* These were included to cover other discursive patterns within the teaching sessions. Such things as, how questioning is used, the amount of interaction between participants, the structural impediments of the physical environment, factors that influence turn-taking patterns and the ranges of verbal contribution to discussion can reasonably be thought to influence the learning process.

Using the above categories, discourse analysis was used in this study to explore the discursive patterns of communication in the physical education classes conducted by student-teachers. It must be noted that the transcripts presented in this thesis are only

examples of student-teachers exploring particular understandings of good teaching in physical education. As such, they must be seen as illustrative of discursive patterns of interaction rather as a full accounts of their pedagogical processes. It was intended that this model would provide students with an analytic reference frame to examine and reflect-on their pedagogical intentions and practices. Further, the model provided a useful way to represent interaction across particular pedagogical episodes. Central to this was an insight into the kinds of discourse participants experience and what interpretations they are likely to take with them. It must be recognised that a range of impediments act to restrict innovative practices on student-teacher practicums (Evans & Davies, 1986; George & Kirk, 1988). Restrictions associated with simulated teaching experiences include; compliance with supervisors, lack of risk-taking, evaluation pressures, lack of knowledge of children, and the influence of dominant discourses guiding practice.