

PHYSICAL EDUCATORS' GENDER IDENTITIES AND EMBODIED PRACTICE [LA “PRÁCTICA INCORPORADA” Y LAS IDENTIDADES DE GÉNERO DEL PROFESORADO DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA]

Fiona Dowling. Norwegian School of Sports Sciences. Oslo¹⁷

Abstract.- A discussion about embodied learning must inevitably address the way in which our emotions are integral to our experiences within Physical Education (PE) culture. Knowledge and experiences within PE are generated, regulated, shaped, worked upon and 'normalised' within webs of emotional social relations.

This paper will focus upon how emotions concerning gender relations in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) predominantly construct a 'gender order' (Connell, 1987) which privileges 'traditional', white, middle class forms of physicality at the expense of alternative male and female physical identities.

Drawing upon data from a Norwegian study of PETE, it will be argued that the hegemonic 'feeling rules' (Lupton, 1998) of formal teacher education encourage actors to see any challenges to traditional gender relations as being ridiculous, tiresome, irritating and disdainful. Actors' embodied responses to matters of gender as expressed via laughter, anger, mockery, disgust or indifference can be understood as a 'deliberate social strategy' (Lupton, 1998) in maintaining the status quo.

Resumen.- Cualquier discusión sobre “aprendizaje incorporado” debe inevitablemente abordar la manera en la que las emociones son una parte de nuestras experiencias dentro de la cultura de Educación Física. El conocimiento y las experiencias de la Educación Física son generadas, reguladas, modeladas, trabajadas y “normalizadas” en redes emocionales sociales.

Este artículo se centrará en cómo las emociones relacionadas con el género dentro de la formación inicial de docentes de Educación Física configuran un “orden de género” (Connell, 1987) que privilegia las formas “tradicionales” de fisicalidad blancas y de clase media a expensas de otras identidades física masculinas alternativas o femeninas.

Con datos de un estudio noruego sobre formación inicial en Educación Física, se sostendrá que las “reglas del sentimiento” hegemónicas (Lupton, 1998) de la formación inicial animan a los actores a ver cualquier desafío a las relaciones de género tradicionales como ridículo, pesado, irritante o despreciable. Las respuestas incorporadas de los actores hacia los temas de género, que se expresan por medio de la risa, rabia, burla, desprecio o indiferencia, pueden ser consideradas como “estrategias sociales deliberadas” (Lupton, 1998) para mantener el *statu quo*.

Key words.- Physical Education; Gender relations.

Palabras clave.- Educación Física; Relaciones de género.

¹⁷ fiona.dowling@nih.no

1.- Introduction

I believe that a discussion about embodied learning must inevitably address the way in which our emotions are integral to our experiences within Physical Education (PE) culture. Knowledge and experiences within PE are generated, regulated, shaped, worked upon and 'normalised' within webs of emotional social relations, yet to date we have paid little attention to this aspect of teaching and learning (Evans et al, 2005). Following Hargreaves (2000), I will argue that while our actions within PE may not be solely emotional practices "... they are *irretrievably* emotional in character, in a good way or a bad way, by design or by default" (Hargreaves, 2003:812). In particular, I will focus upon how emotions concerning gender relations in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) predominantly construct a 'gender order' (Connell, 1987) which privileges 'traditional', white, middle class forms of physicality at the expense of alternative male and female physical identities. Drawing upon data from a Norwegian study of PETE, I will argue that the hegemonic 'feeling rules' (Lupton, 1998) of formal teacher education encourage actors to see any challenges to traditional gender relations as being ridiculous, tiresome, irritating and disdainful. Indeed, actors' embodied responses to matters of gender as expressed via laughter, anger, mockery, disgust or indifference can be understood as a 'deliberate social strategy' (Lupton, 1998) in maintaining the status quo.

In fact my interest in the role of emotions in PETE's regimes of truth concerning gender issues has grown out of my feelings of frustration, anger and despair about the profession's seeming disinterest in the significant body of knowledge about oppressive structures in PE, not simply out of academic interest in the research literature. Talking about gender, whether informally to PETE colleagues, to students in seminars or during research interviews, seems to unleash a plethora of emotions, and I began to see that rather than dismissing these feelings as uncomfortable and inconvenient, I needed to grasp a better understanding of their potential power to contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities. I began to reflect upon my own emotional responses to past incidents concerning the gender order, and realized that my memories had a strong emotional element, as well as a cognitive dimension. One particular humiliating memory could still actually trigger an embodied reaction fifteen years after the incident, getting the blood to rush in my veins and transform my neck and face with patchy red marks! On my first day in a new job, in a foreign country, the male head of the PE department made a sexual harassing joke about the banana I ate at lunch time. To my disappointment the seven other PE staff shared his sense of humour, and I sat there with a feeling of having been ridiculed and marginalized. To add salt to the injury, the strength of these emotions silenced me such that I was unable to verbally

communicate my contempt for such a gendered 'put-you-down' strategy, although my embodied response probably conveyed aspects of it. Of course, at one level it is possible to interpret the incident as representing 'innocent' staffroom banter or as an attempt to make me feel included in the group, but I would argue that the latter relies heavily upon me accepting PE's dominant 'feeling rules' about gender relations, which is clearly something I do not.

Indeed, I position myself as a feminist, critical scholar who acknowledges that gender discrimination and oppression is a feature of Western society, and I seek to understand the mechanisms which contribute to this with the view to bringing about change (Connell, 1987). I reject a biological, determinist view of gender which purports that girls and boys unproblematically acquire a set of behavioural characteristics determined by their biological sex, and instead perceive gender as an on-going identity project (Connell, 1987; Butler, 1999) which is influenced by socio-cultural and political factors, not simply biology. Social class and ethnicity inevitably intersect with biology to construct what it means to be female or male within a given culture, and femininities and masculinities are inherently relational. Indeed, as Connell (1987) argues, these are hierarchically organized, both *between* gender categories but also *within* them. Current gender ideologies work to naturalise the superiority of so-called masculine values, attitudes and behaviours over so-called feminine ones, yet this power relation is open to contestation. I am proposing that emotions have an important role to play in the perpetuation of these 'natural' heterosexual gender inequalities in PE, which entrap women in discourses of weakness, reproduction and the private sphere whilst promoting men as strong, competitive and public beings, and position homosexuals as deviants (Brown & Rich, 2002 ; Clarke, 2002; Dewar, 1987; Dowling, 2006; in press; Flintoff, 1994, 2000; Wright 1996, 2002).

2.- Emotion and education

Williams & Bendelow (1998) argue that the study of emotions may offer a truly embodied educational sociology if we view emotions as,

"...existentially embodied modes of being which involve an active engagement with the world and an intimate connection with both culture and self. ...

... The interactive, relational character of emotional experience ... in turn offers us a way of moving beyond microanalytic, subjective, individualistic levels of analysis, towards more 'open-ended' forms of social inquiry in which embodied agency can be

understood not merely as 'meaning-making', but also as 'institution-making'.

... Indeed, from this perspective, social structure, to paraphrase Giddens (1984), may profitably be seen as both the medium and the outcome of the emotionally embodied practices and body techniques it recursively organises.” (Williams & Bendelow, 1998:xvi-xvii)

With regard to this paper, therefore, I will ask how physical educators' emotional consciousness with regard to the issue of gender is structured via intersubjective experience (Denzin, 1984) in PETE, and how these emotions structure the possibilities for gender identities. Following Zembylas (2003), I will try to illustrate how our emotions can expand or limit our ways of teaching and learning, recognizing that how we *are* emotionally is influenced by our socio-cultural background and our interactions with the available discourses in PETE and society at large. As stated above, PETE culture is regulated by 'feeling rules' which dictate how we can behave socially in acceptable or unacceptable ways, and we are, thereby, constantly having to 'manage our emotions' (Hochschild, 1979, cited in Lupton, 1998). Accordingly I think it is pertinent to ask 'whose emotions are defined as acceptable?', and 'whose emotions are silenced?' in matters of gender relations, and 'why is this so?'

In order to better understand PETEs culturally embedded and politically contested emotions with regard to gender equality and equity, I would like to build upon the work of Andrew Hargreaves (2000) by borrowing his idea of 'the emotional geographies of schooling and human interaction'. That is to say,

“... the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other.”
(Hargreaves, 2000:815)

This concept offers a means for identifying the supports for and threats to the basic emotional bonds and understandings of teacher education that are constructed by the forms of closeness or distance in teachers'/students'/policy-makers' interactions and relations. Hargreaves (2000) identifies five forms of closeness and distance in interactions and relations within the institution of Norwegian PETE which can either strengthen or threaten emotional (professional) understanding. Firstly, socio-cultural geographies refer to the closeness or distance between PE teacher educators' and students' cultural and social backgrounds. Secondly, moral geographies concern the closeness or distance between the PE teachers' moral purpose (for example, their pedagogical and

ideological philosophies) and that of fellow actors in PETE. Thirdly, professional geographies are concerned with the spaces between competing forms of professionalism (for example, managerial or democratic). Fourthly, political geographies concern the relations in the hierarchical power structures of PETE and PETE policy. Finally, physical geographies refer to the physical spaces between PETE colleagues and students: the frequency and quality of their close, or distant, proximity? Before developing each of these in the light of my data, I will inform you about the methodology employed.

3.- Methodology

The data have been collected as part of a research study which asks whether teaching and learning in PETE is a technical-rational/managerial or a moral/democratic project (Dowling, 2006) for the actors involved, and how, in particular, gender equality and equity are constructed therein. Using purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990), three universities were chosen as being useful and appropriate sources of information. Informed consent was sought from the dean of each PETE faculty and from the participating, voluntary informants: teacher educators, supervisory teachers and students. Data are being collected by a number of methods, including in-depth interviews (Kvale, 2001), focus group interviews (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999) and document analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

With regard to this paper, the discussion is generated from in-depth interviews with seven teacher educators from three institutions, and focus group interviews with twelve students attending two of the participating institutions, as well as analysis of documents such as national curricula and local strategy plans. On the basis of the conceptual framework for the project, an interview guide (Mason, 1996) has served as a starting point for the conversations with a purpose (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Three researchers have carried out the individual in-dept interviews with teacher educators: a female, 31 year old PE Master's student; a male, 58 year old senior lecturer in PETE; and I, a female, 43 year old senior lecturer in PETE. Only the two lecturers conducted the group interviews with students. Interviews were conducted at the informants' institutions at a place and time which they deemed suitable. The intention was to provide a safe environment in which trust between the interviewer and informant could be built. We are acutely aware that our project's credibility, similar to all qualitative projects' authenticity, rests upon our ability to establish mutual respect between interviewer and interviewee, and our capacity to be reflexive about our familiarity with PETE culture (Ball, 1990; Delamont, 2002). To aid our reflection we have used log books for personal

reflections about our interview interactions and written 'analytic memos' (Ely et al, 1991) about our emerging concerns and analyses to share with each other. That is to say, analytic memos about what has occurred in the research process, what has been learned, the insights this has provided and the leads which these suggested for future action. Despite the power imbalance between lecturer and student, and the inevitable tensions of the interviewer and interviewee relationship (Kvale, 2001), on the whole we felt that we established an open, trusting dialogue. With regard to the group interviews, we used considerable time at the beginning of each discussion to establish a code of ethics concerning the anonymity of the participants and respect for differences of opinion (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999).

The interviews (2 per teacher educator informant, lasting 1.5-2 hours, and 1 per group of students, lasting 1.5-2 hours) were recorded and then transcribed *verbatim*. Documents were supplied partly by the informants or have been sought by me via the universities' internet sites and the Department of Education. The data have been coded and analysed using a 'content analysis approach' (Mason, 1996) where the emerging theme of emotions in relation to the issue of gender equality in PETE have been categorised in relation to Hargreaves' (2000) 5 forms of emotional geographies. The interview transcripts and our emerging themes (from the interview data, the analytic memos and document analysis) have been given to the informants during this process, although outside the interview context the informants have provided little feedback.

The teacher educator informants are two female and five male PE teacher educators, whose ages range from 31 - 59 years. Their work experience in PETE ranges from 5 - 32 years: in Huberman's (1993) terms, two from the early-, three from the mid-, and 1 from the late-career stage. The student teacher informants (3 females and 9 males) were nearing the end of their 3-year PETE, 11 of whom could be characterized as 'traditional' recruits (their age ranging from 22-23 years) whereas 1 of them could be called a late entrant (over 30 years old).

Below the data are reconstructed in the form of a 'realist tale' (Van Maanen, 1988) using pseudonyms, which I hope respects the informants in the study, coheres with our current knowledge about PE teacher educators and the issue of gender equality in PETE, and may pave the way for reconfigurations of emotions about gender equality and equity.

4.- Socio-cultural geographies and gender equality in PETE

Beginning with a look at the closeness or distance in the socio-cultural relations of Norwegian PETE, the overwhelming majority of the

informants described a homogenous group with a sense of emotional closeness. Many of them referred to the 'special bonds' which exist between physical educators. Max (male student) for example said warmly, "...you really get to know your PE teacher, you dare to open up to him, because you know, sport creates that type of relationship", and Ronny (male teacher educator) proudly claimed, "... I probably became a PE teacher because I wanted to be like my PE teacher, I'd had a good role model." All of the physical educators had entered PETE because of strong feelings, what might almost be called a passion, towards physical activity and sport, and a few of them because of their desire to teach. Phrases like "I just love being physically active", "It's fun and gives me great pleasure", or "It's a joy to work with PE" were commonplace. Their 'love affair' with sport had inevitably developed over a long period of time, as Tor's comments illustrate,

"I suppose I made the decision to become a PE teacher very early on, and I never really considered anything else. As a PE teacher I get to combine my love of sport with a teaching job, and can pursue it actively" (Tor, male student)

There was general agreement that PETE is still dominated by ethnic Norwegians, and this fact seemed on the whole to be of little interest to the informants; the challenges of multicultural education were not a feature of the interview talk. One teacher educator did, however, express that he found it very frustrating that the few students with "... foreign backgrounds are not used to Outdoor Education activities etc, and there's the religious aspect, of not being able to have physical contact" (Per, male teacher educator) From his perspective, it seems that students with less traditional background could threaten the harmony of PETE relations.

Another perceived threat for some of the informants was that of homosexuality, although it was often rendered harmless with the help of humour. Fredrik (male teacher educator) laughingly stated the following:

"It's not unusual to hear remarks like, 'you homo!', that sort of thing among the students. I know when I'm out with the boys hunting, it's common, too. But it's only a bit of fun, nothing's meant by it. I suppose I'd have to say something if a student shouted 'you homo' to another student in a formal setting, but that doesn't really happen."

Kristoffer (male teacher educator), on the other hand, demonstrated a somewhat more intolerant view when he angrily proclaimed:

"Homosexuals are very peculiar, not normal. Inexplicable! I'd never dream of touching a man's body!"

Max (male student) light heartedly commented that "... the changing room is after all not exactly a Sunday school, is it!" Yet Birgitte (female student), on the other hand, thought it was strange and rather a pity that "that sort of thing, sexuality, hasn't been mentioned once on this PETE course!"

Indeed, Birgitte shared the view with Tor (male student) and Bjørn (male student) that PETE had failed to provide more of a focus on gender issues, because until the group interview "we haven't really talked about it, except when I was on teaching practice, when the supervisory teacher couldn't hide his contempt for me as a female student, even though I was good enough to do all his dance teaching!" (Birgitte, female student). Generally speaking, however, the students' and the teacher educators' lack of interest in gender relations represented yet another close feature of their relations. As Fredrik (male teacher educator) angrily exclaimed, "... gender equality really isn't an issue, for me or for my students!" Despite having volunteered to participate in a project about gender relations, the majority of our informants actually experienced great difficulty, and in some instances, great discomfort when prompted to talk about them in interviews! With the exception of one female teacher educator, Jane, they demonstrated anger, mockery, and disdain for gender relations, which threatened traditional forms of masculinity and femininity, because as Elsa (female student) shrieked in an exasperated tone of voice "... biology *is* biology!"

The socio-cultural geographies of PETE configure dualistic gender relations, with male actors being cast as stronger, physically more able, more aggressive, born leaders compared to female actors who are constructed as weaker, self-doubting, less physically able and bound to their reproductive system. Fredrik's matter-of-fact description of femininity and masculinity in PETE is typical:

"Girls are more dutiful, proper, punctual, a bit quieter, more careful. Male students tend to answer more questions, demand more of my attention, are loud-spoken, stand out more

... To my mind, girls lag far behind the boys in football. ... I actually like to dance, but I'd say that it's mainly women who like dance".
(Fredrik, male teacher educator)

Female physical educators are cast as being slightly masculine in keeping with the notion that sport is a male arena. Jane (teacher educator) explained how she was a 'bit of a tom-boy', whereas Tor (male student) conveyed, "... there are a lot of tough girls in sport, you know, I suppose we could call them masculine." Relations in PETE continue to structure gender appropriate activities, as Are (male student) explained mockingly to the great amusement of his fellow students,

“There aren't many of us (read: male students) who knit or like synchronized swimming! We'd rather play a good game of football. ... Girls like gymnastics and dance, we prefer football or basketball.”

There was very little acknowledgement of changing gender relations in society at large, although when prompted during interview talk, several of the physical educators did admit that male actors were coming under increasing pressure to be concerned about their looks, although images of 'softer, caring men' were met with contempt. Tom (male student) joked that, “... I probably have a soft spot, but I'd rather be seen as masculine, macho!” In fact, Jane (female teacher educator) singled herself out as recognising multiple gender identities, illustrated by this comment:

“You know some of these sporty girls they just don't see a problem with the way they are, yet there are so many other femininities out in schools which they ought to recognise! It's so frustrating in many ways!”

Jane was actually the only informant whose socio-cultural identity seemed at times to be at variance with the dominating feeling rules of current PETE.

By and large the field of PE is seen as a male arena, by both women and men. As Hanne (female student) recalled, “... all of my PE teachers have been men!”, which was an experience shared by all of the student informants. When we suggested that the teaching profession was most often seen as women's work, lecturers and students alike passionately disagreed with us, particularly the male informants who perhaps felt their identities under threat. Tor (male student) eagerly proffered that the interviewer was wrong, because “... there are both male and female teachers in all types of schools, and the majority of PE teachers are men, and they influence the way teaching is conceptualised!” Despite a few cracks in the harmonious façade of PETEs socio-cultural geographies, the overwhelming picture is one of close relations with regard to gender equality and equity: namely, that there's a hegemonic belief in gender as a biological given, pre-determined and unchangeable, with men being cast as superior to women.

5.- Moral geographies and gender equality in PETE

Moving on to the teacher educators' sense of moral purpose, this too appears to be a non-contentious issue amongst colleagues and students. I interpret the dominating discourse to be one of morally developing the 'universal pupil' via the codes of 'fair play' in sport. The

pupils' gender, social or ethnic background is not seen as being relevant to the learning environment. As Alexander (male teacher educator) effusively commented

“For me it's about giving the students the opportunity to find themselves, their place in the world. I need to know them as an individual and help them from there. ... Disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable behaviour, that's the bottom line.”

Are (male student) enthusiastically proclaimed, *“... I think as long as you treat everyone the same, then there's no danger is there?”*

Due to the 'close relations' of the PE lesson, as described above,

“... obviously PE provides lots of social contact, team games and play, so really you could say it's all about social interaction” (Per, male student)

Teacher educators and students alike were well rehearsed in proudly justifying PE's role in nurturing positive attitudes, such as respect for individuals and rules, assuming responsibility for oneself and others, and developing pupils' self-confidence. Ronny (male teacher educator) summarized his position in the following way,

“It's essential that you combine physical upbringing with moral development otherwise you risk having the 'perfect body' yet lack human morals. You have to learn to live with other people, accept society's rules, and PE offers this through 'fair play’”.

Most of them agreed, however, that pupils and/or students' social and moral development was not an explicit part of PETE, yet

“... it's there in a way! ... We've talked lots about pupils, and they're boys and girls, and we've talked about how girls behave and how boys behave. We talk about it even though we don't use terms like equal opportunities!” (Elsa, female student in an exasperated tone of voice)

Data from one teacher educator's interview talk did, on the other hand, reveal glimpses of a competing discourse in which students are recognised as having gender identities, alongside many other identities, and the recognition of a moral sense of duty to raise students' consciousness about matters of social injustice. Jane's belief that female students are treated unfairly within PETE configured her emotions differently than the majority; rather than contentment with the way things are, she displayed anger and despair when recalling how her attempts to create greater equality are met with indifference from students and colleagues alike:

“It's so easy to paint a black and white picture. Male qualities are things like being tough, rough, wild, strong whereas female qualities are sort of softer, more refined. And when I hear myself say this, I'm so very much opposed to it! We all have some of these qualities, we're a mixture!

... Yet, I don't think that the needs of girls are necessarily met in PE. Take, for example, the types of activities which are taught in PE. They're mainly ball games, and many girls report that they don't like ball games, it's been documented in a lot of research, but dance and aerobics, which they like, that's not prioritised at all! That's overlooked ... I've introduced some literature about this (read 'gender inequality in PE') in my courses and we tend to have some great debates, but I'm not sure they quite understand the problem! (laughter)

... Today's students are not exactly gender specialists, I'd rather call them individualists! It's all about me, and my right to choose, irrespective of gender. I really feel as though there's been a change in the mentality of students.”

6.- Professional geographies and gender equality in PETE

The gender 'feeling rules' and the types of emotional relations which are configured in PETE concerning the physical educators' sense of professionalism can also be described as congenial. With the exception of one teacher educator, none of the informants identified themselves as educators with an interest in issues of social justice, such as gender equality. Instead they described themselves as experts in performing, and in instructing, a wide range of sports and physical activities, such as dance or outdoor education. The following interview citations are typical of the ways in which they saw themselves,

“You've got to have a wide knowledge base. Know how to play a lot of different sports: football, bandy, basketball, gymnastics etc.”
(Are, male student)

“You need to be able to communicate with others, need to be a good instructor” (Kristoffer, male teacher educator)

“You need to be able to differentiate tasks to include everybody, give them something at their level of performance” (Hanne, female student)

The teacher educators invariably ascribed themselves a co-identity, which reflected the sub-discipline within PETE which interested them the most: for example, *“I'm a psychologist”* or *“I'm a physiologist”*.

Interestingly, none of the teacher educators identified themselves as 'pedagogues'!

The harmonious relations are characterized by autonomous work patterns. Alexander (male teacher educator) admitted that "...I mainly work on my own", and all of the students talked about the importance of teacher-pupil relations rather than collegial ones, when discussing their future work in schools. Only Jane (female teacher educator) dissented in this instance, when she made it clear that she regretted not having the opportunity to discuss professional issues, including gender matters, with colleagues:

"We don't have many discussions about PE teaching in general, let alone gender and PE! It would be nothing more than informal lunchtime chat in response to a TV programme, something like that! My colleagues have very different interests than me, in fields that span from physical activity and psychiatry to biomechanics!"

Paradoxically, Jane's desire for more collaborative work relations was nevertheless framed within a traditional, dualistic concept of gender and workplace roles for men and women, which upheld the PE arena as being 'naturally' male-dominated:

"Yeah, I still think there's a tendency that men get management jobs easier than women, and I think that partially has to do with the fact that it's easier for them to be heads of department. That they're good at accepting the responsibility which goes with the job, it's easy for them, if you like. In a way, I'm still of the opinion that in a way men and women are not alike. ... (Self-mocking laughter) ... Even though we talk about equal opportunities and equity, I'm not convinced, I suppose, and sometimes I think there are things that make boys men and girls women, and men find it easier to be in charge. I'd probably stay awake at night with the worry, but they don't seem to, do they?" (Jane)

Indeed, similar stereotypical, gender characteristics are described by students, as Elsa's (female student) frank comments illustrate:

"In a way we're (read females) afraid of saying too much aloud. We'd rather sit in the background, and if we're asked to apply for a Head of Department job we sit and wonder if we're competent enough, whereas males just say 'I can do that!', even if they're incompetent!"

7.- Political geographies and gender equality in PETE

Moving onto PETE's political geographies, these too seem to be configured harmoniously; neither the majority of the teacher educators, nor the students in the study, perceived policy to be of much importance in PE. National curricula for schools and the national curriculum for PETE are marginalized by actors who perceive their own performing selves to be more crucial to the types of learning opportunities they can provide. As Randi (female, teacher educator) matter-of-factly conveyed,

"I don't know if policy has an influence ... I don't really know the details of the written law ... and you tend to work at a more concrete, practical level: how many hours and what themes am I going to teach?"

The majority of the students agreed upon the importance of 'teaching practice' with regard to becoming a good teacher, and none of them mentioned the way in which the National Curriculum affected their teaching. Jens (male student) prompted his fellow students to nod in hearty agreement when he claimed,

"Teaching practice was where I've learned the most - how to deal with pupils and how to organise lessons. Certainly not from theory or curricula!"

In response to a specific question concerning equal opportunity policy in education, Tom (male student) proudly stated, "... I haven't got a clue about what's in the National Curriculum", which sparked off admiring laughter from the other students in the group. Indeed, laughter seemed to be a common response to questions about gender equality and equity policies, illustrated by Fredrik's (male teacher educator) reaction to being informed about his institution's local gender strategy document:

"... an action plan here at Strand? Never heard of it! (roaring laughter) But if I might say so, it sounds extremely ambitious! I don't see it fitting into my teaching subjects, I don't include literature about gender, no. But I presume those who are interested in gender do include something, so the students get it from somewhere."

Once again there was, however, one dissenting voice in these political relations, that of the teacher educator, Jane. Her opinion concerning national policy demonstrates how competing forms for relations may co-exist when she explained how she actively uses policy for pursue her personal goals of improving female students' learning opportunities:

“Gender equality is a part of the national curriculum for teacher education, under general pedagogy, but I use it actively within subject didactics – I interpret that there's room to do that After all, it's the teacher who interprets plans, for better or for worse.”

8.- Physical geographies and gender equality in PETE

The final form of emotional geographies which colour emotional (mis)understanding within PETE is that of physical geographies. That is to say, the closeness or distance in contact between colleagues and students, where issues such as gender equality may be addressed and/or problematised. There appears to be an overwhelming understanding that these relations are distant. In terms of relations between students and teacher educators, these were characterized as being fragmented and episodic. Many of the teacher educators described students as interchangeable within their neo-liberal notions of individualism (as illustrated in the section on moral geographies), and their use of gender stereotypes illustrates a lack of interest in needing to know the individual student beyond the supposed traits of their biological sex. Even though Kristoffer (male teacher educator) informed us that getting to know the students' names was extremely important for his identity as a good lecturer and motivator, he told us several times, that “... the boys tend to be a bit macho. The girls are more careful, tend to remain in the background”. With regard to the students, none of them talked specifically about a particular teacher educator, and in the case of Tom, David, Are and Jens, they experienced relations to their lecturers as problematic:

“David: This year we've been left a lot to our own devices with only a few hours of lectures per week. Lots of wasted time.

Jens: I certainly wouldn't recommend this course to anyone! That's for sure.

Tom: Yeah, we could have completed the course in 2 years, there's no need for 3!”

Interestingly, however, none of them had decided to transfer to another institution which provides PETE, so it therefore seems that on the whole they were content with their course.

Generally speaking, relations within the student body were perceived as satisfactory, but these too tended to be described as distant in relation to the collective group with close relations being established with simply a few like-minded friends. Birgitte, Elsa and Hanne (female students) explained how they formed a close-knit group but surprisingly did not see their gender as being the reason for this; “... we simply work

well together.” To summarise, the amount of contact between colleagues and students is a taken-for-granted aspect of PETE, and there appears to be little room for discussions beyond the technical-rational content of PETE; issues of social justice are simply not on the agenda and with the exception of Jane (female teacher educator) no one sees this as being problematic.

9.- Interpreting the emotional geographies of gender equality and equity in PETE

The overriding impression I have of the experiential patterns of human interactions and relationships within Norwegian PETE are that they can be characterised as close. With the exception of one teacher educator, and a few specific comments from some of the students, the majority of the physical educators describe close bonds, which stem from their passion for sport and physical activity. Their strong performing identities serve as the core for a set of common beliefs about teaching PE in a technical-rational way; to perceiving the pupil in a neo-liberal, individualist way; and with regard to gender equality, to perceiving traditional forms of masculinity and femininity as being determined by biology alone. The latter appears to cohere with international research on gender in PETE (Dowling, 2006, in press; Flintoff, 1994; Flintoff & Scraton, 2005; Wright, 2002), as well as more general research on discourses within PETE (Kirk, 1992; Tinning, 1991).

When we broached the topic of gender from a social constructivist perspective in interviews, acknowledging the socio-cultural and political aspects of what it means to be female or male, most of the informants had an emotional, embodied reaction to what they perceived as a challenge to their 'feeling rules'. Accordingly, anger or frustrated tones saturated the interview talk when the informants felt that their understanding of gender relations was being threatened, or alternatively they used the emotions of ridicule or mockery to disarm the perceived attack. As illustrated above in the realist tale about emotional geographies, the men in particular seemed to feel threatened by the thought of losing male privilege in an arena which they consider strongly to be theirs by right, which confirms Messner's (1992) findings. Although some of the informants conveyed that their participation in the research project had led them to reflect upon the issue of gender, I believe that this cognitive reaction is less powerful than their emotional one (Tinning, 2002) and is unlikely to bring about change in their beliefs.

Of course the teacher educator called Jane illustrates the possibility for competing 'feeling rules' about gender to co-exist in PETE, as indeed I hope my own position represents, but her interview talk

simultaneously reveals how complex and tenuous such a process of challenging the normative beliefs of the profession can be. Whilst all of the informants remind us of how our professional self-identities can become so taken-for-granted, Jane in particular prompts us to revisit our multi-layered ways of being in the world; it clearly is possible to feel passionate about both wanting new gender relations *and* keeping things the way they are! Here I refer specifically to Jane's views about how there are multiple ways to be a female and or a male, and yet her insistence that men are better suited to management jobs because of some inherent gift, which is an anomaly she recognises herself. Interestingly, her explanation for the latter is an embodied and emotional one: she would have difficulty in sleeping should she have the responsibility of a being a head of department. Similarly she feels irritation and frustration at the thought of girls who play on traditional forms of femininity in classes, rather than offering a theoretical analysis of why the girls do as they do. I am not purporting that the latter is more appropriate than the former, but I do believe that we need to acknowledge that a theoretical understanding of gender is perhaps impossible to achieve before it encompasses an emotional dimension. Following Williams & Bendelow (1998), Jane's emotions can be seen as both a medium and an outcome of the social structure of PETE, as indeed can the hegemonic emotions of the majority of the informants in the study.

In the absence of different emotional configurations about gender in PETE, there appears unfortunately to be little room for people whose belief system deviates from the norm; lesbian and homosexual students and teacher educators (Clarke, 2002; Flintoff, 2000), physical educators with ethnic minority backgrounds (Benn, 2002); or PE teachers with a social justice agenda (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). As Gard (2006) writes, PETE's current gender order may lead to PE lessons and/or lectures becoming,

“... stages for the enactment of particular identities rather than spaces in which the body's movement potential is cultivated. But more than this, the charge here is that PE is both victim and engineer of this gender order because it privileges certain kinds of identities over others.” (Gard, 2006:790)

With regard to the student teachers in the study, research shows that their emotional understanding of gender relations is probably of little use to them beyond the realms of PETE, because once they enter schools they discover, often painfully, that their gender emotional repertoire is too narrow in relation to the broad socio-cultural background of their pupils (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Rich, 2004; Wright, 1999, 2002). As a result PE teachers can face a lot of 'emotional labour' in trying to coax disinterested children into their gendered, bodily practices because they lack the

emotional maturity to understand different gender positions, and accordingly, some pupils fall unavoidably victim to discrimination in the process. The strategies of being a good motivator, of endorsing 'fair play' or being well versed in social skills, which many of the informants mention as a means for securing inclusive PETE, seem thus to have limitations in practice, not unlike the limitations of reducing 'emotional intelligence' to a set of technical competencies (Hargreaves, 2000). This type of strategy fails to consider the broader socio-cultural structures of PETE, including the powerful webs of emotions, in which all teacher educators and their gendered practices are entangled.

10.- Concluding comments

Getting in touch with our feelings is however unlikely to be an easy task; it will *feel* odd and we will have to be prepared for the discomfort which necessarily accompanies the development of a new set of 'feeling rules' about gender relations in PETE. I am not advocating self-indulgent sentimentality simply for the sake of it, but like Hargreaves (2000) see a critical engagement with our feelings, as and when it seems appropriate, as a potential means for enhancing our teaching practice. Of course such an exposure of our innermost and vulnerable selves with require an extraordinary level of trust and respect from ourselves and our colleagues (Day & Leitch, 2001), and just how we can embark upon this reflective journey is clearly a challenge. Shared story-telling (Noddings, 1996), literary criticism (Tinning, 2002) or poetic representations (Dowling Næss, 1998; Sparkes et al, 2003) might offer us a starting point for 're-thinking' our embodied, emotional gender order in PETE and open up new embodied learning opportunities within our subject.

11.- References

- BALL, S. (1990) Self-doubt and soft data: social and technical trajectories in ethnographic fieldwork. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 3(2):157-171.
- BENN, T. (2002) Muslim women in teacher training: issues of gender, 'race' and religion. In D. Penney (ed) *Gender and Physical Education. Contemporary Issues and Future Directions*. (London & New York, Routledge).
- BROWN, D. & RICH, E. (2002) Gender positioning as pedagogical practice in teaching physical education. In D. Penney (ed) *Gender and Physical Education. Contemporary Issues and Future Directions*. (London & New York, Routledge).

- BUTLER, J. (1999) *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London, Routledge.
- CLARKE, G. (2002) Difference Matters: sexuality and physical education. In D. Penney (ed) *Gender and Physical Education. Contemporary Issues and Future Directions*. (London & New York, Routledge).
- CONNELL, R. (1987) *Gender and Power*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- DAY, C. & LEITCH, R. (2001) Teachers' and teacher educators' lives: the role of emotion. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17:403-415.
- DELAMONT, S. (2002) *Fieldwork in Educational Settings: Methods, Pitfalls and Perspectives*. (Second Edition). (London, Routledge).
- DENZIN, N. (1984) *On Understanding Emotion*. (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass).
- DEWAR, A. (1987) The Social Construction of Gender in Physical Education. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10(4):453-465.
- DOWLING, F. (in press) Getting in touch with our feelings: the emotional geographies of gender relations in PETE. *Sport, Education & Society*.
- DOWLING, F. (2006) Physical education teacher educators' professional identities, continuing professional development and the issue of gender equality. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 11(3):247-263.
- DOWLING NÆSS, F. (1998) *Tales of Norwegian Physical Education Teachers: A Life History Analysis*. (Norges Idrettshøgskole: PhD Thesis).
- ELY, M., ANZUL, M., FRIEDMAN, T. GARNER, D. & STEINMETZ, A. (1991) *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles Within Circles*. (London, Falmer Press).
- EVANS, J., RICH, E, DAVIES, B. & ALLWOOD, R. (2005) The Embodiment of Learning: what the sociology of education doesn't say about 'risk' in going to school. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 15(2):129-148.
- FERNANDEZ-BALBOA, J.-M. (1997) Physical Education Peacher Preparation in the Postmodern Era: Toward a Critical Pedagogy. In J.-M. Fernandez-Balboa (ed) *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education and Sport*. New York, State University of New York Press.
- FLINTOFF, A. (1994) Sexism and Homophobia in Physical Education: the challenge for teacher educators. *Physical Education Review* 17(2):97-105.

- FLINTOFF, A. (2000) Sexism and Homophobia in Physical Education: The Challenge of Teacher Educators. In K. Green & K. Hardman (eds) *Physical Education: A Reader*. (Oxford, Meyer & Meyer Sport).
- FLINTOFF, A. & SCRATON, S. (2001) Stepping into Active Leisure? Young Women's Perceptions of Active Lifestyles and their Experiences of School Physical Education. *Sport, Education & Society*, 6:5-22.
- FLINTOFF, A. & SCRATON, S. (2005) Gender and Physical Education. In K. Green & K. Hardman (eds) *Physical Education. Essential Issues*. (London, Sage Publications).
- HAMMERSLEY, M. & ATKINSON, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. (London, Tavistock Publications Ltd.).
- GARD, M. (2006) More art than science? Boys, masculinities and physical education research. In D. Kirk, D. Macdonald & M. O'Sullivan (eds) *The Handbook of Physical Education*. (London, Sage Publications).
- HARGREAVES, A. (2000) Mixed emotions: teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16:811-826.
- HUBERMAN, M. (1993) *The Lives of Teachers*. (London, Cassell).
- KIRK, D. (1992) Physical Education, discourse and ideology: bringing the hidden curriculum into view. *Quest*, 44:35-56.
- KITZINGER, J. & BARBOUR, R. (1999) Introduction: the challenge and promise of focus groups. In R. Barbour & J. Kitzinger (eds) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. (London, Sage Publications).
- KVALE, S. (2001) *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. (Oslo, Gyldendal Akademisk).
- LUPTON, D. (1998) *The Emotional Self*. (London, Sage Publications).
- MASON, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*. (London, Sage Publications).
- MESSNER, M (1992) *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*. (Boston, MA, Beacon Press Books).
- NODDINGS, N. (1996) Stories and affect in teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26:435-447.
- PATTON, M. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (Second Edition)* (London, Sage Publications).
- RICH, E. (2004) Exploring teachers' biographies and perceptions of girls' participation in physical education. *European Physical Education Review*, 10(2):215-240.

- SPARKES, A, NIGLES, L., SWAN, P. & DOWLING, F. (2003) Poetic Representations in Sport and Physical Education: Insider Perspectives. *Sport, Education and Society*, 8(2):153-177.
- TAYLOR, S. & BOGDAN, T. (1984) *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: the Search for Meanings*. (Second edition) (New York, Wiley).
- TINNING, R. (2002) Toward a 'Modest Pedagogy': Reflections on the Problematics of Critical Pedagogy. *Quest*, 54:224-240.
- TINNING, R. (1991) Teacher Education Pedagogy: Dominant Discourses and the Process of Problem-Solving. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 11(1):1-20.
- VAN MAANEN, J. (1988) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. (Chicago, Chicago University Press).
- WILLIAMS, S. & BENDELOW, G. (1998) Introduction: emotions in social life. Mapping the sociological terrain. In Bendelow, G. & Williams, S. (eds) *Emotions in Social life. Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues*. (London & New York, Routledge).
- WRIGHT, J. (2002) Physical Education teacher education: sites of progress or resistance. In D. Penney (ed) *Gender and Physical Education. Contemporary Issues and Future Directions*. (London, Routledge).
- WRIGHT, J. (1999) Changing Gendered Practices in Physical Education: Working with Teachers. *European Physical Education Review*, 5(3):181-197.
- WRIGHT, J. (1996) The Construction of Complementarity in Physical Education. *Gender & Education*, 8(1):61-79.
- ZEMBYLAS, M. (2003) Emotions and Teacher Identity: a poststructural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice* 9(3):213-238.