Physical education in contemporary Ireland: a case study of curriculum, continuity and change

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY IRELAND: 
A CASE STUDY OF CURRICULUM, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

by 
JOANNE MOLES

Doctoral Thesis 
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements 
for the award of 
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University 
(February 2003)

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in part as a response to proposed changes in the curriculum and teaching of Physical Education in Irish post-primary schools. I have been involved in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) for almost thirty years, almost entirely in Ireland, and I have a strong commitment to the promotion of child-centred Physical Education which I believe may be threatened by the proposed changes. My concerns are evident within this study which focuses on three Physical Education teachers in contemporary Ireland over a period of approximately three years during which three Draft New Syllabuses for Physical Education were written by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. These teachers share concerns and values regarding the teaching of Physical Education which broadly concur with my espoused ideology. Each is aware of their preferred pedagogical practices and is articulate in their defence of them. Within this study, the professional practices of these teachers are examined in the context of societal changes and the proposed curriculum changes in Physical Education evidenced in the new syllabuses. Inspiration is drawn from Basil Bernstein's work which Sadovnik (1995, p. 7) claims 'promised to connect the societal, institutional, interactional and intrapsychic levels of sociological analysis'. This study accepts Bernstein's analysis which provides a systematic structural theory allowing micro and macro aspects of the education system to be inter-related.

The pedagogical discourses preferred by these three teachers are examined alongside those implied within the Draft NCCA\(^1\) Physical Education Syllabuses (2000). These, the first detailed syllabuses for Physical Education in Ireland, are considered alongside Bernstein's (2000, p. xii) characterisation of contemporary official state educational reforms as 'a means of managing economic, technological, and cultural change by their projection of pedagogic identities', where, 'different educational reforms projected different pedagogical identities.'

Clearly an analysis of the socio-political climate in which these three teachers work is relevant to understanding the construction of their roles as teachers. Contemporary Ireland has been described by political commentators as moving from being a society to an economy. Implications of this transition are assessed within a broad-ranging analysis of the state of the country alongside a look at the values and practices of the three teachers while they still work relatively autonomously.

\(^1\) The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Irish Physical Educationists, like their counterparts elsewhere, justify their practices within competing ideologies. There is evidence of a complex struggle to control what is taught, as Physical Education is observable at all levels of the education system. In this study, changes in Irish society are described alongside indications of how the Draft New Irish Physical Education Syllabuses (2000) for post-primary schools reflect these changes.

In Chapter 1, an overview of the socio-cultural aspects of contemporary Irish society and the education system within that society provides a context within which the role of Physical Education can be reviewed. The theoretical foundations of the study are described in Chapter 2. A description of Methodology is given in Chapter 3 and the data obtained by various methods are provided in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is concerned with reviewing the study to establish how Physical Education in Ireland is developing and how recent changes impact on the three teachers who are of central interest. Chapter 6 examines the findings of the study in light of four central questions outlined within the Introduction, addressing the nature of Irish society and ways in which Physical Education is developing within it, specifically with regard to the three teachers identified above. Chapter 7 critically evaluates the project drawing attention to issues raised within the research which deserve further investigation.
'Teachers work within a changing world.' Hargreaves (1994, p. 38)

...The end of the twentieth century is witnessing a dislocation between knowledge and the knower. That is, the production, distribution and circulation of knowledge is separated from inner commitments and dedications. The latter impede the production, distribution and circulation of knowledge in response to external demands, i.e. the market. We are experiencing a truly secular concept of knowledge (Bernstein, 1996, p. 4).

1.1 Context:
This study arises from concerns about potential effects of the imposition of new Physical Education syllabuses on Irish post-primary schools. I am concerned about teachers losing autonomy in a shift towards teacher accountability within measurable outcomes. I found no Irish research in Physical Education based either within a critical or interpretive methodology. In Ireland, when research has been undertaken in Physical Education, scientific positivism has been the dominant research methodology. This concurs with McKay, Gore and Kirk (1990, p. 52), who found that:

As part of their quest to secure scientific credibility, physical educators in Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States have increasingly privileged empirical-analytical forms of research.

Following principles of interpretive research, this study examines data relating to the working lives of three teachers who feel themselves to be at odds with the direction of change within Physical Education. Although all three feel valued within their schools, each of them is aware that their concern with their pupils' learning as individuals within a social group runs counter to the view that all pupils should be taught a common curriculum and assessed through common prescribed criteria. These three teachers believe that they and a minority of Physical Education teachers share what Friere (1994) calls 'intellectual kinship'. They see a role for schools in challenging social structures and a not content to establish or reproduce a hierarchy by promoting hierarchical individualism. They are all committed to the idea of accommodating differences within their classes and to heightening awareness of difference among their pupils with the aim of educating pupils to be sensitive to others. The discourses in which these teachers are involved are consistent with aspects of critical pedagogy described by Gore (1993, p.15) as: 'outlining theories and strategies for the enactment of democratic and emancipatory schooling.'

* Ireland is taken to refer to the Republic of Ireland and does not include the six counties of Northern Ireland unless specifically stated.
Under the Draft National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Physical Education syllabuses (1999-2001) teachers in Ireland will be provided with externally described standards on which to base their programmes. Physical Education thus becomes equivalent to other subjects which are formally assessed. Some writers, for example Lynch (1989) indicate that one effect of competitive individualism, implied within this curriculum, is to reproduce the existing social order and maintain the status quo. An alternative model is provided by Bernstein (1996, p. 9) who suggests that within a school it is possible to reduce or contain conflict between social groups by 'creating a discourse which emphasises what all groups share, their commonality, their apparent interdependence.' Bernstein (ibid.) highlights an ideological divide, evidenced in Ball's (1993, p. 209) claim that within the 'New Right' influences on British education:

The ontology of restorationism is opposed to any conception of human nature as social (except in the narrowest senses of family and nation) and conceives instead of private, self-sufficient competing individuals...

The Conservative position outlined above is inconsistent with the form of social order described by Bernstein in which there is social interdependence within and between social groups. Ball (ibid., p. 210) goes on to describe how, within the conservative view of things: 'Teaching is not so much a pedagogic intervention as the most effective method for identifying and realising inevitable intelligence-based differences between students.' The three teachers whose views inform this study perceive and respond to the classes they teach as social groups. They believe that the pursuit of prescribed goals will alter the social dynamic in which they work and damage their relationship with these children. This study examines whether their preferred mode of teaching is being diminished by a trend toward 'a secular concept of knowledge' (Bernstein, 1996, p. 4).

1.2 Purpose of study:
With over thirty years experience of Physical Education both as a teacher and as a Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) lecturer, I have consistently tried to place my practice within theory. A more common research procedure is to use theory to interrogate practice. Having successfully justified my practice to colleagues, critical students and ex-students, now teaching, I am confident in my ability to defend the relevance of child-centred Physical Education in contemporary Ireland. This study
Chapter 1 Introduction

draws on my experience by submitting to a theoretical analysis my concerns about a dilution of child-centred teaching likely to result from the proposed syllabus changes. My initial Teacher Education in Stranmillis College, Belfast from 1964 to 1968 was informed inter alia by the work of Bilborough and Jones writing specifically about Physical Education. Mr Bilborough was external examiner to the Physical Education programme for the National College of Physical Education, Limerick, on which I lectured and he subsequently acted as an academic referee on my behalf. Macdonald et al (1994, p.12) report that Bilborough and Jones (ibid.) described:

The idea that teaching means helping learners to engage actively in independent thinking, problem solving, and open-ended, non-linear exploration of broad movement concepts.

The significance of these ideas has actively informed my practice throughout my career; therefore the potential impact of these new syllabuses on child-centred teachers in Ireland is of particular interest to me. Examining three teachers’ reactions to the new syllabuses provides a mechanism for testing the validity of my professional analysis of the likely effect of the introduction of these new syllabuses. These teachers have all declared their commitment to child-centred teaching and they are consistent in their concerns to react to their pupils’ needs, as they perceive them. I believe that their central ideologies concur with my own.

This study uniquely describes the practices of Irish child-centred teachers and examines the effects on them of pursuing extrinsic goals as opposed to working to personalised programmes. This study examines evidence within contemporary Ireland of aspects of globalisation, observed elsewhere, and the effects of these on Draft New Physical Education Syllabuses (2001) for Irish post-primary schools. This study provides an analysis of Physical Education within an emerging ‘New Ireland’ and especially the implications of proposed changes for the subject. To facilitate this it focuses on an exploration of four central questions selected to investigate the nature and effects of continuity and change in the new millennium, specifically with regard to the Irish physical Education curriculum. The questions are as follows:

- Are Irish Physical Education teachers working in an economy or in a society? This question focuses on the discourses which embed education and the political climate in which education is defined.
- Does the process of McDonaldization described by Ritzer (1993) describe Irish Physical Education? Bernstein’s distinction between models, which he calls ‘Competence’ and ‘Performance’, provides a set of concepts with which to interrogate this.
• Are Irish teachers being deskilled, as described by Hargreaves (1994, p. 117)?
• Is there a ‘gap in the discourse’ whereby the values outlined within policy statements from the official producers of texts are not those incorporated by Physical Education teachers? This gap is explored to ascertain whether within Irish education, in Bernstein’s (1996, p. 4) terms, ‘the knower is separated from the known’.

While results of this analysis relate especially to contemporary Ireland, at the same time they are relevant to more general understanding of the process of curriculum change. In summary, my concerns about the introduction of new syllabuses are being interrogated though the four questions above. These questions have been identified within contemporary literature as having relevance outside Ireland and their relevance in Ireland is examined within this study.

1.3 Structure:
Each chapter of the study is structured around the four central questions, identified above. In addition, in successive chapters the analysis moves from the general to the particular, with consideration of Irish society preceding that of schools and individuals within schools. Chapter 3 includes biographies of the three teachers and descriptions of their schools, related to characteristics of contemporary Ireland identified in Chapter 1. Chapter 4 analyses the implied discourses in the new syllabuses. Conflicting ideologies among and between interested groups, identified in Chapter 2, are outlined in Chapter 4 with reference to questionnaire response and interviews (in Appendix three, four, five, six, eight, nine and eighteen). Reactions of the three teachers to the NCCA Draft Syllabuses (1999-2001) are also considered in Chapter 4. More detailed descriptions of individual chapters follow.

In summary the purpose of this research is to identify and evaluate ways in which late/postmodern changes in Irish society impact on the processes of Physical Education curriculum development. It is undertaken in the context of my personal viewpoint that proposed curriculum changes, without adequate justification, may be expected to, at least in part, supplant existing valuable practice.

3 The term ‘ideology’ is used in this study following McKay, Gore and Kirk (1990, p. 53) to refer to: ‘images, languages, symbols and ideas through which people represent, interpret, understand and make sense of some aspect of human existence.’
1.3.1 Chapter 2:
Critical characteristics of contemporary Ireland are described in relation to proposed Physical Education syllabus change. The effects of the relationship between contemporary Ireland and global capitalism are examined. Socio-cultural influences on Irish teachers are also examined along with considerations relating to class, race, gender and ethnicity. Examples of homogenisation in Irish schools are described with reference to theory describing rationality.

The development of the NCCA PE Draft Syllabuses is described. A copy of the Syllabus Introduction is included in Appendix 17. The 2000 Draft provides a ‘General rationale for Physical Education’ and ‘Overall aim’ for the subject and a list of ‘Learning outcomes central to Physical Education’. The rationale and aims are written indicating concern for pupils as individuals and open with a statement that:

The educational significance of any subject matter on the curriculum is determined by its potential to promote long-term learning directed specifically at the students’ enrichment as persons. (2001, p. 1)

This emphasis on developing personhood coexists with a view consistently expressed by Irish educationists that meritocratic individualism provides motivational force for pupils’ success (Drudy and Lynch, 1993, p. 49) and the implications of this claim are explored.

The PETE programme in the University of Limerick is described briefly, primarily to illuminate likely influences on the ideology of graduates.

1.3.2 Chapter 3:
In Chapter 3 theory is reviewed to expose the importance of the four key questions. The first part concerns global influences in contemporary Ireland. Theory relating to late/postmodern characteristics of modern societies, specifically Ireland, is examined. Tovey and Share (2000) bring together recent detailed analyses of contemporary Irish society which inform this section. Bernstein’s (2000) description of performance and competence models of pedagogy is used to analyse contemporary practice in Irish education with reference to studies of Irish post-primary education, particularly by Drudy and Lynch (1993), and Lynch (1989, 1999). The work of Sugrue (1999) who writes about child-centred teaching in Ireland within the local context of Irish education, helps to inform the analysis.
1.3.3 Chapter 4:
This chapter details methods and procedures employed to gather data. Also included is information designed to explain the way in which the new syllabuses were developed. The composition of the NCCA Committee which produced the syllabuses is described to reveal individual influences within the group. The views of the Education Officer of this committee on the purpose of the syllabus are set out. Descriptions of the schools in which the three teachers work further understanding of how the central questions of this study are relevant to these syllabuses. An account of how the three teachers were selected and the processes by which they were involved in this study is followed by sections providing biographical information.

1.3.4 Chapter 5:
In Chapter 5 the relevance of the new syllabuses to Physical Educationists, specifically the three teachers, is centrally important. Perceptions among the Physical Education community are described by referring to data gathered using methods described in Chapter 4. As well as questionnaire responses from physical Educationists both in PETE and teachers in post-primary schools, responses from teachers and pupils in the three teachers' schools are analysed.

1.3.5 Chapter 6:
Chapter 6 reviews the implications of the analysis presented in Chapter 5 with reference to the four key questions. Each question is examined in the context of questionnaire responses from the Department of Education and the NCCA, University of Limerick PETE tutors' responses and those from teachers and pupils in the three teachers' schools are similarly reviewed.

1.3.6 Chapter 7:
This chapter evaluates findings in relation to the four central questions and assesses the potential effects of contemporary Ireland becoming more globalised, exhibiting characteristics of late/postmodernism. The role of the three teachers within contemporary Ireland is assessed with regard to their preference for a pedagogical model which is consistent with what Bernstein (2000, p. 45) calls a Competence Model of pedagogy. In this way my own views on the likely consequences of introducing the New Syllabuses are weighed and evaluated. This analysis is designed to be of relevance both to contemporary Ireland and to wider areas of curriculum development.
1.3.7 Chapter 8:
In Chapter 8 the success of the project is evaluated. Possibilities for further studies are identified, as are limitations of this study.

1.4 More detailed description of study development and context:
Developments within the teaching of Irish Physical Education are considered with reference to the new syllabuses and my experience of teaching Physical Education.

1.4.1 Proposed changes in syllabus:
Between 1999 and 2002 the NCCA has provided three draft new syllabuses for teaching Physical Education. These syllabuses are being introduced in response to changes in Irish society described in Chapter 2 as reflecting global changes associated with late/postmodernity. Some of the features associated with this global change can be observed in contemporary Ireland and these are outlined in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 expands on relevant theory underlying the relationship between social change and the curriculum. Basil Bernstein's (1990, 1996, 1999, 2002) analyses of pedagogy in contemporary society have particular relevance in this study and provide frameworks for studying the work of the three child-centred teachers.

These syllabuses are prescriptive, detailing specific Learning Outcomes for each stage of schooling. The proposed syllabuses make teachers accountable by ensuring that they teach content which can be examined or observed. For the first time there is provision to hold examinations in Physical Education in the Leaving Certificate Examination, the summative examination in post-primary education. The previous syllabus in the Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools, 1987/88 to 1997/98, did not detail content and on the basis of questionnaire responses (Appendix 4) it seems that most teachers did not consult it. There was no requirement for teachers to follow this syllabus.

In contrast to other Irish post-primary school teachers, Physical Education teachers have been relatively autonomous until the end of the twentieth century. The peripheral position of the subject within the education system has, at least theoretically, permitted teachers scope to provide their pupils with experiences that encourage them to challenge their own beliefs and ideas. In some cases these challenges have been structured to challenge a pupils' self-concept by confronting previously untried activities, facilitate the development of cooperative behaviour with other people and awaken respect for the immediate and wider environment. In other cases however, the limits of teacher education, and of resourcing in schools have often given value to something much more conservative.
1.4.2 The relevance of my experience of child-centred PETE:
My own experience of teaching Physical Education extends for over thirty years. My teaching career began in Northern Ireland after I attended a College of Education in Belfast in the late 1960's where I learned about education as a caring profession. I taught both in a secondary modern school and in a grammar school. In the early 1970's when I became involved in teacher education in the National College of Physical Education, Limerick, I retained a commitment to the necessity of knowing and responding to children as unique individuals. I lectured for three and a half years in Chelsea College of Physical Education in Eastbourne, where this philosophy was respected and shared with colleagues.

My belief in the value of Physical Education as a medium for holistic child-centred education underpins this study. My concerns for society reside within a commitment to Christian caring and concern for the students who I teach. Having moved to the Republic of Ireland from Northern Ireland over thirty years ago I still feel able to take an outsider's view of my surroundings. The facilities provided by the UK government in the schools in which I taught in Northern Ireland were better than those currently used for PETE in the Republic of Ireland. In Chelsea College of Physical Education in the 1970's I shared assumptions and concerns about the purposes of teaching as part of a community. Similar concerns are only occasionally shared with my colleagues in Limerick, the majority of whom welcome the introduction of the proposed syllabuses.

1.4.3 Likely effects of these changes:
Draft Syllabuses for consultation were provided in August 2000. Physical Education teachers' current practice enables them to evolve their own programmes to reflect their own ideologies and expertise although limited resources and time within their schools may restrict them. By imposing syllabuses the Department of Education involves them in accommodating prescribed aims and teaching material which is selected by someone else. For some teachers this may remove some of the stress from their teaching; for others it potentially stultifies their creativity as caring professionals. Potential effects of the changes are examined by looking at current perceptions of Physical Education in Chapter 4.

All three teachers involved in this study claim to embrace child-centred pedagogies. Sugrue (1999) explains how until recently within Irish education at all levels, and particularly at post-primary level, teacher-centred, didactic teaching formed the dominant form of practice. Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 108) indicate that in Irish post-primary schools 'there is evidence of methodological and pedagogical conservatism
in the adherence of teachers to didactic and individualistic approaches in the classroom.'

By contrast a report for the National Education Convention4 (1994, p. 73) included a statement that: 'At the convention there was general commitment to a balanced, holistic curriculum at second level.' It stressed that 'the need for styles of pedagogy which engage and involve all pupils more actively in the teaching-learning interaction than was traditional was also realised.'

The NCCA Draft Physical Education Syllabuses (1999) describe a State determined programme to be delivered by didactic teaching. Even the suggested inclusion of peer assessment relates to pupils evaluating each other, within criteria indicated by a teacher.

Although the General Rationale for the Physical Education Draft Syllabuses advocates a holistic approach to Physical Education, the concept is fragmented. The word 'holistic' appears twice in the General Rationale, in an iteration for consultation (December, 1999, p. 1).

The first time refers to how Physical Education meets its potential to enrich students as persons through 'the fundamental purpose of Physical Education ... to provide a series of learning experiences designed to contribute in a holistic way to individual and collective well-being.' The second appears in relation to 'the Physical Education learning experience', which, it is claimed 'identifies a holistic approach to the concept of physical activity and young people. It recognises the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of the development of the individual.' Further fragmentation is evidenced in the statement that:

Students plan, prepare for and participate in physical activity in order to develop the essential skills, understandings, attitudes and values which promote informed decision-making, encourage participation in regular physical activity and support the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle.

A holistic approach is not in evidence in descriptions of practical activities within the Draft NCCA PE Syllabus (December, 1999). Each activity is treated as a separate/distinct entity associated with skill acquisition, and health-based outcomes are the primary focus. There is no indication of how a range of pupils' abilities can be accommodated and there is no mention of how teachers might structure their classes to ensure maximum participation. No disability, 'race' or gender differences are taken into account.

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4 Representatives of forty-two organisations – educational bodies, the social partners and the Department of Education – were brought together to debate issues arising from the Green Paper on Education before the publication of the White Paper.
The General Introduction which replaced the 1999 rationale, in an up-dated version of the Draft NCCA Syllabuses (August, 2000, p. 1) refers to holistic development only once, claiming that 'physical Education applies a holistic approach to the concept of physical activity for young people.' The same paragraph continues:

It recognises the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human movement. It emphasises the contribution of physical activity to the promotion of Individual and group well-being. Learning in Physical Education involves the acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes central to Physical Education, together with recognition of its potential for integration with other curriculum areas.

The Draft Syllabuses (August, 2000, p. 3) contain some small changes from the earlier version including the provision of a section dealing with students who have special educational needs. The section includes a statement that the 'Physical Education syllabuses are written as inclusive documents developed with the basic goal of meeting the needs of all students, regardless of levels of ability.' However the provision of detailed 'learning outcomes' in the activity areas makes inclusion of all students difficult. The 'Aim' of the 'Practical Aspects' involves students in developing 'technical competence, understanding and appreciation of human movement through participation in a structured course of physical activity.' Within Adventure Activities and Athletics, 'a high level of performance' is specified (NCCA Draft Syllabus, 2000, p. 39f.). There is no mention of educational goals or ideals.

1.4.4 Theoretical basis:
Inspiration is drawn from Basil Bernstein’s work which Sadovnik (1995, p. 7) ‘claims promised to connect the societal, institutional, interactional and intrapsychic levels of sociological analysis’. This study accepts Bernstein’s analysis which provides a systematic structural theory, allowing micro and macro aspects of the education system to be interrelated.

1.4.5 Evaluation of the physical Education curriculum in Irish schools:
Bernstein (1996, p. 117) describes how evaluative rules: regulate pedagogic practice at the classroom level for they define the standards which must be reached.’ Pupils following the new Physical Education syllabuses will be assessed using ‘a variety of assessment schemes’ all of which relate to pupils’ progress and achievements.’ The assessments follow various formats including ‘formal teacher assessment; informal teacher observation; peer assessment; self-assessment and individual achievement.’ (Draft Physical Education Syllabus, 2000)
Comments relating to changes in the British system are relevant here:

... this is essentially a political and oppressive curriculum. The positionings and forms of thought and exclusions and insulations inscribed within its texts and practices are part of a continuing struggle over what it means to be educated.

Ball (1995, p. 100)

Ball (1993, p. 205) describes how the presentation of subjects in the British curriculum objectifies the acquirer:

The student is to learn from history and about music and geography but is separate from them. The possibilities of analytical or political consciousness or of participation in 'culture' are excluded.

He goes on:

Not surprisingly this curriculum of transmission is neatly packed with equally uncompromising and traditionalist visions of assessment and pedagogy. The terrain of dispute over pedagogy and assessment is, not surprisingly, established across the contending versions of the nature of knowledge...

It appears as if the Irish Physical Education syllabus has the same potential to distance the dancer from the dance, or the swimmer from feeling at one with the water, by focusing on 'Performance outcomes' rather than ensuring relevant educational experiences for individual pupils within a supportive group. The structure and content of the syllabus evokes concerns consistent with those expressed by Kirk, McKay and George (1990, p. 62) who describe a situation of 'All work and no play'. They argue that: ...'Physical Education curricula are selectively legitimised on technocratic and instrumental criteria.'

1.4.6 Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) in Ireland:

Because the majority of Physical Education teachers in Ireland receive their teacher education in the University of Limerick, the influence of the under-graduate degree programme justifies an examination of its underlying ideology. I was interested in exploring whether the ideology of PETE reflected, or potentially resisted through the actions of the teachers it 'produced', the ideological orientations of the new Physical Education syllabuses. Initial PETE in Ireland follows a concurrent model, in contrast to the consecutive model of teacher education pursued by the majority of Irish post-primary teachers who take a one year Higher Diploma in Education course after completing a primary degree. In Chapter 6 are evaluated attitudes of teachers and pupils towards Physical Education within the schools where the three teachers are

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5 No figures are available to indicate the exact proportion, but there is no doubt that they constitute 'the majority'.

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employed. According to Drudy and Lynch (1993) within Irish post-primary education, summative examinations are believed to demonstrate that hard-working, motivated pupils are rewarded for their efforts by good grades and consequently places in further and higher education. With the provision of Physical Education syllabuses and the introduction of examinations in Physical Education, Physical Education seems set to join this certification process. Potential effects of this process on pupils, particularly those at the extreme ends of the range of abilities are of concern to me.
CHAPTER 2: IRISH PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CONTEXT

The four questions posed in Chapter 1 provide a structure for this chapter, which reviews literature relevant to aspects of Irish society, culture and ethnicity and their possible influences on the role and function of education, particularly Physical Education, at the start of the twenty-first century. The four central questions are not discrete as they all examine aspects of relationships between people and their social environment. The chapter begins by identifying aspects of contemporary Irish society of possible relevance to the process of curriculum change. Each of the key questions is examined within subsequent sections.

2.0 Chapter 2 Framework – Contemporary Irish society:
This first section is concerned with an emphasis within contemporary Ireland on the acquisition of capital and the effects of this on education. The current role of institutions which were traditionally involved with the social and personal development of young Irish people is examined. Significant among these are schools, the denominational churches, primarily the dominant Roman Catholic Church and the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Changes within Irish society may reflect wider global changes consistent with theories of postmodernity, while Ireland’s recent economic success reflects a reliance on principles of modernity among the financially successful members of society. The gap between rich and poor and the levels of financial corruption among the rich are consistent with concerns expressed about moral individualism. In describing conditions of modernity, Hargreaves (1994, p. 8) claims that: ‘Secondary schools are the prime symbols and symptoms of modernity.’ Expanding on this he claims that:

Their immense scale, their patterns of specialization, their bureaucratic complexity, their persistent failure to engage the emotions and motivations of many of their students and considerable numbers of their staff (…) are just some of the ways in which the principles of modernity are expressed in the practice of secondary education.

The meaning of postmodernity is still evolving. In this study the terms late and postmodernity are used to identify two stages of Ireland’s recent development. Various writers (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Parker, 1997) have described a shift away from the
certainty on which modernity depends. The ease of communication globally has hastened local social changes, often considered the product of economic processes. Maguire (2002, p. 3) argues that, ‘At its most general, globalisation implies a heightened form of time/space compression, where globalising markets render obsolete the national and the local...’

The nature and purpose of education within societies at any time is influenced by prevailing attitudes. Within the UK, Evans, Davies and Penney (1999, p. 9) affirm that: ‘... teaching and learning are now, as they have been historically, socio-cultural and political as well as educational processes and are therefore always and inevitably contested domains.’

Kirk (1998) illustrates how Physical Education in Australia, as elsewhere, reflects social change. The certainty of modernity or a desire to avoid the uncertainty of late/postmodernity coincides with the provision of a set curriculum with measurable, testable outcomes whose efficiency can be empirically justified. Bernstein (1990, p. 86) differentiates between: ‘Visible pedagogies justified by the intrinsic possibilities of knowledge itself and visible pedagogies justified by their market relevance.’

Within contemporary Ireland where ‘the market’ has assumed an enormous importance, Bernstein’s ‘autonomous visible pedagogy’ is less justifiable than the ‘market-oriented [sic]’ form. Bernstein (ibid.) writes:

8 The subject syllabuses of this programme (the Leaving Certificate) are being revised (2000) to give them a greater vocational orientation. In 1994 the Vocational Programme was expanded to broaden the choice of subjects and to strengthen the vocational content of the programme by including three link modules on Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. (http://www.irlgov.ie/educ/briefdescriptionirishedu/leaving.html)
The more traditionally academic Leaving and Junior Certificate curricula are explicitly concerned with ensuring that young people obtain credentials to enable them to obtain employment. Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 115) report that: 'repeated surveys of school leavers show how important educational credentials are in determining one's employment opportunities.' Access to higher education, the most assured route to employment, is presaged on examination success at school level.

- The second section of this chapter is based in ideas taken from Ritzer's (1993) description of the McDonaldisation of society. Similarities are noted between the 'objectives approach' to planning Physical Education programmes (Kirk, 1993 expands on the use of this term) in the Draft new Physical Education Syllabus (1999) and, with appropriate conceptual links, the rationality imputed to multi-national fast food manufacturers. The provision of texts for teachers is considered in this section. The standardisation of texts is also relevant in the next section where it is addressed from the perspective of teachers who prefer to write their own material rather than accept someone else's plan.

- The third section examines the role of teachers in Ireland with regard to Apple's (1986) description of the proletarianization of teachers. It looks at ways in which teachers are being deskillled, by having, for example, some of their responsibilities removed while more accountability is demanded from them. Sensitive teachers can feel less valued if they are required to account for their teaching, particularly if their own values are not shared by their scrutinizers. This process is analysed in relation to the role of Physical Education teachers in Ireland.

- The fourth section describes how teachers may suffer difficulties when they are required to meet externally-provided goals which may not resonate with their own principles. This is analysed as 'a gap in the discourse' indicating that the regulative, or embedding, discourses in which teachers are working and the instructional discourse implied within the new syllabus, may not be compatible. The terms 'regulative' and 'instructional discourse' are defined by Bernstein (1996, p. 48) who indicates that:
Chapter 2  Irish Physical Education in Context

The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse. In one sense this is obvious because it is the moral discourse that creates the criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture etc. In school it tells the children what to do, where they can go, and so on. It is quite clear that regulative discourse creates the rules of social order.

Bernstein (ibid.) goes on to argue that:

regulative discourse produces the order in the instructional discourse.* There is no instructional discourse which is not regulated by the regulative discourse. If this is so, the whole order within pedagogic discourse is constituted by the regulative discourse. (*Bernstein's emphasis)

The three teachers selected in this study, like all teachers, are working in specific locations with particular requirements from their own school authorities. The regulative discourse assumed by their own schools is probably clear to them. Each of them is potentially constrained by factors associated with this discourse. Bernstein (ibid.) indicates that ‘selection, relation, sequence and pace’ are functions of the regulative discourse. These aspects of curricula all have clear implications for how a teacher organises and teaches his or her classes. The imposed syllabuses may not coincide with conditions already in place, for example, if the time requirements increase.

2.1 Society or economy?
The introductory chapter raised questions about the nature of modern Irish society asking whether it has fundamentally changed from a society based on community welfare to one in which wealth generation by individuals is the dominant dynamic. Apple (1993, p. 383) writing about the ‘conservative restoration’ in America claims that, ‘... education has been integrated into a wider set of ideological commitments. The objectives in education are the same as those which serve as a guide to its economic and social welfare goals’.

Within schools, because groups of people are gathered within a set of shared purposes, it is reasonable to describe a school as a society. Pring (1997, p. 2) indicates that: ‘By society I mean a social group which is characterised by a set of social practices and rules, and which, no doubt, has certain values and aims.’

The extent to which teachers, pupils or parents are prepared to acknowledge the socialising potential of schools apparently relates to their ideologies and the extent to which the school reflects their values and aims.
The three selected teachers, with their pupils, are trying to make sense of living in an Ireland where there are some indications that the attractions of modernity are no longer as compelling as in the recent past. Concerns for the environment, large sales of organic food and a rise in popularity of ‘alternative’ medicine, all serve as indicators that some trends are not universally seen as enhancing welfare. Hargreaves (1994, p. 8) believes that:

In modernity there is system and order, and often some sense of collective identity and belonging to. But the price of rationality is also a loss of spirit or magic; what Max Weber described literally as disenchantment in comparison with premodern existence. (emphasis not in original)

Irish society has traditionally embraced spiritual values which, were expressed by the majority of people within the rituals of the Roman Catholic Church and integrated into every day life.

Physical Education is a relatively new subject in Irish schools, with the majority of Physical Education teachers less than forty years old and therefore with experience restricted to a more modern Ireland. This may help to explain why within Irish Physical Education there is a strong commitment to working in a way which satisfies what Tinning (1997) calls the ‘discourses of science’. Penney and Evans (1999) indicate that the policies which regulate the contexts in which teachers work are influenced by political, ideological and economic factors. Bernstein (1996) describes how distributive rules regulate relationships between power, social groups, forms of consciousness and practice.

This chapter examines Irish society, particularly looking for shared perceptions that may shape the ways in which people view themselves and their relationships with each other. The role of education within society is explained through a study of how curricula are provided and interpreted, and through evaluation of the extent to which curricula are informed by the competing positions of child-centred and economically motivated curricula. The extent to which contextual factors limit teachers in their relative autonomy is another dimension of this study. In this regard a central question relates to those teachers who share Williams’ (1998, p. 209) third perspective on reflective teaching, for whom:

the source of knowledge is found in both the action setting and in the practical application of personal knowledge, (which) generates various kinds of new understandings and involved consideration of the situational and institutional context of teaching.
Reflective teachers may be compromised by the instrumentalism underpinning the Draft New NCCA Physical Education Syllabus (2000) within which 'learning outcomes' are described before the teaching takes place. The type of teaching implied within this document is consistent with what Tinning (1997) calls 'performance discourses' in which finding the most efficient means to achieve a particular end becomes the dominant issue of concern. Tinning (ibid., p. 103) believes that: 'The field of human movement has become increasingly dominated by the science-based, performance orientated discourses', which he indicates, 'reinforce a particular view of human movement. They reinforce a particular view of the world. However, although dominant, this world view is not a universally accepted or accurate view.'

The selected teachers claim to value developing relationships based on trust and individual concern above performance by their pupils. Hargreaves (1994, p. 103) indicates that the quest for efficiency and achievement of set goals can influence the whole orientation of a teacher's work with what he, probably simplistically, describes as a 'male monochronic time-frame', being preferred over a 'female polychronic time-frame'. Certainly the imposition of a content-centred syllabus for Physical Education carries with it strong implications for how time is used. Time to reflect and consider is likely to disappear. Acknowledging a gender difference within the ways in which Physical Education is perceived and taught, Hargreaves (1993, p. 68), writes about 'movement education', which was predominantly taught by females:

... this aspect of Physical Education (which) corresponds most closely with Bernstein's characterization of the new progressive pedagogy as a trend towards the adoption of an 'integrated code'. The loosening of the subject's boundaries, of the time and space framework in the lesson and the greater informality therein, is a method for developing in the individual child the qualities of flexibility and adaptability, the ability to explore and solve problems independently, and to co-operate with others—qualities which are seen as being required for competent occupational role performance among the new middle class.

2.1.1 Post late-modernity in Ireland:
Irish schools reflect aspects of the rapid changes in society in the late twentieth century. Pupils have been exposed to influences from contemporary media. Many pupils have experienced foreign travel. Teachers are no longer automatically viewed with the same respect as was traditionally the case. This view is articulated by teachers' unions who claim that teaching is more stressful than previously. The religious institutions no longer
control Bernstein’s (1996) ‘unthinkable’, partly because, as Walshe (1999) describes, the Education Bill, signed into law in 1998, ensured the principle of partnership. No longer is education predominantly within Bernstein’s (1990) ‘relatively self-regulating autonomous mode’ but, rather, the ‘market oriented mode’, which Bernstein (ibid.) identified, is apparent in the Irish education system. Schools market their ‘product’ to prospective ‘clients’ with glossy brochures and videotapes showing school facilities in an attractive way (personal communication with school principals 1999). The White Paper on Education (1995, p. 8) affirms that: ‘Value for money is essential if students and the community are to get the best possible benefits from the available resources’.

The recent rapid economic growth within Ireland has created a climate in which wealth acquisition provides strong motivation for young people. Many more young people now stay longer in education in order to obtain qualifications that are seen as necessary for success within competitive capitalism. Education in Ireland is currently repositioning to meet the requirements of a society within which aspects of postmodernity can be identified. These conflict with only recently adopted practices reflecting modernity. There is, apparently, continuing widespread belief that recent growth can be sustained into the future though this in practice means that groups are competing for limited resources, for example, despite having had their work practices redefined by the European Union, Irish farmers still expect to achieve the same, or higher, levels of income within their new codes of behaviour which in some cases limit production. The European Union enforces guidelines for Irish entrepreneurs which may previously have been ignored.

Comparisons among E.U. States allow competitive individuals to identify measurable goals and targets against which their success may be charted. Council of Europe standardised fitness tests (Eurofit, 1988) allow comparisons of children’s fitness at national and international levels. Improvements can be charted in an impersonal way. Hargreaves (1994, p. 251) writes about the postmodern world as ‘a world in which community and authority have disappeared. It is a world where the authority of voice has supplanted the voice of authority to an excessive degree.’

9 John Walshe (1999) lists the partners as including participants in provision of education i.e. the National Parents’ Council, the unions, and managers as well as the teachers, who were to be in partnership with the providers, the Department of Education.

10 The sobriquet ‘Celtic Tiger’ has been used to describe the strong state of Ireland’s economy in the 1990s.

11 Department of Education statistics (1995/96) indicate that the rate of retention at second level education has risen from below 20% in 1965 to over 75% in 1995. This rate refers to the estimated percentage of entrants to Junior Cycle in a given year who complete second level with a Leaving Certificate. Department of Education Statistics for 1995/96 show that 99.8% of the population was participating in full-time education at age 14, 96.1% was still there at age 15, 89.8% at age 16 and by age 17 the percentage was 78.3. Most candidates sitting the Leaving Certificate have reached their 17th birthday.
The Irish White Paper on Education, 'Charting Our Educational Future' (1995), provided a philosophy regarding the rationale for educational policy and practice. Previously in Ireland no official policy articulated the underlying purposes of education. Shortly before the White Paper was written the social partners in education indicated the need for 'a coherent philosophical rationale' at the National Convention, in October 1993. A report coming from the National Education Convention (1994, p. 7) stated that: 'Within an improved overall policy approach and framework, attention to a philosophy and aims for the education system should be a matter of priority.' It went on:

Given that every educational action unavoidably presupposes a philosophy of some kind or another, the provision of an adequate philosophical rationale, from which both structures and practice draw their coherence and strength, remains a priority.

The nature and implications of the philosophy for education set out in the 1995 White Paper are analysed in sections 2.1.5; 2.1.6; 2.1.7; 2.1.9 and 2.2.

2.1.2 Loss of spirituality in Irish society:
The Irish Times Education Correspondent (22nd August, 1998) indicated: 'For the first time since the foundation of the State, God is not mentioned in the philosophical introduction to the new primary schools curriculum, due to be published next year.' He contrasts the 1971 curriculum and the 1999 version. In the new curriculum the statement occurs that: 'It is equally important that, in the course of a general engagement with the curriculum, the beliefs of every child are respected.' The 1971 Curriculum stated:

Of all the parts of a school curriculum, Religious Instruction is by far the most important, as its subject-matter, God's honour and service, includes the proper use of all man's faculties, and affords the most powerful inducements to their proper use.

The 1971 Teachers' Handbook declares that: 'The teacher should constantly inculcate the practice of charity, justice, truth, purity, patience, temperance, obedience to lawful authority, and all the other moral virtues.'

A need to be guided by externally stated rules and the automatic submission to 'lawful authority' are no longer included as appropriate parameters for the primary school curriculum. There is also an acknowledgement of pluralism, so the pervasiveness of
denominational religion in education is no longer officially reinforced. Contemporary Irish teachers represent a range of opinions within a society where information and travel are readily available. Hargreaves, (1994, p. 251) makes the point that:

Voices need to be not only heard, but also engaged, reconciled and argued with. It is important to attend not only to the aesthetics of articulating teacher voices, but also to the ethics of what it is those voices articulate.

Hargreaves (ibid.) highlights difficulties associated with not listening to teachers who can articulate their visions but cannot make their 'visions heard'. He claims that:

In this world, where purposes are imposed and consensus is contrived, there is no place for the practical judgement and wisdom of teachers; no place for their voices to get a proper hearing. A major challenge for educational restructuring is to work through and reconcile this tension between vision and voice; to create a choir from cacophony.

The postmodern world according to Hargreaves (1994, p. 9):

Is fast, compressed, complex and uncertain. Already, it is presenting immense problems and challenges for our modernistic school systems and the teachers who work within them. The compression of time and space is creating accelerated change, innovation overload and intensification in teachers' work. Ideological uncertainty is challenging the Judeo-Christian tradition on which many school systems have been based, and raising crises of identity and purpose in relation to what their new mission might be. Scientific uncertainty is undermining the claims of a sure knowledge base for teaching and making each successive innovation look increasingly dogmatic, arbitrary and superficial.

The role of teachers in the late twentieth century, as described above, reflects the experience of many Irish teachers who can no longer control every aspect of their classroom work, because of the nature and rate of curriculum change along with the number of demands placed on their time. Dilution of the role of religion in underpinning Ireland's education system has removed an enormous certainty, both at the spiritual level and at the pragmatic level. When the hierarchy of control within a school was explicit and widely known, the school manager, usually a priest, was held in enormous esteem. Relationships are now less clear as teachers may not live in the areas in which they teach, with the result that the local hierarchy, clerical or lay, may not know or be known to them other than in a formal way. Once, members of the Board of Management would have been known to the whole community, including everyone involved in the school. Punitive reactions to teachers who are not obviously conformist are no longer
tolerated.\(^{12}\) Commenting on the ways in which the life and work of a teacher are being ‘pushed in disturbing directions by economic and policy forces’, Hargreaves and Goodson (1996, p. 3) claim:

As ‘fast capitalism’ is eroding workers’ lives generally, these forces are also beginning to attack the professional lives of teachers through reduced resources, wage restraints and the restructuring of what teachers are expected to do.

The issue of teachers being ‘deskilled’ is addressed in the third section of this chapter.

2.1.3 Irish society - aspects which specifically influence teachers:
Teachers are socialised into their roles in ways which are not fully understood. Templin and Schempp (1989, p. 2) cite Merton et al (1957) who, within a functionalist perspective, define socialisation as: ‘... the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge - in short, the culture - current in groups to which they are, or seek to become a member’

Physical Education teachers in schools are members of various groups, and their membership of groups in the past will have influenced their development as teachers. During their time as university students the socialisation process will have been quite intense. Socialisation can be described as learning a perspective, a view summarised by Wentworth (1980, p. 2):

... all that is needed is to learn proper role expectations to become a functioning element in a social system. Such role learning is what Parsons calls socialization but it is more. Just as the cog exists for the wheel after it’s been put in place, the actor only exists in the Parsonian system’s framework as a properly functioning element. Socialisation brings actors into existence or, that is, constitutes them according to socially sanctioned expectations and need dispositions ....

The experiences of teachers in Ireland during their own schooling, including PETE and other teacher education, makes it difficult for them to envisage how education can occur within a discourse which is not teacher centred and transmission-based. Department of Education Inspectors, who provide in-service courses, refer to teachers as requiring frames of reference within which their practice can be measured against established norms and criteria (personal communication, September, 1999). The relative autonomy available to teachers apparently does not free them from a need to achieve in other

\(^{12}\) There have been some notable cases of teachers who were sanctioned for their behaviour outside school - a pregnant woman whose partner was a married man was sacked from her teaching job in 1982 (Walshe, 1999).
people's terms and moreover has the potential to create insecurity when success is seen as a personal outcome, in evidence-based criteria. Curriculum packages provide teachers with content which is to be delivered. They can test pupils on their ability to understand, or reproduce the material. This transmission-based teaching is described by Bernstein (1990) as drawing on behaviourist theories and on theories from social psychology – he does not specify which theories. Tension in late modern/postmodern Ireland between competitive individualism and the maintenance of a sense of community is acknowledged in this statement from the Report on The National Education Convention (1994, p. 9):

The backing of government for education is based on a number of factors, including the realisation of the multi-faceted influence of education on societal improvement, but particularly on economic development. This, coupled with the heavy national investment in education, tends to stress economic concerns with regard to educational outcomes in periodic statements made by government and by the social partners. Such concerns need to be balanced by other dimensions which should be integral to educational policy-making. An overemphasis on economic and instrumental considerations in educational policy-making could have distorting effects with deleterious consequences. The shaping of the educational future is a prerogative of the Irish people. There is a responsibility on all those holding positions of authority to try to ensure that, in restructuring the educational system to bring it in line with changing individual and societal needs, the common good and a future-oriented perspective are kept to the fore in people's consciousness.13

This indicates a role within education for developing community and expresses concern about a system which embraces only instrumental goals. Irish teachers appear to have accepted a conservative role within the education system whereby they implement the curriculum provided by the Department of Education. They focus on working to facilitate the pursuit of the Department's objectives. Because Physical Education teachers are not currently (summer, 2002) required to meet externally-provided criteria in the form of public examinations or evidence-based pupil achievements they are not constrained in the same way as teachers of other subjects. Gore's (1993, p. 123) assertion that, within both critical and feminist pedagogy, 'the teacher is always an authority', makes it necessary to investigate the regulative discourse within which a teacher is operating, along with the extent to which a teacher who has belief in his or her relative autonomy is enabled to evolve a personal set of values in defining how this authority is exercised.

13 The National Education Convention was a vehicle for the expression of ideas, and while the Minister of Education was informed by the report the final fiscal responsibility was with the government. Some might say that it provided a useful opportunity for the airing of views before the hard decisions were made in the White Paper.
However, Sugrue (1997, p. 53) has found the situation is changing within Irish primary schools where: ‘... (T)here is an emphasis on the social development of learners which is more inclusive than the austerity associated with archetypal notions of the master and the mistress.’

Within Irish post-primary schools Drudy and Lynch (1999, p. 222) found evidence that: 'students were keenly aware not only of the power differential which exists between teachers and students in schools but of the respect differential'. Drudy and Lynch (ibid. p. 231) found students critical of authority structures in schools.

2.1.4 Ethnicity in Irish society, accommodating difference:
Social practices and rules within Ireland are not universally shared as variations occur between groups which display different aspects of ethnicity, despite the fact that the population has until recently been almost entirely indigenous. According to Tovey, Hannon and Abramson (1989, p. ii):

Ethnicity is the propensity to organise and give subjective meaning to social realities; it is the attribution or labelling of cultural differences between peoples and the understandings or beliefs we attach to such distinctions.

Ethnicity is an overarching concept which permeates all aspects of a person's societal perceptions. Sparkes (1989, p. 316) describes how physical educators, 'Like anyone else are inducted into certain cultures such as social class, religious, ethnic, school or sporting cultures, via the ordinary process of socialization.' Sparkes (ibid.) suggests that teachers do not always make optimal use of the unique qualities each of them possesses. Each teacher can develop a personal way of achieving goals in teaching which makes only limited use of his or her unique identity. Unless teachers are aware of the enriching potential of personal life experiences both of teachers and pupils, their procedures can become routinized, impersonal and unreflective. Affirming this Charles Taylor (1989, pp. 487) indicates that:

When the search for the authentic self avoids becoming insular and self-enclosed, when it remains rooted in and connected to conceptions of the good and the welfare of others, important moral benefits can be gained.

Pupils live within different contexts moving, for example, between their home lives and their school lives, public and private lives. McLaren's (1986) descriptions of Portuguese
Catholics at school in Toronto provide insights into ways in which these pupils adapt to their circumstances by describing how, what he calls 'streetcorner knowledge', is epistemologically different from traditional conceptions of school knowledge. Classroom knowledge is more formally differentiated. As the formal knowledge of the classroom was not a lived engagement it remained distant, isolated, abstract. McLaren (ibid., p. 126) describes how: 'Within the discursive fields and contested cultural spaces of classroom and streetcorner cultures, various discourses war for dominance.'

The traditionally formal nature of Irish schooling requires pupils to move between their home experiences and often a quite different environment in school, with a possible third dimension to their lives provided by their 'street culture'. Tovey and Share (1999, p. 171) cite studies in Ireland which show that: 'by not using the life experience of the young people as a basis from which to educate, and by not linking the background of the young people to the curriculum, the curriculum is irrelevant and meaningless.' The result of this, they claim, is: 'a very high level of conflict between students and teachers and also between families and teachers.'

Links between home and school were, in the past, facilitated by the church. Inglis (1998) indicates that this is typically no longer as strongly exerted: 'which he puts down to a number of factors including the changing economic and social role of women and the growing influence of the media' (Tovey and Share, 1999, p. 310).

2.1.5 The Irish language - a symbol of culture and ethnicity:
The Irish language in the Republic of Ireland is tied up with national identity. Article 8.1 of the Constitution (1937) declares that: 'The Irish language as the national language is the first official language'.

Despite the fact that virtually all school children in Ireland are required to learn the Irish language, attempts to keep it alive have had only small success. Breen et al. (1990, p. 135) describe how:

The position of the Irish language in the educational system declined from the 1960s reflecting a more general change in emphasis from a nationalism based on 'Irish identity' to an economically grounded nationalism.

This is another example of a move from a society to an economy.
As a symbol of ethnicity the Irish language has value within a wider European community. It has been argued by Tovey et al. (1989, p. 1) that:

...... sociological discussions of identity, and particularly ethnic or national identity, can help us to reconnect what at first may seem like private or individual confusions to a broader social and historical context.

They indicate that within Europe there is a group who:

...... are concerned to revitalise the issue of language and identity, and to argue that the survival of the Irish language is much more fundamentally involved in developing a strong positive and confident Irish identity than is widely recognised today (ibid.).

Teachers at both primary and post-primary level are required to demonstrate proficiency in Irish before they can be appointed on a permanent basis. The following statement is included within the Government White Paper on Education (1995, p. 18):

Ireland has a rich cultural heritage. The education system has an important role to play in its conservation and development. Education can do this by inculcating a strong sense of pride in being Irish and by emphasising the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, music and other cultural activities.

The need to be distinctively 'Irish' may be felt by people looking for an identity within the increasingly complex, postmodern society. Language is one symbol of ethnicity, another is involvement with the 'national games'.

2.1.6 The Gaelic Athletic Association - culture and/or ethnicity:
Among 'other cultural activities' listed in the White Paper (1995) above are the activities of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). In 1874 the association revived native games and pastimes. Marcus de Burca (1980, p. 1) writing about the history of the GAA: '...tries to show the influence of that body on the cultural and political life of the country since then.' Choosing which sport to play in Ireland includes becoming involved with a particular cultural tradition. De Burca (ibid., p. 266) writes that:

The GAA's achievements in the past century give grounds for expecting even greater ones in the future. It arrested an important aspect of the peaceful penetration of Ireland by English culture and began the cultural revival which led to the political revolution of the 1913-1922 period in which it played a major role. It saved the principal native games from extinction. It brought Irish athletics under native and democratic control. It was responsible for the Olympic successes of Irishmen in the 1906-1924 period. It changed for the good social life in
rural Ireland and helped to blur divisive class distinctions, as well as teaching useful qualities like teamwork, discipline and even democratic practice.

He goes on to quote Conor Cruise O'Brien from 'The Shaping of Modern Ireland' (1960, p. 266) as saying that the GAA: 'Organised... the replacement, among the young ...of the country, of what had been a servile spirit by a spirit of manliness and freedom.'

The above quotes indicate how involvement within the sporting association is claimed to have an effect on wider social and cultural aspects of the member's life. A member of the GAA embraces attitudes and values which are bound to affect his or her involvement in school activities whether as a pupil or as a teacher. As all teachers may not embrace the cultural values of the GAA espoused by many Irish young people, potential exists for the teacher's 'pedagogic authority' to be undermined where a conflict of values arises. Gore (1993, p. 60) describes how the pedagogical process 'embodies power relations between teacher and learners ... concerning issues of knowledge'. Cultural pursuits encouraged by the GAA affect individual teachers' perceptions of what aspects of PE should be included in a school programme. Each school has its own ethos, which may or may not coincide with attitudes and values which the children learn from their families and communities, and which may be the same or differ from the children's teacher. De Burca, in the quote above, claims that the GAA was responsible for beginning a cultural revolution which led to the political revolution, demonstrating the implicit link he perceives between politics and culture, evidenced in this sporting organisation. De Burca (ibid., p. 266) acknowledges that the GAA 'has had its setbacks'. His concluding paragraph includes the statement that:

Almost 60 years after the foundation of an Irish State partly based on the rejection of an alien culture; a substantial proportion of our urban community still spends much of its leisure time playing or following field games of that culture.

The influence of the GAA in defining an ethnic group is unmistakable. Since the statement above was written in 1980, interest in soccer, a strong symbol of the 'alien culture', has increased enormously, partly due to the widespread availability of cable television with its pervasive coverage of English premiership and Italian soccer matches. With the introduction of professional rugby in Ireland in 1996, boys with exceptional talent are tempted by the promise of high wages for playing a choice of 'non-Irish'
games. Until 1971\textsuperscript{14}, Rule 27 of the GAA Official Guide imposed automatic suspension on a member playing, attending or promoting rugby, soccer, hockey or cricket (de Burca, ibid.). Women’s involvement in GAA has had less public attention, although the game of hockey has traditionally enjoyed higher levels of participation in Irish schools than camogie.

Aspects of ethnicity overlap, with the GAA and the Roman Catholic Church sharing in each other’s rituals. The Irish language as ‘the first language of the state’ is used officially within the GAA and the policies of the state frequently coincide with the official church position.

2.1.7 Church and state:
The underlying influence of the churches continues to be relevant in Irish society. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 306) contend that:

Any sociological study of Ireland must reflect the importance of religion in the shaping of our contemporary society, its continued relevance in terms of everyday social life and the still central role of religious institutions.

Coakley (1996, p. 30), writing about society and political culture in Ireland, uses the word ‘culture’ as shorthand to refer to the: ‘concrete phenomena of language and religion’.

Gallagher (1996) describes how the relationship between church and state in Ireland is unusual in as much as the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed a special status within the constitution until the early 1970s. Breen et al. (1990, p. 125) indicate that the relationship between the churches and education in Ireland is also strong:

\textsuperscript{14} The National College of Physical Education was set up in 1972 and for the first time Irish men could study PE in Ireland.
educational affairs is still extremely high according to an account from Inglis (1998). Walshe (1999, p. 5) quotes an OECD report in which it was claimed: 'that while the Catholic Church recognised that it could not continue to play its historical role as the principal actor, it remained a major actor on the educational stage' (author's emphasis).

Government policy with regard to the governance of schools was reviewed within the Department of Education White Paper (1995, p. 145), (see Appendix 16). The churches' role is not central within this explicit attempt to make schools more accountable to the immediate community. In practice, clergymen, occasionally women and their representatives are still involved but their centrality is no longer either assumed or assured. The blurring of the relationship between schools and churches may result in 'fast capitalism' encountering less critical resistance because the traditional values promoted by the church do not automatically receive unquestioning support. The White Paper on Education (1995, p. 147) states that: 'A board, on behalf of the patrons/trustees/owners/governors, will be responsible for protecting and promoting the ethos of schools' as reflected in the desires and choices made by parents for their children.' (*emphasis in original)

The ethos among Irish schools still reflects the churches' influence because of the traditional links. Many schools are situated on church grounds or on sites owned by the church. Breen, Hannan, Rottman and Whelan (1990, p. 138), writing about the promise for reform in education believed at the time that: 'Had the State directly or otherwise, owned the schools themselves then the prospects for the rationalisation of facilities and a comprehensive curriculum would have been much brighter.'

The Roman Catholic Church has had an effect on the role and purpose of Physical Education in Irish schools. The ban imposed by the Gaelic Athletic Association on the playing of 'foreign' games lasted until 1971. Archbishop McQuaid of Dublin expressed his total opposition to the involvement of women in sport although he was directly associated with the opening of St. Raphael's College for women Physical Education teachers in 1954 (Duffy, 1997). Recently-introduced programmes about relationships and sexuality have undergone rigorous public scrutiny. Their introduction indicates perseverance by Government Committees appointed to draw up syllabuses to address
contemporary concerns about children’s health within a more liberal interpretation of the role of the schools. The White Paper on Education (1995, p. 162) reflects this concern:

The health-promoting school will work closely with parents, the wider community and all agencies concerned with the health and well-being of students and their families when developing and implementing programmes.

The role of Physical Education in health promotion is specifically mentioned in the White Paper (ibid.). ‘Positive interventions’ include:

- a Physical Education programme, beginning at the early stages of primary education, which will promote the physical well-being of all students and which will be linked to education on hygiene and diet where appropriate.

This description places Physical Education within the instrumental order referred to earlier. It reflects a scientific view of the subject in which observable and measurable outcomes are the central focus rather than an expressive order in which the pupil’s overall development is more central. A scientific approach to Physical Education is less likely to offend sensibilities than, for example, consideration of sensations concomitant with reflective movement or flow experiences, described by Czicksentmahalyi (1975), which do not coincide with popular ideas of purposeful movement.

2.1.8 Geographical and political considerations:
Ireland and Great Britain are close neighbours. At a first glance they seem very similar. It is, however, salutary to remember that the population of Ireland is similar to that of a large British city at around 3.9 million people. There has been rapid social development within Ireland in the last decade with industry and production taking over from the traditional pursuit of farming as the main occupation. A colonial mentality whereby a ‘Master’ of some sort has to be appeased may still have a residual effect on the Irish work ethic. Irish society in previous eras claimed to be classless, as part of the republican identity. Breen, Hannon Rottman and Whelan (1990, p. 17) describe how: ‘Republican ideology recognised no class distinctions’. Breen and Whelan (1996, p. 1) also describe how: ‘In Ireland class distinctions are thought of as a typically English phenomenon’, and that: ‘this has encouraged the notion that we are a classless society.’

All three selected teachers are aware of differences among their pupils which can be described within a Marxist analysis of class. In contemporary Ireland it is possible to
identify at least two classes, with a group of very rich people distanced from a group of very poor. The widening gap is filled predominantly by the salaried public servants who are collectively known as the PAYE (pay as you earn) workers. Breen and Whelan (1996, p. 174) examined social mobility within contemporary Ireland and explain that:

A society with restricted opportunities for upward social mobility automatically denies many the opportunity of sharing important socially created goods while guaranteeing the privileged positions of certain groups.

Ireland's involvement in international markets has encouraged the government to ensure the continued economic well-being of Irish workers by training a work-force which can successfully compete for jobs. Multi-national companies locating in Ireland provide jobs for those Irish workers who reap the benefits of their expertise by working in up-to-date, well-paid environments. Technology is a mainstay of industry in contemporary Ireland with a high proportion of young people becoming proficient in aspects of technology up to university degree level. Breen and Whelan (1996, p. 140) describe how a study of Irish electronics firms:

found that in Ireland entry to technicians' jobs required the completion of two or three years of full-time technical education. In Britain, on the other hand, technicians have frequently been recruited via apprenticeship and subsequent promotion, providing an important channel of upward mobility.

Here education is viewed as a cultural commodity whose value is directly related to employment potential. The Irish economy is described as being very successful in the 1990s with the phenomenon referred to as 'The Celtic Tiger'. The transient nature of much of the industry on which this success is built is worth noting, as is the fact that the success of one section of the community is not mirrored in the less well-off who are becoming more distanced from the wealth of their successful countrymen as the Celtic Tiger grows in strength. Breen and Whelan (ibid., p. 184), believe that:

A possibility exists that the emergence of a significant group of unemployed people, whose formative years will have been spent in conditions of extreme deprivation, and in households effectively detached from the labour-market will make the notion of an 'underclass' displaying distinctive sub-cultural characteristics more relevant to Ireland.

The Irish government has worked to attract industries into Ireland, 'partly by offering generous packages of tax waivers and grants' (Tovey and Share 1999, p. 65). Unfortunately, companies are likely to move on if a better deal is available. For example,
in December 1998, the 'Fruit of the Loom' factory in Donegal relocated to South East Asia with the loss of approximately seven hundred Irish jobs. Unemployment contrasts sharply with the affluence of employed people enjoying the Celtic Tiger boom.

Cities and towns in Ireland are experiencing traffic congestion to the extent that they are almost grid-locked with both the morning and evening 'rush'. Infrastructures to provide new and updated road systems are not in place so that, despite the new century, high volumes of traffic travel along mid-twentieth century roads. Not surprisingly, the rate of deaths of the roads is also among the highest in Europe. The 'old meets new' phenomenon is linked to the high rate of suicides in young people, particularly young men. Swanwick and Clare (1997, p.4) suggest:

... the present data supports (sic.) the view that there has been a true rise in Irish suicide rates. Anomie, lack of integration and fundamental changes in Irish society might be inferred from falling marriage rates, changing spiritual values, increased addiction to illicit drugs, and rising rates of illegitimacy.

A traditional, secure role enjoyed by men in Irish society has been eroded by new attitudes and demands for new skills. Where previously the authoritative male role in Ireland was accorded automatically, there is now apparently a requirement that it be earned. The 'new man' is still finding his way. Tovey and Share (1999, p. 189) indicate that in contemporary Ireland: 'there are concerns over the inability of men to adjust to changes in society, education and the workplace and to develop new models of masculinity.'

Various ideologies can be observed within contemporary Irish society. Attitudes associated with a post-colonial state are still barely submerged. When the Irish state was set up, Coakley (1996, p. 9) describes how: ...'the agenda of the principal forces in Irish politics was dominated by the issue of Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom ...'

An emergent Irish identity, which is now closely associated with membership of the European community, poses questions about how a national identity will be maintained. When the state was founded in 1926 a strong nationalist group emerged supporting autonomy for it and rejecting partition but, as the formal British influence diminished, the state positively directs feelings of national pride. Coakley (ibid., p. 34) describes how: 'The cultivation of pride in Irish achievements in sports, literature, the arts and other
areas of international comparison or competition helped in the long term to displace grievances of the past.'

Richard Kearney (1989, p. 2) outlines a choice for Irish people between two options:

... the old ways of understanding our identity, encapsulated in the phrase 'ourselves alone' have failed, along with the failure of the traditional nation state as the model for international relationships and for domestic political order. As national boundaries are eroded politically, economically, and culturally with the explosion of new technologies, we may opt either to define ourselves as 'a vassal sub-state to an imperial super-state', a dependent peripheral economic region which is subordinated to and increasingly assimilated into a homogenised, universalised 'Euro-identikit' culture or to participate in the creation of a Europe which is decentralised politically and culturally, a community of equal self-directing regions in which 'the rich plurality of European culture' is maintained.

More than ten years on from this analysis, it appears that the 'traditional nation state' has become virtually a thing of the past, as Ireland has enjoyed two successful periods of presidency of the European Union. Coakley (ibid., p. 9) describes how in the one hundred and twenty years after the Act of Union 1800 came into effect, Ireland was dominated by three principal relationships: ...'between Ireland and the United Kingdom, between Catholics and Protestants and between tenants and landlords.' From the beginning of the State, nationalists and unionists were totally divided on all three issues and the two parties were supported by their own communities which corresponded with the religious divide. An understanding of contemporary Irish society is helped by an awareness of the deep-seated divisions which permeated society in the past. Coakley (ibid., p. 25) refers to the term 'political culture', which he describes as having been coined to refer to: 'fundamental, deeply held views on the state itself, on the rules of the political game and on the kind of principles that should underlie political decision making.'

2.1.9 Teaching and Post / Late-Modernity:
When a comparative political analysis is applied to teaching, it is possible to identify similar influences and to make connections between the wider political context and the school. Hargreaves (1994, p. 72) has indicated that:

... the end of scientific certainties and the proliferation of contradictory claims to expertise can reduce people's dependence on experts and empower them, individually and together, to make more meaningful choices and exercise greater control over their personal and collective destinies.
Hargreaves (ibid.) implies that critical teachers arrive at a position where they feel comfortable about taking responsibility for selecting their own content, pedagogy and evaluation. This goes against the culturally learned position in Ireland and would represent a significant cultural shift. There is no evidence available to suggest that Irish teachers in general have arrived at a position where they are prepared to act autonomously in these ways. Tovey and Share (1999, p. 185) report that in Irish schools:

A teacher, popularly regarded as an ‘expert’ either in a particular field or in the practice of teaching, or both, instructs an individual or group and it is assumed, or hoped, that some type of knowledge transfer takes place. This remains the dominant model of teaching even if ‘chalk and talk’ is replaced by video, satellite delivery or computer-aided assessment.

This study examines the extent to which three Physical Education teachers are making their own sense of available information and taking responsibility for teaching and assessing what they value. Physical Education teachers have been and are still different from other post-primary teachers by not being involved in externally-provided examinations which rank their pupils by their performances. Also, because their pre-service education is within a concurrent model, they have perhaps been encouraged to think of themselves more as educators.

In contemporary Ireland a struggle, in curricular terms, between what has been and what is to be is underway. Planning a certification process for Physical Education is well under way. Teachers’ status as professionals is unclear. Section three in this chapter examines the issue of proletarianization of teachers. Market-place values in education look for evidence of a product. Teachers and schools become accountable in economic terms. ‘Accountability’ is one of the ‘Principles’ within the White Paper on Education, ‘Charting Our Educational Future’ (1995, p. 8) in which it is stated that: ‘Processes must be operated at various levels to evaluate the effectiveness of educational policy, provision and outcomes.’

These processes will include arrangements for: ‘accountability to all those served by education including parents, students and the wider community’,... and... ‘to the national and regional authorities’.
Enforced accountability has created a climate in which it is feasible to impose a common curriculum, enforced and formally assessed, potentially restricting teachers' autonomy by institutionalising each teacher's work.

The three selected teachers are committed to working in ways which they believe are appropriate and relevant for the pupils in their schools. They are aware that they disagree with aspects of the dominant discourse and they view each other as allies. Each of them can articulate his or her own position effectively and they find it difficult to understand why the compelling logic of their rhetoric does not convince all their Physical Education colleagues.

2.2 McDonaldisation of Irish Schools:

Drudy and Lynch (1993) indicate that consensualism is one of the principles which is consistently observable in the production of Irish curricula. The idea that one curriculum is appropriate for everybody has only recently been reviewed. The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) course and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), described in the White Paper (1995, p. 53) as alternatives to the existing Leaving Certificate programmes, claim that in the new programmes: 'Creative and innovative skills are fostered through involvement in activity-based learning.' Despite this claim, a transmission-based model of curriculum remains essentially unchallenged in post-primary education. Tovey and Share (1999, p. 170) write about the increasing instrumentalisation of Irish education whereby: 'The demands of the labour market are directly or indirectly fed through to the education system.'

Lynch (1999, p. 274) affirms this point indicating that:

Regardless of the rhetoric of educating the whole person (therefore), students are appraised at the end of their schooling in terms of education performance by further and higher education institutions, and by employers.

'Design' in planning curricula is similar to 'recipe' in the production of burgers and 'Mac Menus'. Pratt (1980, p. 246) wrote that:

The term design most often suggests that curriculum work can be approached in a systematic and rigorous way through the use of objectives that it is a technical matter and indeed that program construction can become a technology.

Kirk (1993, p. 259) makes the comparison with mass production more directly:
... the term seems to provoke us to think analogously with fields like engineering, where educational programmes can be viewed as blue-prints, including detailed and intricate specifications and quantifications. As with other blue-prints and technical specifications, this notion of design in curriculum work lends itself to standardization and normalization.

The above reflect four key principles of McDonaldisation, efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control, described by Ritzer (1993 pp. 9ff.).

- Efficiency in this regard is defined by Dale (1994 pp. 250f.) as 'the search for the optimum means to an end.'
- Predictability is 'the effort to enable people to know what to expect at all times and in all places.'
- Calculability refers to 'the emphasis on quantity, often to the detriment of quality.'
- Control, Dale (ibid.) indicates is 'clearly seen by Ritzer as the most important. Its central characteristic is the replacement of human by non-human technology.'

The role of selecting behavioural objectives to plan Physical Education programmes is further analysed by Kirk (1993, p. 246) who writes:

... there has developed an assumption, strongly held by many Physical Education curriculum workers, that planning by objectives, especially behavioural objectives, is the most efficient and systematic way for curriculum work to proceed; for some, indeed it is the only way.

When formal syllabuses prescribe the aims, content and projected outcomes of a programme, and time constraints require a particular type of efficiency, the opportunities for making learning personally relevant are greatly diminished.

McDonaldisation evidently includes characteristics which are consistent with the implementation of a common syllabus with a supplied set of assessment criteria.

The link between education and work is an underlying consideration in classifying and framing a curriculum. Bernstein (1977b, p. 194) uses production-line assembly work as an example of: 'jobs where the ability to follow instructions within an organized hierarchy of command is valued and in which individuality, creativity and criticism are discouraged.'
Hogan (1995, p. 231) describes how within a 'faulty rationale' which views the 'educational enterprise as being primarily a strategic instrument of economic and social policy', a Marxist analysis claims that: 'schooling reproduces the skills, attitudes and dispositions which serve the interests of capitalist society and which maintain hierarchical divisions between social classes.' In Ireland children are certainly learning attitudes and values which are implicitly, if not overtly, positioning them within the workforce. Tovey and Share (1999, p. 184) demonstrate that in Ireland: 'In very many ways the education system has been structured by the advantaged in order to maintain their position.'

This description of the education system concurs with the rationality of the McDonaldisation phenomenon.

### 2.2.1 School structures in Ireland:

Children attend primary schools in Ireland for eight years so pupils are usually about thirteen years old when they transfer to the next level. Most first year pupils in second level schools have already entered puberty. Irish post-primary education focuses very clearly on measurable outcomes, predominantly associated with summative examinations, both at the end of the junior cycle, normally year three, and the end of the senior cycle, normally year six. The programmes for each cycle are described in 'Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools 1987/88 to 1997/98'. The Irish education system is centrally organised by the Department of Education, with the curricula of the junior cycle (Years 1 to 3) and the senior cycle (Years 5 and 6) focused on summative examinations taking place at the end of each of these phases of education. Year 4 is a 'transition year' in which activities which are not normally offered to pupils can be undertaken because of the absence of academic examinations during this year. Humphries (1997) indicates that Physical Education enjoys a high profile in most schools' transition year programmes. The centrally organised curriculum in Irish post-primary schools displays characteristics consistent with Bernstein's (1977, p. 80) collection code as: 'the contents are clearly bounded and insulated from each other'. The Draft New Physical Education Syllabuses (2000) contain aspects of Physical Education similarly bounded and insulated from each other. Teachers within contemporary England, Wales and Northern Ireland currently follow curricula which are laid down by central government and which significantly reduce, if not remove altogether, the need for teachers to reflect on how to personalise their pupils'
experience. Central government policies in the United Kingdom ensure that all children are monitored as they pass through pre-determined stages. A teacher's success in progressing his or her pupils through these stages is also subject to inspection and the success of schools over the full range of subjects is scrutinised, with comparisons between individual schools and among groups of schools undertaken and analysed statistically. Evans (1998, pp. 4) writes:

Nothing is now worth knowing or doing in education unless it is "evidence based". Pity help a bright innovative idea, or those elements of education (for example, enjoyment, satisfaction, empowerment, equity, dignity, responsibility, independence) that are not easily measurable, quantifiable, or amenable to an evidence base.

This study raises the question of whether the three selected teachers will be able to pursue with the same vigour those elements of their programmes which are not measurable when the new syllabus is officially provided and enforced.

2.2.2 The culture of Irish schools:

Just as a school environment differs from what goes on outside the school, inside there may be no relationship between what happens in one situation and what happens in others, particularly if teachers do not share their aims, experiences and perceptions with each other, as well as with their pupils. McDonaldisation has the effect of ensuring that everyone knows what is happening within the curriculum, at least within the visible curriculum. Penney (1998, p. 9) develops this idea:

... it is in the spaces between discourses rather than in the discourses themselves that power lies; it is silence that carries the message of power; it is the full stop between one category of discourse and another; it is the dislocation in the potential flow of discourse which is crucial to the specialization of any category.

The use of the word 'discourse' allows for an examination of the totality of the communication from the teacher to his or her pupils. The visible and the invisible curricula are included in the communication as are the power relations in which the teacher is situated. The untaught assumes a strength because of its absence, as indicated in the quote from Penney, above.

Each of the three selected teachers indicates how individual teachers can assume responsibility for defining their roles in a school. Analysing how these teachers regard themselves, their subject, and other aspects of the curriculum by maintaining, creating or
challenging existing boundaries helps to assess the role these teachers have assumed within their schools.

Power relations within Irish education have evolved within a confused identity. There is still a tendency to look across to see what is being done in Great Britain. The introduction of courses in Health Related Fitness and Games for Understanding in the PETE course in the University of Limerick may reflect a desire to do what is being done elsewhere. Tovey et al (1989, p. 2) have outlined a dilemma with regard to Ireland's European status as to whether Ireland defines itself as 'ourselves alone', or as 'assimilated into a homogenised, universalised Euro-identikit culture'. Curriculum planners when selecting content, describing pedagogy and providing tools for assessment confront a similar dilemma. Agencies which provide members for the curriculum planning committees include teachers' unions and representatives of the social partners, i.e. members of the churches, the National Parents' Council, the subject teachers' associations for example the Physical Education Association of Ireland. The Department of Education nominates members, usually Inspectors of the specific subject. The Irish Federation of University Teachers has two appointees. Individual teachers are not appointed unless they are representatives of a recognised, nominated group.

Physical Education, a relatively new subject within Irish second level education, is not currently examined within the state examination system. However, an announcement from Michael Martin, Minister of Education in 1998, indicated that he put arrangements in place to include Physical Education as a subject within the Leaving Certificate Examination by the year 2002. The NCCA committee began to put in place arrangements to provide a curriculum and establish assessment criteria for a Leaving Certificate Examination. The Minister's announcement was met with delight in some quarters, for example the (then) Head of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science, Limerick wrote a response in which the following statement was included:

The Department of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Limerick ... supports the inclusion of Physical Education as a Leaving Certificate subject and is actively considering the implications which such a move might have for policy and practice within the department (Internal document PESS Dept., July 1999).

Some teachers, including the three cooperating with this study, expressed reservations about possible effects of suggested changes on their subject by questioning the relevance for their pupils. Bernstein (1996) describes, within the concepts of
classification and framing, how the organisation within a school provides an underlying logic for pedagogic practice. The accommodation of difference within a school indicates priorities and values. Children with disabilities of various sorts and other children who belong to minority groups, whether religious, or racial, along with those demonstrating different values from their peers, are present in all schools. Attitudes towards these pupils are significant. The more confident expression of Ireland as an autonomous, post-colonial state can be seen in the evolution of an agreement between the Prime Ministers of Ireland and the United Kingdom with regard to Northern Ireland. The relationship between the two leaders demonstrates a mutual respect. Their media presentations indicate that they meet as equals. This confidence on the world stage is indicative of an Ireland in which there is a sense of self-worth and subservience is becoming literally a thing of the past. The old-style reliance on authority figures to lead the way may still exert a residual and constraining effect on how teachers perceive their role.

2.2.3 The social context in which Physical Education is taught:
Various writers (Gore, 1990; Evans and Penney, 1996) have indicated the need to examine the relationships between the social contexts in which Physical Education is taught and the implications of selecting particular curricular content. At an early stage in the development of Physical Education and sport in America, between 1900 and 1960, there was a clear link between the education of the child as a person and the Physical Educationist’s role in this process. Ingham and Lawson (1986, p. 71) describe how:

During these formative years, both physical educators and moral/social/political leaders had an ‘elective affinity’ for a residual Progressivist ideology. Central to this ideology was the conviction that reforming society involved reforming the manners, morals and character of children and youth. This child saving enterprise led Physical Education to be conceptualized as both a functional-technical education and a moral education.

Evans (1992, p. 235) describes how three: ‘crucial, interdependent contexts of knowledge production; reproduction; educational discourse, practice and organization’ can be distinguished. Bernstein (1990, p. 59) describes the first of these contexts as: ‘the primary context and the process whereby an educational text is developed and positioned in the context of primary contextualization.’

The development of curricula occurs within this context often when there is an attempt to create meaningful new solutions to curriculum problems. The secondary context describes those situations in which the curriculum is reproduced at all levels within the education system. A third level can be identified as facilitating the movement of
curriculum material, both text and practices, from the first context to the second, and Bernstein (ibid.) describes this as a ‘recontextualizing context’.

The support for Physical Education which is necessary if it is to be adequately funded is often expressed within this third level. Traditional confusion between Physical Education and sport and an extension of that into scientific functionalism which assumes a link between Physical Education and health and fitness, often without precise definitions, has given the subject credibility in the popular perspective. In this popular view, Physical Education is seen as ‘good for all’, and its inclusion in programmes of education can be instrumentally justified. Central governments, both in Ireland and in the United Kingdom, are involved in the production of curricula. Penney and Evans (1999) describe how within Physical Education in England and Wales, this ensures that curricula concur with the aims of the government which implements them. Reynolds and Sullivan (1980) writing about attitudes towards education claim: ‘Tacitly it was held that the traditional curriculum was unproblematically worthwhile and educational policy was to maximise access to it.’

The contemporary notion within the United Kingdom that the best schools, teachers, and pupils can be identified and rewarded makes education an extremely stressful business and, ironically, especially so for those who are committed to succeeding within the system. By equating Physical Education with competitive sport, professional sportspeople are involved as motivators to encourage high levels of performance by British youth. Professional soccer clubs have nurseries where children as young as five or six years old are trained to be skilful players and to wear their club colours with pride. Various agencies, for example, the Youth Sport Trust, operate in England alongside the Physical Education profession to promote children’s involvement in sport. Ireland is involved in setting up similar structures to provide sports coaching for children (personal communication with National Coaching and Training Centre personnel, September, 1999).

An alternative view of Physical Education is articulated by Noddings (1992) who states forthrightly that: ‘physical “education” departments that limit themselves to the supervision of sports and exercise should be eliminated.’ She advocates that the ‘selfish and unproductive’ look of exercise in the 1980s could be replaced by: ‘parents playing ball with the kids, or by scrubbing the kitchen floor, or by digging a new bed for perennials’.
Noddings (ibid.) describes how parents run around the park while children lie in front of a television set. She suspects that: 'kids think that exercise is something people do to stave off old age and fat, and most of them are not worried about either.'

By placing physical activity in a common-sense context separate from measurable fitness outcomes, Noddings describes activity as a natural part of the living process rather than as a bolt-on extra or a socially defined essential. Eating food which one grows or exercising to perform one's daily tasks - walking upstairs, or cleaning the windows - are in contrast to the principles of McDonaldisation and homogenisation.

2.3 Proletarianization of teachers:
At the beginning of the twenty-first century within Irish schools, Physical Education is taught by teachers whose curricula are still largely their own responsibility. Some teachers seem more comfortable with their relative autonomy than others who prefer to work within what Bernstein (1990) calls a visible pedagogy in which criteria for selection and assessment of the curriculum content are available to everyone involved. This distinction is consistent with Hargreaves' (1994, p. 42) description of: 'the struggle between bureaucratic control and professional empowerment that accompanies the transition to postmodernity'.

This study examines the idea that three teachers who value personal autonomy within their teaching as 'pupil-centred', or 'process-orientated' teachers would forfeit some of their professionalism if they were required to justify themselves as teachers by producing 'a product' which can be displayed and compared with similar products manufactured by other teachers following a template provided in the form of an externally-imposed syllabus.

Those teachers who are reflective and confident about their teaching and are able to view their own situation as unique, requiring particular solutions to the problems they perceive, are not prevented by the current structures from working in ways that they believe to be meaningful and worthwhile. (For some teachers other factors may limit their being able to teach in their preferred way). Teachers in Irish post-primary schools are likely to have had positive experiences of education within the instrumental order, firstly in competing for university places within the state examinations and then within a university system which is competitive and meritocratic.
The University of Limerick is the only university in Ireland operating a concurrent model of teacher education. Graduates of other universities who want to teach at post-primary level are required to take a Higher Diploma in Education. Demand for places on such Higher Diploma courses exceeds supply so that only more successful graduates qualify as teachers. This may influence their own teaching to the extent that they want to reproduce their own successes. This point is relevant to an examination of Physical Education in Ireland. A cycle is in place whereby teachers are working within a system which they understand and within which they have been successful. The lecturer in charge of dance in the PETE course in Limerick believes that resistance to creative and expressive aspects of Physical Education, most notably dance, reflects the extent to which Irish education has focused on the instrumental aspects of education to the exclusion of the expressive. There are Physical Education teachers within Irish secondary schools who are concerned about the perceived low status of their subject within a system which values academic success above all other aspects of education. Concerns expressed by the Physical Education Association of Ireland about raising the status of Physical Education in Irish schools are consistent with Goodson and Hargreaves' (1996, p. 7) claim that:

It is certainly true that professional groups construct their 'missions' in terms of the pursuit of status and resources (i.e. professionalization projects) as well as broader ideals (including these groups' representation of their own 'professionalism').

Furthermore, it is not uncommon to find that within the contemporary Irish education system individualism is valued above cooperation. Lynch (1989, p. 68) writes:

From our analysis of the types of knowledge distributed in schools and the time allocated to each we have seen how the development of the technically competent individual is gaining increasing pre-eminence. This process is taking place, however, in a very specific relational context. Not only are students primed to be competent in the scientific, technological and commercial spheres, they are also primed to compete with others in the process. The final rewards of schooling - high grade credentials - are contingent on outcompeting others. It is in the process of evaluation that the structural conditions for competitive individualism are laid.

2.3.1 Physical Education in Ireland at the start of the new century:
Physical Education is a relatively new subject in Irish schools. In 1972 the National College of Physical Education was set up to prepare teachers of Physical Education for Irish post-primary schools. The two existing women's Physical Education colleges were assimilated into this college, making it the only institution in the Republic of Ireland
preparing teachers of Physical Education for post-primary schools. Approximately eight hundred students graduated in the first fifteen years (University of Limerick Student Records’ Office, 1997). The number of graduates per year has slowed down with a current average of fifty men and women. The range of previous experiences and varied interests among the staff of the college mean that its graduates are exposed to a wide variety of viewpoints regarding their subject. They develop their own sets of values, based on their life histories and their perceptions, informed by influences which they felt most strongly during their college careers. The Department of Education Physical Education Inspectors claim to be able to recognise influences from individual university tutors on teachers (personal communication, 1996). Teachers may reflect a set of values which they believe are important and with which they inform their teaching. Standards against which teachers can check their own belief systems are difficult to establish. The imposition of set criteria for assessment objectifies the Physical Education curriculum and provides teachers with a clear structure within which they can work effectively. Those teachers who think critically contest the ‘given’ and, within their own terms, make the curriculum they teach meaningful and relevant to their pupils. They are more likely to see the necessity to ensure equity within their programmes for all their pupils, thus placing themselves in opposition to the prevalent competitive culture which is concerned with identifying an elite who are successful in obtaining cultural credit, either in the form of university places as a result of passing examinations or by gaining paid employment. This aspect is examined in Chapter 2 where Bernstein’s (1990, p. 183) description of a regulative discourse provides a framework within which the embedding principles of the curriculum are analysed.

2.3.2 Irish Physical Education teachers – their current role:

Within the Irish context the nature and extent of Physical Education varies in post-primary schools. Lynch (1989, p. 61) describes how: ‘... with the exception of religion and to a small extent PE, most schools only allocate one or two periods at most to any given non-examination subject.’

She goes on to describe how: ‘The almost entire focus of the pupils’ school day therefore is on the pursuit of intellectual (increasingly technical) knowledge in preparation for technical examinations.’

For most of their school day the vast majority of second level pupils are contained within a system which allows them little autonomy and ensures that their place within the
structure is clearly communicated to them. The organisation of Irish education is predominantly ‘top down’ in nature with the main form of communication from teachers being ‘transmission’, with pupils at the receiving end. According to Lynch (ibid.): “Within the formal teaching day the pupil has little private space, either physically or mentally.’

Physical Education is one of the few areas in Irish schools explicitly offering possibilities for pupil-centred teaching. Currently (2000) no formal assessment procedure is in place whereby pupils can be compared to each other. The drawing up and provision of the curriculum is largely left to individual teachers in their schools who assess their own programmes as they see fit. The programme suggested in ‘Rules for Secondary Schools 1987/88 to 1997/98’ requires good facilities. A committed teacher who does not have access to such facilities is forced into a position where he or she must be inventive to teach the pupils. A teacher who has access to more and better facilities is not required to be inventive in providing activities and he or she is often required to demonstrate success in competitions - because the school has made provision for playing particular sports. Lynch (1989) indicates that the availability of facilities and the provision of activities varies in respect of the type of school, the social class and the gender of the pupils in the school. School size is associated with significant differences in the availability of playing fields. In summary, Lynch’s (ibid., p. 115) findings in Irish schools are that:

It is clear .... that the social-class composition of the school has considerable bearing on the provision of extracurricular facilities. Schools with the highest cohort of pupils from higher income groups (fee-paying secondary schools) have, overall the best facilities. Size also determines the range of facilities available, while gender has a direct influence on the type of facilities available in schools.

Ireland does not have the infrastructures to exercise the same level of control over teachers and youth workers as is in evidence in England and Wales. There are clear signs that the Irish government is aware of the kudos to be gained from high level sporting success and the inclusion, in 1997, of sport in a full ministerial portfolio within the Irish Cabinet indicates that sport is taken seriously. The position of Physical Education is much less clear. In 1969 a parliamentary secretary was appointed with responsibility for sport and Physical Education. This position was later subsumed under the Junior Ministry for Sport within the Department of Education, (Sportspulse vol.5. No.1 August 1997). Physical Education cannot compete with sport for credibility in terms
of public perception and return for government investment. A competitive ethos operates within the education system whereby the centrally-organised Irish education system counters potential complaints about nepotism within the system by running a highly efficient system of examinations. These serve to select pupils to enter what are perceived to be prestigious university courses. In the last decade the Irish education system has been expanded from being purely academic in orientation to include vocational education. Courses of a more technical nature are available for pupils who want to be associated with the growing Irish economy but whose academic ability does not indicate that they will benefit from a traditional university course. The Leaving Certificate Examination has expanded (August, 1996) to include a set of subjects within an 'Applied Leaving Certificate', the aim of which is to include more practical and technically-orientated subjects in the examination system. Within post-primary schools some subjects, for example, religious education, civics and music, have, until very recently, not been formally examined, allowing popular perception to characterise these subjects as being of a lower status. This question of status is shared outside Ireland. Hoyle (1986, p. 28) comments: 'As a profession teaching is prone to status concerns and, within teaching, Physical Educationists are particularly given to pondering status issues.'

In Ireland, concern about status has led groups of Physical Education teachers, following the 'success' of teachers of civics, religious education and music to try to obtain external credibility for their subjects through the government run examinations. O'Sullivan (1997) lists five issues which she believes to be important in creating a climate that values a physically educated person and the last of these: 'Mainstreaming PE in education: certification', is concomitant with the idea that objectively obtained credit is of value in legitimising a subject's worth within the school curriculum. Arguments associated with the adoption of an external system of verification have been well-rehearsed outside Ireland and the advantages and disadvantages are well documented, by for example, Drewett (1991, p. 109) who indicates that: 'This debate has taken place in response to various sets of demands, varying from professional interests inside schools to other political, economic and social forces that exist beyond the school gates.'

Helsby and McCulloch (1996, p. 59) refer to a point made in 'The Independent' newspaper (1993) that: 'the two points on which teachers overwhelmingly agree are that
the introduction of a curriculum has placed a heavy extra burden on their time, and that their professional concerns have been casually disdained.'

Irish Physical Education teachers' concerns are very different. There is no imposed curriculum so teachers whose view of themselves corresponds to Hellison and Templin's (1994) fictitious character, Chris, find only limited demands on their time. They are freed from preparation and from any formal assessment. Strongly committed Irish Physical Education teachers, with well developed knowledge of both the subject they teach and of their pupils, have opportunities to produce wonderfully unique programmes. Teachers can be pressurised in various ways by their pupils, and conditions pertaining in their schools may prevent their developing ideas which seemed attractive during their PETE. O'Sullivan (1997) indicates that time allocated to Physical Education in Irish schools is usually insufficient to deliver the programmes currently (prior to the introduction of the new syllabuses) recommended by the Department of Education. Lortie (1975) describes how students adopt their own school experience as a model which the college course is unlikely to supplant. The Department of Education and Science Physical Education Inspectors whose function it is to supervise teachers have responsibility for large numbers of schools, with only three inspectors looking after all the Physical Education in post-primary schools. The work-load of these inspectors means that they are frequently more concerned with administrative matters than with individual teachers. They are unlikely to be in a position to offer support and build confidence in a teacher who is trying to personalise his/her pupils' experiences and whose practices look different from the majority who follow a safe unproblematic path.

Kirk (1986, p. 173) quotes Lortie (1975) who, recognising that teachers seek rewards for successful teaching, suggests that:

'...reward can come in different forms for teachers, most obviously through increases in salary or status by promotion. However, both of these rewards are extrinsic to the activity of teaching.' Kirk (ibid.) describes how:

Lortie goes on to argue that there is a third kind of reward, which he terms 'psychic' rewards, which are intrinsic to teaching. Satisfaction, a sense of achievement and pleasure would each count as examples of this, and in Lortie's view, the occupational structures of teaching which offers limited prospects for promotion, favours rewards of this kind.
Because of the attention which is given to the extrinsically valued examination system in Irish schools, O'Sullivan (1997) claims that Physical Education teachers can feel marginalized. If teachers are not able to enjoy the psychic rewards described above, they may feel unrewarded. Using well-rehearsed arguments it is claimed by various people, including the Physical Education Association of Ireland that subjects which are not examined within the certificate examinations are less important than those subjects which are part of the accreditation system.

Professor Aine Hyland speaking about assessment at the Physical Education Association of Ireland Conference in 1997 said that: 'assessment ... operationalises our educational goals as much as it reflects them.' Exactly who the 'our' refers to is unclear. She also posed the question: 'By not certifying Physical Education, are we not perpetuating the myth that this is a curricular area which is not worth certifying?'

Professor Hyland referred to assessment as 'the tail that wags the curriculum dog. ', which she apparently did not deem to be a negative quality.

Physical Educationists in Ireland are not unusual in seeking to be valued and, as Hargreaves (1994) indicates, there is a trade-off whereby they can have credibility if they accept intensification of their labour. The 'rhetoric of professionalism' is very temptation.

Non-Physical Education teachers in Irish schools, already working in a way which must allow little time for reflective thought, view Physical Education as important. A small survey in Cork city (Carey, 1997) elicited the following comment from teachers:

PE is important because of its effects on the life of the pupil in the broadest sense. It contributes to their physical well-being, alleviates stress, hones their competitive instincts as well as their appreciation of team spirit and cooperation and affects their lifestyles in an overall positive way.

This comment indicates that teachers who are inside the assessment driven curriculum are able to value the contribution of their colleagues who are teaching a personalised curriculum. Only one teacher (the total number of the sample was not available - although one is clearly a minority) surveyed by Carey (ibid.) made a negative comment, to the effect that Physical Education is an: 'easy subject, no preparations, no exams and no corrections!' Perhaps this reveals more about the teacher's stress levels rather than the state of Physical Education in Ireland.

A desire for status among some groups of Irish Physical Educationists has already resulted in lobbyists for Physical Education explaining the need for: 'an apparatus of
behavioral [sic] objectives, in-class assessments and accountability instruments' some of which have already been provided e.g. ‘The Assist Manual, Physical Education Assessment in Second Level Teaching’ (1988), the production of which was facilitated by Michael Darmody, Physical Education Inspector with the Department of Education. A curriculum package called ‘Action for Life’ has been made available to teachers of Physical Education in Ireland. It contains suggestions for classes in Health Related Fitness, along with objectives and assessments. The Draft New Syllabuses (2000) have resulted in the PEAl web-site (2002) including the following offer:

This page is reserved for all types of teaching resources. We will create a library of all available teaching aids and supply the information as to how to acquire what you want. We hope also to have a section on lesson plans to help members with the new curricula.

The Department of Education and Science has provided a ‘Leaving Certificate Applied’ course for pupils who are less academically successful than their peers. Physical Education teachers can teach these pupils courses in ‘recreation and leisure’, or in ‘sport and the community’. A reduction in time for Physical Education in the senior cycle of post-primary schools indicates the low status of the subject by comparison with examination subjects. Darmody (1986) surveyed schools in County Limerick and found that: ‘The time allocated to Physical Education ranged from fifty-nine minutes per week in Year One to thirty-five minutes per week in Year Five.’

Irish post-primary schools have virtually no organised Physical Education during the sixth year when the focus is on what is perceived as the all-important Leaving Certificate examination (personal communication with Physical Education Inspectors, 1998). Despite current practice, there appears to be agreement among pupils and Physical Educationists that physical activity is important during this final school year, even if only as an alternative and a break from the intensity of academic work. Such is the credibility of the certificate examinations within schools that time-tabled time cannot be diverted from advancing the cause of academic success (information from informal discussions with school principals, pupils, current university students and Physical Education teachers).

O’Sullivan (1997) provides the table below to show who is teaching Physical Education to senior cycle pupils in Irish schools. The data infer that senior cycle pupils are not receiving regular Physical Education teaching from any source:
Table 1  PE Teachers in Primary and Post-Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who teaches PE</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Jr. Sec.</th>
<th>Sen. Sec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PE Specialist</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class teacher</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(O'Sullivan, 1997)

Table 1 does not provide information about what teachers are doing when they are teaching Physical Education. Extra-curricular games are not specifically mentioned and some pupils may be involved in these.

A conventional curriculum planning model, such as described by Nicholls and Nicholls (1972, p. 21), whereby the teacher adopts a set of objectives, decides on content, then methods for teaching this, and ultimately evaluates the pupils by establishing whether the objectives have been achieved, reflects common practice in subjects included for certification within the Irish second-level cycle. Lynch (1999, p. 274) indicates that: 'Regardless of the rhetoric of educating the whole person, therefore, students are appraised at the end of their schooling in terms of examination performance'.

The inclusion of Physical Education within the examination system brings sharply into focus issues regarding the control exerted by teachers over their curriculum. The three teachers in this study still retain their 'rights and obligations to determine their own tasks in the classroom...' and thus satisfy Helsby and McCulloch's (1996, p. 56) conditions of professionalism. The potential for teachers to be 'professionalized' increases with the provision of a centralised, prescribed curriculum which may increase their status by intensifying their workload in an apparently more complex role. Hargreaves (1994, pp.14ff.) and Helsby and McCulloch, (ibid.) enlarge this point.

2.4 Ideologies, discourses and dichotomies:

Irish schools are 'strongly encouraged' (personal communication with a post-primary school Headmaster April, 2001) by the Department of Education and Science to write Mission Statements to define the ethos of the school and describe the aims which the school is pursuing along with those aspirations which are central with regard to the pupils. These Mission Statements help to describe some of the public elements of its
regulative discourse within which teachers are expected to carry out their day to day work. Statements from Irish post-primary schools reflect the membership of the school Board of Management, normally indicating a spiritual dimension to schooling. Connections between Mission Statements and teachers' day-to-day work are often hard to construct, as working at 'the chalk-face' typically does not afford teachers time for reflection and philosophical consideration. Department of Education Inspectors are providing in-service courses to address this difficulty (personal communication, June, 1999 with teachers in one cooperating teacher's school).

Various aspects of teachers' work in schools are relevant to considerations about how Physical Education is constructed and perceived. There are instances of dichotomies within schools in what is espoused as of value and what is possible in practice. Teachers are involved in justifying their subjects to others - inspectors, principals, parents, pupils themselves - in extrinsic ways which may have the effect of limiting their sharing their own delight in the material they teach as they are 'moving to the beat of someone else's drum'.

2.4.1 Sport as work – commodification of PE:
The idea of Physical Education as work, as opposed to play, gains credibility as sport becomes less associated with leisure and more associated with earning a living. High profile Irish sportsmen are paid enormous salaries and many people are employed within sport in a wide range of capacities. Physical Education is perceived, as will be shown, as sport, along with promoting physical fitness and, by implication, health.

Activities which are intrinsically justified are given scant regard. The majority of Physical Education teachers do not teach Dance. Aquatics is normally taught as a set of skills and Gymnastics is regarded as an alternative way of promoting aspects of physical fitness. This predominant interpretation of the nature of Physical Education is reflected in the Draft New Syllabus (this information is gleaned from discussions with University of Limerick teaching practice tutors who visit schools; from Department of Education Inspectors; from serving teachers and from current, 2000, Physical Education students).

The proposed inclusion of Physical Education as an examination subject facilitates its justification as cultural capital, certification of successful pupils provides them with tangible evidence of their achievements. No longer is the intrinsic value of the subject sufficient justification for teachers, there is a perceived need to measure the success of participants within a standardised test. There is a lack of confidence among teachers as
they are encouraged to believe that only that which is measured and compared within standardised testing has any value. There is a mismatch between teachers' messages about 'Action for Life' (Teachers' resource pack, PEAI) and pupils' perceptions about 'having a life'. It is difficult to reconcile claims for a relationship between Physical Education and health and fitness with the observed reality in Irish schools. According to media reports, in early 2001, Irish youth top European polls for alcohol consumption. 'The Irish Times' newspaper (January 18, 2000) reports that: 'Today suicide claims more lives of young males between the ages of 15 and 24 years than traffic accidents or cancer. It is estimated that some 500 people died by suicide last year.'

Programmes of fitness training, focusing on physical strength, endurance and flexibility do not claim to address the apparent discontent among many young Irish people for whom escapism is a way of coping. Post-primary schooling requires pupils to focus away from the here and now, as even during examinations the thought of results provides a future focus. When results of both the Leaving Certificate and the Junior Certificate examinations are announced a tradition has evolved among young Irish people whereby they mark the occasion by exuberant partying, drinking excessively. Examination results seem to be regarded as the product of schooling and not part of a process of learning, nor as an equitable way of ensuring passage into another phase of life.

2.4.2 Teachers' roles – agency or structure?
Teachers' relationships with the new syllabus help to provide answers to the four key questions within this study. If the Physical Education programme is predominantly based on an economic analysis which is concerned with the provision of human capital, teachers are involved in fiscal accountability. A consensual approach to Physical Education encourages teachers to view their pupils in a way which does not take account of individual differences, unless they influence the outcome of the assessment procedures. Teachers who believe that their professional abilities are not acknowledged and that they have to shape themselves to fit a mould, find their self-confidence is undermined. The regulative discourse within which Physical Education programmes are inscribed may not be reflected by teachers in practice because of a combination of the factors above. Attempts to ensure compatibility between one's instructional discourse
and the official regulative discourse can provide another source of difficulty for concerned, sensitive Physical Education teachers. Teachers traditionally are not directly involved in the economic success of their community because their salary is not productivity-linked. They are able to remain relatively detached from the fortunes of the business community and, in times of high unemployment and poor living conditions, teachers appear to be well-off and their security is envied. Currently Ireland is enjoying an economic boom where low unemployment and high inflation have the effect of making public servants, including teachers, relatively less well off. House prices in Dublin are prohibitive for young teachers whose salaries do not attract sufficiently high mortgages to allow them to purchase even quite modest houses. Teachers in Ireland were once highly respected within the community but their status is no longer clear. Figures from the University of Limerick Admissions Office indicate that in 2001 there were 1,274 applicants for the PETE course, of whom 588 put this course as their first preference, implying that this career is viewed positively. High academic requirements to take the course reflect this interest. The Sports Science course which co-exists with the Physical Education course in the University of Limerick is slightly less popular. In its first years the academic requirements were identical to the PE course but numbers applying for Sports Science have dropped and, consequently, entry requirements are lower than for PE which may show that teaching is still valued as a career.

Physical Education teachers in Ireland are academically successful within the formal examination system. Theoretically they have the ability to write programmes for their own pupils which reflect their own expertise and meet the perceived needs of their pupils. Teachers' ownership of, and confidence in, the value of the curriculum being taught helps to ensure that their pupils' experiences are predominantly positive. Teachers who are accustomed to producing their own texts may find their personal satisfaction diminished if they are presented with a text produced elsewhere. This process is explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

There is evidence that a dichotomy of roles and functions are currently adopted by Irish Physical Education teachers. Feelings of 'otherness' experienced by the three teachers receiving special attention seem justified. The quest for subject respectability may

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15 Building societies give mortgages to the value of 2.5 times the annual income and with three bedroom semi-detached houses costing more than €160K, a young teacher's salary is way short. (Personal communication EBS, March 2000)
involve accepting more centralised control with concomitant bureaucratic requirements, consistent with descriptions of a move towards professionalization away from professionalism (Helsby and McCulloch, 1996). There is also an apparent need for pupils to receive social and personal care - a role frequently filled by Physical Education teachers in the past. Teachers who have the ability to identify needs and meet them appropriately may find themselves in a role where they are not required to use what Lynch (1999, pp. 277ff.) calls 'advanced personal intelligences'.
Chapter 3  Ideas important to answering the key questions

CHAPTER 3 IDEAS IMPORTANT TO ANSWERING THE KEY QUESTIONS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the description of Irish society and education provided in Chapter 2 so as to explain the wider significance of the four key questions as identified in the Introduction (p. 4) through a review of literature. It is structured by a sequence of focus, starting with a wider societal context, and ending with a section focusing especially on the place of the three teachers and their schools.

Concepts of globalisation, modernity, homogenisation and proletarianisation, building blocks for the key questions, are prominent in shaping this analysis.

There can be no transmission of skills without transmission of values. All theories of teaching, therefore, ipso facto, embrace issues of social control. (Evans, Davies and Penney, 1999, p. 10)

These ideas are central to this inquiry which is based on the underlying assumption, drawn from structuralism, that society affects individuals who in turn affect society.

The complexities of structuralism are described by Atkinson (1995, p.86) who indicates that: 'Fundamental structures can give rise to a diversity of surface forms or realisations through transformations – a notion which invests the concept of structure with a dynamic potential.'

Key concepts are also drawn from the work of Basil Bernstein. Bernstein (2000, p. 65) argues that: 'curricula reform emerges out of a struggle between groups to make their bias (and focus) state policy and practice.' Bernstein (2000, p. 65) defines 'official knowledge' as: 'the educational knowledge which the state constructs and distributes in educational institutions.' Bernstein (ibid., p.66) indicates that perceptions of curricula are influenced by cultural, economic and technological change. The description of contemporary Irish society in Chapter 2 provides a sociocultural context for an assessment of the Draft NCCA PE syllabuses, as an example of state distributed knowledge. The situationally defined curricula described by MacDonald, Kirk and Braiuka (1999, p.34) within 'a community of practice' contrasts with the centrally provided NCCA PE syllabuses. This chapter examines the opposing ideological positions which define the possibilities for struggles within the provision of a Physical Education curriculum.
3.0 Global influences on contemporary Ireland- society or economy?

As Ireland grows in confidence and views itself as a modern, or even postmodern state, it is possible to identify social change both empirically and in socio-political literature. Irish people with cable television can watch news and sport as it happens from all over the globe. It is possible to feel oneself to be a citizen of the world. Robertson (1987) suggests we think of globalisation as referring to a process or processes by which the world becomes 'a single place'. This process involves changing perceptions of Ireland's identity as a nation state. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 473) describe how: 'Most contributors to the debate on globalisation seem to agree that it weakens or destroys the national state.'

Theory drawn on for this study suggests that modernisation potentially presages a loss of autonomy for individuals within a state (Goodson, 1990; Sklair, 1995; Mann, 1990). Mann (ibid.) contends that globalisation foments the formation of new groupings or identities without local or territorial reference and that new collective identities are established. The implications may be that dominant influences on school curricula will change as different power groups emerge and individuals feel unable to contest their influence.

3.0.1 Late/ postmodernity – changes in Irish society:

In Chapter 2 a popular debate, current in 2002, is described, concerning whether there is more official interest in the nation's economic welfare than about caring for the welfare of individual citizens of the state. Ireland as a newly emerged nation state is clearly in favour of involvement at supranational levels in Europe and in the fora of the United Nations, as was indicated by the outcome of the referendum on the Nice Treaty in October 2002. However, Tovey et al (1989) indicate that a desire to be an independent entity with a unique culture and traditions is also part of Ireland's identity.

Warning about the dangers of viewing globalisation in contemporary society as purely economic processes, Robertson (2001, p. 462), indicates the two essentially defining features of globalisation as: 'the inter connectedness of the world as a whole and the concomitant increase on reflexive global consciousness.'

Ireland's role in world affairs has undoubtedly increased since the foundation of the State in 1922. Ireland provided the 2001 Chairperson for the UN Security Council. Any analysis of the linkages between global processes and the lives of individual Irish citizens is necessarily complex and wide-ranging. Robertson's (ibid.) concept of 'glocalization' (sic): 'is vital in coming to terms with the homogeneity vs. heterogeneity dispute.' This debate is expanded here within an analysis of
McDonaldisation. The influence of world affairs on local economies and cultures is significant in relation to educational organisations and structures. The existence of a dominant global culture may imply, at least on initial inspection, that a set of values is shared by a majority of people. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 297), however, describe how:

the dominant culture of modern industrial societies places particular emphasis on the values of achievement — hard work, long-term career planning, accumulation of material possessions — but we can find groups within these societies who behave in ways and hold views which do not conform to these values.

3.0.2 Consumerism in contemporary Irish society:
One of the ways in which Ireland's citizens demonstrate modernity is by their increasing consumption of material goods. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 444) suggest that in Ireland: 'with the advent of relative affluence for large sections of society, consumption has become a matter not just of meeting needs and securing material comforts but of lifestyle.'
Citing various theories relating to consumerism, Tovey and Share (ibid.) ask why consumerism has assumed such a vital role in developed societies. They offer two possible reasons, first suggesting that:

As a result of passing through the 'mass society' stage we now live in a world where established class or status group differences have become blurred or have disappeared, so that they are no longer available as a source of personal identity.

Another explanation derives from:

'Marx's analysis of the development of capitalism itself, and particularly, his suggestion that capitalism tends to devalue the experience of work.' (ibid., p.444)

The reference above to Marx points to the commodification of workers, with the market place providing their only illusory experience of free choice. Irish young people may be similarly looking for individual identities by exercising choice as consumers: 'there has been a shift in society from the primary source of identity being based upon the paid work a person performed, to identities being constructed around lifestyles and patterns of consumption.' Tovey and Share (2000, p. 445)

To structure one's life as a consumer, it is necessary to have a source of income. Both pupils and teachers are aware of the value of educational qualifications as cultural capital. Robertson (1998, p. 43) describes how in America: 'Embedding the post-Fordist rules has had the effect of tightening the structural correspondence
between education and the economy.' Robertson (ibid., p. 45) elaborates on the effects of this development:

The emerging entrepreneurial culture within the schools has not advantaged all teachers in the same way. We found winners and losers in our study of the effects on teachers of devolution. The winners were teachers who embraced the market, new managerialism and technology, setting into place the structural and functional correspondence between schools and the economy ... The losers were those teachers who failed to exploit the new opportunities, either for ideological reasons or because they were in areas where their expertise was no longer needed or valued.

The winners and losers described above share characteristics with two distinctive groups of teachers, members of the first do not change their practice to accommodate a hegemonic view and members of the second appear to want to be given direction. The three teachers central to this study include two who believe that their expertise is not recognised or catered for within the Draft New NCCA Syllabuses (2000). The third believes that she can satisfy the requirements of the new syllabus without serious erosion of her autonomy. Here it is asserted that a teacher's autonomy is limited when the opportunity to describe goals for his or her pupils is restricted by the state imposition of a common syllabus.

3.0.3 Impact on Irish education:
In analysing curriculum structures, Bernstein (1977, p. 108) differentiates between strongly classified 'collection' codes and 'integrated' codes with weak boundaries between subjects. At that time he posited that teachers' abilities are a factor in their working within one or other code and claimed that:

The collection code is capable of working when staffed by mediocre teachers, whereas integrated codes call for much greater powers of synthesis, analogy and for more ability to both tolerate and enjoy ambiguity at the level of knowledge and social relationships. Bernstein (ibid.)

Following that, he wrote that some teachers, whose previous educational experience was within the collective code, may require re-socialisation if they are to work within integrated codes. Bernstein (ibid.) pointed out that teachers' experiences predispose them to work within one or other code. Consistent with this, it is unusual for Irish post-primary teachers to work outside a strongly classified and strongly framed curriculum. The NCCA PE syllabuses provide strongly classified contents, a framework within which teachers can measure their success consistent with Ball's (1995, p. 87) description of the 'Mark 2' National Curriculum in the United Kingdom
which he describes as resting heavily on: 'heritage, nationalism, and canonical knowledge, on transmission modes of teaching and the deference of the learner, and on the competitive formal testing of students.'

Within the Irish context it is argued here that Ball's analysis resonates with descriptions of conventional practice in schools provided later in this chapter. The work of Lynch (1989, 1999), Drudy and Lynch (1993) and Sugrue (1997) support this argument. Ennis (1997, p. 209), writing specifically about Physical Education in the USA, describes how advocates of a technical-rational curriculum: 'are morally offended by the critical-postmodern perspective that attacks exercise and sports forms as violating the essence of Physical Education and physical activity.'

Empirically we see that Fiona, Siobhan and John all express concern about the potential effects of a NCCA PE Syllabus on their teaching and learning outcomes and especially on their capacity to involve pupils in reflective activities.

3.0.4 Deskilling or proletarianisation of Irish teachers:

Hargreaves (1994, p. 117) sees teachers' autonomy as a central element of professional identity. He cautions that a Marxist analysis of the labour process perhaps over-emphasises the deterioration and deprofessionalism in teachers' work:

In these accounts, teaching is portrayed as becoming more routinized and more deskilled; more like the degraded work of manual workers and less like that of autonomous professionals trusted to exercise the power and expertise of discretionary judgements in the classrooms they understand best. Teachers are described as being increasingly controlled by prescription programs, mandated curricula, and step-by-step methods of instruction.

Although Hargreaves could be accused in part of looking back to British and American 'golden ages', the points he raises are relevant to contemporary Ireland. Hyland, addressing the Physical Education Association of Ireland Conference in 1997, praised the Assist (1986) programme. This programme, now used in many post-primary schools, is based on a behavioural model of Physical Education and invokes Bloom's (1956) 'domains' as ways of describing objectives for the teaching of Physical Education. Seven activity areas are listed. These are traditional activities, similar to those listed within the Key Stages in the Northern Ireland Syllabus, as described by Gilbert and McElhattan (1997). They are athletics, aquatics, games, dance, outdoor and adventure activities, and health related fitness. A system of assessment determined by the Physical Education Association of Ireland
accompanies the curriculum, and the introduction of this curriculum and its accompanying demands suggests that:

...teachers' work has become increasingly intensified, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures and comply with multiple innovations under conditions that are at best stable and at worst deteriorating. Under this view, extended professionalism is a rhetorical ruse, a strategy for getting teachers to collaborate in their own exploitation as more and more effort is extracted from them (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 118).

Teachers in Ireland who chose to adopt the Assist package are provided with a structure for their teaching. Although it is difficult to estimate how many teachers actually use, or have used ‘Assist’, it was widely available to members of the Physical Education community and personal experience suggests that it is widely adopted. The strongly structured way in which the package is designed allows some teachers to feel secure in following its guidelines. In doing this, teachers have accepted more time-consuming administrative work in their professional lives as they are required to complete check-lists about each pupil with regard to his or her performance, following given criteria. The acceptance of a curricular planning model in which the selection of content is seen as unproblematic and where pedagogy is seen as a means of achieving pre-determined ends corresponds to working within the analysis provided by the Reproductive Cluster of teaching styles, described by Mosston and Ashworth (1999). Furthermore the work of Bernstein (1971, 1975, 1977, 1990, 1996) demonstrates how much more than transmission of content occurs formal education, even when this is the teacher’s primary consideration. Complexities associated with the transmission and acquisitions of knowledge are of central importance to this study. There is enormous significance in Bernstein’s (2000, p. 33) claim that:

If the PRF (Pedagogical Recontextualising Field) can have an effect on pedagogic discourse independently of the ORF (Official Recontextualising Field), then there is both some autonomy and struggle over pedagogic discourse and its practices. But if there is only the ORF then there is no autonomy.

In summary, when teachers have more control over their curriculum they enjoy more autonomy in their teaching. Maw (1993, p. 57) found that with respect to curriculum development in England:

the power of one discourse to prevail over another does not depend solely on discursive power, but can draw upon institutional, positional and material forms of power also. This draws attention to the importance of examining the context in which a text is produced in order to illuminate its form and meaning.
Within the Irish context this involves an examination of the policy makers, principally the NCCA PE committee and their relationship to central government. This is reported in Chapter 5. However, Gore (1993, p. 61) cautions that: 'posing a single or stable center of power against which to pose counter strategies of resistance is an oversimplification of the realities of modern disciplinary society.' As a result of international influences, Irish society is evolving at a fast pace with traditional power structures, especially those involving the church, being challenged. It is not clear what new structures will replace the traditional ones.

3.1 McDonaldisation of Society and Education:
John Coakley (1993, p. 25) claims that:

It is now taken for granted that political stability depends on compatibility between political culture and political institutions; the way in which a country is governed must not deviate too far from the system of government favoured by the politically conscious public.

As a member of the European Union, Ireland is part of an economic group of states. The adoption of a shared currency in October 2001 tangibly integrates Ireland into the European Community. Garvin (1993, p. 260) considers changes implied by this:

Irish sovereignty is not being thrown away; it is being pooled with that of the largest and richest multinational commonwealth ever seen. European union may, however, mean that Ireland's separate history is coming to an end and is becoming part of the general history of Europe.

Contemporary Ireland may be described as moving from dependency to globalisation. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 48 f.) indicate that ... 'the dependency approach has now evolved into theories of globalisation that shift the focus of analysis from dependence to interdependence.' This shift is significant within the context of looking at the emergence of an Irish political identity reflecting its recent economic success internationally. Hargreaves (1994, p. 39) indicates that:

Aronowitz and Giroux select the single term "postmodernism" to describe "an intellectual position, a form of cultural criticism, as well as ... an emerging set of social, cultural and economic conditions that have come to characterize the age of global capitalism and industrialism."

Questions about Irish identity and the role of education in its construction are interrelated. A government whose primary interest is in succeeding within international capitalism seems likely to favour what Bernstein (2000, pp. 44-50) calls
a 'performance mode' of pedagogy. Bernstein (ibid.) describes effects of involvement in the performance mode:

Performance modes select from the field of the production of discourse theories of learning of a behaviourist type which are atomistic in their emphasis. And this selection (recontextualisation) has consequences for behaviourist positions in the field of production of discourse.

Features of Bernstein's performance model are consistent with Ritzer's (1993) description of McDonaldisation. Both of these theories indicate management structures which are dominant and controlling. Foucault (1980) believes that management is a 'micro-physics of power', claiming that: 'Its basis is disciplinary' and it is a 'fundamental instrument in the constitution of industrial capitalism and the type of society that is its accompaniment' (quoted by Stephen J. Ball, 1990, p. 165). Foucault (ibid.) suggests that: 'knowledge power and the body are interrelated in the achievement of subjugation.' Foucault's theories provide powerful language in the description of the nature of relationships, not only within schools, where Gore's (1993) analyses of power relationships are informative, but also in looking at how the state interprets its role in providing education. In 1991 Giddens' work (quoted in Tovey and Share, 1999, p. 406):

argues that late modern society is characterised by the development of a new type of life politics - a politics of the self - in contrast to the older emancipatory politics - a politics of resistance to exploitation, inequality and oppression.

The reasons why Physical Education teachers might select to radicalise their pupils rather than to simply reproduce the status quo are important. Lynch (1989, 1999) and Drudy and Lynch (1993) provide critical analyses of Ireland's education system which confirm that conservative pedagogies are widespread in Irish schools. Sugrue (1997) provides further evidence indicating widespread resistance to alternative models of education in Irish schools. Bernstein's (1990, p. 213) theories of instruction permit an analysis of teaching within two intersecting dimensions. Behaviourist theories of instruction are diametrically opposed to radical theories (see Figure 2 below). The tension between these two positions is very evident. Through their initial teacher education courses Irish Physical Education teachers are intellectually encouraged to work within structural positivism for which psychological behaviourism provides a logical structure. Some find this difficult, either because they hold a counter ideological position, or because they adhere to a child-centred view of Physical Education for which behaviourism does not provide a sensible basis.
3.1.1 Does education in contemporary Ireland reflect a society or an economy – performance or competence?

Bernstein (2000, p. 31) differentiates between: 'a discourse of skills of various kinds and their relations to each other', which he calls the 'instructional discourse', and: the 'regulative discourse' described as: 'the moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity.' The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse and the instructional discourse is, in Bernstein's (2000, p. 32) terms, 'embedded in it'. Teachers develop their own pedagogies based on their primary socialisation, their Teacher Education and the situation in which they work, all of which affect their discourse. The extent to which pedagogues can construct their own discourse, however, is dependent on the strength of boundary between what Bernstein (ibid.) calls:

an official recontextualising field (ORF) created and dominated by the state and its selected agents and ministries and a pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF). The latter consists of pedagogues in schools and colleges, and departments of education, specialised journals, private research foundations.

Bernstein (2000, p. 33) warns that: 'Today the state is attempting to weaken the PRF through the ORF, and thus attempting to reduce relative autonomy over the construction of pedagogic discourse and over its social contexts.' By providing syllabuses for teaching Physical Education, the Irish government, through the NCCA, is reducing the autonomy of Irish Physical Education teachers. It is argued later in this chapter that when teachers accept extrinsic justifications in planning their teaching they are less likely to consider either their own or their pupils' situations.
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Bernstein’s earlier work (1971) suggested that a teacher’s ability is also a factor, but even the most able teacher will have enormous difficulty operating an integrated code without support within their school. Space and resources have implications for the discourse which a teacher selects. Bernstein (2000, p. 46) elaborates on this with regard to whether teachers work within a competence or a performance model of instruction.

3.1.2 Rationality in contemporary Irish education – signs of McDonaldisation?

Identifying what is not taught in schools and teacher education courses helps to indicate which values inform them. It was anticipated that the Draft NCCA Physical Education syllabuses (2001) would affect the practice of teachers who used them. The predominant experiences within education for most Irish teachers have been in conservative institutions where transmission and control are the dominant pedagogical discourses. Such teachers are unlikely to embrace progressive practices without rejecting much of their previous experience. Sparkes (1989, p. 322) cites various analyses whose central theme is that:

teachers, via the socialization process, have had instilled in them a dominating form of consciousness or mode of thinking which has an emphasis upon individualism, rationality, efficiency, and objectivity.

Teachers would need to feel confident in their own identities to adopt a different teaching role from the dominant role in their experiences. May (1996, p. 69) describes how people construct a self-identity: 'Individuals are (therefore) engaged in a constant process of monitoring their actions and social selves.' May (ibid.) describes a process informed by a set of parameters against which the identity is measured, and which does not necessarily presage a critical discourse. Developing this thought, Gore (1993, p. 95) indicates how a dominant discourse can be described as either empowering or silencing. Foucault’s description of ‘regimes of truth’ is drawn on by McLaren (1989, p. 81) who claims that:

we can consider dominant [educational] discourses (those produced by the dominant culture) as ‘regimes of truth’, as general economies of ‘power/knowledge’, or as multiple forms of constraint... A critical discourse ... is self-critical and deconstructs dominant discourses the moment they are ready to achieve hegemony.
3.1.3 Structures of Irish curricula explained as classification and framing —societal implications:

Bernstein's (2000, p. 12) descriptions of classification and framing indicate how curricula reflect the political structures of the schools and society within which they are provided. When subjects are strongly classified a hierarchical structure within schools is promoted, and, when strongly framed, a strong boundary is created between the school and outside of the school. With weak classification there is likely to be enhanced interaction between teachers across subjects, both within the institution, and between the institution and outside the institution. Bernstein (ibid.) indicates that weak classification: 'can provide a new social base for consensus of interest and opposition.'

Bernstein's (1977, p. 108) assertion that a collective curriculum which is strongly classified accommodates mediocre teachers implies that this form of organisation does not require well educated, reflective teachers to use their higher cognitive abilities to the full. The introduction of a state syllabus based on strong classificatory principles is unlikely to promote positive social relationships or to facilitate debate and shared experiences among the school community. In Bernstein's (2000, p. 12) terms: classification constructs the nature of social space; stratifications, distributions and locations.

The concept of 'framing' outlined by Bernstein (ibid.) can be used to analyse 'any legitimate communication realised in any pedagogical practice.' These definitions are offered to provide theory within which power relationships within Irish schools can be examined. Bernstein (ibid.) expands the concepts: 'If the principle of classification provides us with our voice and the means of its recognition, then the principle of framing is the means of acquiring the legitimate message.'

Bernstein indicates that the more symbolic control exerted by the state the less control individual teachers have of their own practice. This potentially erodes their professional role. The issue of proletarianisation of teachers forms the third central question in this study.

3.1.4 Homogenisation in Irish society:

Ritzer’s (1993) neo-Weberian analysis of contemporary society, applied to education by Dale (1994), overlaps with three central ideologies informing research and policy documents within Irish education: 'consensualism, essentialism and meritocratic individualism' (Drudy and Lynch 1993, pp. 48ff.).

These ideologies which are manifested in The NCCA Draft New Physical Education Syllabuses (2000) share characteristics with the four conditions ascribed by Ritzer
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(ibid, pp. 9ff.) to McDonaldisation, 'predictability, control, calculability and efficiency.' In Chapter 2, I indicated their relevance to education (where symbols of Irish ethnicity were described). The Irish language and Gaelic games were identified as culturally and ethnically significant aspects of Irish society. These aspects may become less visible as Ireland moves towards full European integration. Tovey, Hannon and Abramson (1988), indicate that:

modernisation theorists hypothesised that the development of societies is inevitably accompanied by large scale cultural homogenisation, and the international convergence of cultural identities.

Garvin (1998, p. 154), also indicating changes within Irish culture, describes how: 'mass education of a kind not available to previous generations has accelerated the detraditionalism of Irish political culture.'

Various contemporary theorists caution against over-simplification in describing homogenisation. The consumer is not merely an object to be manipulated. Kumar (1995) claims that: 'to eat at McDonald's* is not to be McDonaldised*.' (*spelling as in original)

A similar caution may be voiced with regard to children's response to schooling. Griffin (1985, p. 6) describes girls whom she calls 'lost souls' and 'system beaters' who are members of a Physical Education class without taking part. Young people are not cultural dupes; they do not simply imbue uncritically the cultures of classrooms, teachers, or 'society'. Irish society has become more open in recent times where changes in political culture include a move away from paternalistic politics in which people readily accepted the advice of authority figures. Coakley (1993, p. 37) writes that: 'authoritarianism, conformism, anti-intellectualism and loyalty have been identified as distinctive elements in Irish political culture.' He posits various reasons for these attributes, speculating that: '...the dominance of the Catholic Church and its influence through the education system are likely to have strengthened authoritarianism.'

The Commission on the Points System (1999)\(^\text{16}\) indicates that: 'Though almost completely funded by the state, this level of education remains organisationally dominated by religious bodies, principally the Catholic religious orders.' As indicated in Chapter 2, the influence of the Catholic Church has diminished although post-

\(^{16}\) This body chaired by Professor Hyland, was set up to examine the current procedures (the points system) used to select pupils for third level education.
primary education is still influenced by a church presence. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 156) explain that around 60% of the academically-orientated 'secondary' schools: 'are privately owned and managed institutions under the control of religious communities, boards of governors or individuals, but are formally recognised and regulated under the Department of Education and Science'. Tovey and Share (ibid.) also indicate that the influence of the churches is starting to diminish in the post-primary sector where although there is 'a considerable number' of lay principals, the religious orders: 'have begun to establish alternative structures that may permit them to retain a management role in such schools into the future.' These include privileged positions within schools' Boards of Management and in some cases involvement with the management of the buildings of a school.

A key question addresses the extent to which characteristics of McDonaldisation are present in Irish education. The role of teachers in contemporary Ireland is positioned within theory describing proletarianisation, de-skilling and professionalism. Each of these terms has connotations regarding the nature of the society in which teachers are working and their roles within that society. Physical Education teachers in Ireland may no longer be able to assert their own ideologies within a system in which the state provides and defines their curriculum. Evidence of a discursive gap between the three teachers' preferred practices and the practice imposed by the Draft NCCA Syllabuses is analysed with reference to Bernstein's theories of curricula. The teachers' pedagogical discourses are compared with the official pedagogic discourse.

3.2 The place of Physical Education in contemporary Ireland:

Physical Education is a relatively new subject in the Irish post-primary school curriculum. There was no Irish PETE course for men and women until 1972. Within the educational system PE is thus perceived differently from the academic subjects alongside which it is placed. Because of the central importance accorded to the certificated state examinations, Physical Education, which is currently not formally examined, is excluded from gaining credibility through a contribution to Leaving Certificate points. It is therefore possible that higher values, such as those espoused by Evans and Davies (1993 p. 235), who wrote 'The imperatives of justice, equality, and participation lie at the heart of our actions and concerns.' may find expression in the actions of Physical Education teachers concerned with a moral

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17 The subjects in the Leaving Certificate examination all contribute to the points tally which pupils present for admission to third level education.
discourse. Alternatively, of course, the relative freedom accorded Physical Education may mean that more conservative or liberal ideologies may be found. Only by spending time with individual teachers, observing their practice, asking them about their teaching and listening to their views, can their values be established. This process, undertaken with the three teachers is described in Chapter 4.

It is important to restate the complexity of describing ideologies in education. Sparkes (1989) indicates that:

The concepts of "culture" and "ideology" defy simple definition they are utilised within a variety of theoretical frameworks which ascribe different meanings to them and provide analyses at different levels of operation.

McKay, Gore and Kirk (1990, p. 52), indicate that the ideologies of 'professionalism, scientism and instrumental rationality' are central within Physical Education. Parker (1999, p. 3) in a similar vein, describes what he calls 'two stories' within education:

In one there is a vocabulary of means, efficiency, universals, law-like generalization and bureaucracy; in the other one of autonomy, emancipation, uniqueness, democracy, ends and values.

It is possible, within contemporary Physical Education in Ireland, to find evidence of both of Parker's 'stories'. The first is evident in psychological behaviourism, an approach recommended to, and often required from, PETE students in the University of Limerick, as described in Chapter 4. Some of the students claim to find security in the apparent certainty of this approach and others, like Fiona, Siobhan and John, are offended by its underlying assumptions. A behaviourist approach shares characteristics of Ritzer's (1993) tenets of McDonaldisation. Kirk (1993, p. 244) indicates the limitations of an objectives based approach. He reports that: 'A particular criticism is that objectives trivialize educational processes and celebrate convergent learning outcomes.' In contrast, those teachers who justify their practice within child-centred liberalism are less concerned with verifiable measurements than with caring for the person and are keenly aware of the heterogeneity of their classes. Dewey (1928, p. 198) summarises the distinctive contribution of progressive thinking as follows:

Respect for individual capacities, interest and experience, enough external freedom with informality at least to enable teachers to become acquainted with children as they really are: respect for self-initiated and self-conducted learning; respect for activity as the stimulus and centre of learning and perhaps above all belief in social contact, communication and cooperation upon normal human plane as all-enveloping medium.
More recently, Robertson (1996, p. 9), an advocate of child-centred teaching, indicates how several studies, for example Noddings (1992) and Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan, (1996) have found:

A science of teaching based on classifications of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and so on also privileges knowledge and cognition above care as the foundation for school teaching - yet it is the absence of being cared for much more than the absence of being cognitively challenged which leads young people to drop out of secondary school.

3.2.1 Rationality and Physical Education teaching:
The requirements of the Draft PE Syllabuses concur with the dominant culture described above but reflective teachers whose practice, like that of Fiona, Siobhan and John, acknowledges heterogeneity among their pupils, typically embrace wider aims. An instrumentalism pervades the Draft Syllabuses (2001) reflecting the view that teachers should be accountable. Kirk (2001, p. 2) addressing Irish physical educators about 'this new agenda of accountability' indicates that: 'In my view exclusion from this requirement to record and report would have been fatal to Physical Education's continuing existence in the compulsory curriculum.'
The Irish Department of Education and Science 'Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools' (1998/99, p. 7) includes a statement that: 'Physical Education should form part of the curriculum. The programme should be based on the approved syllabus and teaching hours should be registered on the school timetable.' PE is not, therefore, part of a 'compulsory curriculum'. Involvement of Physical Education teachers in certificate examinations at Junior and Leaving Certificate level represents a change of role for them as well as a change of focus for the subject.

3.2.2 Analysing classroom organisation in Physical Education classes:
A teacher's organisation of pupils within a class can be described in various ways, as can teachers and pupils relating to each other. Mosston (1990) lists various 'styles of teaching' all of which are concerned with pupils learning specified content. Moles (1996) identifies organisational styles which are analogous to musical forms and which are similar to those described by Neville (1984) with regard to the organisation of groups. The forms of organisation are as follows: 'Chaos - Unison - Canon - Sequence - Harmony'. These terms are hierarchical as chaos is without imposed structure, and harmony represents sophisticated interaction. Roles of teacher and pupils are altered within each type of organisation, shown in Table 2:
Table 2 Organisation, teacher's role and context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaos</td>
<td>no structure</td>
<td>confusion, no shared purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>everyone working together</td>
<td>very ordered, robotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>groups doing same thing in 'waves'</td>
<td>tidy in appearance no confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>groups doing a circuit of activities</td>
<td>everyone occupied, different activities occurring simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>everyone working to a shared idea</td>
<td>individuals doing different things, but sharing a common purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Role of Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Role of Teacher</th>
<th>Examples of context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaos</td>
<td>absent or ineffective</td>
<td>no order - anything goes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>controlling</td>
<td>folk dance, aerobics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>regulatory</td>
<td>chain swimming, drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>organising</td>
<td>circuit type activities, games with an imposed pattern of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>creative, composing</td>
<td>creative, inclusive games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities, interactive</td>
<td>spontaneous play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Moles, 1996)

This description of organisational forms provides a way of analysing a teacher's pedagogy and is used here to interrogate the actions of the three central teachers in this study. A teacher committed to working within the instrumental order is more likely to adopt more direct control, within unison, canon or sequence, whereas a teacher who works within the expressive order prefers working within, or towards, harmony as an inclusive organisational form. The level to which the pupils share their teacher's perspective on the purposes of education will have implications for the way in which educational encounters are undertaken. A teacher wishing to work within a harmonious form cannot do this unless his or her pupils cooperate. Instrumentally focused teachers adopt more structured forms of organisation. More expressively orientated teachers prefer harmonious ways of working. This conceptual framework facilitates an analysis of the discourses favoured by Fiona, Siobhan and John.

3.3 Roles of pupils and teachers in Irish Physical Education:

Bernstein's (2000, p. 96) definitions of 'instrumental', and 'expressive' orders facilitate analysis of how the teacher carries out his/her role and how this fits in to the overall
school organisation. Teachers who are concerned with meeting externally-imposed criteria may have fewer opportunities to deliberate on the social, moral or emotional development of a pupil. Bernstein (ibid.) describes how in a school, as the central focus on achievement in examinations increases, the social organisation becomes more divisive. For example pupils may be streamed by ability and teachers can become committed to an instrumental order while those pupils who do not identify with the aspirations and goals of this order may become involved in: 'An expressive order which is pupil-based and anti-school.' (Bernstein 1977, p. 39). He claims that:

It is also likely that a strong involvement in the instrumental order may lead, under certain conditions to a weakening of the pupil's involvement in the expressive order and the values it transmits. Bernstein (ibid.)

Ireland's rapid social change, in evidence particularly in the acceptance and promotion of technology, is reflected within the school curriculum where technology and science are accorded high status - each appearing within differently named subjects. The dilution of the influences of the Christian churches in Ireland has created tensions consistent with Bernstein's (1977, p. 56) description of the instrumental values inside a school and the values outside the school failing to coincide. Bernstein (ibid., p. 39) outlines the possible implications when values among members of the school community are not shared:

The weakening of the school's expressive order is likely to weaken the school's attempt to transmit behaviours working for cohesion between staff, between pupils and between pupils and staff.

The way in which a curriculum is defined has implications for how it is taught. Acknowledgement of a 'hidden' or an 'invisible' curriculum involves a wider definition of curriculum than is required by a teacher solely involved with the instrumental order. In Bernstein's (1977, p. 52) view, if the instrumental order of the curriculum is 'open', then it will have 'subject boundaries that are blurred (inter-related)'. If it is 'closed' the subject boundaries will be 'sharp (less inter-relation or integration)'. If the expressive order is 'open' the 'boundary relationships with the outside are blurred', and if the expressive order is 'closed' the 'boundary relationships with the outside are sharply drawn'.

3.3.1 Socialisation of Irish Physical Education teachers:
This study investigates whether Irish Physical Education teachers are in Bernstein's (1977, p. 6) terms involved in 'more personalized forms of control where teachers
and taught to confront each other as individuals,' or in: 'the transmission of common values through a ritual order and control based upon position or status.' (ibid.)

The latter concurs with traditional authoritarianism which Sugrue (1997) indicates is still the preferred approach of Irish educationists.

I use the concepts classification and framing (Bernstein 2000, p. 6) to describe how Fiona, Siobhan and John provide Physical Education for particular groups of pupils with regard to each teacher's own perceptions, the constraints imposed by the school situation and those aspects of ethnicity which appear to have particular relevance for the teachers being scrutinised. A schematic representation of factors involved in forming a Physical Education teacher's perceptions is provided in Figure 1, showing the interdependence of a range of factors within the Irish context.

![Diagram of factors influencing an Irish Physical Education teacher's perceptions](image)

**Fig.1 Frame factors influencing an Irish Physical Education teacher's perceptions of his or her role.**

Various factors within this frame can be described as having qualities associated either with exclusivity, or with integration. The concept of strong and weak boundary maintenance can be applied to each of the categories. The axis from ethnicity to ideology is concerned with the development of an individual teacher. These aspects of personhood are likely to be influenced more by personal characteristics, while factors relating to wider cultural influences likely to be influenced by cultural norms. Church and family, class, lifestyle and ambitions describe a social setting within
which teachers develop. Some teachers apparently feel social influences more strongly than others. Their desire to conform to particular social mores is significant in determining whether these exert strong or weak framing.

A functionalist perspective such as described above, depends on order and compliance, normally within socially defined roles. However, Templin and Schempp (ibid., p. 3) offer a more dialectical perspective of socialisation. In this, people are involved in their own socialisation which suggests that: 'man (sic) can produce and create versus simply reproducing the expected and familiar.' This on-going process can be observed where: '... socialization focuses on the constant interplay between individuals, societal-influences, and the institutions into which they are socialized' (Templin and Schempp, ibid.).

This perspective suggests that teachers can reflect on and evaluate their role and purpose in society. Affirming the role which an individual has in his or her own socialisation, Popkewitz (1976) indicates that: 'while social structures are compelling in the construction of identity, the concept of socialization should define people as both creators and recipients of values.'

Zeichner and Gore (1990, p. 90) give an indication of the complexity of the socialisation process and caution that:

Any adequate analysis of the production, reproduction, and contestation of the social relations of authority and power should attempt also to 'excavate' their epistemic foundations, that is, those largely unseen controls on discourse whose effect, within that specific epoch, is 'for permitting certain facts, opinions and ideas to be uttered while forbidding others'.

Bernstein's (2000, p. 29) 'unthinkable' is clearly implied in the quote above. The implications of control exerted by such strongly-held shared perceptions are important in defining the ways in which a teacher perceives his or her role.

Traditionally within Irish education pupils have been expected to acquire values transmitted by teachers whose authority was within the regulative discourse provided by the church. Hogan (1995, p. 251), writing about Irish education claims that:

There is still a conception of the teacher - including in educational circles - as one who is schooled and certificated in an approved range of subject knowledge and who is sufficiently competent in its transmission to be licensed by some education authority to do so.

There are obvious limitations to this concept. There is a need, in Hogan’s (ibid.) terms to view teacher education as: 'The natural nursery (or academy) for those
dispositions cultivated by the self-critical discipline of dialogue.' A teacher whose role is predominantly as a transmitter of approved knowledge, may be off-putting to someone who is aware of a need for self-critical dialogue. By presenting material as unproblematic, complex issues may be simplified and opportunities for debate and analysis lost.

3.3.2 Pedagogies of the three central teachers:
Concepts drawn from the range of theoretical ideas reviewed here are applied in Chapter 5 to the three teachers to describe their experiences of change in contemporary Irish society. Their ethnic and cultural affiliations are examined as factors in constructing their identities.
The fourth question asks whether there is a gap between the discourse of child-centred teachers, exemplified by the experience of the three teachers and the discourse implied within the Draft NCCA Syllabuses (2000). Paradigmatic positions associated with idealistic stances are rarely observable in practice but can be used as benchmarks against which to test teachers' strongly held views. Fiona's, Siobhan's and John's practices are analysed to ascertain whether there is incompatibility between what they do and what the syllabuses would have them do.

The three teachers' practices are considered in some detail in Chapter 5 to establish whether they display characteristics of Bernstein's (2000) competence mode or whether they work within a performance mode. Bernstein (1990, p. 213) suggests that behaviourist theories focus on transmission of content/knowledge to individuals, in contrast to theories where the focus is on the acquisition of knowledge. This analysis of pedagogies aids in providing a language in which to describe the three teachers' preferred practice.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION

4.0 The framework of the study:
This study is placed within an interpretive paradigm in which the methods of inquiry reflect a desire, in Cantrell's (1993, p. 2) terms to: 'understand and interpret daily occurrences and social structures as well as the meanings people give to the phenomena.' Changes in Ireland, described in Chapter One, have implications for the ways in which education is perceived and practised. Irish society reflects global changes, implying that trends occurring elsewhere will impact on Irish education structures. This study looks in particular at three teachers in contemporary Ireland who are concerned more about the effects of education on their pupils as people, and the implications of the proposed imposition of new syllabuses for these teachers. Cantrell (ibid.) describes how: 'interpretivists accept the inseparable bond between values and facts and attempt to understand reality, especially the behaviour of people, within a social context.' To aid in understanding the reality experienced by these three teachers, data are gathered from a range of sources to describe the contexts in which Irish Physical Education is constructed. On the basis of a career in teaching and reading I am concerned that their commitment to providing child-centred teaching within Physical Education is not given credence within the requirements of the new NCCA PE syllabuses. Fiona, Siobhan and John may not be representative of Irish Physical Education teachers, but their expressed views and ideas provide an opportunity for me to examine my concerns about the effects of proposed changes.

At all times ethical considerations are of central concern. 'The first element common to every protocol is the researcher's respect for the person and group under study,' (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 89) As most, if not all, the people involved are known to me personally a level of trust and respect was already established. This was essential to the effective working of this research approach.

4.1 The research focus:
The research methodology adopted is guided by the theory described in Chapter Two. Concerns about the dominant pedagogical discourses in Physical Education are focused within an inquiry on two-way interaction between society and education. Research described by Sadovnik (1995, p.3) into 'curriculum as the organized and codified reflection of societal and ideological interests' is relevant in 'understanding curriculum as
a social and political construction.' (ibid.) Basil Bernstein, a proponent of a structuralist approach provides insights into pedagogy and curriculum, creating theory which helps us understand teachers' practices. Particularly relevant in this study is theory which describes the role of the teacher within contemporary society, for example Bernstein (2000, p.66) claims that: 'Curricula reform today arises out of the requirements to engage with this contemporary, cultural, economic and technological change.'

4.2 Procedures used to gather data:
A range of procedures was used to build up a picture within which the three teachers could be viewed within a community which included their school colleagues and the wider Irish Physical Education community. It was necessary to understand how education was organised and perceived by the state in order to locate Physical Education in this community structure.

Documentary research:
Government policies relating to Physical Education were analysed. These are found in the Department of Education White Paper on Education (1995), the Report on the National Education Convention (1994), and in syllabuses issued by the Department of Education (1997). Texts describing the PETE course within the University of Limerick were examined, in particular the BA degree submission (this degree was called a BSc since 2001) and the module descriptions provided to students.

Participant observation:
I attended meetings of the Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS) Department of the University of Limerick with the Education Officer of the NCCA PE Course Committee. The PESS Department, including myself, formally met a Department of Education and Science Physical Education Inspector along with an NCCA representative to discuss the draft new syllabuses for post-primary schools. Copies of the most recent syllabuses were provided and standardised forms on which to provide a response were distributed. I took notes during these meetings to record the officially stated position with regard to the provision of schools' Physical Education in Irish post-primary schools.
Classes taught by Fiona, Siobhan and John:
Each of the teachers permitted me to observe and video-tape their classes. I asked to see the first encounters with first year classes so that I could observe how the teachers introduced themselves and their programmes. John was not able to comply with this request as he joined the project after the beginning of term. Aims for these classes were described to me by the teachers beforehand and reviewed together afterwards. I asked pupils who arrived early about their expectations of the classes. John provided a written plan for his gymnastics class. The teachers talked to me immediately after each of the classes. Notes I made during the classes were supplemented through observation of the video-tapes. The observed lessons were analysed in the context of theory described in Chapter Two, within which the teachers' planning, their relationships with their pupils, the organisation of their lessons and their assessment of the lessons was examined. Accommodation of different abilities, along with evidence of a child-centred approach (for example using children's names and being aware of individual needs) were indicators of emphases in the teachers' practices. Bernstein's (2000, p. 98) differentiation between instrumental and expressive orders provided a framework within which to examine teacher-pupil relationships (see Appendix seven for more details).

Interviews:
'Dexter (1970) describes interviews as a conversation with a purpose.' (Erlandson et al., 1993)
Semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted with Department of Education Physical Education Inspectors one of whom is retired. In order to obtain data for analysis I did not want to ask questions in a formal way which would intimidate people who I knew well as colleagues. I met individual PETE tutors (n=6) in the University of Limerick to ask about their perceptions of how developments within Irish Physical Education affected them. These meetings were formally arranged but the discussions were informally structured. Over time I have developed perceptions of their views on Physical Education Pedagogy and these interviews provided opportunities to question these perceptions.
I interviewed the Education Officer of the NCCA PE Course Committee over an hour and a half to talk about the NCCA Draft New PE Syllabuses. This interview was semi-structured with some prepared questions relating to the procedures adopted by NCCA in selecting content. (These questions are recorded in Appendix eighteen). Questions
aimed to identify the underlying philosophy and the extent to which the new syllabuses represented an attempt to control teachers' practice, and the extent to which teachers' professionalism was valued. With his permission I made notes during the interview. Fiona, Siobhan and John and their principals answered my questions about how they perceived Physical Education within Irish post-primary education. First and fourth year PETE students in the University of Limerick were informally interviewed to establish how much they knew about the proposed changes to Physical Education being developed by the NCCA.

**Questionnaire surveys (copies in Appendices) were distributed to:**
- Students (n = 44) in the University of Limerick
- Pupils (n=79) taught by Fiona, Siobhan and John
- Teachers (n=61) in the three cooperating schools
- Tutors (n=8) on the PETE programme in the University of Limerick.

The populations to which the questionnaires were distributed were finite and as I had ready access to each of the groups no further sampling procedures were required. The total populations were sampled except in the case of teachers in the three cooperating schools whose responses represent 35% of all the teachers in these three schools. This sample reflects a wide range of subject teachers who completed questionnaires as set out in Appendix nine, based on their perceptions of the place of Physical Education in their schools and in general. These data allowed evaluation of the extent to which professional aspirations of Fiona, Siobhan and John are supported by their schools. All teachers present in the staff-rooms in the three schools at break-times and lunch-times during two days in March 1999, were asked by Fiona, Siobhan and John to complete questionnaires. Because of impending school holidays and schools examinations, opportunities for distributing and collecting questionnaires were limited. The response rates indicate willingness to cooperate. All children in the three observed classes completed questionnaires at the start of their scheduled PE classes. While none of the questions asked for personal information, all respondents were promised anonymity. A questionnaire, in Appendix five, administered to University of Limerick PETE students, obtained biographical details along with information about their perceptions of their school Physical Education courses and their experiences of their PETE course.
Chapter 4  Methodology of Data Collection

Questionnaires in Appendix eight, administered to the first year pupils who I saw being taught in the three cooperating schools, offered item statements with graduated responses. Almost all of these statements were based on pupils' reactions to their school experience and on how they believed their Physical Education could be improved. Data from these questionnaires allowed comparison with teachers' responses to evaluate the extent of agreement.

Tutors in the University of Limerick were asked to respond to item statements as set out in Appendix six, using a Likert scale ranging from 'agree entirely' to 'disagree entirely'. The items related to the nature and value of Physical Education both within Irish schools and within the University of Limerick PETE programme. Although no identification was requested, all respondents signed the questionnaires.

Responses from the questionnaires were codified for analysis using SPSS.18

4.3 Additional information gathered from among the wider Physical Education community:

Questionnaires (n=16), (see Appendix three) were distributed among key members of the Irish Physical Education community, listed below, to determine whether the Physical Education profession in Ireland holds shared perceptions and attitudes. The Education Officer of the NCCA PE Course Committee was interviewed, as were two Department of Education Physical Education Inspectors, one retired. Physical Education Inspectors were sent a questionnaire asking them to indicate priorities in their thinking. Members of the Physical Education course team in the University of Limerick, current students on the Physical Education course, recent graduates from the course, pupils taught by the three teachers. Non-Physical Education teachers in the three teachers' schools all completed questionnaires which were designed to indicate how their perceptions of the three teachers' work accorded with the three teachers' views of themselves. The ten Physical Education teachers who were contacted by letter (Appendix one) early in the study, all completed brief questionnaires (see Appendix four) which support the view that Fiona, Siobhan and John's attitudes and values are not solely their own.

18 Statistical package for Social Scientists
4.4. Ethical considerations:
When this research was originally undertaken it was within an awareness that I shared a perspective of Physical Education with some teachers, apparently different from the perspective held by others. The teachers with whom I conducted my inquiry were specifically selected to inform a particular view of education and both they and myself were aware that this was the process in which we were involved. Following guidelines from BERA (2000), my research was ‘conducted within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values and respect for the quality of educational research’. The effects of the research on the teachers was designed to be beneficial as they were facilitated in interrogating and sharing aspects of their practice with a trusted and sympathetic observer. Permission to undertake my research was obtained from the schools and the support of all three schools was unconditional. Each of the principal teachers was aware of my interest in the professional practice of their physical education teachers and they allowed me free access to classes taught and pupils in those classes, as well as encouraging my communication with the particular teachers. The teachers were all asked if they required confidentiality and if they wanted their names changed to protect their identities. All three were quite clear that they had no problem with their names being used and none of our communications was privileged. My interviews were all ‘carefully conducted to avoid fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of evidence, data, findings or conclusions’. (BERA, 2000 p. 1) The video tapes are carefully stored in a secure place and the Dictaphone tapes have been destroyed.
Everyone who was interviewed or who completed questionnaires did so while fully aware that data would be used as part of this research.

4.4.1 The process of choosing teachers for this study:
In 1997, when this research was being considered I needed to have unrestricted access to sympathetic teachers who were willing to help me consider how new official syllabuses would influence their teaching. During my years of lecturing PETE students in Limerick I have been aware of students whose perceptions tended to coincide with my own with regard to the nature and purpose of schools’ Physical Education. This awareness arose when students who wanted to discuss aspects of their teaching, to borrow my books and to share with me educational experiences which seemed particularly significant to them.
Several graduates from the University of Limerick indicated that they wanted their teaching to be child-centred, to develop personal and human qualities, as opposed to adopting a pedagogy based on psychological behaviourism and transmission. In August 1998, a letter (see Appendix one) was sent to ten teachers who as students had indicated to me that they were not comfortable with the dominant discourse within their PETE course. They believed themselves as students to be restricted by a requirement to plan their teaching using behavioural objectives. These ten included three teachers with whom I felt comfortable discussing proposed changes and who I believed would let me watch them teaching in the way they normally taught. One of the three originally selected teachers did not have a full-time teaching position at the start of the project so a locally based teacher, who had volunteered to ‘help in any way he could’, was included in the study. These teachers claim to espouse a strongly child-centred view of teaching. All expressed reservations about relying solely on objective measurement to establish a child’s progress in Physical Education. They also shared the feeling that teaching Physical Education for certification would not facilitate their teaching in the way they believed to be most beneficial for their pupils. The original group of ten teachers all oppose what Sugrue (1997, p. 1) describes as:

the factory model... imposed on schools so that pupils were organised into age cohorts (classes or standards) and taught a set programme which was teacher driven and systematically tested at regular intervals to measure progress.

These Irish Physical Education teachers shared a feeling of being in some sense exceptional in their view of education. However they were able to provide examples of other teachers who were ‘trying to teach children as opposed to transmitting content’19. Clues as to their shared values are based on negative comments about the current position of Physical Education in Irish schools, as well as positive exchanges of examples of good experiences in teaching, usually relating to individual children. The three teachers are not claimed to be representative of Physical Education teachers in Ireland. Indeed Irish Physical Education teachers, like John, who qualified outside the state, experienced different influences20 as students from the majority of Irish PE teachers. The decision to look closely at three teachers was made in conjunction with a

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19 Phrases of this type were common among the teachers whose concerns centred on the objectification of their pupils. Their responses to this perception varied. Some negative views related to experiences as PETE students which they wanted to avoid passing on to their pupils.

20 Not within the scope of this study.
decision to follow a qualitative mode of enquiry. The three teachers were selected because of their enthusiasm for the project along with my experience of their reliability and consistency. Their generosity in allowing me access to their schools and their classes facilitated the enquiry. The ten teachers who were initially contacted completed a questionnaire (see Appendix four), which indicated how they thought their subject was viewed. They have not been interviewed subsequently.

I met each of the three teachers individually to listen to his or her life story to hear how they had evolved as caring professionals. Following Corradi (1991, p. 119):

A life story thus involves a dialogical interactive situation in which the course of an individual's life is given shape: by reason of the request that stirs and orientates them, and the subsequent analysis to which the researcher subjects them, life stories aim to explain and give meaning to social phenomena.

As the three teachers were well known to me we shared a level of trust which facilitates ease of communication. There was a sense in which the teachers enjoyed telling their stories while being listened to sensitively and with purpose.

It is important to remember that only aspect of the teachers' lives was scrutinised and this during only a short time. This concurs with Stake's (1995, p. 96) description of case study: 'The chronology of life is explored against a thematic network (i.e., a set of issues). He indicates that: 'Far more often in educational and social research, the study deals only with a phase of life...'

Fiona, Siobhan and John are all involved in personal relationships and in social activities outside teaching, so although their careers provide the focus of this study, they are also involved in society in different roles.

4.4.2 Method of selection of the three teachers:

Fiona, Siobhan and John collectively represent what Silverman (2001, p.104) calls 'purposeful sampling' which he claims: 'allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested.' Stake (1995, p. 2) indicates that 'the case is a specific complex, functioning thing.' Fiona, Siobhan and John were selected for this study because of the concerns they shared with me for their pupils as unique individuals, and because of their willingness and ability to cooperate with my requests for time to talk about teaching and to visit their schools. All three teachers were personally known to me and a relationship of trust existed among us. They shared some of my concerns about the proposed changes in Irish schools' Physical Education. All
three agreed with my description of them as child-centred teachers. Because of an existing relationship between myself and these teachers it is possible to acknowledge the existence of 'intellectual kinship' which has emerged as the result of exchanges of views over many years. I taught Fiona and Siobhan during their PETE courses and I am aware of their abilities to work in reflective academic study. Both are articulate and capable of theoretical analyses about teaching in general and of their own teaching. John and I both attended Colleges of Education in Northern Ireland during the 1960s, and in his case, the early 1970s, when child-centred education was strongly advocated. Perhaps because of this, we share concepts and language with regard to teaching post-primary school pupils.

4.3.1 Interviews and observed classes with Fiona, Siobhan and John:
Initially the teachers were met individually, when they talked about their own education, their PETE and their experiences of teaching to date. These interviews were semi-structured to obtain specific information about their life histories. Questions were specifically asked about their memories of their primary and secondary schooling and about any teachers who they thought had strongly influenced them. They were asked about their involvement in activities outside school. The dominant memories of their PETE were recorded with particular interest in how they perceived the primary goals of their courses. Their current concerns about their teaching were explored. I asked them how they organised their programmes, and about their aims for the pupils. They described how they saw their roles within their schools and how they thought Physical Education was regarded in the schools.

Dates were arranged at the start of the school year, when I could observe the teachers meeting a first year class for the first time. John, who joined the project slightly later than the others, followed the same procedures, but as the first classes with his new intake of pupils had already occurred, a later meeting was arranged. Principals' permission was formally obtained after I wrote to them (Appendix two) to explain the nature of the research. The use of a video camera was unproblematic in all three schools. No ethical concerns were raised. The teachers were present throughout. The camcorder was set up and left in position. The tapes supplemented observations and could be used to check their accuracy and completeness.

Siobhan and Fiona, with the permission of their principals, allowed me to observe them teaching a first year class on the first occasion on which they met the class and then on
two more subsequent occasions. John agreed that I observe any or all of his classes (although I wanted only to see first year classes) and generally to feel free to join in. He informed his principal that this research was being undertaken and no objections were raised. I was able to observe classes, to videotape them and afterwards to talk to pupils and teachers about each of the classes. I used a dictaphone to record these interviews. None of the schools streamed first year classes so the groups were all mixed ability and from a range of feeder primary schools. Resulting from this data collection methodology, several voices can be heard. Information from teachers and pupils in the cooperating schools is compared with Fiona, Siobhan and John’s descriptions of their own roles. Shratz (1993) indicates that:

..doing qualitative research is not a matter of simply stringently following a pre-set order of procedural steps but rather listening carefully to the diverse voices in the field and adopting one’s research methodology accordingly.

4.4 Attributes of cooperating schools:
The schools were analysed with regard to their management structures, their size, the nature of their pupils, whether single-sex or co-educational. The regulative discourses of the schools, as described in their Mission Statements, are evaluated (Mission Statements are reproduced in Appendices thirteen fourteen and fifteen). The appearance of the schools in terms of their lay-out and the organisation of the pupils is described. The pupils’ appearance is described as to whether they wear uniforms, whether they look alert and enthusiastic and whether they communicate a sense of purpose. Each of the schools is different in its management structure. Fiona’s school is a community school, Siobhan’s school is an all girls’ secondary school run by Loreto nuns and John’s school is a comprehensive school run by Jesuits. As there is no examination selection procedure for post-primary schools in Ireland, pupils are admitted to these schools on the basis of criteria which have to do with where they live and their siblings’ attendance at the school. I do not have information about the social class of the pupils, except in the case of John’s school where there is a policy to make places available for some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.4.1 Fiona’s school:
Fiona school is a Community School with a Board of Management consisting of the following: the trustees from the Roman Catholic Church and Co. Meath Vocational Education Committee, each having three members, two parents’ representatives, and
two teachers' representatives. It is housed in a modern building which in 2001 accommodated over 1,000 pupils. There are approximately 70 full-time teachers (personal communication 2002). The Department of Education provided six prefabricated buildings for September 1997 and eight additional classrooms for September 1998. The principal is responsible for operating the budget, in conjunction with the Board of Management, which is accountable to the Department of Education. The school website claims its 'Mission Statement' (1996) is 'idealistic and visionary and gives direction to the work of the school'.

This Mission Statement contains six points, framed within a regulative discourse, which Bernstein (2000) describes as relating to the social order and within which the instructional discourse is embedded. Concerns are expressed within this statement about pupils' holistic development. This statement, written by the teachers in the school, is reproduced in Appendix thirteen. The curriculum is described as 'integrated and challenging' although its arrangement takes the form of a Bernsteinian collection.

Teachers' Posts of Responsibility are listed within traditional subject areas. A hierarchical pastoral structure is in place. An 'Internal Organisation statement' indicates that 'the most important person in creating a positive, happy learning environment in the school is the class (subject) teacher,' (edunet.ie ibid. 1996). Each teacher may obtain help within the school if required. The class teacher can refer to the tutor, who can refer to the year head from whom referrals are to the deputy principal and then the principal. There are sanctions available to each teacher at his/her own level within the hierarchy and it is very clear which types of behaviour invite these sanctions. Fiona is a tutor in the school and this gives her particular responsibility for a group of children. The school policy document (1996) states that:

The role of the tutor is mainly a caring one, the tutor is also responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality ... Students meet with their tutor at form class each morning from 8.50 to 9.00 The focus and aim of tutorial contact with students is the personal development of each student. The tutor deals directly with the following aspects of the student's life:

a. Awareness of self, degree of control over one's behaviour, responsibility for oneself now and in the future.

b. Relationships with peers, family, adults etc. (sic) and relationship skills such as friendship, working with others.

c. The developing sense of self, particularly the need to build a healthy confidence and self-esteem.

When students are referred by a subject teacher the tutor meets with the student with a view to resolving difficulties and/or to modify unacceptable student behaviour.
It is acknowledged by the school that the particular role of a tutor requires 'adequate in-service training, support resources and time to review and evaluate with other tutors.' The structures are designed to create a community in which children are genuinely cared for and Fiona feels that her contribution is valued within this system.

4.4.2 Siobhan's school:
Siobhan's school is an all girls' secondary school run by Loreto nuns, with a nun as principal of the school. The school is owned by the religious order and managed by a Board of Management which includes representatives of the trustees, parents and teachers. The school building is old and solidly built with an imposing exterior facing a main road. There are pre-fabs to compensate for lack of space for the 650 pupils on the roll. There are approximately 47 full-time teachers (personal communication, 2002). The school is in Dublin city and caters for a wide range of pupils from different social backgrounds. Inside the school is clean and bright and the principal has a very strong presence in the school. On each occasion that I visited she was supervising pupils arriving or moving between classes. She knew every girl by name and was aware of her individual circumstances. The staff were open and friendly and welcomed me into the staff-room. The Mission Statement (undated) for this school (in Appendix fourteen) reads as an exciting creative document, indicating positive vision within a caring environment. There is a feeling of energetic commitment within the statement including a sentence in the opening paragraph claiming that: 'Our belief in the immense capacity of the human person for learning inspires us to provide a school which offers students a positive educational experience.' This experience is to be promoted by:

- taking up the challenge to:
- Create a stimulating learning environment which
  - cultivates curiosity
  - encourages exploration
  - nurtures creativity
  so that each of our students may have the opportunity to develop the fullness of her academic potential.

This belief in the potential of individuals within a caring community to develop and 'Celebrate a joyful Christian faith that informs the search for personal fulfilment and leads to justice', is likely to be a factor in creating the social atmosphere in Siobhan's

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21 This refers to a denominational post-primary school (> 60% of Irish post-primary schools).
school. The two Physical Education teachers have a room in which they keep equipment, books and papers. There are lists and time-tables on the walls indicating meticulous organisation. The girls have a uniform which is worn neatly and without obvious personal customising. The communication in the corridors is relaxed and pupils’ movement is brisk and purposeful. I felt welcome in the school as there was a genuine attempt to accommodate my requests. The principal was enthusiastic about the Physical Education teachers’ role. All the staff appear to feel confident in talking to an interested outsider and respected each other’s points of view.

4.4.3 John’s school:
John works in a comprehensive school with religious management. It is a coeducational comprehensive school with 950 pupils in 1998 and was previously an all-boys’ school. The school has a priests’ house attached. Since this school was set up in 1968, all the school’s principal teachers have been members of the religious order of the Society of Jesus, known as Jesuits, until the first lay principal was appointed in 1999. There are approximately 60 full-time teachers (personal communication, 2002). The setting up of comprehensive schools in Ireland is described by Barry (1989) as involving a break from the system in which secondary (sic) schools were managed locally without overt political involvement and retained high social regard. The Boards of Comprehensive Schools consist of a representative of either the local Catholic or Protestant bishop in line with the denomination of the majority of the pupils in the school; a representative of the Vocational Education Committee and a representative of the Minister for Education. John’s school charter commits it to admitting eighty-per-cent boys and twenty per-cent girls and there is an explicit commitment to including a range of abilities in the intake. This gender ratio was reflected in the class I watched. Perhaps because the school is co-educational - other post-primary schools in the city are predominantly single sex - or because of its superior facilities for sport and for other aspects of the curriculum, there is a high demand for places in the school, much greater than the capacity to provide them. The school Mission Statement (1994) (see Appendix fifteen) opens with a statement that the school ‘Incorporates the characteristics of Jesuit education’.

The centrality of religion within the school is evident in this Mission Statement which describes teachers, parents and pupils involved in ‘working together to identify an openness to religious, moral, social, intellectual, cultural, and physical experience and to the word of God in all its dimensions.'
During the period of data gathering, there were three PE teachers: two men teaching only PE and a third, female PE teacher who also taught other subjects. Several other teachers help with games coaching. Specialist teachers and coaches are employed when the school cannot provide necessary expertise. There is a well-developed activity-based programme in the school. Every child follows the same programme with a wide range of activities including dance, gymnastics, games, aquatics, and a compulsory outdoor pursuits residential experience for every child, each year. The school principal is supportive of the programme within the school, and appreciative of the efforts of the teachers, although he did not support the acquisition of an Astro-turf hockey pitch - a decision which divided the Physical Education department. Because John's school is larger than Siobhan's with a separate building for the Physical Education department I did not meet the other staff with the same ease as I did in Siobhan's school.
CHAPTER 5: PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES IN IRISH PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This chapter firstly examines attitudes to Physical Education in Ireland based on analysis of data gathered following procedures described in Chapter Four. Data explored in this chapter allow more detailed prediction of the likely effect on the selected three teachers if the planned syllabus changes occur. These data allow me to examine my understandings of how Physical Education can be taught within a regulative discourse which I have systematically evolved over thirty years of practice. In order to illustrate the wider significance of my selected discourse in finding answers to the four key questions (identified in Chapter 1), attitudes, values and understandings of others involved in Physical Education teaching in various roles are reviewed.

5.0 Context for Irish Physical Education:
This analysis draws on an understanding of Irish society (described in Chapter 1) and explores ways in which theory which indicates how education is socially and temporally situated. Bernstein’s (1990, 1996, 2000) theory of the social construction of pedagogic discourse provides a framework within which curriculum development may be analysed.

5.0.1 Commodification of Physical Education:
Kirk and Macdonald (2000) describe how in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, PETE has changed over time in ways similar to those experienced in Ireland. Evidence presented within this chapter supports a contention that what Evans and Davies (1997, p.195) refer to as the ‘instrumentalism of the new right’ appears within policies and practices in Irish Physical Education. Concern for measurable outcomes, particularly in State examinations, suggests the commodification of education. The Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) in October 2000 averred that ‘human “capital” is now as critical as any other form of capital for economic growth’.
Ball (1990a) indicates how within education in contemporary Britain, measurable outcomes are by far the most valued goals. Data gathered within this study lend weight to the contention that Irish Physical Education teachers are encouraged to be involved in content-based, teacher-centred teaching. Even when teachers' concerns focus explicitly on aspects of children’s welfare, they employ pedagogies which do not require critical thinking from their pupils. The nature of education in Ireland tends to favour formal
relationships between teachers and pupils in which pupils' roles are typically subservient. Lynch (1989, p. 32) writes that the 'doctrine of adolescent inferiority dictates the pattern of teacher-pupil relations in general'.

5.0.2 Focus in NCCA PE syllabuses:
Bernstein's (1990, p. 213) matrix, reproduced in Appendix twelve, shows the polarities of transmission and acquisition, bisected by a line running between inter-group and intra-individual social relations. Defining characteristics of the NCCA Draft Physical Education Syllabuses (General Introduction, 2001 in Appendix 17) place them in the quadrant defined by 'transmission' and 'interpersonal relations', in which behavioural objectives are employed as the basis for planning teaching. When the pursuit of health is described as a personal responsibility the emphasis is on intra-personal behaviour, a position assuming a shared continuum of development among learners. Theory from developmental psychology illuminates dominant influences on Irish education, (Drudy and Lynch, 1993) especially an emphasis on individual responsibility.

5.1 The proposed new Physical Education syllabuses – analysis of implied discourse:
The Draft New Syllabuses for Physical Education (2000) reflect a planning process which assumes a shared regulative discourse among the teachers implementing this syllabus. The 'General Introduction' includes the following statement:

**Overall Aim of Physical Education**
Physical Education contributes to the preparation of the student for a life of autonomous well-being. This aim will be pursued through the

- enhancement of the students' sense of self through the development of skillful and creative performance of practical activities.
- development of the students' understanding of physical activity and awareness of the links between physical activity and other curriculum areas
- motivation of the student to choose a lifestyle that is active, healthy and meaningful
- the personal enrichment of the student by developing personal and social skills and encouraging positive attitudes and values in her/his interaction with others.

There is no direct guidance as to how this aim should link with the content set out in the syllabus. Individual teachers can decide whether to pursue these aims or whether to teach the content while following their own goals. As the content of the syllabus is written in detail, it is possible for teachers to implement the NCCA text without considering the
syllabus aims. The Draft syllabus has been circulated widely inviting criticisms and suggestions. The extent to which such criticisms and suggestions may be reflected in the final wording is as yet not known. Whether the PETE course in the University of Limerick will function as an Official Recontextualising Field (Bernstein, 2000, p. 33) will to a large degree reflect attitudes of tutors working on the programme.

5.1.1 Interviews with the Education Officer of the NCCA Physical Education Course Committee and the Physical Education Inspectors:
The Education Officer for the NCCA PE Course Committee outlined in a semi-formal interview how he was very reflective about both the current and potential roles of Physical Education in Ireland. He claimed that: ‘It is important that a properly structured programme for Physical Education is made available to every teacher. Children are very often coming out of schools with limited experience of Physical Education.’ His views are informed by reading about what is taught in Physical Education programmes elsewhere. He is clear about how he sees the subject developing within the Irish context. He describes a structured approach which is consistent within documents produced by the NCCA. The value which he ascribes to certification supports a quest for external status for the subject. The structured approach is consistent with providing a common syllabus for all schools. Two current Physical Education Inspectors to whom I spoke are similarly committed to providing a structure within which Physical Education teachers can pursue shared goals. Both inspectors claim that social and personal development of pupils is their central concern. Criticism was levelled at the PETE programme in the University of Limerick by the Education Officer of the NCCA PE Course Committee because he perceived graduates to be unclear about how best to teach their pupils. This he described as being a product of too many varied inputs. He believes that there is no shared view about Physical Education among Limerick PETE tutors on the nature and purpose of Physical Education teaching, which he sees as an undesirable state of affairs. Apparently students are not seen as being capable of deciding on their preferred discourse. The benefits of having a range of opinions about teaching Physical Education are discounted.

5.2 Analysis of questionnaire responses:
Questionnaire responses are considered to inform an analysis of trends in Physical Education in contemporary Irish education. This is then placed within a wider
examination of the likely effects of change in contemporary Irish society on the nature and provision of Physical Education.

5.2.1 Questionnaire responses from University of Limerick tutors involved in Physical Education Teacher Education:

Questionnaires circulated to tutors directly involved in PETE in the University of Limerick were designed to reveal perceptions regarding the place of Physical Education in schools and within the university department. Answers help establish how tutors see Physical Education. Tutors' responses differ widely, indicating that some perceive the subject as a medium for personal education, while others regard it as a canon of factual content to be transmitted efficiently. Questions also sought responses concerning aspects of the functioning of the Physical Education and Sport Sciences Department. Responses, displayed in Fig. 5.1, again show widely differing views. Data are presented in a form which facilitates the representation of very diverse perceptions. Observations obtained less formally, for example in unstructured interviews, allow reflective consideration of individual respondent's positions. It is acknowledged that questionnaires are necessarily limited in scope and may encourage over-simplistic responses, but are considered here to provide valuable data, especially when augmented by observation gained through interviews.

![Fig 5.1 Diversity in responses to questionnaire by 6 University of Limerick PETE Tutors](image)

(1 = agree completely and 5 = disagree completely)

**Fig 5.1 Diversity in responses to questionnaire by 6 University of Limerick PETE Tutors**

n=6
Tutors were asked to agree/disagree with a range of statements concerning the nature of Physical Education and how it should be taught on a 5 point scale (1=agree completely, 5=disagree completely). The codes on the right side axis represent the following: 

- **Objs** – are PE teachers encouraged to plan using behavioural objectives
- **Collab** – do tutors collaborate with colleagues
- **Neutral** – are ‘neutrality, objectivity and precision’ desirable qualities
- **Moraldev** – level of moral development expected from students
- **Sportpe** – are sport and PE ‘inextricably tied up’
- **Powers** – is Irish PE controlled by ‘powers that be’
- **Diffsul** – are there different ideologies among PE tutors
- **Socprobs** – does PE have a social and personal role
- **Exams** – would state examinations improve the status of PE
- **Integrat** – should boundaries between PE and other subjects be softened

The following is an analysis of responses to individual questions. The first question asked whether or not Physical Education teachers are encouraged to plan by using behavioural objectives, and responses indicate that there is no consensus among tutors about this. The response rankings (5,1,5,2,2,3) indicate the existence of two groups, only one of which values behavioural objectives.

The second question asked if tutors collaborated in their teaching. The response was unclear and in discussions it emerged that collaboration is restricted to tutors sharing the teaching of a module.

A quote from Kirk’s (1993) article about planning by objectives asked tutors to indicate whether ‘neutrality, objectivity and precision’ are desirable qualities in a professional person. More agreed than disagreed (answers ranged from rankings 1 to 3). Two tutors noted that they valued objectivity and precision more than neutrality, consistent with objectives based teaching. The responses (rankings 1,1,1,2,2,3,nr) indicated a measure of consistent agreement with this statement.

The next question invited tutors to indicate the level at which they expect their students to perform, with regard to Kohlberg’s stages of moral development (See Appendix ten). The higher the level of agreement with the statement, the higher the level of moral behaviour expected from students, in Kohlberg’s terms. Responses (rankings 1,1,1,1,4,2,) indicated general agreement that students should operate at the highest
level. One tutor records a response of ‘4’ which perhaps indicated a desire for compliance from students.

The next question asked whether sport and PE are ‘inextricably tied up’. No agreement emerged in responses (rankings 5,1,1,2,4,5).

Tutors were asked if they thought that Irish PE was controlled by ‘powers that be’, defined in Margaret Talbot’s (1998, p. 105) terms as ‘key-drivers, leaders, stakeholders and gatekeepers’. There was no agreement about this although most seem to support the idea that there were controlling forces (rankings 1,3,1,1,5,2).

As indicated earlier, the question which produced the strongest consensus refers to whether there were different ideological positions held by members of the Physical Education Department, as all respondents responded positively. Tutors were asked if they saw Physical Education as having a social and personal role, indicated by whether they thought social problems existed inside the classroom as opposed to remaining outside it. There was no agreement about this; some saw teachers as being detached from day-to-day concerns about pupils’ welfare outside the classroom. (1,5,5,5,4,1)

Responses to the question about whether State examinations in Physical Education would improve the subject’s status indicated a yes-to-neutral opinion (rankings 4,1,1,3,3,2). On the question of whether tutors thought that boundaries between Physical Education and other subjects should be softened, tutors responded ‘Yes’, ‘No’, and ‘Don’t know’ in equal proportions (1,2,1,3,3,1).

The questionnaires elicited responses which indicated that there was no shared concept of the role and purpose of Physical Education among this influential group. Within the University of Limerick PETE tutors did not involve themselves in regular structured debate about curriculum issues. The view was expressed during an interview that there exists no shared set of concepts within which ideas can be debated. One tutor described how a policy of ‘live and let live’ ensured minimum friction among colleagues. Integration of ideas or softening of boundaries is left to the students.

Teachers’ professional identity is a central focus of this study. The extent to which PETE tutors believe themselves to be repositories of knowledge, which they will then pass on to their students who will, in turn, teach it to their pupils, indicates the extent to which teaching is seen as a professional endeavour, carried out by autonomous decision-makers. When PETE is conducted in a way consistent with Bernstein’s (2000) description of ‘performance’ as opposed to ‘competence’, teachers’ autonomy is less assured. The role of the university department in defining how its graduates will be
perceived, ties in with questions about how the subject is perceived, and how the profession of teaching is regarded. Currently Physical Education is regarded differently from other school subjects, because it is not examined within the certificate examinations. A majority of tutors are convinced that if Physical Education were examined within the State examinations the subject would become important with more teachers employed and better programmes taught in schools (internal minutes of PESS Department meetings). However there are at least two tutors who are undecided about the potential effects of introducing a certificated examination in Physical Education.

The 'Mission Statement' of the University involves the pursuit of 'excellence and relevance'. The preamble to the PETE course outline includes the following aim: 'To enable students to become reflective teachers, who will provide educationally worthwhile learning experiences for children in secondary schools.'

Analysis of the written course descriptions offers few clues as to how this aim will be achieved. Tutors' preferred pedagogical discourses indicate a range of particular ways of thinking about teaching and assumptions about roles of teacher and learner. All Physical Education tutors are involved in PETE and not only do they provide models for their students' practice, consciously or not, but they are also concerned with defining good practice, particularly in their roles as Teaching Practice supervisors. Teaching Practice is also supervised by part-time staff whose views are not available for comparison with the full-time Physical Education tutors. Some of these part-time staff supervisors are not currently involved in school-based Physical Education, making the students' varied experiences even more diverse as their part-time tutors' expectations may be more difficult to ascertain.

5.2.2 Questionnaire responses from fourth year (2000) Physical Education students in the University of Limerick:

These new-comers to the profession have experienced the most recent PETE programme in the University of Limerick. Those graduates who are going to teach immediately are experiencing the effects of 'the Celtic Tiger' in society. Their comparisons with the life chances of graduates from other faculties are undoubtedly relevant in terms of whether they will teach.
Fig. 5.2 Destinations of PETE Graduates (September 2000)  n=27

Fig. 5.3 shows a relationship between those students who enjoyed teaching practice and those who are currently teaching.

Fig.5.3 PETE students at the time of their graduation (Sept. 2000) - attitude to Teaching Practice and whether currently teaching
In Ireland holders of Master's degrees are paid on a higher salary scale, although there is no Department of Education and Science provision for serving teachers to obtain sabbaticals to pursue higher degrees. A combination of these factors may influence graduates' decisions not to teach immediately. The percentage of Physical Education graduates entering teaching (53.8%) does not reflect the vocational nature of their course, see Fig. 5.4. A positive aspect of these responses is the clear link between students who enjoyed their teaching practice and those who are teaching immediately after graduating, see Fig. 5.3 below. Some of these are pursuing Post-graduate courses in areas involving scientific research. Three students indicated that they were researching within aspects of Health and Fitness pursuing MSc degrees.

In December 2000, post-primary school teachers involved in 'industrial action' (sic) hope to advance their claim for a 30% rise in pay. Graduates are aware that their earning potential in the private sector is considerably higher than as teachers starting their careers, particularly when the practice is to employ teachers in a full-time temporary capacity for the first few years, apparently to avoid hiring a poor teacher on a permanent basis and not being able to remove them.

Figures from the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (2000) demonstrate that: 'In 1998 the first destination of qualified teachers included 6.1% to permanent teaching in Ireland and 51.4% part-time temporary or substitute teaching in Ireland.'

Fig. 5.4 below shows the first destination of this group of graduates. Those who are not teaching are in many cases undertaking further study. Some are travelling abroad.
The majority of these graduates (53.8%) are teaching. They are qualified teachers of Physical Education and another subject and, in some cases, they are employed to teach a combination of these. Some of the graduates are teaching no PE. Only two graduates (7.7% of this small sample) are teaching only PE. One graduate is running an Outdoor Pursuits centre so he is involved full-time in the provision of physical activity. The fact that the one full-time PE teacher viewed 'PE as more of a science' when responding to the questionnaire, may have to do with schools looking for someone to coach their teams. It is anecdotally believed that students with a high profile in competitive sport are employed before their less well-known contemporaries. Coaches are expected to use sports science in preparing teams for competition. (Personal communication with Physical Education course co-ordinator who receives requests for graduates as teachers, August 2001). An indication that these students are predominantly disposed to a view that teaching is more an art than a science may indicate that instrumentalism is not all pervasive. A Likert-type question asked for a response where 0 = not at all, through to 5 = completely; 57.7% of respondents ticked 4 or 5 to indicate that teaching is 'more an art' and 15.3% ticked categories 4 and 5 claiming it is 'more a science'. It is recognised that the small sample size means that these data cannot be used to generalise regarding PETE graduates of other years and from other course.

5.2.3 Questionnaire responses from non-Physical Education teachers in Fiona, John and Siobhan's schools:

Teachers (n=61) in the cooperating schools were asked by Fiona, Siobhan and John to complete the questionnaire reproduced in Appendix nine. The teachers showed a high level of concurrence both in their assessment of the place of Physical Education in their schools and in their opinions of how it is currently perceived and valued within the education system. They showed similar positive views with regard to their Physical Education colleagues. Attitudes towards the role of Physical Education were favourable and overwhelmingly supportive of the unique position which Physical Education enjoys. Non-Physical Educations teachers in all three schools described functional outcomes as important for Physical Education programmes. The programmes being taught in their schools did not necessarily reflect their views. Fig. 5.5 below indicates that non-PE teachers in Fiona's school saw skill and fitness as more important than social development or play and fun. In Siobhan's school, an all girls' school, play and fun were
deemed the most important elements. In John's school, skill was the most popular justification among non-PE teachers. Interestingly, while all three Physical Education teachers believed the social component of their programmes to be highly significant, their colleagues' responses, while acknowledging the importance of this aspect, did not indicate this as their central concern.

There was agreement among the non-Physical Education teachers in the three schools about the positive value of Physical Education. All three sets of teachers saw the Physical Education teachers as being central to realising this importance.

5.2.4 Questionnaire responses from pupils in the cooperating schools:
The pupils from the three classes which I observed (n=79) in Fiona's, Siobhan's and John's schools provided data with regard to themselves and their perceptions of the current and potential contribution of Physical Education to their education, in response to the schedule reproduced in Appendix eight. Siobhan's school is an all-girls' school, so, overall the gender balance is weighted towards girls (n=44) with fewer boys (n=27). Some students (n=8) from John's and Fiona's schools did not indicate their gender. Of the girls in the three schools, 14% are in favour of examinations in Physical Education. 84% are opposed, with the 2% remainder recording 'don't know'. Boys indicate that 41% are in favour with 52% against and, again, a small number, 7%, recording 'don't know' replies. Of the eight pupils whose gender was not recorded, more than half were
opposed to examinations with the rest in favour. Pupils' gender is reflected in their responses. In Fiona's co-educational school, 29% of the boys and girls favoured examinations in Physical Education. In Siobhan's all-girls' school, 13% supported the idea of examinations and in John's co-educational school, 33% thought there should be Physical Education examinations. 68% of Fiona's pupils were against examinations. 88% of Siobhan's female pupils did not favour Physical Education examinations and of John's pupils, 59% were opposed to the idea. These data indicate a possible relationship between gender, both pupils' and teachers', and attitudes to the purpose of Physical Education.

Pupils in the three schools are predominantly (71%) opposed to the introduction of examinations in Physical Education. When asked to give a reason for their answer, most who were in favour of examinations gave reasons to do with status for the subject. One pupil wrote: 'It is as important as any other subject.'

The majority feel that while PE is very important it should be enjoyable (not deemed compatible with being examined!) and there is consistent concern about it being unfair to examine pupils in a subject where there is such a wide range of abilities. Issues about embodiment are pertinent here as no concerns about different abilities within more traditional areas of the course are expressed. Concern exists about what should be examined in PE. The idea of examining sporting activities was universally derided as the
pupils saw the fact that these areas are enjoyable as making them different from other examined subjects. Physical fitness, greatly valued among the pupils to whom I spoke, is associated with involvement in Physical Education classes. The pupils' attitudes to examinations in Physical Education reflect the attitudes of their teachers. Several pupils in their responses to the question about examinations described a need for Physical Education to cater for everyone. Overwhelmingly, these pupils were convinced that Physical Education is 'a good thing'. 84% of the pupils 'like PE', while 73% 'enjoy school'.

5.3 The Physical Education curriculum considered by Fiona, Siobhan and John:

Questions about the fundamental nature of Physical Education were raised in conversation with Fiona, John and Siobhan. Questions about choosing activities as a medium for education are alive within the minds of all three teachers, but the NCCA Syllabuses (2000) includes activities for Physical Education- athletics, aquatics, dance, gymnastics, games and outdoor/adventure activities (which concur with those being taught within the National Curriculum in England, Wales and Northern Ireland). The organisation of these activities within the NCCA Syllabuses (2000) is consistent with Bernstein's (1977, p.110) description of a collection code. There is no indication of how activities can be integrated either with each other or with other aspects of the curriculum. Perhaps part of the feeling of 'kinship' among these three teachers results from a feeling that they each select their own activities for their own unique situation rather than accepting content provided from an outside source. The three teachers assess their pupils with regard to their responses to their own programmes as opposed to assessing them within externally provided-criteria. The three teachers describe variously how pupils' perceived needs are met by accommodating the pupil within the social grouping in which they are taught. This is inevitably mediated by the teacher's ability to relate to a particular class. Siobhan relates how a parent talked to her about her daughter's behaviour in school - she was constantly bullying other pupils - and Siobhan made conscious efforts to ensure that the girl's Physical Education classes did not provide opportunities for her to behave this way.

John snorted in derision at the idea of including athletics in his programme. He teaches athletics, but not for all his pupils, and not as a programme of events. Only those pupils who are interested in particular events are taught, as part of an 'options' programme.
Siobhan similarly feels that the competitive nature of athletics activities precludes involvement by everyone, in a way which she feels is desirable:

I am too concerned with pupils developing their self-esteem and ensuring that they do not view their bodies negatively to have them compete within the rigid disciplines of athletics which I believe will produce more failure than success (personal communication with Siobhan, 2000).

Non-traditional approaches to teaching athletics\(^{22}\) are apparently not familiar to these teachers, limiting the scope of their teaching. The complexities of this question are apparent in considering whether the role of the NCCA is to compensate for gaps in Initial Teacher Education. Teachers whose courses are provided as text may have the advantage of receiving imaginative well-researched content but, unfortunately, the rich resource of pupils' imagination is not tapped when the content is too detailed and when it relates directly to the assessment. A distinction between adapting activities for children as opposed to adapting children for activities encapsulates the points raised specifically about athletics, and indirectly about all aspects of the NCCA syllabuses.

In Ireland, there is a long-standing tendency to look elsewhere for credibility (Coakley, 1993, p. 37). As Ireland emerges from a colonial past, the impact of globalisation on the state as described by Tovey and Share (2000, p. 489) 'has heightened our awareness of the modern state's lack of autonomy and competence within a globalising world and its continual struggle to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.'

The NCCA Physical Education syllabuses are very similar in content and format to the NCPE in the United Kingdom. The inclusion of 'learning outcomes' which relate to a recognisable list of strongly classified and framed activities is an example of this globalising process in action.

5.4 Fiona, Siobhan and John's Responses to the NCCA Draft Physical Education Syllabuses, January 2000:

Each of the three teachers read copies of the new syllabuses and each was asked to provide written comment on it, with some suggestions as to what they might comment on. These suggestions are reflected in the responses which the teachers provided. They were also asked if they knew who was on the syllabus committee and who represented

\(^{22}\) For example Jean O'Neill (1999) has written about adapted athletics activities which accommodate a range of pupils' abilities.
them on the committee. This question was included as a result of the Education Officer of the NCCA PE Course Committee telling me that if teachers wanted to be involved in the process, they needed to contact their representative, by which I assumed he meant their union representative or the Physical Education Association of Ireland representative.

5.4.1 Fiona’s response:
Fiona replied immediately and also telephoned to apologise for being so agitated in her written response to my questions. On receiving her response on an answering machine, I telephoned her at school to reassure her that she was not over-reacting and that she had made valid points which concurred with other teachers’ views. Her response is transcribed in full to capture the energy of the writing; only writing in italics is added to the original. Underlining, bullets, numbering and emphases are all Fiona’s:

Joanne,

• NCCA PE committee - vague notions - perhaps
  (A list of six names, one as an afterthought, and ‘you?’, wondering if I was involved. Four of the six names were correct.)

• Who are my reps? Did you mean geographically? (She correctly named a member of the committee, a union representative, who teaches near her).

• Syllabus - JUNIOR CYCLE
  Maybe I have a problem with the whole idea of a syllabus for all schools, rather than developing what your pupils need. I found loads of things that annoyed me - I know I’m supposed to let you know how it would change our syllabus, however I feel it is not so much a difference in content as a difference in focus/Aim. By this I mean I would probably "do" a lot of named areas on the syllabus but in a different way with very different reasons for doing them.
  ~ ○ Too much focus on physical/technical performance stuff! Makes you forget that there is a human being doing it.
  ~ ○ Goals (Aims) objectives cannot be the same for all and cannot all be long term. Pre-specified objectives (for all) cannot meet needs of a student or a class (or teacher) - start with the child, not the objective.
  ~ ○ No scope for process, only product.
  ~ ○ 4 Blocks each year - too long for Junior Cycle. {At in-service we were told minimum 4 blocks which is good}
  ~ ○ Assessment - Suspect - it’s as if they put down all the “cool” ways of assessment just to be "with it". Interaction with someone I think is the best way and also observation from a distance.
  Self assessment - Good
  Peer Assessment - I would be very cautious about this
  ~ ○ Including sport in their PE profile???
  ~ ○ O.Ed - content useful
Aquatics - N/A as we don’t have a pool - Benefit of Aquafit at Junior Cycle questionable.
Athletics - shouldn’t it all be enjoyable not just fun relays?
Dance - Haven’t taught enough of this to comment.
Gym - Quality focus and relationships good - usually my main focus (foci?) thro’ content.
HRF - Benefits? More suitable @ Senior Cycle.
Games
No scope for unnamed activities which I do lots of in first year especially and also 2nd/3rd. Games making good. General Games Education - I assume in the one line given is an attempt to allow variation from the norm.
No context really given - just skills with knowledge about skills. Attitudes about activity not about people - life etc.

- Enjoyment
- Cooperation
- Keeping/ negotiating rules etc.
- Development of confidence - not. just thro’ Physical/technical
- Not really included and I consider it a big part of PE competence but interaction etc.
- Taking initiative
- Development of confidence etc.

SENIOR CYCLE - V. Confused and confusing

Different pen - written on the back of the preceding, pp..

Joanne,
I attended an in-service course yesterday in the ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland) HQ. I don’t know where to begin on it.
I feel Leaving Cert. Exam PE is being rushed in, in case we never get the opportunity again. Instead of being worthwhile for its own sake it seems to be just to raise the credibility of PE (from what I could gather yesterday). I don’t think there is any point in doing something badly - it should be done properly or not at all. Very little consultation has taken place with the people on the ground. An approach which is bottom -> up and not top -> down might work better.
Senior/ Leaving Cert. PE at present I wouldn’t do either as they are laid out.
Junior Cycle I would take some aspects of this but not all. Structure of content is limiting - what about ball games in the pool?, etc.
I am very confused at present with all this - hopefully I’ll be clearer as time goes on - hope this of some use to you and is legible - Take care Fiona

5.4.2 Siobhan’s response:
Siobhan sent an email with her reactions to the new syllabus. She has already taught ‘Leisure and Recreation’ on the Applied Leaving Certificate course and believes that she can successfully adapt the course to suit her own style of teaching as well as ensuring that her pupils ‘will meet’ the assessment criteria. The relevant parts of her response are included in full:

Hi,
I had a look at the syllabus and to be honest I don’t find it at all threatening. If it comes to having to implement the programme I think it will be very easy to adapt it into my own programme. There are problematic
areas, the logistics in terms of space and time mean the non-exam P.E classes (will there be such a thing) will suffer greatly. Similarly their notion of assessment is farcical if you consider that at any time teachers who are polar opposites will be grading their students (for a clearer picture imagine yourself and “grading the same students”) using completely different criteria. Personally I don’t see that as a fault. It actually allows me to teach as I want to teach and to assess individual students according to their strengths and weaknesses. It does however show the syllabus to be very much a cosmetic exercise. Having been through the implementation of the L.C.A* leisure and recreation programme I have no doubt that the flexibility in assessment techniques will allow me to carry on as normal (with a little more paperwork). The knowledge and concepts stated seem like an effort to intellectualise aspects of P.E, perhaps to aid the great “status of the subject” debate. Within the areas outlined I can see the theory base (particularly at senior cycle) alienating weaker students irrespective of physical capabilities.

In response to your other questions I don’t know who the members of the N.C.C.A are. I have not contacted or been contacted by them. Keep in touch. I hope this answers your questions. Siobhan

*Leaving Certificate Applied

5.4.3 John’s response:

John telephoned me in Early March 2000 with his response to the new syllabuses and apologised for not having been in touch sooner - he had been in hospital for minor surgery. Like Fiona, he was very concerned that these syllabuses, ‘were not written with children and their problems in mind. Whoever wrote this is only thinking about activities and not about the children I teach.’ (John, early March 2000)

John saw no future for himself within the new structures where children would follow a prescribed programme with the possibility of taking certificated examinations at the end of the junior cycle and at the end of the senior cycle. He intends to take early retirement as the subject that he loves and the job that he really enjoys doing are, in his view, being eroded. He read an article in the Irish Times (6.3.2000) about Department of Education and Science plans to have Physical Education as a subject in the Leaving Certificate Examination. The thrust of the article was about the examination of sport and the value of Sports Science graduates in teaching this programme. John, whose career has been in Physical Education, was horrified. John explained that children in his school who experience problems in Physical Education are dealt with by caring teachers on a personal level. The introduction of another layer of bureaucracy is unlikely, in John’s opinion, to do other than exacerbate the problems. John has real concerns about a drug culture among young rugby players who take supplements which they believe build up their strength. John believes that they are inducted into a system where hard work on its
own is not perceived to be enough to achieve success. This highly competitive sports environment is not concomitant with John's view of activity which is not restricted to organised sport. All pupils in John's school take part in Dance and in Outdoor/Adventure activity. If external assessment is introduced he is aware that already successful pupils will be doubly rewarded for what, in many cases, is predominantly natural talent and not necessarily the result of focused effort. In John's school, a culture of strong pupils helping weaker pupils has been developed in Physical Education and within a move towards a system which identifies extrinsic rewards for involvement in Physical Education, this culture no longer has the same justification.

The following story provides an example of the culture of care which John espouses. A blind boy in John's school is receiving swimming lessons from a Physical Education student from the University of Limerick. John has been taking this boy for sessions on the university climbing wall. While John and I and the PE student were talking about the possibilities of this boy learning to dive, it became clear that the education process in which he is involved is more subtle than any impersonal examination can identify. The boy is unwilling to have other pupils attending his 'special sessions', and John was aware of the need for his social development to keep pace with his physical achievement. Personal development dimensions, glaringly evident to John in considering this blind boy's Physical Education, are concerns which John relates to all his pupils. He feels that his expertise in identifying and meeting particular pupils' needs is being undermined if someone else undertakes his planning without taking into account all the factors which he can identify and include. He does not believe that his pedagogic skills are valued within the new syllabus which takes a homogenous view of pupils, and depends on extrinsic achievements to record successes. John is aware of members of the syllabus committee with whom he has disagreed in the past and whose opinions he does not value.

In November 2000, John attended a meeting about the new syllabus and he reported that there was quite a large attendance but that he believes that: 'no-one there understands those things that I value in my teaching, for example, the development of attitudes and values in pupils.' (John, November 2000)

He explained to me that he writes a subjective comment about each pupil at the end of a course of lessons but does not assess measurable outcomes. He thinks that it is very important to identify aims for his teaching and at the end of a lesson to reflect about whether and how he is achieving them. This process of reflection is for him the important
assessment of his teaching. His view of assessment is consistent with Bernstein's (2000) 'theory of reading' within a competence model of pedagogy whereby: 'the meaning of an acquirer's signs is not available to the acquirer, only to the teacher.'

5.4.4 **Summary of the three teachers’ responses:**
Each of these teachers interprets the draft syllabuses differently. Fiona resists the idea of a common curriculum and rejects the aims and goals which she identifies within the NCCA draft syllabuses. Her strong concern for the children she teaches as unique individuals is central to her analysis. Fiona is already working hard to situate her practice appropriately and she resents being asked to change what is working for her which, she believes, has educational value. Her analysis is informed, indicating an understanding of the political nature of the process as well as its implications for her own practice.

John has similar concerns that the central thrust of his teaching is not in the direction favoured by the writers of the new programme. John is not interested in changing from what he believes is good practice to a syllabus which he does not think is relevant for his pupils. Nothing which John has read from the NCCA policy has allayed his concerns. He is deeply concerned about the implications of change.

Siobhan is more pragmatic in her response. Of the three she is probably best informed about the process of working to a syllabus having already taught a Leaving Certificate course. Siobhan sees that she can still retain control of her teaching. Her analysis of the reasons for the exercise indicates that she feels in control of her own situation.

5.5 **Classes observed being taught by the three teachers:**
I had the opportunity to speak briefly with each of the teachers before their classes and each of them was keen to ensure that I realised that they would be introducing their course and laying down ground rules. Siobhan was involving the girls in 'mini-games.' Fiona was starting a gymnastics programme. John was teaching gymnastics, his first indoor lesson with this group. In each case, the teacher taught the class as a unit and spoke to individuals quietly without drawing the attention of the rest of the class to the exchange. The recordings are scrutinised in terms of the organisational strategies which are used along with the dominant discourses which are in evidence. Conversations with both pupils and teachers were recorded allowing a reviewing process to clarify perceptions relating to the classes. These recordings are not transcribed as their content is not being formally analysed. Along with notes taken during the classes the recordings
are valuable aides-memoires. Quotes are taken from the recordings and the lessons where their use helps to clarify a point.

Early September 1998
The videotaped classes were used to refresh memories about notes made during the classes, as were some short recordings on a Dictaphone. The notes were about teacher instructions and how the pupils responded, particularly about how pupils were encouraged to work. A narrative description of the classes is provided later in this chapter. Both Fiona’s and Siobhan’s classes involved a first teaching encounter between the teacher and a first year class. In each case, the teacher had already been introduced to the pupils in their own form room and some of the children had visited the school during the previous school year during an open-night when prospective pupils could ‘come for a look’. In both classes observed, the teachers knew brothers or sisters of the children in her class. This knowledge gave the teacher very obvious credibility with the younger sibling. At the start of both classes the teachers introduced me to the pupils and I explained that I was interested in looking at how a teacher and pupils got to know each other on a first encounter and that the video recorder was primarily focused on the teacher and that it would not be on television at any stage (in response to questions from both groups of pupils). I invited anyone who was interested to come at the end of the class and talk to me about what they thought had gone on. There were volunteers at the start of both classes who were told to come at the end if they were still keen to ask questions.

5.5.1 Fiona’s observed classes:
Fiona’s introductory class was in gymnastics. Like Siobhan she had as her aim that the children and she would get to know each other. She had a co-educational group and the children divided themselves by gender throughout. Fiona began by telling them not to wear jewellery during class and she explained to them what ‘uniform’ was required for PE. Most of the boys were wearing shirts associated with English Premiership soccer teams, predominantly Liverpool and Manchester United, which surprised me because the school is in a county which won the ‘All-Ireland’ Gaelic football championships in 1997 (less than a full year ago so they were reigning champions when I saw the class) and I would have expected to see County Meath shirts supporting the Gaelic Athletic Association in evidence.
In her introduction to the class Fiona told her pupils that they would be doing gymnastics for five weeks and there was a bit of a negative response. She then exhorted them to 'Give it a go' and there was a positive response to this suggestion. The teaching was exclusively transmission-based although the tasks given were progressively less teacher-defined. In the early stages of the class, the pupils were moving in a self-conscious way with a great deal of touching against each other, boys pushing each other and girls tapping each other with their hands. When Fiona pointed out the contact, the pupils giggled in an embarrassed way. There was no apparent difference in kind between boys' behaviour and girls' behaviour at this stage although the boys exhibited a more strongly physical interaction towards each other, as described above. There was a high level of energy and a low level of control and Fiona spoke in carefully measured tones, not becoming angry or upset and always trying to make sense of the situation for the pupils. At one stage she told the pupils to 'keep in control', a frequently referred-to requirement, and not to touch anyone else, and when a boy fell down unexpectedly she stopped the class and said that one or both of her conditions must have been ignored i.e., either he had lost control and fallen, or he must have been in contact with someone else. There was a high level of self-conscious behaviour in the early stages of the class with everyone watching to see how everyone else behaved. Fiona used three children to demonstrate and they all performed carefully. She insisted that their peers watch with care and when they were asked whether they would like people shouting at them if they were demonstrating, the majority of the class agreed that they would not. Fiona then declared that this was agreed class policy and that demonstrations were to be watched sensitively. When the class was asked questions, only boys replied; no girls answered questions put to the whole class. At least three boys had high profiles for the whole time and were keen to be noticed. Danny was delighted when Fiona asked him his name and recognised his surname. She knew his brother and that seemed to please Danny a great deal. After Fiona said she was from Cork, in response to a remark about how she pronounced the word 'roll', Steven asked her whereabouts in Cork she came from:

Steven 'What's your name?'
Fiona 'My name?'
Steven 'Yeah'
Fiona 'Daly'
Steven 'Ms. Daly?'
Fiona 'Yes'
Steven 'What part of Cork are you from, West Cork?'  
Fiona 'Yes'  
Steven 'D'ye know Castletownbere?'  
Fiona 'Yes I'm from near there.'  
Steven 'I go there on my holidays.'

During this conversation the pupils were working on tasks involving 'rolling' and 'balancing', and there was a vagueness about the tasking which made it rather complicated to understand. Several actions were outlawed as not being safe; so while rolling was required, forward rolls and backward rolls were not allowed. Handstands and cartwheels were also banned. Fiona delivered a talk about everyone having to stay at the same standard 'to keep it safe' and this seemed to be accepted as an acceptable reason for the sanctions. She demonstrated the need for 'tension' in the movements by showing first a controlled movement into a roll and then a less controlled one and the pupils were asked to describe the difference. They were quite clear about the difference and they attempted to introduce 'tension and control' into their own movements. There was no clearly defined purpose to the tasks and the children were complying out of good will rather than because of a sense of purpose.

The class moved on to a task where the children had to 'Line up in alphabetical order by first name.' Two or three boys opted out of this task and there was no teacher intervention. The teacher said, 'This will help you learn each other's names.'

When this task was completed the children said their names while in the line and the teacher sorted out one mistake in the placing. She then asked them to make the word 'Sycamore', the class name, on the floor with their bodies. This seemed to me to be a task of mammoth proportions but they apparently organised themselves by invisible communication and almost successfully completed the task. One boy placed himself as a full-stop at the outset and let the rest get on with it. One letter was left out but considering the enormity of the task this was a small omission.

At the end of the class a group of boys came to where I was videotaping and said, 'She's a great teacher, she should pass.' I said, 'It's not about that.' 'Then she should fail', said a wit but the rest weighed in strongly and said 'She's a great teacher, she's brilliant' and so on. I asked them what they thought the class was about and they said 'Physical Education, you have to have it so you can be fit when you're old'. 'What about now?' I asked. 'I'm fit', said Steven, 'look at my muscles' (flexing his pre-pubescent biceps).
These lively pupils provided Fiona with quite a challenge when they took out and put away the equipment. She was able to give them a brand new mat each and they were not as careful in handling them as she would have liked. She persevered and the children got the idea that she was serious about minding the equipment.

Fiona had high expectations of student cooperation. The atmosphere was one of subdued excitement and there was a high level of compliance. Good-will was evident in the class.

The content was not easy to put in a broader context. As in Siobhan’s class there was very little specific teaching of content. Both of these teachers were primarily concerned about involving the pupils in activity and their reasons seem to focus on the interpersonal and social aspects of the experiences. This first encounter helped to establish a basis on which classes would take place in the future.

**Second observed class Fiona, October 1998:**

Fiona’s second observed class took place in an enormous sports-hall attached to the school. On the day I was there, 29th October 1998, there was a bucket underneath a leak in the roof which was soaking the floor (not just the bucket). Fiona told me that this was the ‘real world’ which I took to mean that even in such a super big space there were unforeseen hazards (not unknown within the ‘real world’ of university Physical Education). She placed cones around the area which was wet, before the pupils arrived.

The pupils arrived with great enthusiasm and they were gathered around for a roll call and a briefing about the purpose of the class. The roll was called, using only first names. Fiona told them that the floor was wet in the area where the leak was landing and that the area around the cones should be avoided. The class was called ‘Minor Games’ which Fiona told them was, ‘Lots of different stuff’. They started with a game of chasing and there was a condition that when you were touched you turned through 360 degrees, then you were ‘on’ and the person who caught you was free. It was very lively and the pupils were focused on what they were doing. There was no sign of any gender bias.

In the first game the pupils had to get into circles which they did briskly. Again, there was no sign at all of any gender division. In one group a skilful boy treated the rest of his group to a display of basketball juggling while the rest of the groups were getting organised. This boy’s group and himself, were very pleased with his performance.
The first game was introduced in a ‘Look and copy the teacher’ mode and the pupils were very compliant - they worked hard although their skill level was not generally high. In a passing game which followed, the boys in the group were playing with the girls by looking away as they passed the ball and passing to someone with whom they had no eye contact - all in very good humour and apparently entertaining and acceptable to all including Fiona. This adaptation of the teacher’s game allowed the pupils’ good humour to mask their lack of stylised skill. The final stage of the class involved several small games in which the aim was to shoot into the basketball ring after a pre-requisite number of passes. The games were largely self-regulating with Fiona’s role ensuring that everyone was taking part. There was clear evidence of pupils enforcing the rules of the games as they perceived them and there was general acceptance of the need for order without any aggressive behaviour.

During the final game phase of the class, two girls were injured. One went over on her ankle and seemed to have strained it. She went off with a non-active participant and they procured some ice to hold against it - Fiona was in evidence taking care of this and putting in place the opportunity for a review if the ankle was still sore after the lunch break which came immediately after this class. The other injury involved a girl who banged her finger(s?) against a basketball. She also received ice treatment and she seemed to recover before the class was over.

**January:**

I was to have watched Fiona teaching on the 19\textsuperscript{th} January 1999 but she telephoned to let me know that she had a chest infection and that she was on the first course of antibiotics of her life. She went to considerable trouble to track me down and it is a measure of the support of these teachers that she made such an effort.

**Mid-March:**

I next saw Fiona in Mid-March, again teaching ‘Sycamore’. I arrived in time to talk about the class beforehand and Fiona was aware that the social climate in the class had changed somewhat because two boys from another first year class who had been put into Sycamore were not willing to go along with the prevailing atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill which Fiona values so much. Neither of the new boys was taking part in the class, a games class with badminton equipment but only vaguely associated with Badminton. A net ran the whole length of the hall. After a roll call and a chasing
introductory activity, the pupils hit the shuttlecock across the net counting the number of consecutive hits. Fiona then gave them the task of challenging themselves, providing some suggestions some of which were taken up; for example one pair played sitting down, one pair used soccer juggling skills with the shuttlecock before hitting it, others hit, sat down and jumped up to hit again. A large girl laughed almost constantly as she and her partner tried to hit, turn around, and hit again - with only limited success. Fiona was quite clear that she did not want to teach specific Badminton skills unless a pupil asked her to - and then only to the person who asked. The atmosphere in the class was lively and friendly apart from the two newcomers who went out of their way to try to disrupt and were frustrated by the lack of support from the participating pupils, apart from one girl who was attracted to the two boys sitting out at the side. She was sexually provocative towards them, making sexually explicit gestures with the badminton racket encouraged by the boys. The rest of the class did not become at all involved in this activity and played contentedly.

Fiona was much happier with this class than with the last. She had been away from school on an Outdoor Pursuits course and the break had given her fresh energy. She was in good form and the half-term break coming up the week after my visit allowed her to look forward to a rest. She now knows the children in this class very well and we were able to talk about individuals with her contributing in an informed way. Daniel is an extrovert character in the class and she was pleased that he had focused as well as he had during the class I watched. I am interested on reflection to note that I know the names of about five boys in the class, but no girls. I must examine why this is so.

5.5.2 Siobhan's observed classes:

September:
In Siobhan's first class with this group she started by calling a roll and matching each name with a child's face. At this point she was able to say to one girl 'Have you got a twin sister?' and when the girl agreed that she had, the teacher checked the twin's name and this girl's name. She asked another girl if she was Deirdre's sister and the girl smiled shyly and said she was - obviously pleased to be recognised. After the roll call, Siobhan laid down some ground rules regarding uniform for Physical Education classes and she picked one girl to show the rest what they were to wear - a green track suit bottom and a white polo shirt and the grey sweat-shirt with the school logo. Siobhan was herself wearing a green track suit bottom and a white polo shirt and was distinguishable from
the girls only by her positioning and movement around the room. She explained to the girls that if anyone had difficulty in acquiring the PE uniform that they were to see her in the PE office and she told them where that was. After the uniform was discussed, Siobhan explained that spray deodorant was not allowed in the changing-room because of the unpleasant effect it had on the atmosphere in a small space. She asked for any questions regarding PE and one girl asked if they would be ‘doing’ basketball. Siobhan explained that they worked in ‘four or five week blocks’ and that they would be doing basketball. ‘It means’, she said, ‘that if there’s something you don’t like, you only have to put up with it for a while because we’re always changing the activity.’

The class then went into a structured activity the purpose of which, it was explained, was to get to know each other. The girls were given pieces of paper on which were written eight phrases in separate boxes. These items included ‘Has been to Spain/ Doesn’t drink tea/ Plays a musical instrument/ Has size 6 feet/ Has two brothers/ Likes “the Verve”, and so on. There were two distinct sheets making sixteen items being pursued. Siobhan asked them ‘Do you all know each other?’, and they said things like ‘Most people’, and ‘not everyone’. She then said ‘This will give you a chance to meet different people and find out a bit about each other.’ When they had finished this they were asked to spread out over the floor of the hall which is small and narrow but beautifully panelled in wood with a sprung floor. They then played a game of ‘port and starboard’ which is simply a command/response activity with the teacher calling out commands from a choice of six and the pupils responding instantly to the command given. The three or four girls who had forgotten to bring their change of clothes were given tasks which were alternatively policing the compliance of the girls and watching for safety points such as that they did not run against stacked gymnastics boxes. The class then moved on to a cooperative game in which they formed a circle and each person had to sit on the lap of the person behind her. This involved quite difficult balance and timing and the circle collapsed twice before they were able to control the final position for several seconds. Siobhan’s role in this was controlling and encouraging and she put her hand on girls’ shoulders several times to stop excited reactions or to calm down the person involved. She used this touch several times while she was teaching to move someone into a position or to keep someone from moving off too soon. The next activity was a chasing game where there were two catchers who caught the rest and, when caught, they had to stand feet astride until another pupil crawled through their legs to free them. This generated a great deal of action and the pupils were enthusiastic about the game. It was
always controlled, with no wild shouting or uncontrolled charging around. Next Siobhan put the pupils into groups and she demonstrated with one of the groups how they could hold hands and create a tangle of arms. They did this and they then had to untangle themselves. The demonstrating group finished quite quickly so Siobhan invited them to help the other groups both with setting up and with untangling themselves. Siobhan had explained to me that her class would involve ‘little games to help them get to know each other and me’ and the class moved from total teacher control to a situation where the pupils were working in a way which facilitated each other.

True to their word, some of the class came to me at the end and I asked them what they thought the teacher had been doing. They said that she was trying to help them get to know each other and that the games were a fun way to do that. I asked them if they thought PE was important and they said that they did but when pressed as to whether they thought it was as important as other subjects one girl said that it was not, as ‘you wouldn’t get a job from it’, and the others seemed to agree with that. She added that ‘you need it to keep you fit’ as if that was sufficient justification. This functionalism was apparent in the answers from Fiona’s class as well.

On 19th October 1998 I made my second visit to Siobhan’s school and watched her teaching the same group as I had seen previously. She was looking forward to a rest at half-term. She had recently been on a residential Outdoor Pursuits course with a senior class and had been very pleasantly surprised by the positive response from the pupils. Her positive attitude to these girls was in contrast to a slightly disappointed reaction to the class that I watched her teach. These first years have in their ranks a group of girls intent on making life difficult for the others. The first sense I had of this was in a game of chasing in which a Muslim girl was ignored as she waited to be released after she had been caught. I thought that this might have been racially motivated. Siobhan saw it as part of a larger problem.

The class I watched was a basketball class and there was a warm-up, involving the chasing described above, followed by some passing practices in which the focus was on following a format, with games at the end. The small hall imposed limitations on the numbers which could play at any one time so two teams had to wait while two played. Afterwards, I asked Siobhan why she had not changed the opposition with team a playing b, and c playing d, being followed by a playing c, and b playing d. Siobhan explained that this change had been tried before and the resulting chaos was best
avoided. I have to say that there was no sense of trouble brewing below the surface so Siobhan was managing the social situation very skilfully. There was very little emphasis on the score and the girls were involved without the competition being all-pervading. There was some celebratory acknowledgement of scores but in a way that suggested parody rather than arrogance.

The atmosphere in the class was pleasant; only when the girls were sitting on the stage waiting for their turn to play was there any sign of dissension. This took the form of a group leaning back from the benches on which they were sitting to lean against a crash mat which inevitably slid. They were entertained by their own foolishness and indulged themselves by all sliding together.

At the end of the class a girl came looking for her ring and it could not be found immediately. Siobhan indicated that she thought it was missing as part of the teasing/bullying of which she was conscious in the class.

On 18th January, 1999 I observed Siobhan teaching the same class as before. It was an Educational Gymnastics class. Although it was cold, the girls were all changed for PE and took part enthusiastically. The class happened in a friendly cooperative atmosphere with a pleasant working climate prevailing. There was no loud teacher intervention or negative interaction. A social climate exists whereby the pupils accept the teacher’s regime. One girl whom I had noticed seeking attention on my previous visit stood for long spells when she watched those around her. She made some attempts to coax nearby pupils to join in her observations, but they declined. I asked Siobhan about her afterwards and apparently this girl had been disruptive at first and then she was more cooperative. In the lesson I watched she regressed again. It may be that this girl prefers competitive games as she was highly motivated in the basketball class which I watched and she appeared keen to demonstrate her skill. The gymnastics was very much focused on pupils’ taking responsibility for their own work-rate and making choices and did not provide objective measurement that she could relate to. Siobhan told me afterwards that she was very worried about one girl who bullies others in the class and that she had spoken to her specifically three or four times during the class. I had noticed Siobhan positioning herself near the group in which the girl was working but had not picked up any negative interaction. The girl in question is a skilful gymnast whose older sister is very successful in the school. Siobhan believes that the younger sister obtains credibility by dominating weaker members of her class to whom she demonstrates her
superior ability and by implication their inferiority. This class included tasks involving matching and Siobhan told this girl that she must pick actions which the others in her group could also perform. I think that Siobhan was very sensitive in dealing with what she perceives is a problem, particularly as the subtle exchanges from the teacher were not evident to me although I was watching closely. The social climate in the classroom is pleasant, with general acceptance that work on tasks set by the teacher goes ahead without resistance. The lesson content involved the exploration of simple gymnastics activities on mats and the pupils worked in groups of two or three, sharing a mat. They moved in an area immediately around their own mat and they shared the space sensibly. Siobhan moved from group to group and occasionally spoke to the whole class. Siobhan demonstrated and she selected pupils to demonstrate to the rest of the class. Some of the girls had good gymnastics skill, probably learned in a club. The demonstrators who were selected from the whole class, represented the more competent performers and were selected to demonstrate because of their ability.

After the class Siobhan and I talked for some time. She had been to a gymnastics course at which the 'New PE syllabus' was presented. She showed me the curriculum package which had been given out at the course which she analysed as being solely about gymnastics with no attempt to make it contextually relevant. With regard to the class she had just taught and others that she identified in the school, she believes that context-free material is difficult to teach when you have social and personal development aims for your pupils. Siobhan told me how she and her Physical Education colleague were strongly aware of the negative potential of involvement with competitive sport and that they have arrived at a point where they believe that it is hard to justify the amount of organisation involved in taking girls to events where they are likely to have their weaknesses exposed and their perceived inadequacies reaffirmed. She cited the example of a swimming gala run for schools managed by the Loreto order of nuns. Siobhan and her colleague had taught several girls to swim and the school had three competitive swimmers among its pupils. The neophyte swimmers were given the choice of going along to watch, or joining in 'for a bit of fun'. After testing their ability to cover the set distance, at least some of the girls opted to swim in a race. Siobhan described the elitist way in which the gala was run, with scores announced and visibly displayed to the chagrin of these girls. She felt that rather than being a celebration of achievement it was a humiliating experience for her pupils and one which she would not wish to repeat.
Siobhan also talked about the politics of the introduction of Physical Education as a Leaving Certificate Examination. She is convinced that the people who are pushing for certification have only a limited understanding of the potential of Physical Education to educate. When she was pushed on this she thought that they were unaware, rather than mischievous, I wondered if they were conservative Catholics who did not want pupils taking responsibility for their own physical state or indeed deriving pleasure from the skilful use of their bodies. She saw how that could be the case but from her own experience of the people involved she thought that they simply did not realise the full potential of Physical Education.

I asked Siobhan how she and her colleague selected activities to teach and her reply was a sweeping gesture around the small hall. 'Is it purely pragmatic?' I asked. She thought for a second and said that while circumstances dictated what was possible she reacted to the pupils' interests and needs in whatever way seemed right to her and she told me about a group of sixth years who had been unrelentingly resistant to Physical Education until they went on a school-organised residential Outdoor Pursuits trip. During this trip they had a long hill walk which Siobhan saw as a symbolic event. The girls acknowledged their own lack of physical fitness and accepted the need for some remedial intervention. These girls are now following a Health Related Fitness course with Siobhan in which they are identifying and pursuing goals which are directly relevant for their own aspirations. Some of these are at a very low level such as the ability to walk or run continuously for five minutes or to run the length of the hall ten times, but, Siobhan indicates that it represents a major change from their previous levels of non-involvement. Among this group are girls who have their own babies to mind: one girl's parents have made her entirely responsible for her baby, although she is still a schoolgirl. An awareness of the needs of particular pupils has made Siobhan cynical about the value of blanket goals imposed from outside. She is delighted to receive ideas and clarification about material, but she does not believe that the achievement of externally-imposed objectives is what matters in her teaching. Siobhan is interested in researching for a Master's degree in which she would examine the impact of Physical Education on pupils. She is vague about the exact project she would undertake, but her reflection is refreshing. Siobhan's commitment to her pupils and their total experience is unquestionable.
March 1999:
I visited Siobhan in mid-March expecting to see her teach, but because of telephoneanswering machines and technological mishaps, I did not receive her message to say that she was not taking the usual first year class. We had a quick but productive chat when she told me there were 'lots of things' that she had to tell me. Most particularly, the girl who has been a nuisance to Siobhan because she was bullying other pupils had been reported to her mother. Her mother cried to Siobhan at the school parents' day and looked for help in dealing with the girl's problems. Apparently this girl is no trouble at home, was never in trouble in primary school and gave no sign to her family that she was in any trouble. Siobhan spoke to the girl about her mother's distress and is hopeful that this problem may be resolved now that it is 'out in the open'. Another event in Siobhan's life as a teacher is that a fifteen year-old girl is back in school having had a baby and she was making inquiries about her eligibility for the volleyball team. Siobhan said graphically that, 'She's thinking volleyball and I'm thinking baby!' Instances of girls becoming pregnant represent a real area of concern for Siobhan. The syllabi being drawn up by the NCCA do not make allowances for girls who may be primagravida. These two anecdotes highlight some of Siobhan's concerns as a teacher. Her interventions involve analyses rather than following some preordained path.

5.5.3 John's observed classes:
As John was brought into the project after Fiona and Siobhan he was not observed on his first encounter with this class but on the first indoor class with this first year group. He offered me a choice between watching Mini-rugby, Educational gymnastics or both and I opted for the gymnastics, mainly because of the predictability of the climate inside, and the related ease of working the camera. This class took place on Thursday afternoon, 21st January. The co-educational class was unstreamed and contained a wide range of abilities in all respects, including physical, academic and social. John already knew all their names and quite a bit of background information regarding their families, their involvement in sport and their behaviour in school in general terms. He was able to plan his class with regard to pupils in the class, accommodating a wide range of abilities and various levels of motivation. John's experience as a teacher was immediately in evidence and I was struck by the difference between his teaching and the teaching of less experienced teachers, particularly under-graduate Physical Education students. There was a sense of serious work being done and the work rate was extremely high,
with a range of techniques used to obtain work from the pupils. There was never a sense that John was less than one-hundred per cent in control of what was going on and, despite the fact that he gave the children clear tasks and set them working on their own, he was always aware of any deviance from the concentration that he demanded. At the start of the class he showed me a lesson plan which focused on holding stretched positions while weight bearing on different bases. One girl in the class, a skilful gymnast, was accommodated within the tasks, as were three or four adolescent boys whose recently achieved large size seemed unfamiliar to them. The pace and progression of the class were expertly judged for the children because there were in the class some potentially difficult pupils who attempted to define the encounter as a contest, ‘kids against the teacher’. They never had any success with this as John changed the focus of the task or asked for a demonstration, or asked a question which stopped any disruptive behaviour before it escalated. One boy made sneering noises when John demonstrated with a girl as his partner. John did not react until the class was all working again and he said to the boy, who was near me, ‘You’re walking a very dangerous path’. I did not understand the full implication of this until at the end of the class this boy handed up a report card to be signed and John was able to advise that his behaviour had not been satisfactory. The exchange took place as the rest of the class collected their valuables and they all saw that the large boy was not being allowed to behave inappropriately, in John’s terms. The gymnastics ability of the class included a wide range of ability but the work was challenging and the quality of the responses was good, mainly because the teacher required precision and accuracy. There was very little pupil initiated talk. John asked questions about the work, both about what they saw and about the theory behind the task. Two boys who were unwell were sitting out and on one occasion John asked the class a question and immediately turned and looked for an answer from the non-active members, who were silent. He then asked them, ‘What was the question?’ and they did not know. They were told that they must always know the question whether or not they knew the answer, ensuring that they were aware they were still part of this class.

5.6 Commentary on observed classes:
An examination of the classes was undertaken using the tools of analysis described in Chapter Two. Fiona, John and Siobhan all used social groupings which included ‘Unison’ and ‘Harmony’. As these are at extreme ends of the spectrum of organisational
styles, it seems as if each of these teachers used contrasting discourses as a means of teaching the children to work with her and to work on their own. Fiona’s task involving ‘making the word ‘Sycamore’’, was dependent on the pupils’ ability to cooperate with each other without the teacher’s help. It depended on their accepting the imposed task without any clear rationale as to why they were doing it. Similarly, Siobhan gave her pupils latitude to help each other in the untangling task which she gave them and she withdrew and did not intervene when this was happening. John taught an aspect of gymnastics and then asked pupils to make phrases of movement incorporating his teaching. Pupils seemed to be involved in both Kohlberg’s (1971) fourth and fifth stages of moral reasoning where they were being asked to obey rules because the rules had personal relevance and they made sense - not only because the teacher says so. Kohlberg’s stages of moral development are defined in the Appendices.

All three teachers referred to the social ambiance in the class in their assessments, corresponding to Cope’s (1985) ‘more subjective’ assessment criterion. Neither content, nor pupils’ responses to the content of either class, seemed to merit any specific evaluation by the teachers. I asked Siobhan about her assessment and she thought that there were ‘one or two potential trouble-makers’. When I said that they seemed to get out of breath very quickly, she agreed entirely. John was aware of incorporating pupils with extremes of ability. His class included boys and girls at various stages of puberty. One girl was a competitive gymnast. He had boys in the class whose aim seemed to be to disrupt and he assessed not only the behaviours which were visible but possible reasons for these behaviours, based on his extensive knowledge of individual pupils.

After the first encounters it seems that both Fiona and Siobhan share a view of Physical Education, certainly in the initial stages, as a socially based activity. Their teaching at this stage corresponds with Placek’s (1983) contention that teachers are concerned with pupils being ‘busy, happy and good’.

I wrote to the teachers thanking them for sharing their classes with me and reiterated my original assertion that they could make use of me in whatever way they saw fit. Siobhan asked for some material from a ‘Minor games’ course that I had taught her, to be sent to her. Fiona was unsure whether she wanted more written material. John asked to borrow Hellison and Templin’s (1991) ‘A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education’ which I had mentioned to him.
5.6.1 Summarising classes taught by each of the three teachers:
In Fiona's and Siobhan's classes, when I was watching there seemed to be very little emphasis on teaching content. This may have been because I was present and they were indicating an emphasis of which they thought I would approve. They were also in the early stages of establishing a relationship with their classes and were involved in evaluating their pupils' practical abilities. Fiona's strong emphasis on 'what not to do' in gymnastics is consistent with ensuring safety while retaining some aspects of freedom. All three teachers have clearly thought about ideological reasons for teaching, although significantly in both Fiona and Siobhan's teaching, the instructional discourse focuses on organisation and use of space rather than on the exchange or transmission of knowledge. The organisation of pupils into activities seems to be the central focus. Both Fiona and Siobhan's concerns with ensuring that their pupils are able to play in a way which is socially and morally acceptable indicate clearly that they are embedding their instructional discourse within a regulative discourse. Unpleasant inter-personal interaction is actively discouraged and both teachers seem to set great store by pupils treating each other kindly. Siobhan expressed concern about the effect some girls in her class were having on another girl. Both teachers in their conversations with me were focused on the children and their development as people as opposed to a focus on the activities and how they were performed. The aims of these teachers are much more than simply ensuring that the pupils are 'busy, happy and good' (Placek, 1983) as they are aware of, or believe that they are aware of, wider implications for the pupils from their Physical Education classes than simply learning to perform the activities.
John's understanding of the material of the activity enables him to make it relevant for all the pupils. At all times, he uses his well-developed observational skills to adapt the material to accommodate pupils with exceptional ability. He demonstrates that the content must coincide with individual pupils' needs and he is able to ensure that challenge is present throughout, without the pupils feeling that they are ever 'finished'. John uses lots of demonstrations, both pupil demonstrations and his own, and his pupils are treated with great sensitivity, particularly when they show their work. They are appropriately encouraged to think that they have 'done well'. He uses demonstrations for a variety of reasons which he shares: 'Look at the lovely way he stretches his arm to stay steady in his balance.' There is a difference in emphasis within the instructional discourses of the three teachers with John teaching in a way which is clearly focussed on the medium of the specific content being taught. Fiona and Siobhan require the pupils
to behave in ways which the teachers value, not necessarily requiring pupils to consider theory and practice of Physical Education in a systematic way. The texts chosen by these teachers allow them to accomplish the goals of their regulative discourses in ways which the NCCA text, if implemented, would not. All three schools in which they teach have Mission Statements (in Appendices thirteen, fourteen and fifteen) and all three feel proud to embrace the aspirations described.

In the next chapter implications of the changes in society and their manifestation within the NCCA PE syllabuses will be considered. These three teachers provide exemplars of pedagogies different from the functionalism implied in the official text. All three are reflective and self-critical, qualities which make their teaching constantly challenging. Implications for these teachers of imposed curriculum change are further addressed in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER 6: FOUR KEY QUESTIONS – A SYNTHESIS OF PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES:

6.1 Review of key questions:
Four questions which structure this study are described fully in Chapter 1 and are listed again here. Firstly, is Ireland perceived as a society or an economy? Secondly, is Irish education, and specifically Physical Education, being homogenised in a process reflecting Ritzer’s (1993) description of McDonaldization? Thirdly are Irish teachers being proletarianised in a way consistent with Hargreaves (1994) description? Lastly, is there a gap between Fiona, Siobhan and John’s preferred discourses and the official, state described discourse?

Empirical data described in Chapter Four are used to address these questions, drawing on the theoretical concepts provided in Chapter Two. This chapter is concerned in part with establishing whether Fiona, Siobhan and John, teach in a way which reflects the official position, inferred within the Draft New Syllabuses (2000). The contexts in which these teachers work are explained within the data obtained to answer the key questions and the influences which these contexts exert are compared with the teachers’ ideologies.

6.1.1 Providing a structure to examine the questions:
Within this chapter the four central questions of this study are addressed by focusing on evidence of societal change and its relevance for the practice of three teachers. A regulative discourse is indicated within the schools’ mission statements and less clearly in the new national curriculum. Changes in curriculum structures which are documented apparently occur in response to societal changes. The official curricula are examined to see whether the adoption of only formal teaching methods is anticipated. Academic members of staff in the University of Limerick PETE programme are involved in both the official production of knowledge and in its recontextualising in schools so their understanding of the required pedagogical discourses is significant. Teachers in Fiona, Siobhan and John’s schools influence the children they teach and their responses indicate their attitudes towards Physical Education. Pupils’ interpretations of their schooling influence their attitudes towards Physical Education and its role in their education.
6.1.2 Official knowledge in Irish Physical Education:

Teachers’ autonomy is lessened when state control is increased and education is viewed as cultural capital. The extent to which Physical Education teachers in Ireland enjoy autonomy now and in the future is central to this study. The potential threat to their autonomy from the imposition of an NCCA PE syllabus with an associated threat to individualised programmes of education which cater for individual teachers’ and pupils’ abilities is consistent with Bernstein’s (2000, p. 65) definition of officially produced knowledge as ‘the educational knowledge which the state constructs and distributes in educational institutions’. The ‘construction and distribution’ of knowledge reflects a more complicated process than a direct transmission of state policies, particularly in an era which has been described as postmodern or late modern. Apple (1995, p. 52) considers:

the complex relations the state has to multiple axes of power, how state control itself is actually formed out of a complicated process of social ferment and hegemonic alliances, and how ‘official knowledge’ in the school curriculum actually gets to be declared officially legitimate knowledge in determinate situations.

The first key question examines whether or not the central focus within contemporary Irish educational policy is on improving the state of the national economy without considering the wider effects on the quality of lives of individuals. Stein (1998, p. 1) writes that ‘to situate learning is to place thought and action in a specific place and time.’ Stein’s position is difficult to reconcile with an officially provided syllabus, as John and Fiona both believe. As Chapter 4 indicates, the NCCA Physical Education Committee which drafted the official state syllabuses, included people from different roles within the Physical Education community. It is not possible to identify characteristics which would indicate that this committee is a unified group. An examination of the Draft New Syllabuses (2000) in Chapter Three shows the homogeneity of response required by the syllabus. It is important to remember that while drafting the syllabuses, interactions within the committee affected its orientation and content and that the process of developing the syllabuses is planned to continue as teachers are involved in implementing them. Penney and Evans (1999, p. 22) describe how:

Policy, its emphases and meanings will change to a greater or lesser degree in this process. As a result, the text subsequently communicated to others may be quite different to that ‘received’ by those now communicating its content, intent and/or application.
Teachers' roles are inferred within the NCCA (2000) Physical Education Syllabus where, for example, less responsibility than previously is given to teachers to evolve their own curriculum because, within the new syllabus, the content or 'text' for their teaching is provided. Penney (1994b, p. 23) claims that:

In reading any written text or listening to a spoken text, we produce our own 'mental map' of that text, and it is that mental map rather than the 'original' text that will be our reference point in referring to policy.

This quote serves to confirm that teachers are not automatons and they will make sense of the requirements often in ways which are unexpected. However, in considering the effects of an imposed curriculum, Helsby and McCulloch (1996) caution against making simple assumptions about how teachers develop professionalism. They cite Harland (1987, p. 39) who:

has observed what she calls the 'central paradox' of the emergence of two apparently or potentially conflicting features, on the one hand, strong central government of a kind which has permitted the detailed intervention of a central government agency right down to the level of the classroom; and on the other a teacher response which is, in many of the pilot schemes, creative and innovative, and often indeed experimental and downright risky.

6.1.3 How is the official text regarded in the Irish Physical Education community?

Clearly the process of recontextualising the text is a complex process with each teacher's mental map being unique to him or herself. The socialising process which teachers have already experienced and continue to experience, including PETE, will influence their interpretation of the text. In Apple's (1995, p. 53) terms the provision of an official text is the crucial factor in the production of 'official knowledge'. 'The text...becomes a door into nearly all of the power relations involved in education.' In this case Apple is referring to a textbook; however, both he and Gore (1990) indicate that 'text' can refer to the discourse within a teaching context. Gore (ibid., p. 165) offers the following definition:

I use 'text' here to refer to social signs which can be read, signs which indicate to us that a number of things are happening in any given social situation; which we use, for example, in our identification of the hidden curriculum.

Parker (1999, p. 71) states that: 'From a deconstructive point of view everything is text.'
Parker (ibid.) enlarges on this by indicating that when there is an underlying rational framework to support the presentation of text, the text itself can take many forms. He claims that any example of writing, any fragment of language, conversation, film, advertising poster is text. According to Parker (ibid.) an underlying logic and rationale is present, whether or not it is made explicit. The Draft NCCA Syllabuses (2000) provide a text, to be interpreted specifically by teachers within their particular schools. Kirk (1990, p. 419) describes how Apple's analysis of curriculum packages depends on a linear relationship between knowledge producers and receivers, viewing the form and content of these curriculum packages as:

concerned with matters of control of work practices, the deskillling of teachers, the regulation of social interaction and behaviour of teachers and students, and the prescription of learning outcomes – among other things.

Kirk (ibid.) agrees that while Apple's description may be correct, ideological control is not something which can be accurately predicted.

6.1.4 The role of assessment:
The potential for individual interpretation of texts by teachers may diminish when an assessment procedure forms part of it. Speaking at the 1997 Physical Education Association of Ireland Conference, Professor Hyland's reference to assessment as 'the tail that wags the curriculum dog' concurs with Bernstein's (2000, p. 47) description of text within a Performance Model of education.

Here the pedagogic text is essentially the text the acquirer produces, that is the pedagogic text is the acquirer's performance. The performance is objectified by grades. The professionalism of the teacher inheres in the explicit pedagogic practice and in the grading procedures.

Evans and Penney (1999, p. 5) describe how in England and Wales the Educational Reform Act imposed a set of highly technical and technicist language for the curriculum. 'This formed a 'discursive frame', effectively defining how teachers and all others concerned with education were now to think, talk and describe practice and performance in schools.' Specialist text has the effect of creating a mystique which removes the text from the non-specialist. Power relations become more clearly defined. Bernstein (2000, p. 5) believes that:
Power relations ... create boundaries, legitimise boundaries, reproduce boundaries, between different categories of groups, gender, class race, different categories of discourse, different categories of agents. Thus, power always operates to produce dislocations, to produce punctuations on social space.

The three teachers central to this study are, in their own schools, examples of what Bernstein (2000, p. 66) refers to as: 'the local identities available in communities and groups.'

These three teachers are not members, outside their schools, of any specialist groups within which curricula are discussed or redefined, so they are not involved in using new, possibly technical and technicist, language for their curricular practice. They seem to operate outside the dominant power structures associated with teaching Physical Education. Fiona went to a meeting about the new syllabus and subsequently declared: 'I am very confused at present with all this - hopefully I'll be clearer as time goes on.' (Fiona, September 1999)

Siobhan (2000) is less concerned about the official language associated with the syllabuses, perhaps because she has already been involved in teaching to a standard text within the Leaving Certificate Examination. 'If it comes to having to implement the programme I think it will be very easy to adapt it into my own programme.' She goes on to indicate how she can adapt the syllabus to suit her own work:

It actually allows me to teach as I want to teach and to assess individual students according to their strengths and weaknesses. It does however show the syllabus to be very much a cosmetic exercise. Having been through the implementation of the L.C.A* leisure and recreation programme I have no doubt that the flexibility in assessment techniques will allow me to carry on as normal (with a little more paperwork). The knowledge and concepts stated seem like an effort to intellectualise aspects of P.E, perhaps to aid the great “status of the subject” debate. (Siobhan ibid.)

*Leaving Certificate Applied

6.2.0 Society or economy:

As described in previous chapters in contemporary Ireland, social and cultural change has been rapid and is continuing. The role of Physical Education is being redefined as part of a response to socio-cultural change. Bernstein (2000, p. 66) indicates how:
'curricula reform today arises out of the requirements to engage with this contemporary cultural, economic and technological change.'
The Irish Physical Education community contains examples of what Parker (1999) describes as two stories. Siobhan's response indicates that she believes that she can adapt the syllabus largely to suit her own programme. This adaptation depends on restructuring the subject to select from both of Parker's stories. Penney and Chandler (2000, p. 85), in describing how the planning of Physical Education can occur within themes, rather than in traditional subject groupings, indicate that:

> New partnerships between teachers and pupils are arguably the most important in the developments that we have discussed, but if connections are to be made to pupils' lives beyond schools, greater involvement of parents and of representatives of other agencies providing participation opportunities seems crucial to the success of developments.

Reflecting Parker's (1999) analysis, at least two definable ideological positions can be discerned within the Irish Physical Education community. Children's and parents' attitudes to the subject also vary. Some children are apparently so focused on learning whatever the teacher teaches that its relevance, or even its accuracy, are unquestioned. For these pupils, there is a 'right way' to answer a task provided by someone else, as opposed to finding one's own solution. Named games within a sports paradigm enjoy particular credibility with pupils in Fiona, Siobhan and John's schools, even though all three teachers are keen to play down the relative importance of competitive games in their programmes. The girl in Siobhan's school who, having had a baby, returned to school wanting to establish her eligibility to play on a Volleyball team, emphasises the gap between Siobhan's (1998) invisible curriculum, concerned with educational processes and the girl's concern with the visible, with playing on a team: 'She's thinking volleyball, and I'm thinking baby'.

Fiona's concern with the social climate in her class-room encourages her pupils to question their preconceptions of what should happen in a physical education class while working within her 'here and now' focus. Fiona does not work towards measurable objectives, preferring to set tasks which challenge the pupils to quickly identify solutions. They are not learning how to play a particular game, but they are trying to invent games and to experience playing these together. Within their responses to questionnaires and interviews, her pupils did not express any negative attitudes towards their programme.
They understand that certain behaviours are unacceptable, particularly in their treatment of each other. They responded immediately to prompts from Fiona about inconsiderate behaviour. Members of one of Fiona’s extra-curricular basketball teams were horrified at the behaviour of another team’s coach, not a Physical Education teacher, whose treatment of his players they deemed harsh and insensitive. Fiona was pleased that they believed this communication to be inappropriate. When John assumed responsibility for an extra-curricular girls’ hockey team he found the highly competitive culture disturbing. The girls were so concerned with winning that they were willing to do whatever they perceived was necessary to beat the opposition, including very aggressive play. John has reservations about this level of competitiveness. He is extremely concerned and very well informed about rugby playing schoolboys taking a nutritional supplement, creatine, which they believe will boost their energy levels. John believes that school sport has become much too orientated towards winning at all costs, with some of the costs being potentially damaging to participants. In John’s opinion, the ‘tradition’ of pupils drinking alcohol after important matches, to the extent that they are too hung-over to attend school the next day, is an example of Physical Education and sport having very different aims. John expressed relief at the fact that none of his own three children is playing competitive sport. In Siobhan’s school, school teams are coached by people from outside the school and the Physical Education teachers concentrate on inclusive activities which are not geared to the most physically able.

6.2.1 Society or economy? The view of The Department of Education and the NCCA:

‘Links between education and the economy at national and institutional level are important.’ (White Paper on Education, 1995, p. 5).

The Department of Education Web-site (2001) includes the following statement:

*Department of Education Mission Statement*

The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure the provision of a comprehensive, cost-effective and accessible education system of the highest quality, as measured by international standards, which will: enable individuals to develop to their full potential as persons and to participate fully as citizens in society and contribute to social and economic development.

Both society and the economy are acknowledged in this statement about the state’s provision of education. An individual is expected to contribute to both the ‘social and economic development’ of the state. Within the White Paper on Education (1995)
Physical Education is referred to within a section entitled 'The Promotion of Health and Well-Being'. Reference is made to 'the health promoting school' which it is envisaged:

...will implement a broadly based programme of physical and health education which will promote the well-being of its students and incorporate a new emphasis on diet, hygiene, safety and relationships and sexuality education (ibid. p. 23).

NCCA programmes are not written to accommodate social and cultural differences within and between schools. The statement quoted from the White Paper on Education (1995) emphasises content to be taught rather than children's relationship with the content. Thus success in Physical Education is determined by a pupil's ability to meet set criteria and to conform to externally monitored standards. No consideration is given to social behaviour within groups nor to cooperative behaviour to achieve shared goals. Meritocratic individualism provides a measure of relative success among groups of pupils. Healthism and sport are significant within the syllabuses. It is possible to follow the Physical Education course outlined in the syllabus without taking any Dance or Gymnastics classes. Unlike the situation in the United Kingdom, there is no entitlement curriculum within Irish Physical Education so children's experiences do not have to conform to requirements. The introduction of certification in Physical Education was promised by the then Minister of Education in 1998 and the NCCA has provided a Draft Syllabus for the Leaving Certificate Examination in Physical Education (2000). Justifying the inclusion of Physical Education as an examination subject, Stidder (2000, p. 159) found that in one English Secondary school:

a commitment to examination courses in PE for all pupils can raise standards, increase motivation, improve achievement and provide certificated evidence of their efforts in Physical Education after two years work.

These findings coincide with justifications for supporting credentialism for school based Physical Education voiced by tutors on the PETE course in the University of Limerick. One tutor stated that 'it means the pupils get credit for what they're good at'.

Observable and measurable outcomes provide an attractive justification for including examinations in Physical Education, consistent with one of Parker's (1999) two stories. This position also accords with Bernstein's (2000 p. 45) description of a performance model with 'procedures which are clearly marked with respect to form and function'.
There is no evidence from the Official Knowledge presented in the NCCA Physical Education Syllabuses of the existence of Parker's (ibid.) second story which involves reflective teaching, and which corresponds to Bernstein's (ibid.) description of a competence model in which the autonomy of the acquirer is acknowledged and accommodated. These syllabuses privilege a teacher who defines the context and provides pre-selected content. From an economic perspective, a performance model has cost advantages. According to Bernstein (ibid. p. 50) 'In general, performance models are more susceptible to external control and to the economies of such control'.

Measurable economic justifications within the Official Recontextualisation Field lend weight to a structured approach to curriculum provision. A competency-based approach is less likely to be justified in official documents than aspects which are simpler to quantify. Commodification of education provides measurable outcomes allowing for the award of credentials as tangible rewards.

6.2.2 Society or economy? Views from PETE tutors in the University of Limerick:

Responses from PETE lecturers in the University of Limerick described in Chapter Four show how the majority of tutors indicate strong support for a functionalist approach to curriculum planning. Almost all PETE tutors recommend the pursuit of pre-determined learning outcomes, both at university level and in schools. However data provided in Chapter 4 indicate that tutors do not all agree that Physical Education teachers should be encouraged to plan using behavioural objectives. A belief exists that the introduction of evidence based assessment would assist in raising the status of the subject because teachers would once again, as in college, be required to indicate their expected outcomes before teaching. A University of Limerick Education Lecturer, responsible for teaching first year PETE students about planning for teaching, averred: 'We get them used to planning within Bloom's taxonomy in first year in the hope that it'll stick' (personal communication, January 2001).

Some University of Limerick Physical Education tutors claim to know no way to plan other than by identifying specific objectives. They feel that by departing from their written plan they display weakness or inconsistency. There is a strong commitment to
'objectivity' both in planning and in implementing a curriculum. An attraction to scientific positivism is shared among a majority of tutors in the Physical Education and Sports Science Department. Stylised measurable responses, usually within a sports paradigm, are described in course outlines for students in practical aspects of the PETE course (internal communications PESS Department, University of Limerick, 2000). This position is consistent with Friere's (1968, see foot-note 14) banking concept of education as well as being evidenced within the NCCA Draft Physical Education Syllabuses (2000). Fiona and Siobhan remember that, when they were students in the University of Limerick, with perhaps one exception planning by rational objectives was the predominant way in which tutors required students to plan for teaching. When they were interviewed both these teachers were adamant that they did not plan their teaching by predicting precise outcomes.

6.2.3 Views from Fiona, Siobhan and John, other teachers and pupils in their schools regarding Ireland's role as a society or an economy:

The three teachers are consistent in their concerns about possible implications of a State-monitored Physical Education syllabus. Fiona feels that she has difficulty enough undertaking her own planning and appropriate assessment without having another layer of bureaucracy imposed. John, similarly, does not believe that his pupils' interests can be served by implementing courses written by someone who does not know them. Siobhan is less pessimistic about the potential effects of examinations as she has confidence in her own ability to adapt the imposed curriculum to suit her pupils. Pupils' personal and social development is viewed by Fiona, Siobhan and John as more worthy of their attention than the provision of cultural capital, either in the form of sporting success for school teams or as examination grades. All three are aware of resisting factors which reflect Foucault's (1978) 'bio-power' which Marshall (1995, p. 2) describes as a form of power exercised on the body.

It is exercised over members of a population so that their sexuality and individuality are constituted in certain ways that are connected with issues of national policy, including the machinery of production. In this way populations can be adjusted in accordance with economic processes.

Kirk (1998) notes how in Australian education, at the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, children's bodies were 'schooled' by the imposition of set patterns of behaviour and controls on their day-to-day existence. A process of imposition is in place...
within contemporary Irish schooling whereby 'learning outcomes' are described within official syllabuses. Currently teachers, with the possible exception of Physical Education teachers, pursue objectives which are not written for their specific situations. Fiona, Siobhan and John are sufficiently confident in their own teaching not to adopt someone else's plan without considering its relevance. Each of these teachers' work is identifiable within a competency model as described by Bernstein (2000). Specifically all three are more concerned with presences than with absences when evaluating their pupils. Fiona praises pupils' individual and unique responses to tasks when they are inventing their own games with badminton racquets and shuttlecocks. The skills of Badminton might be deemed appropriate by a teacher requiring conformity to known skills but Fiona takes great delight in more divergent responses such as hitting the shuttlecock with the handle of the racquet. John consistently praises pupils for well-constructed responses as opposed to criticising poor responses: 'Look at the lovely way he stretches his arm to stay steady in his balance' (John, 1999).

Siobhan is keenly aware of the need to personalise her pupils' experiences as well as not simplifying the discourse in which she is involved. When some of Siobhan's pupils were entered in a swimming gala which exposed weaknesses in their performances, this experience served to strengthen her view that praise for what pupils can do is more important, than indicating what is absent. The commitment of Fiona, Siobhan and John to strengthen social and personal dimensions within their teaching involves them in pedagogic practices consistent with Bernstein's (2000) definition of competence rather than performance. None of the three teachers is working to achieve pre-specified objectives, although they all have broadly defined 'aims' for their classes within regulative discourses which they can articulate. Table 3, below, indicates differences which Bernstein (ibid.) describes within recontextualized knowledge. In each of the six areas listed, all three teachers are consistent in their preference for a competence model:
Table 3: Recontextualised knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Competence models</th>
<th>Performance model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Categories</td>
<td>weakly classified</td>
<td>strongly classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
<td>presences</td>
<td>absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse</td>
<td>acquirer</td>
<td>performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bernstein, 2000 p. 45)

While it might be possible to describe the three teachers as being involved in high cost teaching, additional costs are likely to be incurred because of their commitment to enriching and individualising their pupils’ experiences.

We brought in a coach for the basketball teams to free up time for us to work with the inactive fifth year girls after school.’ (Siobhan, 1999)

Every pupil in every year gets a residential outdoor experience away from school (John, 1999).

Concerns expressed by these teachers about their pupils becoming involved in a process leading to certification are consistent with Bernstein’s (1990) description of how a visible curriculum provides performance indicators while the invisible curriculum, within which these teachers consciously work, is not officially recognised. The processes of commodification of education, or viewing education solely as cultural capital, are consistent with a view of education contributing to an economy as opposed to developing a society. Giroux (1993 p. 98) claims that:

central to a radical democratic politics and pedagogy is a notion of community developed around a shared conception of social justice, rights, entitlement. This is especially necessary at a time in our history in which the value of such concerns has been subordinated to the priorities of the market and used to legitimate the interests of the rich at the expense of the poor, the unemployed, the homeless.

In my experience there is little official support for Irish Physical Education teachers who interpret their roles in radical ways. While the majority of Physical Education teachers, because of the way they have been educated as teachers, may have no problem (and
no opposition to) administering a national curriculum in PE, teachers such as Fiona and John are likely to find themselves increasingly, or even more, marginalised than at present, if they fail or are unwilling to accept its terms. Siobhan believes that she can maintain a middle ground and can accept the NCCA controls without losing her own control over what she teaches.

6.2.4 Views of the role of Physical Education held by teachers of various subjects in Fiona, Siobhan and John’s schools:
Personnel working in Irish post-primary schools are aware of the enormous influence exerted on the whole school community by the terminal examination. Concern is strong about the way in which this summative assessment is firmly linked into pupils’ prospects of employment and with their place in society. Drudy and Lynch (1999, p. 107) writing about Irish education indicate that:

> While the primary barriers facing low-income students in accessing and succeeding within college were economic, these were compounded by a series of interrelated obstacles which were social, cultural and educational.

Physical Education has been outside the State run credentialist system until now. As indicated in Chapter 4 the prospect of its becoming yet another examination subject is not viewed as attractive within the school communities where John, Fiona and Siobhan teach. Undoubtedly, this is at least in part because the enthusiasm of Fiona, Siobhan and John demonstrates the intrinsic merit of school Physical Education rather than it being simply another subject from which examination grades can be earned. The idea that Physical Education is different from other subjects is accepted, without this necessarily implying that it is any less significant as a subject.

6.2.5 Role of Physical Education – views of pupils in Fiona’s, Siobhan’s and John’s schools:
As reported in Chapter 4 pupils in all three schools believe that the idea of examinations in Physical Education is laughable. Their responses to a question about it are derisory and sardonic. In the classes I watched in all three schools, I saw pupils working together as a community. There was a sense in all of the classes I observed, that the pupils saw themselves as belonging to a group and that they expected to work together. Their responses to the questionnaires suggest that they regard Physical Education differently from other areas of the curriculum and not part of the extrinsically measured ‘points
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system’. As first year pupils of course their experience is very limited because they have knowledge of no other system.

There is support for the introduction of examinations in Physical Education by some Physical Education tutors who foresee advantages such as described by Stidder (2000, p. 165), writing about an English secondary school when examinations in Physical Education were introduced:

Such was the response and interest amongst pupils at this case study school that .......the department made a commitment to a compulsory programme of GCSE PE for all pupils in Key Stage 4.

The experience within the school described above suggests that when examinations in Physical Education present a real choice, pupils are willing to consider them positively, although Stidder (ibid., p. 164) found that:

some chose what they perceived to be a more ‘academic’ subject at the expense of GCSE PE or simply responded to the advice or encouragement from other curriculum areas who were seeking talented individuals for their own particular subject.

The emphasis on gaining points in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination means that pupils frequently chose their subjects tactically to maximise their score and consequently their options in choosing a course of further or higher education. Pupils’ concerns are less likely to be altruistic than pragmatic as the source of the points is less important than their value as a means of progressing within the Irish system. Lynch (1999) expands on this point which is consistent with a view of education as a commodity.

6.3 Homogenisation of Physical Education in Irish post-primary schools as evidenced within the draft NCCA PE Syllabuses (2000):

Aspects of globalisation theory are reflected in the homogenisation process being described within Irish society: ‘...the globalisation thesis works as a way of thinking and speaking that makes possible certain ways of acting and behaving and at the same time, works to conceal other versions or alternatives’ (Maguire, 2002, p. 4).

On the basis of analysis of draft NCCA PE syllabuses, within contemporary Ireland it is reasonable to infer that state policy with regard to education supports an approach which maximises the production of predictably ‘educated people’ as efficiently and inexpensively as possible and with the least loss of control. The reproductive nature of
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the process ensures that people enjoying success share characteristics with those people defining success.

6.3.1 Views from Department of Education Inspectors and the NCCA:
As indicated by Drudy and Lynch (1993), consensualism is one of the consistent principles underlying the organisation of the Irish Education system. This principle assumes that everyone should be taught the same content. Only very recently have alternative programmes been available within the Leaving Certificate Examination. The proposed NCCA Syllabuses for Junior and Senior Cycle Physical Education (2000) do not take cognisance of different abilities of pupils in classes. Department of Education Inspectors express more concern about transmission of content in the programme than with pedagogical discourse (personal communication, September, 1999). One Physical Education Inspector and some university tutors were irritated by my suggestion that perhaps pupils who had little or no curriculum Physical Education in a school where there was an enthusiastic PE teacher might develop more positive attitudes towards physical activity than pupils in a school with a structured PE programme where the discourse was suppressive and unsupportive. However two colleagues observed that there was potential conflict between achieving high levels of pupil involvement and the achievement of high levels of performance from pupils.

6.3.2 Homogenisation in the PETE programme in the University of Limerick:
The PETE programme in Limerick currently demonstrates a strong commitment to equality, rather than equity. All students follow the same programme and are assessed within criteria which do not make allowances for differences of gender, ethnicity, culture, physique or other individual characteristics. This is consistent with the ideologies of essentialism, consensualism and individual meritocracy described in Chapter 2. Assessments for some practical courses are so detailed as to define times within which distances must be covered to achieve a grade. Some tutors who recommend the use of teaching packages in schools are involved in producing these for teachers in post-primary schools. A ‘one size fits all’ approach can be identified in some of these programmes. A recent circular (September, 2000) advised tutors that all schools were to be informed in exactly the same way as to when tutors would be visiting on Teaching Practice supervision. This was described as being ‘fair’ for ‘the students’ - again consistent with equality as opposed to equity. At least one member of the Education
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Department in the University of Limerick (personal communication, January, 2001) insists (sic.) that: ‘teaching practice lesson plans are written with clearly outlined, behaviourally stated, objectives which include all three domains of Bloom’s (1958) taxonomy’.

A formulaic approach to teaching furthers the quest for homogeneity, and potentially reduces opportunities for students to demonstrate their creativity as teachers. By imposing detailed planning requirements without dialogue, a tutor is necessarily involved in a hierarchical relationship with the student teacher which permits controlling behaviour by the tutor. A student’s means of success within this relationship is based on conforming with his or her tutor’s requirements.

Those conditions of McDonaldization described by Ritzer (1993 pp.9-11) and identified within the NCCA Draft New PE Syllabuses (2000), ‘efficiency, predictability, calculability and control’ are also valued by those tutors within the PETE course in Limerick whose assessments do not require personal input or creativity from students and rely on reproduction of tutor-recommended factual material.

6.3.3 Homogenisation of Physical Education – views from Fiona, Siobhan and John:

Of the three teachers Siobhan is least concerned about working with a provided syllabus. She believes that her pedagogy can adapt to accommodate different goals and that she can ensure a worthwhile experience for her pupils even when she does not directly select the material to be taught. All three teachers display characteristics consistent with Bernstein’s (1996) description of competency where the focus is more clearly on the whole person rather than on the achievement of measurable outcomes. Fiona’s school principal has identified that within his school, because of the teachers he has employed, more than one pedagogical discourse is invoked in the teaching of Physical Education. He is supportive of each of his teachers as he recognises the value of diversity. This allows Fiona the confidence to be different. She is outspoken about her distaste for the way that meritocratic individuality is valued within Irish education. John has evolved practices which he finds enhance his teaching of Physical Education and he is loathe to give these up in favour of a common curriculum. Siobhan indicates several

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23 Students report that they prefer courses where they are involved in reproduction of tutors’ material to those where analysis or reflection are required. In games courses the most usual assessments are based on files which record the activities undertaken in class.
cases where she provided guidance and help for pupils with problems and it is interesting that she feels that she can do this while also pursuing the extrinsic rewards of certification. John is adamant that he cannot marry his existing child-centred programme with a syllabus which has as part of its package a formalised assessment. Fiona wants to develop personalised programmes with and for her pupils and she is not happy with the impersonality of an imposed syllabus. All three teachers use techniques which involve their pupils in activity which is not directly teacher-controlled. Fiona works very much within a challenge-setting mode of teaching and she does not appear to have any pre-conceived ideas of how the responses will be framed. John's teaching includes a range of communications, primarily conducted within a dialogue between himself and his pupils. Siobhan again varies her communication style but she does not rely on teacher transmission to communicate with her pupils and her classes are clearly places where pupils have an input and are listened to. All three teachers give the impression of working towards 'Harmony' in their classes, as described in Chapter Three. Acknowledging pupils as individuals is not consistent with homogenisation or with individual meritocracy as a means of structuring the programme.

6.3.4 Views on homogenisation of Physical Education from teachers, principals and pupils within the three schools:

Irish teachers clearly understand that public value of their work often focuses on the outcome of the Leaving Certificate Programme which privileges the most able and the most motivated pupils (Drudy and Lynch 1999, indicate that these are often from families which can afford to pay for learning materials and extra tuition). Teachers' strikes during 2000 and 2001 were ineffective in securing a government response until the teachers indicated that they were going to withdraw their involvement in preparing pupils for the state examinations. In March 2001 strong reactions to the teachers so-called 'industrial action' centred on the effect on the pupils as opposed to concerns for the poor pay and conditions of the teachers. The ASTI\(^24\) (1996) statement supports a submission from teachers to the arbitration board asking for a 30% increase in salaries and expenses and includes a statement to the effect that: 'The decision to raise the school leaving age to 16 will cause the retention within the system of pupils for whom current curricular provision and school structures are inappropriate.'

\(^{24}\) Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland
Chapter 6  Four key questions – a synthesis of pedagogical discourses:

Teachers, principals and pupils within this study are all convinced of the potential within Physical Education to provide experiences for pupils which are different from those within the examination driven subjects. The three principals are explicit about their satisfaction with the social and personally enriching experiences provided by their schools' Physical Education programmes. They believe in the potential for positive experiences from residential outdoor pursuits courses. The role of Physical Education in identifying and meeting particular needs of individual pupils is a recurring theme from all three schools.

6.4.1 Proletarianisation of Physical Education teachers, views from the Department of Education Inspectorate and the NCCA:

My communications with Department of Education and Science Physical Education Inspectors indicate that their view is that, if Physical Education teachers are to teach well, the curriculum content should be provided for them. Their case is made with regard to their experience in Irish schools and with the conservative PETE programme which students undertake. The discourse indicated by the content and the assessment techniques provided within the NCCA syllabuses is strongly classified and framed. Bernstein (2000 p. 13 f) indicates how this emphasises the role of the transmitter. Timing, pacing and assessment are all described in the NCCA texts which are written with the direct involvement of Department of Education personnel. I attended a meeting along with a senior official from the NCCA and a Department of Education PE Inspector in September 2000 when it was acknowledged that teachers' salaries are insufficient for them to enjoy a standard of living commensurate with traditionally ascribed professional status. Government policy does not advocate investing the wealth generated by the Celtic Tiger to maintain or advance the status of teachers, nurses or junior doctors. In January 2001, teachers went on strike to support their claim for a 30% rise in pay and only after the integrity of the 2001 Leaving Certificate Examination seemed to be threatened did negotiators address the teachers' grievances seriously. This example of the commodity associated with education, in this case the examination results, wielding more strength in negotiations than ideological or philosophical arguments is significant. The Junior Cycle Physical Education Pilot Project (1999), undertaken in 59 schools, provided content and assessment criteria for participating teachers. The content was described in detail, including individual lesson plans. The pedagogical discourse centred on transmission of content to be assessed, a process potentially involving teachers in a
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'cage of rationality', in which an unending process runs from teaching to assessment and back again. Because the teacher's role does not require reflective critical thought, opportunities for breaking out of this cage are limited by the nature of the official provision. This is consistent with Ritzer's (1993) description of the characteristics of McDonaldization which he claims share features of Weber's (1979) predictions for modernity whereby: 'growing rationality would result not only in liberating humankind, but in confining humankind to an "iron cage" of rationality.'

6.4.2 Views from the University of Limerick on the Proletarianisation of Physical Education Teachers,

Tutors on the PETE course share a perception that they disagree about the nature and purpose of Physical Education. Tutors were not questioned directly about proletarianisation of teachers, although their attitudes to the relationship between teachers and the curricula they teach provide an indication of the extent to which teachers are viewed as autonomous. Prescriptive texts, based on Learning Outcomes, have been written by some PETE tutors. Accommodation of pupils' differences is seen as a matter for each individual teacher to deal with as he or she sees fit. Texts provided from within the PESS Department in the University of Limerick do not typically deal with new material or present content in ways which are unusual. These texts tend to provide content in a simplified and easily accessed way which facilitates teachers in acting as conduits through which this content can pass to their pupils who can then be assessed as to how much they have mastered or remembered. Examples of these texts are: 'Action for Life' (1996); 'The Assist Manual' (1986).

Within the University of Limerick PESS Department, the official course outlines, (January, 2001) confirm that planning by rational objectives is by far the most frequently used method of planning courses. Assessment criteria reflect this rational approach to planning. Student teachers are expected to plan for their teaching practices by indicating learning objectives for their pupils. The University of Limerick Teaching Practice Handbook describes an objectives approach to planning lessons. A comprehensive list of 'Objectives of Teaching Practice' appears under the statement: 'Teaching practice should provide student teachers with the opportunity to ...' lending weight to the perceived importance of predictive statements.

The subsequent list of very structured objectives involves observation, researching, evaluating, acquainting, gaining some experience, gaining some knowledge and
providing experience. There is no requirement to explore, create design, reflect consider or invoke higher order thinking consistent with personal analyses.

6.4.3 Proletarianisation of Physical Education teachers - views from Fiona, Siobhan and John along with teachers and pupils in their schools:
Frustration felt by all three teachers in part relates to their feeling manipulated within a system which does not recognise their professional strengths. Fiona in particular is irritated by the objectives based curriculum from the NCCA PE Curriculum Committee, which she believes to be at variance with her strongly held child-centred concerns. Siobhan is happy that she can manipulate her environment to satisfy external criteria while remaining faithful to her principles. John feels that his expertise in relating to individual children’s needs is not acknowledged within the new syllabuses. While he teaches in the way he believes is best for his pupils, he is alienated by powerful influences in Irish Physical Education which appear to ignore his knowledge and experience. All three teachers are aware that most value is placed on aspects of education with which they are not centrally concerned, such as achieving measurable outcomes and reaching standardised goals.

6.4.4 Effects of proletarianisation on Irish teachers:
Personnel within Fiona, Siobhan and John’s schools indicated that they were very supportive of, and impressed by, the contributions of the Physical Education teachers. Questionnaires completed by non-Physical Education teachers in all three schools show that there is enormous support for the work of the PE teachers whose work is acknowledged as being ‘at least as important as every other teacher’ (see page 135). Currently (2001) post-primary school teachers in Ireland believe their relative status is being down-graded because of economic changes. Multi-national companies in Ireland pay their employees higher wages than a teacher’s salary, at all points of the scale. Because teachers typically cannot afford to pay for accommodation in Irish cities young members of the profession are restricted in joining in with the vibrant youth culture associated with successful ‘Celtic Cubs’. Teachers perceive that their role is being defined within a materialistic society in which schooling is regarded as the means through which qualifications and thus well-paid jobs can be achieved. A statement from the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (October, 2000) claims that:
The success of Ireland’s investment in human “capital” development is dependent to a large extent on the maintenance and development of the standards of our education system. The most critical aspect of that investment remains investment in the teaching force.

This crie de coeur apparently fell on deaf ears, as issues raised during the teachers’ strike were not resolved during 2001. State examinations scheduled for the beginning of May normally depend on teachers’ cooperation in preparing pupils for these and in assisting in running them. Although the government indicated that the examinations could be run without teachers’ involvement, teachers stepped down and ran the examinations.  

6.5.1 Regulative discourse and pedagogical discourses – effects of recontextualising the Official Knowledge within schools:

Bernstein (2000, p. 32) describes how: ‘Pedagogical discourse is a principle for the circulation and reordering of discourses.’ He indicates (ibid.) that in:

- taking a discourse from its original site of effectiveness and moving it to a pedagogic site, a gap or rather a space is created. As the discourse moves from its original site to its new positioning as pedagogic discourse, a transformation takes place. The transformation takes place because every time a discourse moves from one site to another, there is a space in which ideology can play.

The movement of an official syllabus into a school involves ideological change as the pedagogical discourse is recontextualised. Bernstein (ibid.) avers that: ‘Pedagogic discourse is constructed by a recontextualising principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other principles to constitute its own order.’

The Department of Education Inspectorate are to manage the implementation of the NCCA Physical Education syllabus in Irish schools. The provision of the Draft PE Syllabus (2000) is consistent with what Bernstein (ibid.) calls an official recontextualising field: ‘created and dominated by the state and its selected agents and ministries.’ He distinguishes between this and a pedagogical recontextualising field which he describes as consisting of: ‘pedagogues in schools and colleges, and departments of education, specialised journals, private research foundations.’

25 The examinations went ahead in 2001 although the main issues of the strike have not been resolved. There is still (2002) considerable ill-will among the teachers.
Within the Irish context there is an overlap between personnel working in the official recontextualising field and those listed as working within the pedagogical recontextualising field. This lack of clarity in roles is indicated within responses to the Draft New Syllabus (2000) from University of Limerick PETE tutors, many of whom are enthusiastic about an imposed syllabus. One tutor (interview, 1999) claimed that it would 'stop teachers from teaching nothing but games'.

Currently Fiona, Siobhan and John enjoy almost total autonomy with regard to selecting a pedagogical discourse for their teaching. This study highlights the potential for this autonomy to be diminished if teachers are treated as a homogenous group. The NCCA as a statutory body is potentially strengthened by links with the University of Limerick. Two PETE tutors are also members of the NCCA PE Syllabus committee.

Bernstein (2000 p. 34) demonstrates how 'the rules of social order are created within the regulative discourse'. The recontextualising principle is always ideologically based and always embedded within a regulative discourse. When teachers receive a provided syllabus they embed the syllabus within a moral discourse which may be different from the regulative discourse within which the official document is embedded. The NCCA Draft Physical Education syllabus (2000) is written with little scope for individual teachers to appropriate the content for their schools (see Appendix 17). A preference for planning by objectives, primarily behavioural objectives within Irish Physical Education is evidenced in the official syllabuses. This helps the State to maintain the subject within conservative and manageable limits.

The dominant discourse implied within the NCCA PE syllabuses is consistent with descriptions of control and transmission, and with the traditional didactic teaching which still dominates Irish school practice at all levels. The lack of a formally defined regulative discourse within which the instructional discourse is embedded leaves teachers to identify their own higher values to inform their teaching, if only to avoid being trapped in Weber's cage of rationality described by Ritzer (1993) as 'McDonaldisation'.

6.5.2 An examination of regulative and pedagogical discourses in the PETE programme in the University of Limerick:

The PETE programme in the University of Limerick is currently (2001) taught within a modular structure. The modules stand alone as components of the course. Despite this university-wide structure, all Physical Education students take the same courses in their
main area. They all take courses in an elective subject, chosen from English, Chemistry, Geography, Irish or Mathematics. Variations exist between elective subjects in terms of numbers of contact hours and types of assessments. Tutors on the PETE courses vary in their perceptions of what constitutes Physical Education and about how successfully the course prepares teachers of Physical Education. Some of these differences are quite easily observed in tutors’ instructional discourses which Bernstein (2000, p. 13) describes as referring to: ‘Selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of the knowledge.’ Ideological differences are uncovered when strongly held positions are defended. The latter corresponds to Bernstein’s (ibid.) rules of social order, consistent with the regulative discourse and referring to: ‘conduct, character and manner.’

Bernstein (ibid., p. 12) describes the principles of ‘classification and framing’ to contextualise curriculum practice. These are helpful in considering attitudes to curricula:

The principle of the classification provides us with the limits of any discourse, whereas framing provides us with the form of realisation of that discourse, that is, framing regulates the realisation rules for the production of the discourse. Classification refers to what, framing is concerned with how.

Writing about teacher training (sic) Penney (1996 p. 14) writes that: ‘frequently the organisational and teaching arrangements further reinforce the divisions and insulation, rather than facilitating their deconstruction.’

The strongly classified and framed situation in the University of Limerick is exacerbated by the fact that many of the people involved in teacher education have been members of staff for almost thirty years. Individual positions have become caricatured and probably over-simplified in their popular representation by generations of graduates and by colleagues, making the discourses of members of the department subject to a potentially over-simplified analysis.

6.5.3 Gap between the ORF and the PRF evidenced by Fiona, Siobhan and John, and teachers and pupils from their schools:

This section examines the potential for Siobhan, Fiona and John to find professional roles within which they feel fulfilled. Their expertise is not fully acknowledged within the requirements outlined by the NCCA PE Syllabuses (2000). They are in danger of being deskillled by non-recognition of the levels of sensitivity and commitment they bring to the complex task of teaching Physical Education. Each of these teachers works within an
invisible curriculum which provides opportunities for their pupils to find intrinsic satisfaction from their Physical Education classes, which are designed to promote long-term personal benefits relevant to individuals.

The central role which the Department of Education ascribes to formal assessment is not reflected in the practices of these teachers. All three assess their pupils using wider criteria than those implied within the ‘Learning outcomes’ provided by NCCA guidelines. In Bernstein’s (2000) terms all three teachers are involved in pursuing a model of competence rather than providing instruction and in celebrating difference rather than requiring sameness. It is difficult to see how the unique professional identity of these three teachers can be accommodated within a system which is so committed to meritocratic individuality. Functionalism, which Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 31) claim underpins Irish education, does not take cognisance of the caring role associated with Physical Education teachers who adopt a child-centred approach. Thomas (1993, p. 7): ‘raises the spectre of teachers desperately trying to resolve the tensions between regulating and balancing their professional ideals and meeting the competing demands of surviving in the education market-place.’ Evans (1993, p. 7) indicates that these are: ‘circumstances hardly conducive to dealing with the complex curricular and pedagogical issues which have to be addressed if equality and equity in PE are to be achieved’.

Tensions described above, which were already apparent in England and Wales in 1993, are becoming evident within Ireland in the early part of the new millennium. A gap is evident between competing sets of values. Among the pedagogical issues is a question about providing the potential for pupils to develop towards autonomy. For this to occur, pupils need to have experience of taking responsibility for their own moral decision-making consistent with Kohlberg’s (1971) description of levels of moral development (see Appendix 11). All three teachers provide opportunities for their pupils to reflect on and consider their own reactions. John’s (1999) requirement that: ‘You may not always know the answer but you have to know the question’, is a message about the need to listen and be involved in the class. John did not simply berate the pupil for not knowing the answer. Fiona’s approach with the disruptive boys was to try to get them to provide reasons for their behaviour, not simply punishing them within the framework provided by her school. Fiona’s concerns about ‘named games’ are consistent with her unwillingness to apply rules without concern for their relevance. By adjusting groupings, Siobhan provided an opportunity for a girl who was bullying others to stop, not because she was
told to but because she was facilitated in changing her behaviour and encouraged to reflect upon the reasons for changing. The role which these teachers have adopted is one in which they interact with their pupils rather than one in which their pupils are recipients of transmitted information and imposed control. Fiona, Siobhan and John’s ways of relating to their pupils indicate that all three teachers are concerned with education as transformation rather than as reproduction.

There appears to be a wider gap between the implied Regulative and the stated Instructional discourses in the three teachers’ practice than is allowed for within the Official Knowledge. Implications of this are examined in Chapter 7. Chapter 7 also examines the potential for each of the three teachers to obtain professional satisfaction from teaching the content of the NCCA syllabuses and whether their ideological positions are compatible with the requirements of what is essentially an assessment-driven process.
Fiona, Siobhan and John are able to reflect critically about potential contributions Physical Education can make, within the confused society associated with late/postmodernism, at a time of rapid and apparently accelerating change. Indicating the complexity of our modern world, Tovey and Share (2000, p. 427) claim: 'The result for post-modernists is a world that is constantly in flux and impossible to pin down, whether by sociologists or anyone else.' Biographies of these three teachers, provided in Chapter 1 demonstrate that they are aware of societal changes which they see occurring around them, some of which they believe have negative implications for the children they teach. Siobhan's (1999) comment, 'She's thinking volleyball and I'm thinking baby', indicates reflective thinking about this girl's priorities. The boy in John's (1999) class who was told, 'You're walking a very dangerous path' did not behave as a cooperating member of his class until John monitored his behaviour closely. Fiona intervened with boys who were not working cooperatively with other people in their class. It is a matter of some concern to these teachers that their direct interaction with these troubled and troublesome pupils may be less effective when formal assessment procedures in Physical Education provide less personalised feedback. Opportunities to know individual pupils will be reduced when teachers are required to concentrate on transmitting content which will be assessed formally.

If we are to change what Physical Education is, then a likely mechanism for that change would seem to be the curriculum for it is the curriculum that defines, describes and communicates the essence of what the subject matter is (Cothran, 2001, p. 67).

The curriculum changes Cothran refers to are within the instructional discourse, without explicit acknowledgement of a regulative discourse. Bernstein (2000, p. 78) states that: 'We are in the process of producing for the first time a virtually secular, market driven official pedagogic discourse, practice and context.' He claims that implications of this include:

...new sources of tension, change and possibility in the relation between the official pedagogic identities and their contexts of transmission and acquisition, and the local identities of the emerging field (Bernstein, ibid.).
Chapter 7 Further Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

Bernstein’s description of a move to secular education indicates the potential for ‘a gap in the discourse’. Fiona, Siobhan and John are working within personally defined parameters which are less precisely defined than the officially described discourse. Perceived differences in intent involve these three teachers in trying to make sense of a curriculum defined within an instructional discourse while their commitment is to a competency-based curriculum which allows them to see their pupils as unique individuals with various aspirations and needs. Bernstein (2000) indicates that the implications of the ‘Official Recontextualising Field’ being the only pedagogical discourse include there being no autonomy for the teacher. This is the logical end point of a process which removes responsibility from individual teachers in favour of centralised State control.

7.1 Reflections regarding the key questions posed:
This study considers issues affecting contemporary Physical Education in Ireland through seeking answers to four central questions. The nature of modern Irish society is reviewed with particular regard to the acceptance of an emphasis on competitive individualism, associated with late capitalism, which has apparently replaced concerns for community and the caring society, to which Ireland aspired in previous times. A further analysis reviews the extent to which Physical Education provision reflects characteristics of McDonaldisation. Ritzer (1993) indicates that efficiency, predictability, calculability and control are central concerns associated with mass production. Homogeneity and measurable outcomes are valued over creativity, autonomy and individuality in this commodification process. Ritzer (ibid.) also indicates the irrationality of rationality, a view which supports a critical analysis of the process. Fiona, Siobhan and John’s roles are examined in contemporary Irish society to establish whether they can be described as being systematically deprofessionalised, deskilled or, in Apple’s (1986) terminology, ‘proletarianised’. The study examines a perceived ‘gap’ between these three teachers’ preferred way of working and the PE syllabus, or ‘text’, from the NCCA (2000). In Bernstein’s (2000) terms, this represents a gap between the Official Knowledge and the Pedagogic Recontextualising Field. Bernstein (2000, p. 65) describes official knowledge as ‘the educational knowledge which the state constructs and distributes in educational institutions’. He also indicates that ‘curricula reform emerges out of a struggle between groups to make their bias (and focus) state policy and practice.’ (Bernstein, ibid.)
Chapter 7  Further Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

The dominant group constructing the Irish Physical Education curriculum is the NCCA PE committee although the extent to which this group is a policy making group is unclear. Lynch (1999, p. 132) lists the NCCA among a group of agencies which she describes as one of 'a whole series of state maintained and controlled bodies operating as advisers and managers of the education process'.

The NCCA PE committee has at least fourteen members. Fiona, Siobhan and John, who have no clear idea of who the members are, rejected the idea that they are represented on the committee. Ideological struggles among staff providing the PETE course within the University of Limerick are paralleled within the NCCA committee (personal communication with members of the committee, June 2000) and, in each group, the majority favours an instrumental curriculum. The strong classification and framing within the NCCA Draft PE Syllabuses (2000) provides a similar structure to the PETE Programme in the University of Limerick (2000), in which, for a majority of courses, observable and/or measurable outcomes are predicted and pursued in an instrumental way. This process is instrumental in identifying a meritocracy who provide evidence of having satisfied the specified criteria. Lynch (1999, p. 179) indicates that inequalities have become legitimised within Irish society: 'As the superordinate-subordinate relations are built into the structures of institutions and systems, they become normalised and habitualised.' Lynch (ibid., p. 178) describes how modern Irish society has 'huge income and wealth differentials' which 'reinforce rather than challenge structural inequality.' She also points out that 'the core differentials of power, wealth and income are not altered' and quotes Hardiman (1998) who believes that: 'Undoubtedly one of the major reasons for this is the political marginality of the groups most affected by poverty.'

Supporting this point, a report about pupils' non-attendance in Irish primary schools from the Curriculum Development Unit, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (2000) claims that '...at the beginning of the twenty-first century the problem of non-attendance is unfortunately much more serious'. Marginalisation is continued, as the cultural capital associated with education is not accessed by the already disadvantaged.

Many changes in Irish society are blatantly obvious. Traffic congestion is an obvious symbol of change. A decline in the churches' dominating role is well documented, for example by Inglis (1998). Acquisition of wealth as a national aspiration is explicit in government policies and in official documents where success is described in terms of financial gain. Protests about income levels, during 2000 and 2001, by both teachers and nurses in Ireland, indicate that these traditionally caring professions are
subjected to scrutiny within economic terms rather than by reference to their contributions to society.\textsuperscript{26} The nurses’ action preceded the teachers’ and, in both cases, protests were pushed to confrontation by government intransigence. Tovey and Share (2000 p. 167) writing about research into educational sociology in Ireland, confirm that until recently: 'The dominant interest was very much in the relationship between socio-economic status and educational attainment.'

Detailed syllabuses leading to certification are currently (2002) provided for Irish teachers in virtually every subject except Physical Education\textsuperscript{27}. Pupils are assessed on their ability to learn and reproduce content identified within the syllabuses. Creativity is typically not valued within the formal assessments. Expressions of individuality are usually discouraged in answering examination questions (personal communications with Leaving Certificate examiners in a range of subjects, September 2000).

Competitive individualism, encouraged within the national achievement-driven process, reflects a mass-marketing mentality. Quantity of cultural capital is given credibility over quality, for example the ‘points’ scored in examinations provide statistical data, a source of delight for analysts and government ministers for whom they can be interpreted to attract votes. Irish sociologists, summarised by Tovey and Share (2000, pp. 176-185), are worried that concerns about performance may distract attention from a fundamental question about social class. Already privileged children are further privileged within the education system.

Bernstein (2000, p. 104) describes research which demonstrates that:

\begin{quote}
Inasmuch as some children recognise the distinguishing features of the school, relative to the children who do not, those that do are in a more powerful position with regard to the school. It is likely that those who do recognise the distinguishing features of the school are more likely to be middle-class children than working-class children.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} Both teachers and nurses eventually withdrew labour as part of their ‘industrial action’ before their concerns were addressed, albeit in a piecemeal way. Websites for the unions describe the processes involved: http://www.s.org/articles/1....ire/o05-prn.shtml impact.ie/links/irunion.htm

\textsuperscript{27} Although a syllabus has been written for Leaving Certificate Physical Education its implementation has been deferred (Irish Independent, 16.5.2001). See footnote 27.
Chapter 7  Further Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

Within Government Documents, including the Education White Paper (1995), Physical Education has been linked to success in sport and to physical fitness. The former has implications for developing patriotic pride, a central concern of Thatcher’s restoration conservatism in Britain.28 The latter is associated with individuals’ taking responsibility for their own well-being; perhaps more consistent with Neo-Liberalism as described by Apple (1999). Tovey and Share (2000, p. 243) demonstrate that in Ireland, as elsewhere, ‘there are indications that income is an important variable affecting health with lower socio-economic status being associated with higher mortality, morbidity and psychological stress.’

The Irish Government’s position in the White Paper (1995) is that: ‘Value for money is essential if students and the community are to get the best possible benefits from the available resources.’ Exactly how this is to be defined is not made clear. Penney and Evans (1997, p. 21) show how, within the UK, trends also observed in the USA and elsewhere are apparent where:

the needs and interests of the economy (of capital accumulation) rather than of children and teachers have taken precedence in the development of a national curriculum for state schools in England and Wales, in an endeavour to nurture particular forms of ‘citizenship’, skilling and social control.

Physical education in Irish post-primary schools is usually taught to mixed ability groups. When classes are grouped by ability it is on the basis of academic ability and not for Physical Education (personal communication PEAl spokesperson, 2001). For some activities, particularly swimming, classes are sub-divided into ability groups with the least able and the most able separated for instruction, a practice whereby the transmission of information is given precedence over pupils’ development within a social setting. Physical education classes require skilful teaching to accommodate all members of the class in activity which is relevant, safe and appropriate and in the swimming-pool environment some teachers apparently find this difficult to achieve. The Amateur Swimming Association, in its publication called ‘Education Standard’ (May 2001) outlines a National Plan for Teaching Swimming in which ‘grouping by ability’ is a required skill within one of the ‘Assessment objectives’. A highly structured, outcomes-based approach associated with Governing Body Awards is probably attractive to less confident teachers, as are the NCCA syllabuses. Bernstein (2000, p. 58) indicates that within the Thatcher regime of the late 1970s: ‘Survival and growth depended now upon optimising a market niche, upon objective

28 Slack (2000, pp. 44-54) makes reference to this process.
production, upon value added procedures.' These conditions are consistent with the commodification of education associated with credentialism. Attitudes and values identifiable in contemporary Ireland conform to Bernstein's description, with only lip service paid to the accommodation of difference. Teachers who would like to have a transformative effect on their pupils are unlikely to be satisfied by teaching solely to achieve a set of pre-set, global objectives. The adoption of provided objectives inserts a layer of control which prevents individual teachers from involving their pupils in questioning the status quo. The level of personal decision-making is arrested at a level consistent with Kohlberg's (1971) fourth stage (see Appendix 11). Because the regulative discourse under which some teachers work is invisible, other teachers can be unaware of the central importance to their colleagues of a set of rules of social order. Bernstein (2000, p. 186) makes this point by reference to 'specific code modalities', the manifestation of which he describes within three headings:

- **context** translates as interactional practices
- **meanings** translates as orientation to meanings
- **realizations** translates as textual productions.

Codes are tacitly acquired and they influence teachers' professional practice by describing particular power relations and indicating how content is selected and presented. The practices of Fiona, Siobhan and John are embedded within regulative discourses concerned with the social and personal development of the children they teach. Their code modalities are shared within regulative discourses which highlight practices predominantly focussed on children acquiring attitudes and values within a group. All three teachers value unique responses from children, encouraging children to be confident in their individuality and willing to question situations they encounter. The strongly disapproving reaction of Fiona's pupils to the aggressive basketball coach demonstrated their ability to recognise and analyse an unwelcome episode.

Teachers who want to change their pupils' attitudes and values must first be aware of their pupils' current views. The process of transforming depends, Lynch (1999, p. 49) argues, on an assumption that:

- teachers will know and understand the oppression of groups, such as migrant workers, working class people or disabled people and act on their behalf through redefining the parameters of educational discourse.

She expands on this idea:
Even if this is desirable (that is that one speaks or works on behalf of the 'Other'), and this is highly debatable, it is not very likely to happen in societies where teachers are not proletarianised, or where they are incorporated into the decision-making machinery of the state itself.

Taking Lynch's position above in conjunction with Macdonald and Tinning's (1995, p. 108) description of how, in Australia:

PETE students' experiences reflected many indicators of proletarianisation in that they received fragmented and decontextualised knowledge, given without scope for their own theorising, thereby fulfilling both ideological and technical proletarianization trends.

A case could be made that teachers are going to resist either for ideological reasons, or because they are proletarianised to become the 'other' when a voice is required. Fiona, Siobhan and John perceive themselves as being involved in equipping their pupils to resist aspects of the society in which they will live as adults, apparently for ideological reasons. Their behaviour is consistent with professionalism. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 252) describe how: 'The development of professional power does not rest only on securing rights over knowledge and practice - it is also based on interactive relationships such as trust.' Within teaching, this trust is developed with colleagues, pupils and pupils' parents.

7.2.1 Valuing Physical Education in Contemporary Ireland – commodity or community?

'Students' grades are often regarded as only indicative of their ability, as if the teachers' skills, the learning context and so on had no effect' (Fryer, 1996, p. 18). Attempts to make objective judgements about students' work ignore the creative potential of individuals. Bonnet (1994, p. 163) has a fundamental question about educational assessment: 'What conditions provide the maximum opportunity for overt responses which are a true expression of a child's thinking and understanding?'

Standardised assessment does not involve learners in making full use of their creative faculties. They may become more concerned about relative successes than with making judgements about their potential for achievement in their own as well as in other people's terms. Summative assessment involving goal-setting is limited because the outcomes are pre-decided. Objectively measured assessment is

29 They are all opposed to bullying behaviours and they are concerned with values being prioritised within a 'concern for others' framework. The 'creed of greed' is not encouraged.
unlikely to promote creativity and higher order thinking. People with disabilities are discriminated against when there is a common assessment for all. Bonnet (ibid., p. 173) indicates that: ‘if we wish to achieve assessment in any full educational sense we must be significantly concerned with the progress of unique individuals in their own understanding of what they have learnt.’

By providing broad descriptions of their purposes and functions, institutions may cause their members to feel dwarfed by these over-arching goals. For example, the Mission Statement of the University of Limerick claims the pursuit of ‘excellence and relevance’ which makes any one person’s contribution a smallish drop in the ocean. To be effective, goals need to be accessible to those who are pursuing them, that is neither too precise nor too broad.

A need to analyse the specific situation in which teaching and learning are to occur is described by Kirk (2000, p. 204) as part of the planning process. Situating a curriculum is essential for critical pedagogues. Mawer (1996, p. 147) indicates that the articulation of ‘situational understanding’ can be viewed as the central task of mentoring student teachers.

Fiona, Siobhan and John knowingly share an educational perspective. We are each committed to developing Physical Education as a medium through which children can be educated to know themselves and their society more accurately, with positive feelings about their own roles within this society. Contrary to the dominant ideologies informing Irish education, identified by Drudy and Lynch (1993) described in Chapter 2, the three teachers and I share the view that every child is a unique individual whose needs and aspirations can be considered within his or her Physical Education classes. We see each class as a social occasion in which the teacher has a role in providing guidance as to how different pupils can be encouraged to feel valued. Physical education is viewed as a process rather than as a set of outcomes, although the extent to which these two overlap is not agreed. Success is measured in many ways, not least of which is in terms of personal and social development. These three teachers occupy different positions on a continuum within a child-centred paradigm. Fiona’s concerns with her pupils’ social and personal development completely overshadow concerns about the technical content of her teaching. Siobhan recognises that content and pedagogy are inter-linked. I saw her teaching, in a didactic way, skills associated with First Aid. I also watched her teaching specific Basketball passing skills. Siobhan is aware of the need to embed the teaching of content in an appropriate pedagogical discourse. She knows that the teaching of
some skills does not involve negotiation, for example resuscitation skills. Fiona deliberates about the selection of content and its possible effects on her pupils, to the extent that she uses very little direct teaching. John’s teaching demonstrates awareness of a desire for order and discipline which is consistent with his belief that children require a disciplined environment in which to move and learn. Of the three teachers, John is most concerned with the transmission of content. He is also aware of the need to make his lessons relevant to everyone in the mixed ability groups that he teaches and he maintains a very close control over the class to ensure that there is no-one left out or treated unfairly.

These three positions are all consistent with Sugrue’s (1997, p. 53) description of child-centredness in contemporary Irish primary schools where ‘.... there is an emphasis on the social development of learners which is more inclusive than the austerity associated with archetypal notions of the master and the mistress.’

Of the three teachers, John most frequently uses transmission as a means of communication. He is most explicit about how he wants pupils to develop as a result of his teaching. He is concerned with their learning practical skill while behaving in ways which indicate concern for themselves and for others. This may be consistent with his age or it may be that because of his experience he has identified most clearly where, in his own terms, he can achieve success. John’s pedagogy reflects a certainty about what he is doing. Pupils are involved in working on tasks and in composing phrases of movement, always within John’s understanding of what is appropriate for the particular pupils involved. Fiona does not convey certainty about the content. Her questions are genuine attempts to obtain information and not to receive ‘right’ answers. Siobhan alters her discourse in response to her pupils’ behaviour, not by a major shift of emphasis, but subtly and perhaps simply by changing her position in the room. All three teachers are aware of the rich potential of ‘teachable moments’ and they capitalise on these when they arise. The regulative discourses which inform their practice allow these teachers to prioritise their responses to pupils’ behaviours. An example of this is in Siobhan’s description of how she and her colleague discontinued their involvement with the elite performers in the school teams to devote more time to less motivated pupils. John’s involvement with the hockey team included a requirement from them to remember that ‘nice people play on this team.’ Fiona’s pupils are reminded constantly that she is concerned with them as members of a social group. Her instructional discourse is more difficult to access than her regulative discourse. Her pupils are aware that she
holds strong positions with regard to their behaviour and the ways in which they are taught; for example they were shocked to witness a coach from another school shouting at his or her team because of their poor performance.

None of the three teachers assesses their pupils formally. Even when Siobhan taught a class within the Leaving Certificate Applied course she believed that she could pursue undeclared goals, while satisfying the requirements of the syllabus. John writes a comment on each pupil's work, based on his observations. Fiona aims to get to know the pupils well enough to make their classes individually relevant. (All comments based on interviews during 2000).

7.2.2 The three teachers' roles in the Irish Physical Education community – pursuing uniformity or encouraging uniqueness?

Although Fiona, Siobhan and John believe that as PE teachers they are different from the majority and they share characteristics with each other, each is clearly an individual. They are not members of any influential groups within the Irish Physical Education community. They feel removed from official decision-making which affects the nature and purpose of their subject. John has tried during his years of teaching to share his perceptions of Physical Education with other Physical Education teachers but he feels thwarted in a variety of ways. This study indicates that there are clear differences among the three teachers and their abilities to teach confidently have developed in personal ways. The official position within Irish Physical Education, articulated within the NCCA Syllabuses (2000), implies that Physical Education is concerned principally with sport and health. These two aspects clearly inform content and, inevitably, teacher success will be linked to measurable outcomes supporting a regulative discourse. Both sport and health have obvious publicly-acclaimed values which politicians and the media recognise as unproblematic, and which can be extolled without controversy. Bernstein's (2000, p. 102) description of an 'instrumental order' which he sees as being involved with 'the transmission of skills' differs from what he calls an 'expressive order' which he claims is the 'transmission of conduct, character and manner'. Teaching to achieve measurable outcomes is necessarily focussed within the instrumental order and may not be concerned with the expressive order. This is consistent with education as training. Penney (1998, p. 7) believes that 'established and 'traditional' identities are retaining their dominance in and of curricula and pedagogic processes.'
Ball (1990, p. 155) wants to suggest that:

this shift is part of a 'radical right' thrust to gain closer and more precise control over the processes of schooling, and that the discourse of management plays an essential role in achieving this shift and justifying these forms of control.

Fiona, Siobhan and John are necessarily affected by the central control of education by the state. Lynch (1999, p. 96) indicates that '...the state controls the organisation of schooling, in terms of curricula, examinations, teacher appointments, and the relationships between schools and higher education colleges.'

The three teachers feel unclear about their role within this process, seeing themselves as part of a dynamic process rather than as a resisting group. They feel, for example, that parents of the children they teach are aware of their positive contributions and that they are valued within their schools. Department of Education policy expresses disapproval of homogeneity in education. Among the Educational Principles in the White Paper (1995, p. 6) is included a statement that 'While the capacity to develop is part of human nature, each individual has unique learning needs'. These needs, it could be argued, are served only by the sensitivity of individual teachers and are unlikely to be met within the tenets of McDonaldisation.

Transmission and control are the dominant discourses within traditional content-centred education and they are evidenced in attitudes associated with what Evans and Davies (1997, p. 195) refer to as the 'instrumentalism of the new right'. Opportunities in Ireland still exist in Evans and Davies' terms to keep this instrumentalism of the New Right 'at bay'. It is the case that 'space for reflective teaching and teacher education remains' although this space seems to be shrinking. The disenchantment of teachers like Fiona, Siobhan and John with the direction in which they are being taken is apparently not sufficiently widely felt to make a policy-changing impact on state policy. Ireland appears to satisfy conditions as indicated by Evans and Davies (ibid.) in as much as: 'The principles of relevance, certainty, cheapness and choice, rather than educational opportunity and need will drive PE practice in ITT\textsuperscript{30} and in schools.'

Evidence gathered within this study affirms the view that the hegemony desires to make Physical Education an examined subject within the state examinations. The rationale for this appears to be primarily concerned with altering perceptions that
Physical Education has a lower status than those subjects currently certificated by the state. Those pupils, teachers and school principals interviewed and surveyed within this study do not support this view of Physical Education as a lower status subject. The PETE tutors in the University of Limerick are not unified about the value of the certification of Physical Education although the majority of tutors favour a state examination in Physical Education.

Strategies used in the production and implementation of new syllabuses are consistent with an instrumental approach, apparently unconcerned with individual differences, either among pupils or within their situations. Already privileged pupils, who are well fed and whose parents provide plenty of support for their exercise, continue to start at a clearly advantaged point. Lynch (1999, p. 101) writing about Irish education indicates that '...the direct effects of poverty in marginalized working-class communities were very visible to community activists, what was most visible to teachers were the relative advantages of middle-class pupils.' Teachers, as caring professionals who want to ensure equity in their classrooms, will not be facilitated within content-based syllabuses which have measurable outcomes as the favoured mode of assessment. Assessing pupils in predetermined skilful behaviours discriminates against those with unusual abilities and potentially excuses teachers from making special provisions. Lynch (1999, p. 300-301) provides a salutary analysis of the ways in which assessment in Irish education is circumscribed. She indicates (ibid. p. 305) that:

Equality of condition would require not just that various groups were enabled to access, participate and succeed on equal terms with others, but that the organisation of school life, and the formal curriculum, took account of their lifestyle and culture and included it fully in the school/college. It would mean mainstreaming differences into the curriculum, organisation, culture and life of the school.

None of these aims is achievable through describing instrumental outcomes and control. The current undifferentiated approach to assessment within Irish education coincides with Drewett's (1991, p. 110) description of British increasingly common opinion that 'the public examination system as it stands, represents a narrow and unambitious approach to the problem of measuring educational achievement.'

A strong reliance on a sporting paradigm is evident within the NCCA PE syllabuses. For example, practical ability in aquatics is assessed in terms of ability to swim 'recognised strokes'. Ritzer's (1993) McDonaldisation metaphor is appropriate when

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pupils' performance must conform to a model. A strongly classified and framed curriculum provides support for psychological behaviourism as a strategy for organising units of work. Bernstein’s (1990, p. 213) shows how concern with transmission, along with a focus on intra-individual relations, is promoted within psychological behaviourism. Bureaucratic accountability can cause teachers to appear more efficient as they work to meet extrinsic demands. Imposed syllabuses ensure that teachers' behaviours are more predictable and the requirements of calculability and control, associated with McDonaldisation, are associated with processes observable when teachers work to the beat of an external drum.

7.2.3 Teachers' roles in contemporary Irish education – professional or proletarianised?

Bernstein (2000, p. 61) describes how he sees the state's role in the recontextualising of knowledge within contemporary society:

...the state, through greater centralisations, and new forms of decentralisation, has shifted pedagogic models and modes, management structures, and cultures of all educational institutions and sponsored generic modes. The reproduction of state-recognised and -rewarded forms is facilitated by the change in position of recontextualising fields (ORF, PRF), the introduction of new discourses and, of crucial importance, the domination of new actors with new motivations.

These 'new actors' tend to favour a bureaucratic approach to management and they depend on market-models for their management skills. The effect of this in both the teaching profession and the health professions is that traditional caring roles are now being defined in terms of their productivity and their economic efficiency which, in turn, puts teachers and health professionals under enormous pressure to achieve all that is required of them.

Hargreaves (1994, p. 125) claims that 'These rising demands on and expectations of teachers certainly amount to strong support for the intensification thesis, as does the combination of high expectations with reduced support.' The proletarianization of teachers is consistent with a society working within features of modernity associated with scientific certainty. Fortunately, as Apple (1986, p. 44) recorded, teachers resist this process in a way similar to Siobhan's reaction to the Leaving Certificate Applied syllabus. Apple describes a process which he calls 'intensification' whereby teachers are required to spend ever-increasing amounts of time 'on technical tasks such as
grading and record-keeping. The complexity of this process is described by Apple (ibid.):

Few of the teachers were passive in the face of this.................the active role of teachers in attempting to win back some time, to resist the loss of control of their own work, and to slow down the pace at which students and they were to proceed, the way this is done is not necessarily very powerful. In these instances time was fought for simply to relax, if only for a few minutes. The process of control, the increasing technicization and intensification of the teaching act, the proletarianization of their work – all of this was an absent presence. It was misrecognised as a symbol of their increased professionalism.

Teachers' ability to control their own situation ensures that their cooperation is needed to implement any successful programme of change. If they are required to implement someone else's programme, they are always going to interpret it in a way which suits them, often adapting the materials to fit in with their preferred practice (see Apple, 1985, p. 37-8).

In Ireland, the proliferation of industries producing information technology, especially computers and mobile telephones, is significant in understanding the emphasis given to multi-national style management of the workforce. For young people the attraction of a job which pays well and offers attractive working conditions is significant in the choice of subjects in school and in the way in which work and leisure are perceived. Teachers who do not subscribe to the hegemonic position that competing for goods is the raison d'être in contemporary society are unlikely to convince their pupils and their pupils' parents of an alternative path, unless they can provide justifications to counter the dominant belief.

7.2.4 Do the draft NCCA PE Syllabuses (2000) facilitate reflective teaching and academically based teacher education? Is there a gap?

Fiona, Siobhan and John are undoubtedly reflective teachers within Gore's (1993, p. 149) perspective which refers to:

teaching which attends mindfully to the social and political context of schooling, as well as to technical and practical aspects, and which also assesses classroom actions on the basis of their abilities to contribute towards greater equity and social justice, and more humane conditions in schooling and society.

All three of these teachers are aware of personal implications of adopting a syllabus which describes in detail content and assessment procedures. All three are concerned about the effect on the children they teach as opposed to worrying only
about how their own practice would be affected. None of the teachers is prepared to become involved in reproducing attitudes and values in their pupils of which they disapprove. Fiona dislikes the mores associated with competitive team games. John is highly critical of the culture surrounding schools' rugby and hockey as he thinks that the amount of hype surrounding matches is inappropriate. Siobhan was disturbed by the effect on her pupils of swimming in a schools' gala where the competition was at a much higher level than their ability could match.

Among the teachers is an awareness that the highly competitive environment associated with competitive sport is undesirable for their pupils' optimal social development. John deplores the drinking and drug-taking which are widely reported as being widespread among Irish youths, and he associates the taking of creatine by school rugby players with this culture. All are concerned about teaching in a way which emphasises understanding and employment of safe principles. None of the three sees pupils' performance achievements as valuable indicators of their teaching success. The behaviourist approach favoured within the NCCA document is not consistent with the learning provided by these three teachers. Macdonald and Tinning (1995, p. 99) indicate that 'It is important that PETE graduates have the skills and values that have been identified as important for all teachers.' They describe how: 'These include a broad and balanced knowledge base, together with a balance in intellectual skill and practical competencies, skills of critical reflection and collaboration, and the valuing of access and success for all learners.'

This appears to be commonsense until the trends within PETE are examined within the move towards a technocratic rationality. Giroux (1981, p. 43) describes how:

Given the positivist emphasis on technical control and coordination, it is not surprising that the role of theory in this perspective functions as a foundation to boost scientific methodology. At the heart of this perspective is the assumption that theory plays a vital role in manipulating certain variables to either bring about a certain state of affairs or to prevent its occurrence.

Tinning and Macdonald (1995, p. 99) indicate how research in Australia has revealed 'the dominance of utilitarian, scientific, technical, and male-defined conceptions of Physical Education in some contemporary PETE programs (sic).'

Inevitably when teachers are well qualified and, demonstrably in the case of Irish PETE graduates, intellectually talented people, if they are required to work within an environment dominated by technical considerations which limit their creative potential, they are going to be frustrated. The prescriptive nature of the NCCA (2000)
syllabuses could limit teachers' creativity by providing solutions to teachers' questions. Within what Abbs (1989 p. 89) calls the 'mathmatico-scientific, mode of investigation or order of knowledge', he indicates that:

Qualities previously associated with the artist's mission – inwardness, passion, vision, personality, intensity of experience – under the mathmatico-scientific paradigm came to be regarded as 'outdated', and more public and more impersonal qualities were thought to be essential.

Colquhoun (1992, p. 8) identifies a similar process to that described by Abbs', indicating that, '..at the tertiary level the Physical Education curriculum is becoming more objective and quantitative and the subjective and humanistic aspects of the subject are becoming trivialised.'

This is consistent with the current (2002) University of Limerick PETE programme where students consistently have difficulty in working within creative and artistic discourses, particularly in Dance courses, (personal communication from course leader and dance tutor, 2001). Cultural values associated with dance are resisted by students who are apparently suspicious of non-purposive, creative activity.

Macdonald and Tinning (1995, p. 101) argue that 'the future of PETE with its current structures and hegemonic knowledge bases, will limit the possibilities of physical educators to value equitable, intrinsically satisfying, and creative Physical Education programmes.'

A desire to work only within a routinized, unproblematic discourse, where one's own contribution is predictable and 'right', is consistent with a move towards proletarianisation as described by Macdonald and Tinning (1995). Hargreaves (1994, p. 257) indicates that teachers develop cultural links which create possibilities for expanding their professional abilities in various ways, for example:

Beyond schools themselves, there are trends in staff development towards establishing professional networks among teachers where teachers are connected by electronic mail and satellite and can meet in smaller interconnected sites.

This hopeful sign of teachers creatively networking implies that teachers who acknowledge each other within what Paulo Friere (1994) calls 'intellectual kinship', can share experiences and ideas within a supportive, like-minded group. Fiona sent me a booklet she has compiled of cooperative games which she thought would be of interest to PETE students on the 'Minor Games' course which I teach. Sharing resources in this way is part of a process by which teachers can support each other professionally and develop personal and inter-personal confidence.
Chapter 7 Further Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

In a study examining the proletarianization of teachers in Australian schools Macdonald (1995, p. 129) uncovered the following five main categories underpinning teacher dissatisfaction:

a) lack of status  
b) repetitive nature of Physical Education work  
c) limited decision making  
d) personal and professional surveillance  
e) unprofessional staffroom culture.

None of the above is currently applicable to Fiona, Siobhan or John's situations. The issue of proletarianization would have more relevance to a situation in which the use of the NCCA PE syllabus was strongly enforced. Derber (1983) provides the following conditions: 'When a teacher loses control over the technical (administrative decisions) and ideological (social and intellectual goals) aspects of their work, it can be interpreted as indicative of proletarianization.' Derber's description is less complex than Apple's (1986) which indicates that teachers resist radical changes in their day-to-day practice. The main Irish post-primary teachers' union, the ASTI, has reportedly indicated (see footnote 3) that the assessment procedures required by the NCCA Draft PE Syllabuses (2000) are not acceptable to its members.

7.3 Reviewing the current position:

It is undoubtedly the case that Ireland has become entrained in global capitalism with all the associated implications, including the evolution of a society which is more concerned with its young people as members of the work-force than as members of a society in which they are cherished as individuals. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 170) indicate how: 'The official discourse on Irish education has come to be suffused with a concern for labour market issues and competitiveness to the detriment of more humanist concerns.'

Ireland's education system is instrumentally justified in terms of low unemployment statistics and numbers in full-time education\(^3\) rather than in terms of the young people who drink excessively or take non-prescription drugs of various sorts or who are involved in petty crime and acts of violence.

The first question in this study is posed as a political question to establish the role of education within contemporary Ireland and specifically the position of Physical Education within Irish schools. The nature of Irish education, as described in Chapter

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31 Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 85) suggest that 'having one of the highest retention rates in education in the EC, Ireland is fast becoming a sophisticated well-educated industrialised society in which rational rather than traditional authority holds sway.'
One, indicates that there was no period corresponding to the late 1960's and early 1970's in the UK, when the Plowden Report (1969) was influential in ensuring the centrality of children in the education process. Irish children's success in school is measured in terms of their ability to meet adult defined goals. Their own voices are rarely heard. Lynch (1999, p. 180) indicates that: 'Although our failure to establish structures for listening to children is not unique to Ireland, our institutions are, in several regards, less respectful of children than those in other countries.'

Fiona, Siobhan and John are all trying to hear the voices of the children they teach. The discourse of the Draft NCCA PE syllabus (2000) does not facilitate this process. Gore (1993, p. 60) describes how, within schools, children learn to behave in ways which are expected of them:

We can say that pedagogy produces particular political regimes of the body. Such technologies of the bodily self can also be understood as manifestations of the internal (mental) self—how people identify themselves.

The requirements of the NCCA (2000, p. 14) syllabuses include matching models, primarily of sports-related behaviours. Specific 'learning outcomes' in Aquatics state that: 'The student will perform front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke and butterfly strokes'. This provides little scope for developing a personal relationship with the exciting three-dimensional medium of water. The requirement to perform precisely described movements is consistent with the regulation and normalisation associated with Foucault's 'disciplinary society' described by Kirk (1998) with regard to Physical Education in Australia and Britain between 1880 and 1950. Foucault's analysis of the social construction of the body is described by Jones and Porter (1999, p. 25) as reflexive. They claim that: 'A body analysed for humours contains humours; a body analysed for organs and tissues is constituted by organs and tissues; a body analysed for psycho-social functioning is a psycho-social object.'

Physical educationists have constructed the body in various ways as described by Bain (1990, p. 29) who indicates that within a technocentric ideology, 'physical educators view 'man' (sic) as machine and aim to produce the most efficient machine measured in terms of performance'

Colquhoun (1990, pp. 229-33) writes that: 'Health as self-control emerges as a major focusing concept in school health education through two prevailing messages: first, a mechanistic conception of the human body; and second, a reliance on the closely related controlling devices of 'self-responsibility' and 'habits'.
Chapter 7 Further Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

One tension between Fiona, Siobhan and John and the dominant position can be described as the three teachers being strongly aware of their pupils as unique individuals as opposed to viewing them as objectified bodies which can be schooled and assessed. Evans, Davies and Penney (1999, p. 12) write that:

The work of Foucault provides a majestic means of understanding discursive practice; how the thinking and actions of teachers and pupils are framed by wider ‘regimes of truth’ relating for example, to the scientific, physical, political educational, economic and other knowledge and ideological domains of contemporary society and which are selected and recontextualised in ITE and schools.

It is currently (2002) possible for teachers to resist the dominant ideology which informs the Draft NCCA syllabus (2000). Decisions about implementing certification of Physical Education have reportedly been deferred. The reasons are stated to be economic and organisational32. The ASTI does not support the proposed assessment procedures. This postponement enables teachers like the three in this study to continue working as they have been doing, without feeling that they are preventing their pupils from achieving success in an extrinsically validated form. Bernstein’s (2000, p. 11) analysis of curriculum explains that ‘...the long socialisation into the pedagogic code can remove the danger of the unthinkable and of alternative realities.’ Fiona, Siobhan and John think in a way consistent with Bernstein’s (2000, p. 30) ‘unthinkable’. They are concerned about ways in which bodies are socially constructed. They believe they have a role to play in the formation of their pupils’ identities. If they were required to implement the NCCA Syllabus, their curriculum would become more strongly framed and their role more externally defined. Tovey and Share (2000, p. 166) indicate that the NCCA Draft PE Syllabus (2000) is not necessarily typical of contemporary Irish education. They believe that:

It would be a mistake...to assume a clear and unambiguous link between education and the project of modernisation. While education has been associated with the development of scientific rationality, specific types of interpersonal relationship, achievement orientation and a facility with technology, it has also provided an arena for the development of attitudes, behaviour and relationships that have been seen as barriers to the development of a modern sensibility.

This is hopeful from the three teachers' points of view as are the views of OBuachalla (1974) who remarked that:

32 Katherine Donnelly reports in the Irish Independent (16.5.2001) that;
it often appears in education systems as if the rate of change and innovation is frustratingly slow; education seems to follow a haphazard pattern of development with huge internal resistance within systems inhibiting long-term adaptation and reform.

The three teachers form part of an internal resistance within the PE community in Ireland, the strength of which has not been tested. Bernstein and OBuachalla agree that it is apparently only as the result of a lengthy process of erosion that educational change occurs. The gap between Fiona, Siobhan and John’s regulative discourses and the instrumentalism of the official syllabus may be typical of reflective teachers who want to define and teach their own curricula. As the complex role of education evolves, however slowly, official perceptions of the role of education, and specifically Physical Education within Ireland, will infer the extent to which Fiona, Siobhan and John continue to feel different from the majority. Evans and Davies (1997, p. 195) write that: ‘There may be places in the future where the narrow instrumentalism of the new Right is kept at bay and where space for reflective teaching and teacher education remains.’

This process is aptly analysed by Bernstein (2000, p. 114), writing about ‘the pedagogic device’ which he describes as:

a symbolic ruler, ruling consciousness in the sense of having power over it, and ruling, in the sense of measuring the legitimacy of the realisations of consciousness. The questions become whose ruler, what consciousness? In this way there is always a struggle between social groups for ownership of the device. Those who own the device own the means of perpetuating their own power through discursive means and establishing, or attempting to establish, their own ideological representations.

In Irish Physical Education there is still evidence of reflective space. If the three teachers continue to expand their ‘intellectual kinship’, promoting awareness, in Bernstein’s (1996, p. 4) terms, that ‘the production, distribution and circulation of knowledge’ of how Physical Education can influence the positive development of Irish children cannot be ‘separated from inner commitments and dedications’, it may be possible to reawaken what Bernstein (2000, p. 79), calls the ‘Moral imagination.’

‘A confidential report highlights the lack of resources in schools and difficulties with assessment arrangements and says it is not “possible to indicate a starting date for a schedule of implementation”.’
CHAPTER 8: EVALUATION OF PROJECT

8.0 Personal reflection:
This chapter reviews the study and examines its success in illuminating the questions raised. The extent to which the selected methodology was successful in providing a context for, and indicating the broader relevance of the views represented by the three teachers is considered. When I undertook this study I was convinced that Irish Physical Education teachers were capable of more complexity within their jobs than was officially recognised, and that they were being undervalued within the State Education system. Having taught undergraduate students on their PETE course and having been in dialogue with Physical Education teachers in Ireland for almost thirty years, I remain convinced that their potential to contribute to the overall education of Irish children is not adequately exploited. At the start of this study I believed that a scientific approach to Physical Education teaching in Ireland was the most respected approach both in PETE and by practitioners. As I am accustomed to interrogating my practice within education theory, grounded in the disciplines of philosophy, psychology and sociology, professional dialogue with immediate colleagues whose practice is justified within instrumental positivism is difficult. My practice does not fit into the dominant ideology in the Physical Education and Sports Sciences Department in the University of Limerick, although I have not always been clear about the rationales which inform the professional practice of other members of the department. This study has informed my understanding. I now have more detailed concepts and language which help to explain different sets of values and with which to engage in dialogue with colleagues. I understand that ideology can inform what Kenway (1990, p. 178) calls 'collective will' which can lead to an ideological struggle, consistent with Gramsci’s (1971, p. 324) ‘war of position’. As already indicated in earlier chapters, this struggle is evidenced within Irish Physical Education where competing ideologies vie for dominance.

8.0.1 Reflection about the three teachers:
I have explored the professional practice of three idealistic and committed Irish Physical Education teachers concerned about contributing to children’s total education, rather than with producing evidence to demonstrate achievements, as stipulated within the new...
Chapter 8 Evaluation of Project

NCCA syllabuses. If, as is planned, Physical Education is examined within the Leaving Certificate Examination, teachers who prepare pupils for this state examination can demonstrate success through extrinsic achievements. Perhaps, as the PEAl contend, these teachers will achieve more academic credibility, or perhaps the requirement for external accountability will become part of a deskilling process. My concerns are that teachers who implement a prescribed syllabus will be working within Bernstein’s (2000, pp. 44 ff) performance model, as opposed to the competence model currently favoured by the three teachers. I am convinced that time spent by students on critical reflection following the University of Limerick PETE course would be further diluted if a performance model were successfully implemented in Irish schools’ Physical Education curricula. Teachers would increasingly focus on explicit classroom management and on mastering content for teaching, with no specific requirement for concern about the psychological, sociological or philosophical implications of their practice on individual pupils. The professional preparation of teachers would become even less theory-and-research orientated with a resultant loss of professionalism. This pessimism reflects my awareness of what has already been described as happening in other countries.

8.1 Choice of topic:

My belief in the value of Physical Education as a medium for holistic child-centred education underpins this study. This study has helped me, in a tangible way, to progress my understanding of alternative interpretations of the nature and purpose of education, specifically Physical Education. Increased familiarity with academic literature describing socio-cultural influences within contemporary Ireland has furthered this understanding. I have also addressed some of my concerns about the effects of late capitalism on attitudes to education and its role in Irish people’s lives.

I understand that when the churches were the main providers of education in Ireland, teachers, often nuns, brothers and priests, employed a discourse within which compliance and conformity were rewarded. A regulative discourse, tacitly accepted by everyone involved, was provided within the tenets of the church. All my colleagues on the PETE course in Limerick (Summer 2002) received at least some of their post-primary education from members of religious orders, in contrast with my experience in a

33 The Draft New NCCA PE syllabuses are being amended by the course committee ‘on the basis of feedback received during consultations’. (Personal communication NCCA Official, August 2001). They will not be available to schools until these amendments are completed. Implementation of the junior and senior cycle syllabuses ‘might happen in September, 2002’ (NCCA Spokesman September 2001).
Northern Ireland State-run all-girls' grammar school. Aspects of modernity have replaced the church's centrality in Irish society. Chapter Two describes signs that Ireland is now in a late modern or a post-modern phase. These terms help to illuminate the central questions in this study by providing a context for Irish society and to set this study in an international context.

In contemporary Irish education, an instrumental approach which involves planning by rational objectives is the preferred model. This is evidenced in the Draft NCCA PE Syllabuses (2000). For at least some Irish Physical Education teachers, no other approach is conceivable. Scientific positivism provides tools to quantify aspects of pupils' performance and behaviour, providing impressive records of achievement. Intrinsic achievements are less easily demonstrated. The role of a pupil in Irish education has traditionally been that of a recipient of wisdom, typically transmitted from a teacher. Contemporary developments within Irish Physical Education affirm this position. I am concerned that neither teachers nor pupils are explicitly involved in the creation of their own roles and that the potential of both to think creatively is not being required.

The complexity of viewpoints represented by these three teachers as individuals is considered to be microcosmic of the complexity among PE teachers nation-wide, masked within a simple division by ideology. The three teachers are, like all teachers, working with children in a problematic world with glaring inequities and only limited resources to deal with them. Like all teachers, Fiona, Siobhan and John have strengths and weaknesses. They do not represent a romantic ideal. Even in their responses to the production of new syllabuses, they are very different from one other.

8.2 Choice of Methodology:

A qualitative mode of research enabled me to understand the personal situations of three selected teachers. I avoided the impersonality of conducting statistical analyses of large samples. I use ethnography to describe how three teachers are working within an Ireland where wealth, at a level never previously experienced, is available to some of the population and visible to all. Information, gathered from various sources, provides data, which are woven into a story. The four central questions on which this study focuses enable a context to be established for the three teachers' work. I reflexively review my perceptions of values in contemporary Ireland, by comparison with descriptions of how Physical Education in other countries has responded to changes associated with what some writers call postmodernism. My role in interpreting and recording the teachers'
Chapter 8  Evaluation of Project

voices is consistent with Finlay's (1999, 2.6) description of 'constitutive reflexivity' in which 'the fact that the author constitutes and forms part of the "reality" she creates is axiomatic to the analytic style'.

The dialogue between these teachers and myself has been taking place for a maximum of twenty-five years and a minimum of nine, and is expected to continue for many more years. Because of talking to, and observing, these teachers in their schools, my understanding of their teaching personae is enriched by my awareness of the contexts within which they make sense of their practice. Acquaintanceship with the workings of their schools allows me to apply theoretical analyses, predominantly from Basil Bernstein's writings, to these teachers' situations and to analyse their practice within this theory. Bernstein's (1990, 2000) descriptions of how curricula are selected and constructed help to structure my understanding of how each of the three teachers works within a context provided by society and by their schools. Having speculated about how the dominant ideology in Irish Physical Education gained its strength and having wondered how people were able to work with such apparent conviction within what I perceived to be a limited conception of Physical Education, I am now less concerned about conspiracy theory. The story told in this study is written in a way which acknowledges a deconstructionist position described by Hammersley and Atkinson (1997, p. 13) as 'an undermining of the distinctions between different genres of writing: between those of 'writers' and 'critics', between fiction and non-fiction, indeed between literary and technical writing generally.'

My authorial voice is clearly present throughout the writing of this study. I selected which data would be used to inform the study so as to maximise the impact of the three teachers' voices as represented in the narrative. I am aware of the responsibility I have in representing them fairly without abusing their trust. I am aware of a possible conflict between telling the story I want to be heard and telling it as it is. The teachers' roles are shown to be complex. My analysis of these roles serves to indicate how they might react to or be affected by a new syllabus. I am aware that, in using what Oliver (1998, p. 21) calls 'the paradigmatic analysis method'; I am putting my own interpretation on events. Oliver (ibid.) indicates that: 'Paradigmatic analysis remains abstract and formal, it often misses the uniqueness of each story because it relies on the researcher's preconceived categorization.'
My narratives about Fiona, Siobhan and John hopefully do not distort their stories. Nothing that is not a direct quote was written without their agreement.

I value being given a free rein to quote from statements made by these teachers and accept that their trust could be interpreted as her according me what Clifford (quoted by Evans 1991, p. 238) calls 'monological authority' in researcher. Evans (ibid.) warns that this can mean that: 'The author's voice is active while those of the subjects is (sic) passive.'

I hope that our intellectual kinship and our history of dialogue prevent me from suppressing the teachers' voices when they want to be heard. As I am more familiar with current literature about Physical Education teaching than Fiona, Siobhan and John are, I can place their teaching in a wider context. Their reflective practices enable them to identify inconsistencies in my representations of them. I am aware that the extent of a teacher's experience in teaching, as well as his or her confidence about their understanding of the material, are factors in how they teach. These aspects of teachers' personal development would benefit from further examination.

8.3 Success of my chosen methodology in achieving aims of research:
In order to inform an understanding of social influences on Irish teachers, I have provided in Chapter One a broad description of Ireland in this new millennium, which indicates various influences with which Fiona, Siobhan and John are familiar. The study began with an indication of how small a country Ireland is, and this point deserves to be reiterated. Ireland's total population of c3.9 million is similar to that of a large British city. The potential for power groups to exert great influence is enormous within such a small community. Situating the three teachers in wider society is extremely important to understand their professional role, both resulting from their own socialization and reflecting the role in which society casts teachers. Education in contemporary Ireland is examined and specifically Physical Education, particularly the PETE course in the University of Limerick. A clearly structured analysis moves from describing the broad perspective to close up focus on three teachers.

My methodology allowed me to identify differences among these three teachers, both from the dominant ideology and from each other. Similarities among the three teachers also became evident, with all three demonstrating concern to create a climate in which
teaching can occur, without the social climate deteriorating because of teacher domination, or because of anti-social interaction among the pupils. They all value the social occasion of a lesson and they are all concerned about negative effects on children's behaviour from competitive individualism.

Fiona and Siobhan both experienced difficulty in maintaining an open dialogue with their pupils, while simultaneously teaching them factually based content. Perhaps because of their own school experiences, including their PETE, Fiona and Siobhan both have difficulty in teaching content in an informal way. John's teaching is more adaptable to individual pupils' needs, even pupils initially not interested in cooperating. John is sufficiently convinced of the value of what he teaches to insist that pupils take him seriously. He regularly indicated to me that he would not be willing to teach 'someone else's content' if it did not promote his own way of relating to and making sense of his pupils' experiences. Fiona does not want to dominate her classes by insisting on total compliance, without negotiation. Siobhan can alternate her role from counselling and caring outside the classroom to transmission-based teaching when she is in class. Although John tended to be dismissive of direct questions, preferring to illustrate his points with anecdotal references to his teaching, I feel that he really enjoyed talking about his teaching in a reflective way, sharing his delight in 'special moments'. This has implications for gathering data from experienced teachers who may resent being formally questioned about sensitive, complex aspects of their work, perhaps preferring to indicate presences than be made aware of absences.

8.4 Summer 2002 – the position with regard to the NCCA PE syllabuses:
Many of the concerns raised within this study centre around potential effects of imposing three new syllabuses, all written in an instrumental way. The NCCA Draft PE (2000) junior cycle syllabus has been piloted by a group of sixty teachers who were monitored by post-graduate students. The investigation primarily examines pupils' demonstrations of what they learned, consistent with an objectives-based curriculum. Quantitative research does not address my concerns about the implications of involving uniquely individual teachers and their pupils in such strongly classified and framed experiences. The pilot study does not investigate how learning experiences are interpreted by and for individual pupils, or whether some pupils are privileged over others. The role of a teacher is apparently viewed as being unproblematic. Socio-cultural relations and power, central concerns within my study, are not mentioned. My concerns about the total
experiences of Irish pupils within their Physical Education programmes are not met. Pupils' voices are not represented within the syllabuses. Fiona, Siobhan and John are aware of limitations within these syllabuses and they draw some comfort from their lack of confidence in the Department of Education's ability to enforce its implementation.

8.5 Summer 2002 - PETE in the University of Limerick:
A total review of the University of Limerick PETE programme is to be undertaken. In Summer 2001 the recently appointed Adjunct Professor David Kirk became involved, bringing great experience and an informed approach to developing a new programme. I and perhaps two other tutors have challenged the current dominance of a scientific mode of inquiry within the PETE programme. My aspiration is for a PETE programme which facilitates all students in developing confidence as reflective practitioners whose practice is informed by the academic disciplines associated with education. The influence of the PETE course on prospective teachers is important, even if, as we are lead to believe by Rossi and Cassidy (1999, p. 191), 'it is small'.
I understand that students' experiences before they enter a teacher education course must be acknowledged and respected. Gore (1993,149-152) indicates how involving students in reflective practice is difficult, but unless tutors involve themselves with their students in reflection about the contexts and curricular implications of their teaching, I am convinced that there will be no climate for significant change. This stance is supported by Rossi and Cassidy (1999, p. 195), and Tinning (1997, p. 112) who cites various other writers describing: 'the need for a more socially critical curriculum for the preparation of future teachers'.
Unless education is to become a (more) benign tool of government, teachers need to be aware of various ways of analysing power relations and structures within society. (Ingham, 1997, p. 173 expands this point).

8.6 The three teachers – summer 2002:
The professional lives of Fiona, Siobhan and John have evolved since this study began. Fiona is still teaching in the same school and she has bought a house from which to commute. She considered pursuing research leading to an MSc degree in Physical Education in the University of Limerick during the academic year 2001/2, but decided instead to take a course in Guidance Methods. She is adamant that she does not want to leave Physical Education teaching. She thinks a Guidance Course will help her in
teaching pupils in the way that she values. Siobhan has also bought a house and continues to enjoy teaching, fitting in with what she is asked to do while aiming to influence her pupils positively with regard to their view of themselves and their role in society. John has left teaching after two incidents with pupils in which he believed his professional status was compromised. He found the associated stress unacceptable and has taken early retirement on medical grounds.

8.7 Limitations of this study:
This study confirmed that at least two distinct ways of looking at Physical Education are apparent in Ireland. One is dominant and widespread and the other rarely seen and barely heard. These different viewpoints represent a source of conflict between members of the profession. My research methodology reflects sympathy for one way of viewing education, particularly Physical Education, within a concern for individuals and their experiences in society. I recognise that the study as undertaken indicates how my complex set of values and understandings is limited in representing the professional behaviours of three very different and complex individuals within a society, the nature of which is changing rapidly and radically. The work reflects the general problem that it is not feasible to simplify a discourse. By focussing on three teachers, it is possible to make specific observations but not to extrapolate. It is clear that any attempt to homogenise pupils’ experiences involves over-simplifications, which ignores the rich diversity present in any group of people, thus curtailing both pupils’ and teachers’ roles. This study may have been deficient in failing to indicate the potential impact of a prescribed curriculum on pupils whose experiences are currently carefully mediated and monitored by caring teachers. A desire to compare changes in contemporary Ireland with the world of three teachers places a broad overview of society alongside a close examination of the three teachers. This makes it difficult to generalise, but it has the effect of contexting the teachers’ work within society.

8.8 The more general relevance of this study:
This study has attempted to document the way in which certain features of globalisation (e.g. McDonaldisation) are impacting education policy in Ireland and, in turn, the practices of teachers in schools. I have suggested that the proposed National Curriculum in Physical Education is an expression or reflection par excellence of the managerial tendencies towards centralisation, measurement, and performance, now apparent on the
wider socio-economic landscape. The view I have taken, shared by the three teachers central to this study, is that the new curriculum will have a damaging impact upon educational processes and prohibit momentum towards more egalitarian, progressive educational ideals. However, there are tensions in this thesis. I have claimed that the PE profession in Ireland is a conservative force, with the three teachers in this study being exceptions to the rule. It could, therefore, be argued that the arrival of a National Curriculum is long overdue, that a centralised curriculum would ensure that teachers achieve at least basic ideals. This is not the position I have taken. Central to this thesis are issues of power and control. My claim has been that a centralised curriculum (no matter how good it is) de-professionalises the most able teachers by failing to enlist their ability to attune their pedagogy and curriculum to the particular needs of the children in their care and their communities. This study essentially is concerned with the effects of imposing syllabuses on teachers who believe they are already working effectively in their schools; the nature of power relations is a central consideration. The three teachers share my concerns about teaching as nurture and in ‘not reproducing “tyrannical power”’ (Gore (1993, p. 72). The new syllabuses undermine those teachers who want to resist forces which seem set to include Physical Education within an extrinsically valued and validated curriculum, simplifying their professional practice into the production of evidence of conformity. Maguire (2002, p. 2) identifies a need to ‘celebrate and share the struggles of teachers who are still ‘making a difference’.

Within Irish schools, subjects other than Physical Education are widely regarded as conduits through which points are acquired as credentials. The inclusion of Physical Education in the Leaving Certificate Examination may remove from teachers a requirement to defend a personal set of values and may also prevent pupils from acquiring attitudes consistent with a competence-based model of education (Bernstein, 2000, p. 45). The two NCCA PE Syllabuses (2000) which are not concerned with examination preparation provide detailed assessment procedures, making it difficult to move away from the confines of modernism and traditional practice which are pervading education and which are affirmed within globalization. Ironically, Ireland, by accepting homogenisation associated with globalisation, affirms the conservative practice of traditional educators, which seems unlikely to enhance the professionalism (and professional standing) of PE teachers or, more importantly, the education of children in a rapidly changing and challenging world.
8.9 Future research possibilities indicated in this study:
Further research is needed to indicate if and how different ideologies can be harmoniously accommodated within the teaching of Physical Education in Ireland.
Grounded theory encourages the construction of complex models from different research perspectives. Glaser (1998, p. 137) acknowledges that: ‘the world is empirically integrated, not logically modelled whether the researcher likes it or not'.
Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 7) describe how grounded theory provides ways in which concepts can be analysed in order to provide categories which develop propositions. This conceptualisation process could be used to describe a way forward in Irish Physical Education allowing different discourses to coexist.
Were I to progress this research I would like to understand the extent to which child-centred, liberal teaching depends on a teacher's confidence in his or her purpose and value as a teacher. This would necessarily involve building relationships with a wider group of teachers and getting to understand their motivations and understandings. I would like to find out how predominant an objectives-based approach to teaching PE is in practice. I suspect that teachers may feel they ought to use an instrumental approach which they learned about as students.

I believe that this study has identified important issues within Irish education which are significant for Physical Education generally and which require further attention. I also believe that unless the complex mix of voices of Irish teachers and their pupils are listened to, the nature of Irish education and, by implication, the society in which it is provided will be diminished within a process reflecting Ritzer's (1993) description of McDonaldisation. Teaching involves so many messages with so many voices competing to carry the messages that it is essential to ensure that individuals are not sacrificed to some perceived ‘common good’ or that the common good is not relinquished in favour of the ambitions of some individuals.
Bernstein (2000, p. xix) writes: ‘Education can have a crucial role in creating tomorrow’s optimism in the context of today’s pessimism.’ My work with PETE undergraduates encourages them to question the nature and purpose of their subject and its potential contribution to young people’s lives. The enthusiasm of these student teachers helps to justify a claim for optimism in the future.


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Appendix 1

LETTER TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS:

To: (list of names in original)

15 August 1998

Dear [list of names]

I am currently in the process of setting up a context within which I can research Irish Physical Education. As I am on sabbatical leave from the university I have some time available in which to look closely at the ways in which P.E. teachers work.

I am keen to identify teachers whose planning is personally undertaken and which reflects their own interpretation of what is required for the pupils they are teaching, as opposed to following an externally-provided curriculum. There are clear implications for these teachers particularly if/when P.E. becomes a certificated subject and I am keen to record how the 'endangered species' i.e. the intrinsically-motivated teacher currently sets about planning, teaching and assessing his/her work.

What I would ideally like to do is to assemble a group of like-minded individuals who would discuss and share their ideas and, on the basis of these discussions I would spend time with one of the teachers in his/her school recording and observing how the ideas work in practice. My own role would be defined in consultation with the teacher in question, ranging in possibility from my being told: 'Sit there and keep quiet', to: 'If you're so smart give me a hand here', with various options in between.

Some of you will remember that at one stage in the University we had a group which we called 'ESCAPE', a mnemonic for Educationists Seriously Concerned About Physical Education. This group of teachers would share that focus. This group might be called, Endangered Species Concerned About Pupils' Experiences!

I am initially contacting a few known sympathisers from whom I would expect, if not support, at least no resistance. Each of you probably knows of at least one other P.E. teacher who is working to the beat of his/her own drum - at least some of the time and you might let me know. I have hopes of organising a get-together during the summer, probably in Limerick. If a physical get-together is not possible we could network by email or 'phone and I would travel to meet individuals or sub-groups to discuss relevant points. I envisage that one meeting as a group could cover all the necessary points but if people were enjoying the exercise we could meet more often.

I am primarily concerned with the child-centred focus of your programme and the ways in which you make your teaching personally appropriate for the pupils. Considerations of gender-accommodation, bullying and the place of sport, are all relevant, and I'm sure that as teachers you will identify more. I am hoping as a result of this work to construct a frame, demonstrating how P.E. teachers conceive, plan, present and validate their courses.

If you are interested in becoming involved can you let me know - by letter, by 'phone (061) 202819 or, home, 452523, or by 'e' mail joanne.moles@ul.ie or molesrandmolesj@tinet.ie. Dates when you are available would help my planning.

With sincere good wishes
Joanne Moles
Appendix 2

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Dear Mr. Flynn,

I am a lecturer in the Physical Education department in the University of Limerick, and I am currently on sabbatical leave to research for a PhD. My research is focusing on selected teachers whose practice has been identified as having positive qualities, primarily in that they are able to plan in a way which is particularly relevant to the children they are teaching.

Fiona Daly who is teaching in your school is one of the teachers and I should be very grateful if you were willing to let me come and observe her teaching a series of lessons with a first year class. The purpose is to establish how she constructs the social scene in which she will work and to record the interaction between the teacher and the pupils. I would be delighted to talk to you further about my work and indeed your own contribution would be valuable in making sense of the whole picture within which the teacher is working.

If you have any queries or reservations about my coming into your school I am happy to talk to you to clarify any points you would like to raise.

Best wishes for the coming school year.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Moles MA.

(Similar letters sent also to the Principals of John's and Siobhan's schools).
LETTER TO PETE TUTORS UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

30 August 1998

Dear Colleague,

I am involved in researching physical education in Irish schools and, as you all know, the perceptions of what constitutes a 'good' physical education programme are by no means shared among members of the profession. There are many legitimate ways of making sense of the phenomenon called physical education and I think it's fair to say that our department represents quite a few of these.

In order to make a selection of schools for close investigation I should be grateful if you would indicate the names of any schools which you believe are presenting 'good' physical education programmes. Your selections are simply to inform my choice. Your criteria need not be declared and I will not be making any personal comment about the choices nor subjecting them to any close analysis.

If you have any queries about this request I should be delighted to answer them.

Finally, I would find it very helpful if you could read the three justifications for physical education below and indicate your perceived ranking of each as a reason for teaching the subject to secondary school children.

| Circle one number for each (1=most important .............5=least important) |
| ➞ Technocentric rationality |
| (concerns about measurable gains in fitness and health). |
| ➞ Social and personal development. |
| ➞ Competency and skill development. |

If you were able to name three schools that you think are offering 'good' physical education programmes that would be marvellous. I realise however that this may be too much to ask and I will be grateful for any response - even one school.

| NAMES OF SCHOOLS |
| SCHOOL 1. |
| SCHOOL 2. |
| SCHOOL 3. |

hassle and I hope that you will find time to help me.

Sincerely,
Joanne Moles

Appendix 3
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR P.E. TEACHERS

1. Is Physical Education in your school regarded as a serious subject?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (ring one number where 1=extremely serious and 5=not at all serious)

2. Do you decide on the programmes for your P.E. classes?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = I decide completely, and 5 = I have no say in the programmes)

3. Are decisions about curricula formally discussed within the school?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = formal meetings are arranged, and 5 = no discussion occurs, even informally)

4. Do the P.E. programmes cater for all pupils equally?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = every pupil's needs are addressed, 5 = the programmes take no account of individuals)

5. Do other members of staff take an interest in what you are teaching?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = interested in all aspects, 5 = totally disinterested)

6. Is your principal supportive of your work?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = supportive in all respects, 5 = unsupportive)

7. Do the pupils’ parents take an interest in the Physical Education programmes?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = great parental interest, 5 = no parental interest)

8. Do the children think that P.E. is an important subject?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = extremely important, 5 = not at all important)

9. Have you had help from the Department of Education inspectorate?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1 = a great deal of help, 5 = no help at all)

10. How would you describe your facilities?
    1 2 3 4 5
    (1 = everything I could want, 5 = inadequate)

11. Would you welcome more guidance in the preparation of your schemes of work?
    1 2 3 4 5
    (1 = I'm in need of help, 5 = I would resent any interference)

12. Will you include P.E. as a Leaving Certificate subject within your programme if/when it is offered?
    1 2 3 4 5
    (1 = absolutely, no question, 5 = certainly not)
13. Have you read the Department of Education secondary school syllabus for P.E.
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1=I refer to it constantly, 5= I never read it)

14. Have you professional colleagues whose opinions you value?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1=several, 5=none)

15. Are you fulfilled in your profession as a P.E. teacher?
   1 2 3 4 5
   (1=completely, 5=I find it very unfulfilling)

16. Rank the following justifications for P.E. as they relate to your own programmes:
circle one number for each  (1=most important ..........5=least important)

   • Technocentric rationality
     (concerns about measurable gains in fitness and health).
   • Social and personal development.
   • Competency and skill development.

This questionnaire is aiming to establish how P.E. teachers classify and frame their subject, as described by Bernstein (1996). An attempt is being made to discover how autonomous Physical Education teachers can be within the current system in Irish post-primary schools and whether the move towards certification is likely to improve the experience of all Irish school-goers. You are perceived as someone who is currently successful in planning a P.E. experience for your pupils which aims to make a personal impact on each pupil - as opposed to aiming for standardised norms. At a later stage I am hoping to interview teachers in order to establish how they feel they are facilitated in providing relevant and valuable education for the children they teach.
Appendix 5

Questionnaire for P.E. students in Limerick University
November, 98

I'd be very grateful if you could take the time to fill in this short questionnaire -
--- Joanne Moles (P.E. tutor on sabbatical, trying to make sense of it all!)

Are you a 'mature' student?: y/n........
favourite activities: rank 1 (like most) -7 (least)

gender: m/f...........
(Can you place the activities in order of preference.)

1. What year of the course are you in? ..............
2. Did you have a P.E. teacher at school? .......... Yes
3. Did you have organised P.E. classes? ............ Yes
4. Was there after-school sport? ...................... Yes

5. Which activities were offered within your P.E. programme? (tick for 'yes', blank for 'no')

ALL YEARS JUNIOR CYCLE ONLY SENIOR CYCLE ONLY

Aquatics
Athletics
Dance
Health related exercise
Games
Gymnastics
Outdoor/adventure activities
other (name)

6. Would you describe your school P.E. experience as?:
circle at least one
education
sport
recreation
training
other (specify)

7. How would you rate your school P.E. experience?:
circle at least one
excellent
good
all right
poor
useless

8. Do you think that examinations in P.E. would improve the pupils' experience?
circle one
Yes
no
not sure

9. Do you think that P.E. in your school was given sufficient attention?
circle one
Yes
no
not sure

10. Did P.E. in your school cater for all pupils?
circle one
Yes
no
not sure

11. How would you improve P.E. in your old school, or schools in general?

12. Is the course you are on, satisfying your ideas of what P.E. is? (circle one)
Yes
no
not sure

Have you any strong thoughts about P.E. in Irish schools?
(if so - please write them below).
Appendix 6

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION TUTORS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK:
Many thanks for agreeing to fill in this questionnaire. I hope the questions are clear and that you find the ideas easy to follow.

In each case 1 = agree completely and 5 = disagree entirely circle one

1. Physical Education teachers in Ireland are encouraged to teach in a way which involves planning by rational objectives: 1 2 3 4 5
2. Your teaching is done in collaboration with other tutors: 1 2 3 4 5
3. Neutrality, objectivity and precision are desirable qualities in a professional person: 1 2 3 4 5
4. Physical education classes can serve to advance pupils’ moral development, but only if the teacher is prepared to relinquish some of the decision making: 1 2 3 4 5
5. Physical education is inextricably tied up with sport: 1 2 3 4 5
6. There are ‘Powers That Be’ in physical education in Ireland: 1 2 3 4 5
   (In Britain, Margaret Talbot calls these ‘key-drivers, leaders, stakeholders and gatekeepers’) 1 2 3 4 5
7. Physical education lecturers in the University of Limerick hold different ideological positions, (i.e. there is no one agreed position): 1 2 3 4 5
8. Social problems exist outside the classroom: (as opposed to inside) 1 2 3 4 5
9. Certificate examinations in Physical Education will improve the status of the subject in Ireland: 1 2 3 4 5
10. Ideally would you like to see the physical education curriculum as part of an integrated curriculum with boundaries between subjects softened? Yes No Don’t know (circle one answer)

* Space is left for additional comments relating to any of the questions above.

Joanne Moles, 27 September, 1999
Appendix 7

PRINCIPLES OF DESCRIPTION FOR EMPirical STUDY OF SCHOOLS

Formal Controls
ORDERS: INSTRUMENTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixing of categories</th>
<th>Purity of categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching groups: Heterogeneous - size and composition varied.</td>
<td>Homogeneous - size and composition fixed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy: Problem setting and creating</td>
<td>Solution giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes ways of knowing</td>
<td>Emphasizes contents or states of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: Teaching roles co-operative/inter-dependent</td>
<td>Teaching roles insulated from each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties achieved</td>
<td>Duties assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum: Subject boundaries blurred</td>
<td>Subject boundaries sharp (less inter-relation or integration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(inter-related) Progression: deep to surface structure of knowledge</td>
<td>Progression: surface to deep structure of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils: Varied social groups reducing group similarity and difference - increased area of choice.</td>
<td>Fixed and stable social groups emphasising group similarity and difference - reduced area of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations of the many raised Fluid points of reference and relation</td>
<td>Aspirations of the few developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE - OPEN</td>
<td>TYPE - CLOSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Ritual order celebrates participation / co-operation</td>
<td>(1) Ritual order celebrates hierarchy/dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Boundary relationships with outside blurred</td>
<td>(2) Boundary relationships with outside sharply drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Internal organization: wide range of integrative sub-groups with active membership and success roles across ability ranges If prefect system - wide area of independence from staff but limited exercise of power</td>
<td>(3) Internal organization: Narrower range of integrative sub-groups with active membership and success roles confined to high ability range If prefect system - under staff control and influence but extensive exercise of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of opportunities for pupils to influence staff decisions e.g. opportunities for self government</td>
<td>Limited opportunities for pupils to influence staff decisions, e.g. limited opportunities for self government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Teacher-pupil authority relationships: Reward and punishment less public and ritualized Teacher - pupil relationships of control - inter-personal</td>
<td>(4) Teacher-pupil authority relationships: Reward and punishment public and ritualized Teacher - pupil relationships of control - positional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bernstein (2000, page 98)
Appendix 8

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FIRST YEAR PUPILS
Where there is a choice can you please tick your answer. If you are not certain of an answer tick 'don't know'. If you need more space, write on the back.

I am a girl / boy

1. Are you enjoying secondary school? Yes No Don't know
2. Have you made friends in the school? Yes No Don't know
3. Do you think that your school is giving you a good education? Yes No Don't know
4. How many classes of P.E. do you have each week? (double classes =2) 0 1 2 3 4
5. Do you like your P.E. classes? Yes No Don't know
6. What do you think is the main reason for P.E.? Tick the one you agree with most
   • To keep fit
   • To learn skills
   • To learn about yourself and other people
   • Other (write down what)
7. Do you think that there should be examinations in P.E.? Yes No Don't know
8. Please write a sentence to explain your answer to question 7.
9. What would you change in your P.E. programme if it was possible?
10. Do you think that P.E. is ...... (tick one)
    • the most important subject in school
    • as important as any other subject
    • quite important
    • less important than other subjects
    • not at all important
11. What do you like best in your P.E. classes?
12. In P.E. does the teacher usually..... (tick one)
    • tell you what to do
    • give you choices in what you do
    • let you decide what to do
    • other (write down what)

Thank you for your help in filling in this form. Pupils in other schools will be filling it in as well and the answers will help us to understand a little bit about what you think. If you would like to add anything else about your school P.E. please write it on the back of the form.

Joanne Moles, P.E. Dept., University of Limerick.
Appendix 9

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS IN COOPERATING SCHOOLS
Thank you for filling in this questionnaire - your help is greatly appreciated.

1. What subject(s) do you teach? .........................................................
2. Do you teach examination classes? ................................................. Yes  No
3. Are you involved in teaching? ....................................................... •Junior cycle
                                                                   •Senior cycle
                                                                   •Transition year
4. Do you think that physical education in your school is:
   Tick one:
   •The most important subject
   •As important as any other subject
   •Quite important
   •Not at all important
   •A waste of time
5. In your opinion is physical education concerned with: yes =1 .......no =5
   Circle one number in each: ..............................................................
   •Health and fitness 1 2 3 4 5
   •Competency and skill acquisition 1 2 3 4 5
   •Social and personal development 1 2 3 4 5
   •Play and fun 1 2 3 4 5
   •Other (please specify) 1 2 3 4 5
6. Would the inclusion of physical education as an examination subject
   Tick one: .................................................................
   •Give it the same status as other subjects
   •Involve P.E. as 'more of the same'.
   •Make no difference to anything
   •Spoil a good thing
   •Remove a positive part of school
   •Other (please specify)
7. Do you regard the physical education teachers in your school as:
   Tick one: .................................................................
   •Very important to the school identity
   •Positively different from other teachers
   •Equal to every other teacher
   •Negatively different from other teachers
   •Not proper teachers
8. Do you think that every child, regardless of ability, should have a physical education
   programme? ...............................................................)
   •Yes
   •No
   •Other (specify)
9. Do you think that Irish post-primary education in general is:
   Tick one: ...............................................................)
   •Excellent
   •Working well
   •In need of change
   •Deficient
   •Disastrous
If you have any comments about physical education please write them on the back of the form.
Joanne Moles, P.E.S.S. Department, University of Limerick.
Appendix 10

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PE STUDENTS AT THE TIME OF THEIR GRADUATION:
This questionnaire focuses on teaching practice but can you indicate first of all whether you have a teaching job for next year.
if ‘Yes’, is it full-time? Is it all PE? Is it permanent pensionable? (write below)

1. Did you enjoy your teaching practice? 1 2 3 4 5
2. Have you a clear idea of the sort of teacher you would like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
3. Do you think that your T.P. school had a good PE programme? 1 2 3 4 5
4. Did your tutor support you in how you wanted to teach? 1 2 3 4 5
5. Were the children in the school treated as unique individuals? 1 2 3 4 5
6. Was the PE teacher supportive of you as a student? 1 2 3 4 5

7. Score the following aspects of teaching with regard to being successful - in your own terms:
   Give each item a score out of 5 where 1 = vitally important and 5 = of little importance
   • Management of Learning Environment
   • Quality of Planning and Preparation
   • Knowledge and Structuring of Subject Matter
   • Effectiveness of teaching Strategies
   • Assessment of Pupil Learning
   • Personal Qualities
   • Quality of Interaction
   • Self Evaluation
   • Extent of Innovative Teaching
   • Sense of Professionalism

8. Do you see yourself as a teacher who is predominantly:
   a) Concerned about what the children learn 0 1 2 3 4 5
   b) Concerned about what the teacher teaches 0 1 2 3 4 5
   c) Concerned about meeting external standards 0 1 2 3 4 5
   d) Trying to get through the class 0 1 2 3 4 5
   e) Other (write below what it is) 0 1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you think teaching is more an art or more a science? (0 = not at all, 5 = completely)
   Art 0 1 2 3 4 5
   Science 0 1 2 3 4 5

10. Write a short paragraph on the back of this page about if, and how you think your college course could have met your needs better in preparing you for teaching.
    Thank you for your help. I’d be happy to talk to anyone who is interested in my research into the teaching of physical education in Irish post-primary schools. Congratulations on successfully completing your course. Joanne Moles, August, 00.
Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development:
Kohlberg and associates identified six stages of moral reasoning which develop sequentially. Not everyone attains the highest stages, for a variety of reasons.
These stages are:

1. The Preconventional Level
   
   At this level the individual responds to a moral decision as good or bad, right or wrong only in terms of pleasant or unpleasant consequences (punishment, reward, exchange of favours) or in terms of the physical power of those who might reward or punish him.

   The level is divided into the following two stages:

   **Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience.** The physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning respect for power are valued in their own right.

   **Stage 2: Personal Usefulness.** The right moral decision consists of one that satisfies one’s own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed like those of the marketplace: one of exchanging favours or revenge - you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours.

2. The Conventional Level
   
   At this level maintaining and supporting the individual’s family group or nation is seen as valuable in its own right, regardless of one’s own immediate and obvious needs. The attitude is seen as one of conformity and loyalty to the group and maintaining the group. There is also support for actively maintaining, supporting, and justifying orderliness and stability in the group. The individual’s moral choices must necessarily conform to the expectations and rules of the group.

   At this level, there are the following two stages:

   **Stage 3: Conforming to the Will of the Group.** Pleasing or helping others to get approval or to avoid disapproval. There is much conformity to standard ideas of what is the will of the majority, or ‘natural’ behaviour. One earns approval by being ‘nice’.

   **Stage 4: Law and Order.** Obedience to rules for their own sake. Moral decisions are justified on the basis of fixed rules which are necessary to maintain order. Right behaviour consists of doing one’s duty, showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

3. The Level of Independent Judgments Based on General Principles of Behaviour
   
   At this level there is an effort to define moral values and principles that seem generally true or valid apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual’s own identification with these groups. This level again has two stages.

   **Stage 5 Social Contract, Constitutionalism and Higher Law.** Right action tends to be defined in terms of general values that have been agreed upon by the whole society (freedom, equality, mercy). Aside from what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal values and opinions. At this level one often seeks to solve moral issues by passing laws, but laws are justified by more general principles, e.g., ‘Greatest good for greatest number’, giving everyone equal opportunity. Laws can be changed when they are seen to violate more general humane principles: one has the right of revolution because the government has broken the social contract.

   **Stage 6: Personal Conscience.** Right is defined by the decision of personal conscience in accord with general ethical principles that apply to all men everywhere, regardless of the group or nation in which a person lives. These principles are abstract and ethical: the Golden Rule; they are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart these are universal principles of justice of the reciprocity and equality of human rights and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons. They are not tied to a particular culture or society - they apply to men everywhere.
Appendix 12

**PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES DESCRIBED BY BERNSTEIN (1990)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>intra-individual</th>
<th>acquisition</th>
<th>transmission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piaget</td>
<td>Radical pedagogic theories</td>
<td>Friere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chomsky</td>
<td>Social psychological theories</td>
<td>Freinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestalt</td>
<td>inter-group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behaviourist theories

Bernstein, 1990 p. 213
APPENDIX 13

Mission / Vision Statement (Ashbourne Community School)

A Mission Statement is idealistic and visionary and gives direction to the work of the school. The Mission statement evolved throughout our first year in operation, (1994). The final draft which is printed below, represents the collective thinking of our staff and contributions from various school partners. It was formally accepted by the Board of Management.

Mission Statement
1. We would like our school to be a place where we stress such values as hope, justice, compassion, forgiveness and care. We would strive to have these values evident in both our school policy and practice.
2. We facilitate the active involvement of parents and community representatives in the school mission.
3. We recognise that each pupil is unique and has different needs and different gifts. By offering a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we shall endeavour to help each pupil achieve his/her potential.
4. Through positive staff/ student relationships, and integrated and challenging curriculum and a wide variety of extracurricular activities we hope to foster in each student a healthy self-image, a confidence which allows each to make his/her place in society and a certain independence of mind and spirit.
5. We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important, therefore we shall endeavour to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to the personal and spiritual development of all. We acknowledge and respect the religious faith of each individual student and cooperate with parents and religious leaders to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values of each student.
6. We encourage student involvement in decision making in the day-to-day life and running of the school and in projects directed towards student welfare. Thus we would hope to enable students to make their contribution for the betterment of an ever-changing society and to share fully in promoting the school's basic philosophy.

The final draft which is printed above represents the collective thinking of the staff and contributions of various school partners. It was formally accepted by the Board of Management. However we do not see this document as something static or permanent. We hope through seminars, workshops, parent/staff interaction and informal exchange with all our partners in education to continue to develop our thought and philosophy so that at all times our mission statement reflects and embodies the needs and aspirations of the whole school community.
(Ashcom@edunet.ie, 1999)
Appendix 14

LORETO COLLEGE, CRUMLIN ROAD, MISSION STATEMENT

At the dawn of a new millennium, we in Loreto College, Crumlin Road, celebrate our identity as a Loreto school. Our belief in the immense capacity of the human person for learning inspires us to provide a school which offers students a positive educational experience. Immersed in a pluralist society, we take up the challenge to:

- Create a stimulating learning environment which
  - cultivates curiosity
  - encourages exploration
  - nurtures creativity
  so that each of our students may have the opportunity to develop the fullness of her academic and personal potential

- Promote a school culture which
  - values diversity and its enriching effect on our school
  - creates and supports structures which enhance the self-esteem of all
  - nurtures an ethos of respect for self, others, the wider community and the earth

- Celebrate a joyful Christian faith that informs the search for personal fulfilment and leads to justice.

In partnership with parents, guardians, students and the wider community, we seek to empower our young adults as they journey towards becoming mature, discerning, compassionate women of integrity.
Appendix 15

CRESCENT COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE - ACTION PLAN - 1994

MISSION STATEMENT:

Crescent College Comprehensive, which incorporates the characteristics of Jesuit education, seeks to develop a community of learning and academic excellence comprising teachers and parents collaborating to fulfil the full potential of each individual pupil. This will involve teachers, parents and pupils working together to identify and develop an openness to religious, moral social, intellectual, cultural, and physical experience and to the word of God in all its dimensions. Each individual's talents will be developed to the level of their personal potential for the benefit of community and humanity.
Appendix 16

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY REGARDING GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS:

The governance of schools was reviewed within the Department of Education White Paper (1995, page 145). The policy approach is based on several considerations which include the following:

- governance structures for schools should respond to the diversity of school types, ownership and management structures which is a central feature of the structure of Irish education at primary and second levels
- governance structures should reflect the plurality of Irish society, including the rights and needs of minority groups
- the composition of boards of management should reflect the plurality of Irish society, including the rights and needs of minority groups
- the composition of boards of management should reflect and promote participation and partnership in the running of schools among patrons/trustees/owners/governors, parents, teachers and the wider community
- the composition and operation of boards of management should reflect and promote public accountability to the immediate community served by the school and to the State as the predominant source of funding for schools.
Appendix 17

NCCA DRAFT NEW SYLLABUSES (2001) GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

Physical education applies a holistic approach to the concept of physical activity for young people. It recognises the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human movement. It emphasises the contribution of physical activity to the promotion of individual and group well being. Learning in physical education involves the acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes central to physical education, together with recognition of its potential for integration with other curriculum areas.

Overall Aim of Physical Education

Physical Education contributes to the preparation of the student for a life of autonomous well-being. This aim will be pursued through the

- enhancement of the student's sense of self through the development of skilful and creative performance of practical activities
- development of the student's understanding of physical activity and awareness of the links between physical education and other curriculum areas
- motivation of the student to chose a life-style that is active, healthy and meaningful
- the personal enrichment of the student by developing personal and social skills and encouraging positive attitudes and values in her/his interaction with others.
Appendix 18

PREPARED QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION OFFICER OF THE NCCA:
'When the new syllabuses were written did you have a procedure for selecting material, e.g. did small groups or individuals write material or was everything discussed in committee?
Who decided on what should be taught? Were there votes? If there were disagreements how were they resolved?
Did the committee as a whole think that teachers needed their syllabuses prepared for them? Were there members if the committee who were concerned about retaining teachers' autonomy and if there were did they receive support?'