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Swedish PE teachers' understandings of legitimate movement in a criterion-referenced grading system

Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy

Lena Svennberg

the Swedish school of sport and health sciences, Stockholm, Sweden

University of Gävle, Sweden

Box 5626

11486 Stockholm

Sweden

+4626648417

lsb@hig.se

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Abstract

Background: Physical Education (PE) has been associated with a multi-activity model in which movement is related to sport discourses and sport techniques. However, as in many international contexts, the Swedish national PE syllabus calls for a wider and more inclusive concept of movement. Complex movement adapted to different settings is valued, and in the national grading criteria qualitative measures of movement are used. This research seeks to examine how the wider concept of movement is interpreted and graded. Drawing on Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device, the paper explores teachers' roles as active mediators in the transformation of national grading criteria for movement and the kinds of movement that are valued in teachers' grading practices.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate what PE teachers consider legitimate movement in a criterion-referenced grading system and the factors that influence their grading practice. The Repertory Grid (RG) technique was employed in order to access their tacit knowledge.

Methodology: Seven Swedish PE teachers were interviewed, all of whom teach and grade years seven to nine in different compulsory schools. Using the RG technique, the teachers were asked to reflect on the aspects they considered important for achieving a high grade. The national grading criteria for years seven to nine were then presented one at a time and the teachers were asked to describe how they assessed and graded each requirement. The teachers were also asked whether any specific factors had influenced their grading. In the content analysis, the second part of the interview was attended to first and the results were interpreted in light of Bernsteins' concept of the pedagogic device

Findings: Sport techniques and competitive sports influenced the teachers' interpretations of what constitutes complex movement. The aspect of fitness also appeared to be valued by the teachers in that it facilitates the valued movement. In some cases the difficulty of describing movement qualities in words could reduce the concept of movement to something measurable and quantifiable. The teachers' concerns about students' unequal opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills also influenced the teachers' interpretation of complex movement.

Conclusions: In the transformation of national grading criteria to grading practice, the pedagogic actions taken inform and limit the way in which legitimate movement in PE is conceptualised. Adopting a concept of movement that is wider than competitive sports allows the structures of inequality to be addressed and enables the movements performed by students with other moving experiences than competitive sports to be valued. The tension between the demands of transparency in a high stakes grading system and the inability to articulate the quality of complex movements is problematic. There is a need to verbalise teachers' conceptions about physical education knowledge to be able to discuss and develop the concept of movement. In this process, the RG technique is a potentially useful tool. Having

the language to discuss movement qualities also enables us to strengthen the interrelation between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Keywords: assessment, grading, movement, standards-based, teachers' grading practice

Introduction

Physical Education (PE) has been associated with a multi-activity model and related sport discourses (Kirk 2010; Penney 2013). In Sweden, as in many other countries, competitive sports and sport federations have had a strong influence on the kind of movements performed in the school subject of PE (Lundvall and Meckbach 2008). The multi-activity model has been widely criticised and arguments presented for curriculum to be responsive to changing times and societies. Several scholars have discussed content and forms of knowledge. Larsson and Redelius (2008) differentiate between activities (what to do) and content (what to learn). Penney and Chandler (2000) suggest learning in and via activity contexts, as compared to learning of activities (p.71) and weaker frames of the subject to give more students a possibility to connect PE with their own lives and experiences.

In the last two decades there has been a shift in the Swedish curriculum, away from a content-driven curriculum towards 'governing by output' by using national grading criteria that all students should attain (Sundberg and Wahlström, 2012). The teachers have great freedom to choose content and methods adjusted to their local context as long as their students achieve the national goals and knowledge requirements. The national curriculum leaves room for a broader concept of knowledge and avoids specifying activities and sports. However, teachers and students have found it difficult to express what should actually be learned in PE (Larsson and Redelius 2008; Sandahl 2005) and in this context a gap between policy and practice has been identified (Annerstedt 2008; Lundvall and Meckbach 2008, Quennerstedt, Öhman, and Eriksson, 2008). The curriculum recommends a broad range of activities, although at the practical level the content is much narrower and dominated by traditional sports (Annerstedt 2008; Lundvall and Meckbach 2008). The kinds of movement teachers privilege and give value when grading students' work is an indicator of the movements that they considered legitimate in a specific context. This is not always consistent with what is valued in the national grading criteria. Redelius, Fagrell, and Larsson (2009) have analysed Swedish PE teachers' statements concerning how they grade their students in year eight and nine. Abilities valued for the highest grade are good performance levels in sport in terms of quantifiable and

measurable results, not required in the grading criteria. This grading practice sends a different message to the students than the national grading criteria do.

In 2011 a new curriculum was introduced by the Swedish Government to guide teachers in their interpretation of valid knowledge. The intention was to achieve better alignment between national grading criteria and teachers' grading practice. The PE syllabus calls for a wide and inclusive concept of movement, which is emphasised in the national grading criteria by not using language related to competitive sports and quantitative measurements. Instead, students shall develop basic physical movements in the early years of compulsory school and build on combinations of basic forms of movement to be able to perform complex movements in the grading criteria for years seven to nine (SNAE 2011). Teachers have to consider the nature of movement, when not defined as sport techniques and competitive sport, and they are expected to assess qualitatively how well movement is adapted to different settings. The intention in this study is to investigate the kinds of movements that PE teachers consider legitimate in their grading of students' work and discuss the factors that influence their grading practice in relation to the national grading criteria. In order to provide a context, the paper begins with a short summary of how movement in PE has been identified in the research literature and in the Swedish curriculum and how the present formulations in the national grading criteria have come about. Thereafter, the theoretical focus based on Bernstein's work is presented.

The meaning of Movement

Different definitions of PE have in common that they presuppose some kind of movement or physical activity (Tinning 2010), but different outcomes are in focus. Health, cognitive processes and sport are some of the outcomes mentioned by Kirk (2010). The meaning that is given to the subject determines which kinds of movement are considered legitimate. This paper illuminates what Swedish PE teachers consider to be legitimate movement in a context in which health is an important aspect and where '[t]eaching in physical education and health should aim at pupils developing all-round movement capacity and an interest in being physically active' (PE syllabus, SNAE, 2011). The concept of legitimate movement in PE has changed over time so let us first take a look at previous perceptions to better understand today's context.

Even though the idea of what constitutes PE has varied in different countries, there are more similarities than differences. Kirk (2010) identifies one paradigm shift in the mid-20th

century: from PE as gymnastics to PE as sport techniques. Swedish PE is a typical example of this shift. In the first half of the century, Swedish PE was in the form of gymnastics inspired by Ling, with the aim of shaping the body and creating healthy citizens with respect for authorities (Lundvall and Meckbach 2008). During the latter half of the century concepts of training, fitness and acquiring skills began to dominate discussions about PE and competitive sports and activities that can be measured gained importance (Larsson and Redelius 2009). After the shift from gymnastics to sport there has been an uncertainty about the meaning of PE among Swedish PE teachers (Larsson and Redelius, 2008). Sport federations contributed in shaping the subject by providing literature, equipment and in-job training courses for PE teachers (Lundvall and Meckbach 2008). Different sports dominated the subject and the meaning of the subject was understood as developing skills in different sports and finding a suitable sport to continue to be active in outside school (Larsson and Redelius 2008). Over 80 percent of young people in Sweden join a sport club at some stage during childhood and adolescence according to a national survey (Thedin et al. 2012). Swedish PE as sport techniques can be described as a 'smorgasbord' of activities, where 'ball games, gymnastics, fitness training, and track and field dominate the subject' (Annerstedt 2008, 303).

In the context of PE as sport techniques, basic movement has been regarded as crucial to success in various sports. As success is considered necessary for lifelong participation, sport techniques have now become so central that they constitute the meaning of PE (Kirk, 2010). Activities are based on competitive sports, often with masculine values such as strength, speed and controlled aggression embedded (Hay and Isahunter 2006; Hay and Macdonald 2010a; Kirk 2010; Redelius, Fagrell, and Larsson 2009). These masculine values, favouring the strong and fast students, in combination with a pedagogy in which everyone has an opportunity to develop in their own right, shape a contrarious image of ability which has made it difficult to formulate ability criteria in PE (cf. Kirk 2010).

Following Bourdieu, several scholars suggest that ability is socially constructed and that it is related to how well students' habitus and capital match the field that PE represents (Evans 2004; Hay and Isahunter 2006; Hay and Macdonald 2008; Hay and Macdonald 2010a, 2010b; Hunter 2004). PE as sport techniques does not always challenge the established knowledge structures and can prevent students with other moving experiences than competitive sports finding their place in the PE context. Since competitive sports often favour students that already are physically strong and fast, equality can be questioned. As Penney

and lisahunter put it: ‘unless we understand PE to be about learning rather than innate physical talent, there is no justification for PE in the school curriculum’ (2006, 207).

Pre-dating Penney’s and lisahunter’s critique (2006), since the mid-1990s Swedish steering documents have shown a tendency to downplay the importance of sport techniques and instead provide a broader conceptualisation of movement where the focus is on developing students’ knowledge rather than activating them (Larsson and Redelius 2008). A new curriculum was introduced in 2011 in order to further clarify valid knowledge. The previous grading criteria have now been replaced by progressive knowledge requirements. Instead of the idea of PE as sport techniques, different ideas now exist side by side. Three areas of knowledge are highlighted in the PE syllabus: *movement*, *health and lifestyle* and *outdoor life and activity*. They can be considered to have equal value in the sense that the knowledge requirements for all three areas have to be fulfilled on the same grade level to be awarded that grade.

This paper investigates the knowledge area of movement. The idea of movement has changed and competitive sport is not the norm for what counts as valid movement in the national curriculum. An aim for PE is to give students the opportunity to develop their ability to ‘move without restrictions in different physical contexts’ (SNAE 2011). The quote below shows the knowledge requirements for movement in the lowest grade, E, in years seven to nine. For higher grades, C and A, the same formulation is used but the words *to some extent* are replaced by *relatively well* or *well*:

Pupils can participate in games and sports involving complex movements in different settings, and vary and adapt their movements *to some extent* to activities and context. In dance, and movement and training programs to music, pupils adapt *to some extent* their movements to beat, rhythm and context. Pupils can also swim 200 metres, of which 50 metres are in the back position (SNAE, 2011, 54).

The different grades depend on how well one adapts one’s movements to activities and context as well as beat and rhythm. Games and sports are considered contexts for learning complex movements rather than something to learn and participation is a requirement for all grades. The knowledge requirements above are dominated by qualitative measures of movement (to some extent, relatively well or well), while quantitative measures, such as running fast and jumping high, are traditionally preferred (Larsson and Redelius, 2008). Swimming is an exception from the qualitative measures. All students are supposed to swim

200 metres to get a pass grade to ensure that all students graduating from compulsory school can swim. In the transformation of the knowledge requirements into grading practice, 'PE teachers are active mediators of both progressive and regressive policy discourses' (Penney 2013, 8). Penney (2013) claims that collective or individual 'pedagogic action' can either challenge or legitimate the established order. In order to conceptualise the transformation from national knowledge requirements to teachers' grading practice, Bernstein's work on the pedagogic device is employed. This is described in more detail in the next section.

Transformation of national grading criteria to grading practice - a theoretical perspective

Bernstein (2003) regards curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as interrelated message systems. What is graded sends a message to the students about what is considered as legitimate knowledge (Hay and Penney 2013). Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device has highlighted the complexities of the processes of transformation and selective appropriation and is here applied to understand teachers as agents in the transformation of the knowledge requirements of movement into pedagogic practice. Bernstein (1996) suggests that at least two transformations occur when knowledge produced in the primary field (i.e. universities and research institutes) moves to and is reproduced in the secondary field (i.e. primary and secondary school). The first transformation is the conversion of knowledge produced in the primary field to pedagogised knowledge in the recontextualising field, for instance in a national curriculum. The different interests of groups vying for power influence the selection of what is to be transmitted. Agents come from both the official recontextualising field (i.e. the state) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (i.e. universities and the media together with their readers and advisers) (Singh 2002). Tinning (2012) draws attention to how political and economic interests influence the idea of PE. Sport federations can also be considered agents in the Swedish context (cf. Lundvall and Meckbach, 2008). Bernstein (1996) observed an increased influence of the official recontextualising field and Sweden is a typical example with a national curriculum decided by the state and national grading criteria that determine valid knowledge.

The second transformation is the translation of pedagogised knowledge (for instance in the national curriculum) by teachers and students into pedagogic practice in the secondary field of reproduction in the classroom. In the secondary field, teachers make use of recontextualised knowledge for the content of particular lessons using different pedagogical strategies (Tinning

2010). This paper's primary focus is on the second transformation, where privileged knowledge appropriated by teachers is converted into common or shared classroom knowledge in interactions with students (Singh 2002) and used for assessment and grading purposes. According to Bernstein the pedagogic practice is regulated by evaluative rules that 'act selectively on contents, the form of transmission and their distribution to different groups of pupils in different contexts' (1996, 118). The evaluative rules govern what is recognised as most valuable in the school context and help us to consider what counts as valid knowledge.

The transformation of knowledge leaves room for a gap: 'every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is a space in which ideology can play. No discourse ever moves without ideology at play' (Bernstein 1996, 47). This is crucial to curriculum and pedagogy, because if there is always a discursive gap, there will never be a curriculum or a pedagogic approach beyond ideology (Liljedahl 2015). We can thus assume that ideology is involved in the transformation of national grading criteria into grading practice.

In order to understand teachers' practices we need to consider the inner logic of their intentions and the practical sense, traditions, perspectives and strategies that evolve in the profession and are passed on to novices (Lindblad, Linde, and Naeslund 1999). In several studies teachers' beliefs and values have been shown to influence grading (McMillan and Nash 2000; McMillan 2003; Penney et al. 2009). Experiences, beliefs and values are sometimes articulated, but at other times described as 'gut-feelings' (Svennberg, Mechbach, and Redelius 2014). The Repertory Grid (RG) technique is employed to illuminate the teachers' expressed and implicit interpretations of which movement is legitimate to grade after transforming the national knowledge requirement in the recontextualising field to the practical level of grading. In this paper I also want to illuminate and discuss the factors that influence teachers' transformations, given that school is a regulated institution that rest upon frames and rules as well as agents (Lindblad, Linde, and Naeslund 1999). Influences, visible in the teachers' statements, from curriculum as well as other agents and ideologies, are analysed and discussed.

Methodology

Seven PE teachers from two municipalities in central Sweden took part in the interviews. In order to participate, the teachers had to have a teacher education degree in PE, teach and grade students in secondary school (equivalent with years seven to nine in Swedish

compulsory school). Grades are given from year six and in order to gather as much grading experience as possible, teachers in secondary school were selected. To increase the diversity of the sample the teachers were chosen in order to represent different schools of different sizes (working alone or with several PE colleagues) from different areas (small village, outskirts or centre of a small and middle-sized town, with different catchment areas). The teachers – four men and three women – had between three and 18 years of teaching experience at the time of the interview. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms are used in order to protect their identity. The teachers chose the location for the interview themselves. The interviews lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and were performed in two steps in order to catch what the teachers expressed as valuable when grading movements and their implicit beliefs and values. In an attempt to have as little influence as possible on the teachers' verbalisation of their implicit beliefs and values the two steps were performed in the following order:

Step one involved a RG interview where the teachers reflected on the aspects they considered important for giving a high grade by using the RG technique. This technique can be used to verbalise people's explicit and implicit perceptions of a phenomenon (Fransella, Bell, and Bannister 2004; Svennberg, Meckbach, and Redelius 2014). It also facilitates access to teachers' tacit knowledge about grading criteria (Björklund 2008). Even though teachers sometimes find it difficult to specify and describe the characteristics of a student assessed as able in movement, they can often articulate the differences between one student and another if they know their own students well. Each teacher chose seven students who represented all the possible grades in a class they were teaching and grading (Fransella, Bell, and Bannister 2004). In total 49 students were discussed by the teachers during the seven interviews. The names of the chosen students were written down on pieces of paper and presented to the teacher three at a time. The teacher was asked to explain how two of the students were similar and different from the third in those aspects regarded as significant for grading purposes. The similarities and differences are called constructs. For instance if two students are considered similar in the way that they both *understand the principles of the game and get in position* and the third student differs in that he *remains standing*, the construct is: *understand the principles of the game and get in position – remains standing*. The constructs were written down and new combinations of students were presented until the teacher could no longer come up with new similarities and differences. The two different poles of the constructs help

us to understand the meaning of the construct in the specific context (Fransella, Bell, and Bannister 2004).

Step two was a semi-structured interview where the national knowledge requirements for movement were presented one at a time and the teachers were asked to describe in their own words how they assessed and graded each requirement. The teachers were also asked whether any specific factors had influenced their grading of each requirement. Both the first and second step were recorded and transcribed.

The teachers' statements about how they graded the knowledge requirements for movement (step two) were attended to first in the content analysis. The Swedish transcriptions were read in order to identify the meaning units, label them and group them into categories. The categories were then compared and organised into themes that described the content of the data. As a result, two themes relating to the kind of movements that teachers valued when grading were identified and another two themes relating to factors that had influenced their grading practices. Throughout the analysis the data were constantly re-read, re-sorted and re-labelled until an understanding of the content was reached. Thereafter, a summary reflecting the variation was written in English. A new content analysis was performed on the RG interviews and when new aspects emerged they were added to the summary. The results are discussed in relation to the national knowledge requirements and additional factors influencing teachers' transformation of the knowledge requirement into grading practice.

Results

The teachers' statements about what movement they look for when grading and thus find legitimate will be presented first. This is followed by a presentation of some factors, influencing the teachers' interpretations of legitimate movement when applying the national grading criteria.

What the teachers considered legitimate movement

An important result of the study is that sport techniques and a multi-activity model still frames teachers' interpretations of what constitute legitimate movements. Another result is that the fitness of students also appears to be valued by the teachers. It is possible to trace influences from sport federations and competitive sport on the transformation described by Bernstein

(1996) of the national grading criteria in the recontextualising field into what is valued movement in the secondary field as exemplified below.

When the teachers were asked how they assess the knowledge requirement '*Pupils can participate in games and sports involving complex movements in different settings, and vary and adapt their movements to some extent to activities and context*' (SNAE 2011), they said that they used the activities students perform in all their lessons to assess how the students manage complex movements. What was assessed was intimately related to the privileged content of the lessons. The teachers gave examples of activities such as ballgames, gymnastics, track and field, racket games, fitness training, dancing, swimming, skating, obstacle courses and movement games and also specific movements such as jumping and running. An outcome of the multi-activity model was: 'you have to be an all-rounder to get grade A' (Gloria).

Many activities were specifically regarded as sport, and examples of complex movement were often described as sport techniques: '[...] take a clear stroke in badminton for example or take an instep shot in football or take a combination step in dance. These are the kinds of complex movements I imagine, that's what you're actually looking at' (David). Four of the teachers interpreted how movements are adapted to activities and context as how movements are adapted to specific sports, possibly due to their dominant content (Annerstedt 2008; Quennerstedt, Öhman, and Eriksson 2008). Adapting well was expected to lead to measurable results in the sport. Adapting movements could be interpreted in terms of technique, understanding of the game and tactics. An example from badminton is given below:

According to that activity you should in some way...you should start from the middle, move out to the sides and then back to the middle, that's what the game is about, being able to get to the corners quickly to get all the balls. If you can do that, then you have adapted your movements to that activity. Also just the technique, it's about being able to hit the ball as high as possible for example, that shows that you've adapted your movements to the game. That's what I think it's all about. (Bill)

When the teachers reflected on what they considered important for specific students' grades a new theme of fitness, which is not actually part of the knowledge requirements, emerged among four of the teachers. Movements that required or enhanced fitness were valued. Fitness was sometimes associated with the health discourse, but was also sometimes considered to be a prerequisite for movement. For example, in activities like fitness training and obstacle

courses, being strong, fast, explosive, flexible and fit is an advantage. Gloria gave gymnastics on the bar as an example of when strength can compensate for technique:

Of course a lot of it is to do with technique, but Sally would never, it would take a lot of training for her to be able..., these guys would probably be able to do it [the exercise] using the strength in their arms, so they wouldn't need the same technique. Sally would have to struggle a lot with the technique in order to do it. (Gloria)

She commented that even though strength is not graded, strong students are able to perform the exercises more easily. When the activities favour physically strong students, focus is moved to strength rather than the requirements in the policy documents, to 'vary and adapt their movements' (SNAE 2011).

Factors influencing teachers' interpretations of legitimate movement

Two main themes appeared when the teachers talked about what they found problematic when applying the grading criteria for movement. The first theme was the difficulties in describing movement qualities, which sometimes resulted in teachers preferring movements possible to assess quantitatively. The second theme was a concern about students' unequal possibilities, not acknowledged in the knowledge requirements. This concern sometimes resulted in compensatory interpretations of complex movements. Teachers' struggle to achieve transparency, fairness and to give all students equal possibilities to learn can be interpreted as ideology at play (cf. Bernstein 1996) in the transformation of grading criteria in the recontextualising field to grading practice in the secondary field. As shown in the examples below the teachers had different solutions on how to achieve transparency, fairness and equal possibilities. These solutions were sometimes incongruent with the intentions of the national knowledge requirements.

Qualities of movement are difficult to explain in words and teachers sometimes referred to a 'gut feeling':

I can't put it into words, it's impossible. Instead it's my experience and my gut feeling that tells me what it is. It's so incredibly complex and there are many parameters to take into account when you see a person in movement in terms of balance and coordination. (Adam)

This difficulty to describe complex movement is problematic for the teachers in their communication with students and parents. The knowledge requirements are supposed to be transparent and the teachers had different solutions. Often the teachers' tacit knowledge or

‘gut feeling’ was the same as the students’ perception of their own ability. When the students questioned their grades the inability to communicate what adapting their movements to some extent, relatively well or well (SNAE 2011) means had in some cases resulted in the teacher preferring movements possible to quantify. One of the teachers described how he used a number of tests in different ball games. In gymnastics he assessed the number of exercises performed: ‘I use six exercises and if the students practice them all and do their best they’ll manage. The grade levels depend on how many exercises they can manage.’ (Eric). When communicating movement qualities the teachers used expressions like wag the body when running, jerky movements, coordination, timing, precision, body control and balance. When lacking words to describe the qualities of movement Cecilia compared one student’s running with that of her own three-year-old to make herself understood. Another teacher, Felicia, was considering video filming a boy’s performance to help her communicate why he has not reached the higher grade level.

The limitations of the language also created uncertainty about what complex movement actually is. Even though the teachers conferred with their colleagues when discussing the same student, some were still troubled about the differences between schools and what the knowledge requirement really means:

If you are motorically skilled and move in a good way you can show...what I consider to be a complex movement, but there again I don’t know whether it is a complex movement, someone has to tell me that. Or show me. I would like the people from SNAE, who have written this, to come and demonstrate five complex movements. (David)

In the second theme, students unequal possibilities were sometimes considered genetically inherited and sometimes due to inequalities in society. Rhythm was sometimes described as something that is inherited; you either have it or you don’t. After observing individual students walking to a beat, Adam said:

I use that as a base when we are going to dance. If it’s the foxtrot or jive I already know that these people, there aren’t many but they do exist, can’t follow a rhythm, they can’t feel it, and then I understand, then I know, that when we dance it will be very difficult for them.

The teachers sometimes suspected that students can meet the knowledge requirements, but have little opportunity to practice and display them due to socio-economic factors, group dynamics and movement experience. They had pedagogic concerns about how to give all students the same opportunities to develop and occasionally the teachers compensated for

students' different possibilities by transforming the knowledge requirements of complex movements to basic movements or less, for instance by giving pass grades to students who had trouble performing basic movements such as running on uneven surface.

A student's socio-economic background can influence his or her possibilities of being assessed. Economically less privileged students occasionally lacked equipment and sometimes did not change for the reasons Eric describes in the quote:

I've seen that more among the girls [...] if they don't have the kind of clothes or equipment that they feel comfortable with they don't bring them to school and in that case cannot take part in PE. They might do some of things they can do [without changing], but they don't get involved in the same way. (Eric)

If they do not participate in PE the teacher cannot assess their knowledge. A second reason for not demonstrating their skills was the group dynamics in the class. If students did not feel safe in the group or were afraid of failing they were reluctant to get involved. Cecilia gave an example of how two boys were influenced by others.

If he [Sven] thinks that gymnastics is sissy these boys won't do it either. If we work in stations and he doesn't think that somersaults or handstands should be done then they don't do it either. When he isn't there you can do things they haven't done. [...] She [Susanne] can inspire them. She can nag them into doing a somersault. If they were all in the same group she would probably force them to do these things. If he's [Sven] not there. If he's in another group I mean. [...] He'll [Sven] only does it if he knows he'll be the best. (Cecilia)

Movement experience was mentioned as an influencing factor by all the teachers except one. For students with a foreign background this could be problematic, especially if they have had little access to PE at school or sports in their leisure time in their home countries. A lack of physical movement can result in poor muscle tone, thus making it difficult to do certain activities like running or skiing. In many cases such students received a pass grade in PE even when having trouble with basic movement. On the other hand, experience of leisure time sport was an advantage for the higher grades. Students who are active in sport clubs in their leisure time often achieve higher grades in PE (cf. Quennerstedt, Öhman, and Eriksson 2008). The teachers explained that it is easier to meet the knowledge requirements if you have previous knowledge and experience of sports and as a result have confidence in your own ability. This enables students to assist peers, understand instructions, know what to practise and why and understand where they need to improve. Gloria gave an example from swimming: 'He's good at the crawl and can adapt his movements [...] I think he may have

learned this at home.’ She also acknowledged that all movement experience does not contribute to ability in legitimate movement.

He is good at skateboarding so there he demonstrates that he has good balance. I watched him in the skate park, so I know he has [...] in gymnastics I think that he [benefits from his experiences]... but when it comes to things like somersaults, it is clear that he has reached a certain level but probably won’t be as good as the more physical guys. (Gloria)

Skateboarding was not recognised by the teacher as a sport that contributes to the legitimate movements necessary for grading purposes. Here, it is more important to be what Gloria called a physical guy. Previous discourses can be considered agents in the transformation of the broader content of the curriculum to the more narrow content in the secondary field (cf. Annerstedt 2008). The activities pursued in the lessons are often ballgames, gymnastics, games and track and field, which means that the masculine values embedded in the activities (Kirk 2010) favour the strong. A broader content where for instance skateboarding is equally important as a somersault, could make it possible for students with other backgrounds and different moving experiences than traditional sports to find their place in PE (cf. Penney and Chandler, 2000).

Discussion and conclusions

Policy texts are always open to interpretation and pedagogic actions taken by the teachers contribute to what can be regarded as legitimate knowledge and legitimate movement in PE:

the creativity in the reading may be directed to either no change—a maintenance of status quo by accommodating new requirements within essentially unchanged programmes and pedagogies—or, in contrast, the pursuit of new pedagogical opportunities relating to physical education and sport within the curriculum and beyond it. (Penney 2011, 17)

In this paper the specific pedagogic action of grading is investigated. In the transformation of national grading criteria to grading practice the pedagogic actions taken in the secondary field inform and limit the way in which legitimate movement in PE is conceptualised. Among the teachers taking part in the study, performance in a multi-activity model is a common perception of legitimate movement. The multi-activity model limits alternative discourses advocated in the national curriculum (see Penney 2013, 13). The persistence of established discourses frames assessment interpretations, practices and understandings. Movement in the higher grades is often associated with competitive sports. As a result, strength, speed, technique and tactics are often included in the assessment (see also Redelius, Fagrell, and

Larsson 2009). Some teachers regard physical fitness as part of legitimate movement despite fitness not being part of the national curriculum. The choice of activities that favours strong students is in part favouring innate physical talent, criticised by Penney and Lisahunter (2006) and students that are early in their physical development.

For the lower grades, basic movements such as running and jumping are sometimes mentioned but do not seem to be necessary to get a pass grade, even if the national knowledge requirements expect a higher level of complex movement. The teachers often use grades to preserve the existing structures, rather than using the grading system to challenge traditional knowledge boundaries of movement (cf. Hunter 2004). Why the teachers choose to reaffirm rather than challenge the established order is discussed below.

The curriculum provides an opportunity to challenge the content of PE lessons to allow students with experience of physical activities other than competitive sports to be considered able in movement. A teacher's choice of activities should not be considered a neutral action: 'Possibilities for thought in and about education and physical education are always framed by a much wider web of policies, discourses and the discursive, resource and relational conditions that they generate' (Penney 2013, 9). It is a complex web with many influences. Teachers' understanding of the meaning of PE is one of them. If the purpose of PE is activity, then traditional activities like sport, fitness training, ball games and dance are well adapted to allow about 30 students to be active at the same limited time in a limited space. Consequently, students who are active in the teachers' chosen sports benefit from the content since they are familiar with and support the prevailing sport discourse. When the goal of knowledge in movement is interpreted as knowledge in traditional sports there is little need to change the lesson content in any significant way. Moreover, the boundaries of what can be thought of as legitimate movement are not challenged.

How might we understand the tension between past and possible futures (Bernstein 1996; Penney 2013) and between established structures and emerging structures that 'seek to embrace new discourses' (Penney 2013, 13)? The teachers are positive to the intentions of the national grading criteria and try to adjust to them, although in their own practices they still value traditional sports. They also find it difficult to interpret how students should 'vary and adapt their movements to some extent to activities and context' (SNAE, 2011) in other ways than to adapt them to different sports and thereby achieve good results. The difficulty to communicate what complex movement is and the teachers' pedagogic concerns of how to

motivate *all* students to participate and accept the sport discourse provide possible ways to understand teachers' pedagogic actions when grading.

Sweden has a high stakes grading system, where grades are used for selection to higher education. The grades are supposed to only reflect specified knowledge, regardless of context and students' backgrounds. The national knowledge requirements used are intended to support valid and just grades and therefore have to be transparent and communicable. The demand for transparency in grading sometimes conflicts with the difficulty of verbalising what complex movement consists of. The difference between *to some extent* and *well* is often implicit and difficult to communicate to students and parents. The teachers deal with the problem in different ways. In some cases they make use of practical tests to rank movement according to degree of difficulty or to count the number of exercises that are satisfactorily carried out. One teacher, who has been challenged by both students and parents, is methodically trying to quantify movements in order to be able to communicate specific criteria for different activities. The demand for transparency has in this case limited legitimate movements to those that are measurable and communicable. This is an unexpected and undesired outcome in a high stakes, criteria-based grading system and is in direct opposition to the curriculum's intention to expand the concept of movement beyond competitive sports and measurable results.

High stakes assessment has been identified as a key driver in the interrelated message system of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in secondary school (Penney 2013; Thorburn 2007). I acknowledge the advantages of such a system, but also point to the need to be aware of undesired consequences. The tension between the demands of transparency and the inability to articulate complex movements is related to the tension between high stakes grading and progressive curriculum, as suggested by Thornburn (2007) and Penney (2013). Similarly, Evans and Penney (2008) point to the tension between the desire to measure performance objectively and the possibility of educating people holistically.

The results also expose the interrelation between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Bernstein, 1996). Performance-based assessment can be influenced by pedagogical concerns about students' possibilities to learn and demonstrate their ability in movement. The teachers' pedagogic ambitions to nurture values of equity and encourage every student to develop in their own right are sometimes in conflict with the expected grading practice. Socio-economic differences, experiences of movement and status in the class are all recognised as factors that

influence which abilities in movement students can display. The teachers are sometimes unsure about students' abilities and think that some students could perform better if they were given the opportunity to do so. The teachers try to compensate for unequal opportunities in different ways. The qualitative knowledge requirements are sometimes interpreted in a way that makes it possible for less privileged students to achieve a pass grade, for example by reducing complex movements to basic movements. The teachers also try to motivate students with less capital and less adherence to the sport discourse. However, as Evans (2004) points out, school alone cannot compensate for society, although it can make a difference to less privileged students' chances by confronting structures of inequality. Compensatory education 'can direct attention away from internal organization and quality of the educational context of the school to focus attention on deficits of families and children' (Evans 2004, 98, referring to Bernstein).

Nyberg and Larsson (2014) have drawn attention to the need to articulate what there is to learn when moving. They suggest that one reason for the absence of assessment of the quality of movement could be that certain aspects of knowing in moving and body awareness include a tacit dimension that is not easily articulated. They argue that several aspects of knowing, including both mental and physical processes, should be taken into account when elaborating human movement. They use experts in moving to observe and communicate human movement. As has been shown in this study, the RG technique is one possible way of exploring teachers' expert and tacit knowledge of legitimate movement in PE and helps to 'reveal embedded thinking about the physical education knowledge and learning, and [make it possible to] pose new, searching and potentially transformative questions about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment' (Penney 2013, 18). The interviewed teachers appeared to have difficulties in finding ways of letting new discourses replace or add to the existing sport discourse and lacked the language to discuss movement qualities with students, other teachers and the authorities. The articulation of the tacit dimension of movement is essential in order to understand which movements are graded and therefore valued in PE and to initiate a discussion that could challenge present conceptions. A language that communicates complex movement might also facilitate the development of new discourses and allow movement in PE to be understood in terms other than competitive sports and measurable performance. This could enable the movements of students with other experiences than the privileged sports to be valued and assessed and at the same time strengthen the interrelation between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Better possibilities to communicate qualities in movement can also

help further exploring movement as a knowledge area, using other conceptual tools or theoretical perspectives.

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