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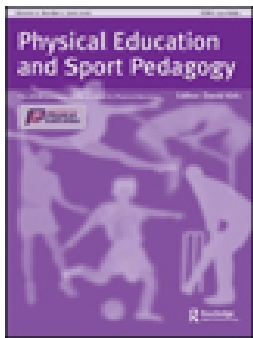
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# Exploring Movement Composition in the transition from physical education teacher education to school PE

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Scholars have suggested that students' views of what is important for them to know as Physical Education (PE) teachers are a result of what is assessed in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE). Thus, there is a risk that students will reproduce content areas such as sports and assess sport-techniques without much critical consideration. In this study, however, the risk of reproducing what is prioritised in PETE is seen as an opportunity regarding the potential reproduction of other content areas than sports. Based on the regulative principles of PE and PETE that privilege sport skills and hinder creative movement learning, we focus on a content area in PETE that provides opportunities for students to engage in creative collaboration and examine how this content area is realised in school PE. Hence, we have chosen to explore 'Movement Composition', a content area which has a long tradition at one of the PETE universities in Sweden. Based on an overarching interest in whether and how PETE matters, this exploratory study focuses on the potential transferability of Movement Composition as a particular content area in the transition from PETE to PE.

**Purpose and research question:** The purpose of this study is to explore Movement Composition as a content area undergoing the transition from PETE to school PE. The research question is: How is the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition constructed, recontextualised and realised in the transition from PETE to school PE?

**Methods:** Data was generated through an interview with one of the initiators of Movement Composition. Stimulated Recall interviews and Zoom interviews were also conducted with a group of five PETE students and three experienced PE teachers. In addition, documents such as the study guide, course literature, and written assignments associated with Movement Composition in the PETE programme were included in the empirical material. In the analysis, the combination of Bernstein's pedagogic device and the Swedish didactics of PE research tradition was used to identify the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition in the transition from PETE to school PE.

**Findings:** The findings show how the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition as a content area is *constructed*, *recontextualised* and *realised* in the transition from PETE to school PE. The construction of Movement Composition as a pedagogic discourse in PETE is about how the

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content area (the *what*) is selected and organised for pedagogical purposes. The recontextualisation of Movement Composition is about how the pedagogic discourse is interpreted and translated in relation to the PE syllabus. The realisation of Movement Composition involves how the content area in PETE is implemented in PE practice.

**Conclusions:** This exploratory study has shown that what is articulated as a relevant content area and the way it is taught, learned, and assessed in PETE in many regards survives the transition to school PE. The transition from PETE to school PE does not only involve reproduction of sports and sport-techniques from one context to another. PETE also contributes to the use of creative, collaborative, and student-centred learning tasks in school PE.

## Introduction

Physical education teacher education (PETE) students in many countries tend to perceive practical content areas in their teacher education as more important than theoretical ones. They often express that learning about the teaching of ball games and other sports is more relevant than, for instance, addressing different issues in physical education (PE) from socio-critical perspectives (Larsson 2009; Larsson, Linnér, and Schenker 2018; Mordal-Moen and Green 2014; Spittle and Spittle 2016). Larsson, Linnér, and Schenker (2018) further suggest that students' views of what is important for them to know as PE teachers are a result of what is assessed in PETE. As long as physical skills in sporting activities are highlighted in assignments and assessments in PETE, students will perceive these aspects as crucial in their future teaching of school PE. There is consequently a distinct risk that students will continue to reproduce the teaching traditions and assessment components that are traditionally associated with PETE without much critical consideration (Larsson 2009; Larsson, Linnér, and Schenker 2018; Mordal-Moen and Green 2014; Tinning 2022). Hence, it seems like PETE matters – although not always in a desirable way.

In this study, this 'risk' of reproducing what is prioritised in PETE is instead seen as an opportunity regarding the potential reproduction of other content areas than sports and sport-techniques. Engdahl, Lundvall, and Barker (2021, 1) have pointed out that 'the overarching regulative principles of PE and PETE that privilege sport skills and physical exercise hinder creative movement learning.' So, what happens if we focus on a content area in PETE that provides opportunities for students to engage in creative collaboration and examine how this content area is realised in school PE? To find the answer to this question, we have chosen to explore what is referred to as 'Movement Composition,' a content area with a long tradition at one of the PETE universities in Sweden. Based on an overarching interest in whether and how teacher education matters, in this case PETE (Backman et al. 2021b; Tolgfors et al. 2021; Tolgfors et al. 2022), this exploratory study thus focuses on the potential transferability of Movement Composition as a particular content area in the transition from PETE to PE.

Movement Composition involves students in teacher education (or indeed pupils in school) choreographing a combination of movements from dance and gymnastics. The theory behind this task and the means of assessing it is based on Rudolf Laban's movement framework (see Smith-Autard 2014). The MC learning task<sup>1</sup> provides opportunities for students (or pupils) to develop movement capabilities through creative and collaborative learning experiences. According to one of the initiators, Movement Composition was first introduced in Sweden about 25 years ago. PETE instructors at the time aspired to make students aware of certain common qualities within gymnastics and dance. The goal was to activate PETE students as 'composers of movements to music' – not just followers of teacher educators' own choreographies.

Movement Composition stands out from other content areas within Swedish PETE, such as ball games, swimming, or fitness training, as an area of particular interest since it is not likely that many

PETE students have experienced Movement Composition in a context other than their teacher training. This entails that the MC learning task is something most PETE students will have experienced for the first time during PETE – not in sports clubs, swimming pools, or fitness centres. Consequently, if PETE students choose to use a similar learning task in school PE later in their profession as PE teachers, they will more than likely be drawing on the teaching they participated in during PETE. This makes Movement Composition a particularly interesting study object in the transition from PETE to school PE.

In our previous work, the time span of our investigation stretched from PETE (Tolgfors et al. 2021) to the induction phase of PE teaching (Tolgfors et al. 2022). Scholars in the field of occupational socialisation have, however, identified the need for research to go beyond the induction phase (the first three years of socialisation in school) to study what determines more experienced teachers' ways of teaching (see for example Iannucci and MacPhail 2019; Richards, Templin, and Graber 2014). Unfortunately, the time limit of our research project, funded by the Swedish Research Council between 2019 and 2023, prevents us from following our current PETE students beyond the induction phase (Backman et al. 2021b). To overcome this problem we have decided, in this exploratory study, to focus on a content area that has been taught in a similar way over time in order to investigate the transfer of a content with teachers that have reached beyond the induction phase.

In this study, we draw on Bernstein's (1996) framework, focusing on the *construction, recontextualisation* and *realisation* of pedagogic discourses, and combine this with an approach shaped by the 'Swedish Didactics of Physical Education research tradition' (Quennerstedt and Larsson 2015, 565). From these perspectives, Movement Composition is seen as a particular '*what*', a content area that has been continuously taught at the studied PETE university since the 1990s. The ways it is justified (the '*why*') and implemented (the '*how*'), on the other hand, are more likely to undergo changes as these aspects transition 'over time' from PETE to school PE due to different contextual conditions. Our explorative research design entails that we can access the reflections of both PETE students and PE teachers on Movement Composition, even if these educators have different degrees of experience. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore Movement Composition as a content area undergoing the transition from PETE to school PE. The research question is: How is the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition constructed, recontextualised and realised in the transition from PETE to school PE?

### **Movement cultures in PETE and school PE**

In Sweden as well as in many other countries, several movement cultures form the basis for the subject content in PETE and school PE. In Sweden, for instance, Backman (2008) has highlighted the important role of 'friluftsliv' (outdoor education) as well as ball games (Backman et al. 2021a) in these educational contexts. Moreover, Larsson and Karlefors (2015) have identified a number of movement cultures in school PE based on different logics: a sport logic, a sport-technique logic, a keep fit-logic, and a dance logic. Gymnastics and dance are examples of movement activities with different logics. While gymnastics can be related to sport-techniques and learning of skills, dance can be seen as an aesthetic activity (Mattsson and Lundvall 2015).

Gymnastics and dance are usually taught separately, since both in many respects have their own traditions and purposes (Maivorsdotter, Lundvall, and Quennerstedt 2014; Mattsson and Lundvall 2015; McVeigh and Waring 2021). Gymnastics is widely regarded as fundamental for developing children into effective and confident movers (Baumgarten and Pagnano-Richardson 2010). Dance, on the other hand, provides opportunities for learners to develop both their creativity (Marquis and Metzler 2017) and their ability to adapt their movements to the rhythm, beat, and character of the music (Mattsson and Lundvall 2015). However, if dance is taught as predetermined movement sequences, its potential creative aspects are limited (Mattsson and Larsson 2020). If correct dance techniques are what is assessed in PETE, there is a risk that it is these components that

will be reproduced in school PE (Backman, Nyberg, and Larsson 2020). One way of dealing with this problem is to adopt the approach of Movement Composition, which combines the movement cultures of gymnastics and dance and, with the involvement of creative composition, positions students as choreographers.

### *Theoretical framework*

Basil Bernstein's ideas play a key role in the theoretical framework of our overarching research project, as well as in the current study. Bernstein's (1996) pedagogic device is a useful way to understand how pedagogic discourses are produced in different educational contexts (see e.g. Backman 2011; Kirk, Macdonald, and Tinning 1997; MacPhail 2007; Singh 2015). For example, Bernstein's *regulative discourses* are based on knowledge in relevant fields of society. They do not have to be understood as pedagogic per se, but they are nonetheless influential in the construction of *instructional discourses*. For instance, Kirk and MacDonald (2001, 554) explain that:

The construction of the instructional discourse of HPE takes place primarily within Bernstein's recontextualising field. This process takes the form of syllabus- and textbook-writing and policy making. When programmes are implemented in schools, that is, within Bernstein's secondary context of reproduction, they reproduce those aspects of regulative discourse that were selected and organized by agents in the recontextualising field.

This argument refers to how, in this case, Health and Physical Education curricular documents are formulated and reproduced in what Bernstein calls the recontextualising field. Translated to our research project, an interview with one of the initiators of Movement Composition revealed that its regulative discourse is based on Swedish TeamGym and show-dance, two areas in which the teacher educators behind Movement Composition had been practicing before they put the programme together. These sources of inspiration are of contextual importance. The instructional pedagogic discourse regarding Movement Composition, however, takes shape in the context of the PETE programme. Drawing again on Bernstein (1996), a *pedagogic discourse* emerges when regulative and instructional discourses meet in different educational contexts. Thus, we focus on how the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition is *constructed*, *recontextualised* and *realised* in the transition from PETE to school PE:

- (1) **Construction:** According to Singh (2015), teacher education and teacher educators are influential actors in the construction of pedagogic discourses. They represent a 'regime of rules or principles of power and control by which knowledge (content, skills and processes) is selected and organized for pedagogic purposes' (Singh 2015, 367). Thus, the study guide and the course literature on the Laban movement framework (Smith-Autard 2014) can in our study be seen as written elements of a pedagogic discourse in the PETE context. In the content area of Movement Composition, PETE students are positioned as composers of choreographies under the supervision of their teacher educators. The guidance by these experts in dance and gymnastics can be viewed as an embodied element of the pedagogic discourse (see e.g. Evans, Davies, and Rich 2009).
- (2) **Recontextualisation:** When a content area is transmitted from teacher education to school, the subject matter must be adapted to the curriculum and contextual conditions provided. This process of 'interpretation and translation' (cf. Braun et al. 2011) is what Bernstein calls recontextualisation. In this study, when PETE students reflect on how Movement Composition might be adapted to their future teaching practices, data will be generated regarding their view of the transferability of Movement Composition to school PE. PE teachers will contribute further understandings of how Movement Composition can be recontextualised, by sharing recollections of the MC learning task in PETE and reflecting on their own experiences of integrating it into their current PE practices.

- (3) **Realisation:** The realisation of a pedagogic discourse is manifested through the way the teaching and assessment is carried out in school at the evaluative level (Bernstein 1996). Accordingly, we will pay attention to the PETE students' reflections on how Movement Composition can be used in school PE (in theory). Authentic examples of how the learning task is realised (in practice) will be provided by the PE teachers. Data reflecting a pedagogic discourse will also likely be generated by the feedback they provide to their pupils, based on Laban's movement analysis (cf. Smith-Autard 2014).

In this study, we combine a Bernsteinian framework with a Swedish didactics (or *didaktik*) of physical education framework (Quennerstedt and Larsson 2015), an approach which has gained ground in the past decade in the Scandinavian research field of teaching and learning in PE (see also Quennerstedt 2019; Tolgfors and Barker 2021). Didactic questions involve 'what, how and why, in terms of what and how teachers teach, what and how students learn and why this content or teaching is taught or learned. Questions such as who is teaching, who is learning, when and with whom are also relevant' (Quennerstedt and Larsson 2015, 567).

These questions are in our study used methodologically, both when interviewing the participants and in the analysis of their reflections on Movement Composition. The PETE students' and PE teachers' answers will generate data about the construction, recontextualisation, and realisation (Bernstein 1996) of the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition as an example of a content area in PETE. This exploratory study of Movement Composition can accordingly provide important insights into the consistency and sustainability of content discourses in PETE and school PE. In the section on our analytical process below, we will give a more detailed description of how the didactic questions will be addressed within the Bernsteinian framework.

## Method

This section is structured around the two educational contexts where data generation was carried out in this exploratory study: (1) the PETE context and (2) the context of school PE. In each section, details about the participants and the data generated will be presented. This study is explorative in the sense that we use different kinds of data and we do not longitudinally follow the same group of PETE students. Instead, the assumption is that if we generate data where the question of *what* stays much the same, we can say something about the *how* and *why* questions in the transmission and transformation of this particular content area from PETE to school PE. Hence, we contend that this approach provides rich data on the *construction*, *recontextualisation* and *realisation* of the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition as a content area in the transition from PETE to school PE.

### The PETE context

At the beginning of this study, an interview was conducted with one of the initiators of Movement Composition where we asked questions about the history of the MC learning task at the Swedish PETE institution. Our informant had been a PETE lecturer, responsible for gymnastics instruction, who shared her experiences of how she and her colleague, responsible for dance instruction, had come up with the idea and *why* they felt it was important. She described the components of dance and gymnastics that were included within the Laban movement framework (the *what*) and how Movement Composition was to be implemented by the students (the *how*). The Laban movement framework was accordingly crucial for the content area so a short explanation of its components is needed.

According to Langton (2007), Laban's movement framework can be applied to different physical activities, such as games, dance, and gymnastics. The four aspects of movement (body, space, effort, and relationships) can be used to analyse: (1) what the body does; (2) where the body moves; (3)

how the body moves; and, (4) with whom or what the body is relating as it moves. These skills and concepts are never meant to be taught in isolation, but rather within the context of a particular content area, such as gymnastics, dance or, in our case, a combination of the two. Importantly, Langton (2007, 22) explains that ‘the extent to which the student can gain from movement framework learning experiences largely depends on the physical educator’s capacity to understand, interpret, and implement the learning experiences derived from the movement framework’. The PETE students in the current study have learned about the Laban movement framework through their course literature (Smith-Autard 2014) and lectures. Their teacher educators also draw on Laban when providing feedback.<sup>2</sup>

Data was further generated through Stimulated Recall (SR) interviews (Endacott 2016; Vesterinen, Toom, and Patrikainen 2010) with a group of PETE students, currently collaborating on the MC learning task. A GoPro camera was used to record the students’ group work during the second of their six two-hour classes, in which they made preparations for a final performance. Seventeen of the eighteen students in the class gave their informed consent to participate in the study. In order to get access to their practical group work (see Barker and Quennerstedt 2017), and to access their reflections on Movement Composition as a content area, we decided to focus on *one* of the groups consisting of three male and two female students. The students were shown selected parts of the video recordings and asked to reflect on their experiences, elaborate on *how* and *why* they moved in particular ways, and describe how they felt about the learning task at this early stage in the process. The SR interview was followed up a couple of weeks later with a group interview held via the online software Zoom. Now that the students had gained more experience as ‘choreographers’, they were asked questions about their progress from the situation they had described previously and whether they considered Movement Composition as something that could be used in school PE.

Apart from an evaluation of their final performance, the PETE students’ assessment also included an individual written assignment in which they were asked to reflect on (1) their own experience of learning Movement Composition, and (2) how they could adapt Movement Composition to their future pupils in school PE. Due to ethical considerations, we waited until the students had submitted their examinations before asking for their permission to include their anonymised written reflections in our research data. All eighteen PETE students in the class gave their informed consent to this.

### ***The context of school PE***

The in-service PE teachers included in this study were contacted and selected through a closed Facebook group with a membership of several thousand PE teachers. Initially, we posted a question about Movement Composition and if anyone used the MC learning task in school PE. A few PE teachers responded that they often let their pupils create dance choreographies<sup>3</sup>, but taught gymnastics separately. Thus, only three PE teachers were recruited, based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) They had studied at the PETE university where Movement Composition has been taught since the 1990s; (2) They had about 20 years of teaching experience each, which meant that they had passed the induction phase of PE teaching; (3) They still used Movement Composition, with its distinct combination of dance and gymnastics, as a learning task in school PE.

The three PE teachers gave their informed consent to participate in the study. They were asked when they planned to implement the learning task and if they could choose an appropriate PE class for us to observe. One of the researchers was able to visit one of the PE teachers at her school, film a session of Movement Composition with a GoPro camera and on the same day interview her according to the same procedure used for the SR interviews with the PETE students (Endacott 2016; Vesterinen, Toom, and Patrikainen 2010). This interview focused on her recollections of the content area during her own PETE and how she as a PE teacher had realised the MC learning task in school PE. Other issues covered how the group work was organised and her use of Laban’s movement

**Table 1.** Data for the exploratory study summarised.

Period of data generation	Method	Participants / sources	Use
October 2021	Zoom interview with one of the Movement Composition initiators	The former gymnastics instructor	Construction of pedagogic discourse
Early fall 2021	Analysis of Movement Composition study guide and course literature	Written documents	Construction of pedagogic discourse
Mid fall 2021	SR interview	A group of five PETE students	Mainly construction of pedagogic discourse
Late fall 2021	Follow-up Zoom interview	The same group of five PETE students	Construction and recontextualisation of pedagogic discourse
Early spring 2022	Analysis of written reflections on Movement Composition	All 18 PETE students' written examinations	Recontextualisation and potential realisation of pedagogic discourse
Early spring 2022	SR interview with a PE teacher at her school in a large city	A female PE teacher	Mainly realisation of pedagogic discourse, but also reflections on construction and recontextualisation
Early spring 2022	Zoom interview with two PE teachers, working at the same school in a smaller city	One male and one female PE teacher together at the same time	As above.

analysis when providing feedback. More ad hoc questions were based on the filmed sequences from the PE class that had just been observed. A Zoom interview with the other two PE teachers was based on a similar interview guide, apart from the section on filmed sequences (Table 1).<sup>4</sup>

### Analytical process

Initially, all four researchers read the texts resulting from the different parts of the data generation process individually and marked excerpts of particular interest. This familiarisation was followed by a theoretically grounded analysis using the theoretical framework outlined above. We were also inspired by Goodyear et al.'s (2019) deliberative strategy suggesting procedures for quality and rigor in qualitative analysis.

The didactic questions *what*, *how* and *why* were posed to analyse Movement Composition in the transition from PETE to school PE, by using them as rough proxies for Bernstein's three pedagogical discourses as follows:

- (1) The characteristics of Movement Composition as a pedagogic discourse constructed in the PETE context were analysed using the following questions: What is/was perceived as the purpose (the *why*) and the key elements (the *what*) of Movement Composition, according to the study guide and participants? What is/was characteristic of the teacher educators' supervision (the *how*) of Movement Composition in the PETE classroom? How do current and former PETE students describe their collaboration and group performances (the *how*, *what*, and *why*)?
- (2) The characteristics of Movement Composition as a pedagogic discourse recontextualised from PETE to school PE were analysed using the following questions: How do PETE students view the potential transferability of Movement Composition to school PE? How do PE teachers account for their teaching of the MC learning task in relation to the national PE syllabus and other contextual conditions?
- (3) The characteristics of Movement Composition as a pedagogic discourse realised in school PE were analysed using the following questions: How do current PETE students expect to realise the learning task in school PE? How is the learning task adapted to pupils' prerequisites from the PE teachers' perspective? How is the Laban movement analysis integrated in the teaching and learning process? What are pupils expected to learn from Movement Composition and what is assessed at this evaluative level?

Taken together, the combination of Bernstein's (1996) framework and the Swedish didactics of PE research tradition (Quennerstedt and Larsson 2015) facilitates an analysis of Movement Composition as a content area in the transition from PETE to school PE.

## Findings

The findings show how the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition as a content area is *constructed, recontextualised and realised* in the transition from PETE to school PE. As the results show, the transition of the '*what*' is characterised by continuity while the '*hows*' and the '*whys*' are characterised to a much greater extent by transformation.

### *The construction of Movement Composition in PETE*

The construction of Movement Composition as a pedagogic discourse in PETE is about how the '*what*' is selected and organised for pedagogical purposes. As a content area Movement Composition involves combining elements of two movement cultures and thus generating a learning experience which is quite distinct from those associated with dance and gymnastics when taught as separate content areas. Because PETE students are expected to use the Laban movement analysis, the discourse around the teaching of Movement Composition as a content area is all about movement qualities, expressing emotions, and collaboration. PETE students are positioned as composers of choreographies under the supervision of their teacher educators.

The study guide for Movement Composition outlines that the goal is to create a piece of choreography including dance and gymnastics. In addition, students are supposed to reflect on and document their learning process and consider how formative assessment can be integrated into the teaching and learning process in their future profession. The written instructions imply a pedagogic discourse around Movement Composition that suggest it should include:

- Gymnastics and dance
- Various movements and dance styles the students have learned during PETE and that can be identified in their performance
- An introduction, a middle, and an end
- Laban's movement analysis

The pedagogic discourse is also constructed through the teacher educators' oral guidance, stressing that the choreography should be based on a theme which is, preferably, animated by using props. According to the initiator of Movement Composition we interviewed, the original instructional discourse constructed 25 years ago was based on the same elements (Zoom interview). Some aspects, such as the explicit use of formative assessment, have been added later, but forward-looking feedback has always been provided during the process. The assessment criteria for the examination clarify that the PETE students shall:

- Actively participate in the collaboration of creating a Movement Composition, in which complex movement capabilities can be both developed and assessed.
- Show an ability to adapt his or her movements to the beat, rhythm, and character of the music.
- Use the cornerstones of the Laban movement analysis in the composition as well as in the assessment of another group's choreography.

The construction of the discourse around Movement Composition can be further illustrated through PETE students' experiences of the content area's purpose. The students stated that, through the combination of dance and gymnastics, the learning intention is for them to develop their movement capabilities in an alternative way compared to when dance and gymnastics are handled as

separate learning activities. In the assessment of their performances, however, their impression was that their group choreography was more important than their individual skills in dance and gymnastics:

As I have understood it, the teacher educators will focus on our group work and that we are all involved in the creation of a Movement Composition. If I have a hard time dancing to the beat of the music, I do not think that will matter if I play my role in the choreography. I do not think they will assess our technical skills. (PETE student 1 in the SR interview)

As suggested here, one positive aspect to emerge from this complex learning task is the constructed understanding that it is compensatory. As this student understands it, if you do not excel in gymnastics, the marking of the choreography will allow you to compensate for that by dancing well, or vice versa. The pedagogic discourse as constructed by the PETE course seems also to stress the importance of expressing emotions when presenting the theme of the performance.

The PE teachers, who had all been teaching for about twenty years, still recalled their first acquaintance with Movement Composition. Based on their reflections, the pedagogic discourse surrounding Movement Composition in their experience of PETE is constructed as involving creativity, collaboration, and a combination of movement cultures:

It was about creating something, something other than traditional sports. Dance and gymnastics were the cornerstones, and we were supposed to choose a theme and express it somehow. Collaboration throughout the process was crucial. It was also important to express emotions and to perform in front of an audience. (SR interview with PE teacher 1)

The PE teachers were agreed in their recollections of the ‘fantastic performances’ in their former PETE classes. They also perceived the purpose of Movement Composition in similar ways:

The purpose must have been to plan a choreography and practice different movement capabilities to music. It was a bit like theatre, like a stage performance. (Zoom interview with PE teacher 2 and 3)

The way these teachers constructed their discourse around Movement Composition was based on the profound impression they received at the time about how their learning task was to be completed. They appreciated the opportunity they had to work independently in groups for a long time within a fixed framework. They clearly remembered the enjoyment of sampling their own music and deciding what to wear during the show in order to express their theme.

### ***The recontextualisation of Movement Composition***

The recontextualisation of Movement Composition is about how the pedagogic discourse is interpreted and translated in relation to the PE syllabus, which enables the transfer of the content area (the *what*) to the educational context of school PE. Here, both the PETE students and PE teachers linked the MC learning task to curricular goals and explained how it could be justified (the *why*) in their future or current PE practices. The recontextualisation of the pedagogic discourse also included reflections on the Laban movement analysis framework as a mechanism (the *how*) for feedback and assessment.

The PETE students’ statements clearly show that they found Movement Composition useful and adaptable to school PE:

This is something I would like to work with in school, because I think it is both a lot of fun and very educational. So, it is something I would like to bring to my future teaching practice. (PETE student 2 in the Zoom interview)

In their written reflections, they further described the learning task as highly relevant in relation to the aims of the national PE curriculum:

I think Movement Composition is suitable as a working method in school PE because it corresponds to the movement capabilities that are to be developed according to the PE syllabus. For instance, in upper secondary

school, the pupils are supposed to develop a versatile physical ability. They should also be able to independently plan, perform, and evaluate different movement activities that promote physical ability. (PETE student 3, written examination)

The PETE students also provided more detailed information on how the learning task could be handled in different stages of school PE, depending on the pupils' age and previous experiences of dance and gymnastics. For instance, they felt the Laban movement analysis could easily be integrated into the learning task:

According to Laban, dance can be divided into different categories, based on aspects such as flow, space, weight, and time. There are movement qualities with opposite functions within each category which can be used to describe various movement patterns. Movements can, for instance, be viewed as free or bound, firm or light, sudden or sustained. (PETE student 4, written examination)

Some PETE students also felt the Laban movement analysis could be useful when providing feedback to pupils and assessing their movement capabilities.

The experienced PE teachers' descriptions of how they justified their use of the MC learning task in school PE in relation to the current national curriculum for PE also involved a discourse of recontextualisation. For them, the overall purpose of Movement Composition was to create a love of movement and to develop complex movement capabilities. They argued that the learning task was well aligned with the national knowledge requirements and referred to the section which says that pupils should be able to adapt their movements to the rhythm, beat, and character of the music. They also connected Movement Composition to the assessment of movement qualities, which in gymnastics involves pupils' abilities to adapt their movements to the purpose of different exercises, for instance in terms of power input, balance, and control. In this way, the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition is clearly recontextualised in relation to the national curriculum.

### ***The realisation of Movement Composition in school PE***

The realisation of Movement Composition involves how a certain content area in PETE is implemented in PE practice. The evidence we gathered from PETE students and PE teachers shows that, when realising Movement Composition in a practical teaching context, even if only theoretically in the case of the PETE students, in many senses the *what* remains the same but the *how* and *why* can differ.

Here, PETE students speculated about how the combination of movement cultures as represented by Movement Composition could be adapted to school PE. They thought that it could be appropriate in their future teaching to guide their pupils throughout the preparation for and realisation of the MC learning task:

I think that in school, we would need to be available to support the pupils more, compared to the supervision we got in the PETE course. It would be good to let the pupils gain access to a repertoire of movements to start from, before they are supposed to create their own Movement Compositions. (PETE student 5 in the Zoom interview)

The PETE students also found the limited time in the schedule problematic. From their point of view, it was not likely that their future pupils could manage to complete the collaborative learning task by themselves outside of school hours, because so much mentoring was necessary.

The PE teachers, on the other hand, provided authentic examples of how the MC learning task is currently realised in some schools. Two of the PE teachers explained how they sought to realise Movement Composition gradually across two distinct year groups. When pupils were in school years 7 and 8 (aged 13 and 14) they worked with dance and gymnastics as separate movement cultures. Then, in year 9 (aged 15) they combined the two subjects in Movement Composition. The purpose was at that point to provide a wider perspective on what PE could be and to show that

it could go beyond traditional sports. The learning intentions were shared with pupils in an animated way:

We show film clips of previous performances to give current pupils an idea of what Movement Composition is and what they are supposed to create themselves. Thus, the film clips serve as an inspiration, but they are also used for clarifying what will be assessed in terms of movement qualities. One requirement is that the choreography must have a flow and contain movements that are soft and hard, and high and low. (Zoom interview with PE teacher 2 and 3)

This statement illustrates that in their realisation of the pedagogic discourse these PE teachers based their teaching on the same elements as in the PETE version of Movement Composition: a combination of dance and gymnastics. The PE teachers also referred to aspects of Laban's movement framework when they described what pupils should aim to do in their choreographies, how they should seek to achieve a flow between the different parts of the composition, and how their movements should have contrasting qualities. The local tradition at their school also involves a performance in front of the whole school at the end of the process. According to the PE teachers, this annual performance has meant that most pupils try to create their own contributions, even those for whom this is not an enjoyable task. Some of them find the performance both challenging and intimidating. Considering this problem, the PE teachers have started a collaboration with the health team at their school:

We work together with the health team regarding how to handle emotions. We spend three lessons on this, when our school welfare officer and school psychologist have a plan for how the pupils may handle their emotions and anxiety surrounding their upcoming performance. They talk about taking steps up the stairs until they feel safe. (Zoom interview with PE teacher 2 and 3)

The description of the collaboration with the health team shows that the realisation of Movement Composition involves the articulation of a pedagogic discourse concerning the importance for pupils of facing challenges and expressing emotions, but also the awareness that this content area comes with certain risks that need to be managed.

Another illustration of how Movement Composition in PETE is realised in PE practice is the PE teacher we interviewed who has partnered with the music teacher to deliver the learning task. Both teachers have identified learning goals of mutual interest in their two subjects, which they have gone on to combine in a Movement Composition assignment. Their teamwork generates more teaching hours for the task and creates opportunities for more profound supervision and co-assessment by the two teachers. The music teacher is also present at the PE lessons, every now and then. In groups of four or five, the pupils have 13–14 lessons to identify the music they intend to use and create their choreographies. They have access to iPads (with the software iMovie), which they can use to edit their music and record their ideas for different step combinations and gymnastic exercises during their collaboration. They document what they have done and what they intend to try during their next lesson in a logbook.

During the observed PE lesson, the music teacher focused on the pupils' ability to evaluate their creative process in their logbooks. Meanwhile, the PE teacher provided formative feedback to one group at a time, by commenting on what could be developed and how the pupils' movements could be related to their theme or adapted to the character of the music. According to the Laban movement framework, the PE teacher also stressed the importance of connecting the various parts of the choreographies to achieve a better flow between the movements. Feedback and assessment are, accordingly, crucial elements in how Movement Composition is realised in school PE. While one group of pupils presented how far they had come, another group used a checklist when watching their classmates' performance and provided feedback to them based on the criteria of 'Two stars and a wish.' In this one lesson alone, a whole battery of techniques in Assessment for Learning (AfL) were used in the realisation of the pedagogic discourse. According to the PE teacher, the pupils' final performances are evaluated by means of co-assessment:

The final performances are filmed. Then, the music teacher and I usually gather all of the material from the Movement Composition lessons: the pupils' logbooks, and film clips, and we go through everything together. In PE, the pupils' movement capabilities are assessed, whereas the Music teacher focuses on their ability to evaluate the creative process and their personal expression in relation to the music. (SR interview with PE teacher 1)

This quotation illustrates what is regarded as valid knowledge in the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition at the evaluative level (Bernstein 1996).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study has been to explore Movement Composition as an example of a content area undergoing the transition from PETE to school PE. The research question was: How is the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition constructed, recontextualised and realised in the transition from PETE to school PE?

By posing didactic questions (Quennerstedt 2019) within a Bernsteinian framework (1996), we were able to identify the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition in the transition from PETE to school PE.

### *The what, the why and the how of Movement Composition*

Our analysis shows that current PETE students find Movement Composition meaningful and transferable to school PE. Twenty years on, the PE teachers included in the study still realise Movement Composition in their teaching practices. The content area (the *what*) that undergoes transition, and has done so over a sustained period of time, is the combination of dance and gymnastics and a final performance in front of an audience. The *why* has also remained consistent, with Movement Composition seen as an alternative way of developing movement capabilities when compared to the separate teaching of dance and gymnastics. However, an extension of its educational purpose has occurred in the transition of Movement Composition from PETE to school PE. At one of the schools the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition involved clear expectations of promoting pupils' personal development as human beings, capable of facing challenges and becoming confident enough to perform in front of spectators. The *how* has changed the most in the transition from PETE to PE. The pedagogic discourse still includes creative group work, the use of Laban's movement analysis, and the pupils' opportunity to choose their own music and props to illustrate a theme of their choice. At both schools, however, the PE teachers stressed the importance of collaboration between colleagues for keeping the tradition of Movement Composition teaching alive. One of the PE teachers explained that she had not been able to realise Movement Composition at her previous school, but when she moved to a new school, she met a music teacher who saw benefits of interaction between subjects and together they have started to deliver it as a joint content area. They have also developed their use of AfL techniques<sup>5</sup>, such as self-assessment and peer-assessment during the working process, and the facilitative role played by iPads, checklists, logbooks, and strategies for co-assessment.

### *The consistency of the pedagogic discourse of Movement Composition*

Based on the findings of this exploratory study, PETE can be said to serve as a basis for teaching in school PE. So, what is done in PETE matters. The study provides a template for how a content area, or a specific learning task, can be reproduced in school PE. For other PE teachers, the complexity of Movement Composition might be perceived as a limitation for its usefulness in school PE (cf. Engdahl, Lundvall, and Barker 2021). It is important to note that we cannot draw any far-reaching conclusions based on this study, since only a few PE teachers fulfilled our quite strict inclusion criteria. Drawing on Smith (2018), however, we suggest that our descriptions of these teachers' ways of

realising Movement Composition could be transferable to other school PE teaching practices. There are hundreds of PE teachers who have studied at the university where Movement Composition has been a content area for decades. We do not know to what extent the MC learning task is used in the PE teaching at other schools or if certain aspects of Movement Composition are used in teaching more broadly. Dance and gymnastics are often handled as separate content areas (see for example Baumgarten and Pagnano-Richardson 2010; Mattsson and Larsson 2020). Thus, it may be more common to provide opportunities for pupils to do group work with dance compositions (Barker and Quennerstedt 2017; Larsson and Karlefors 2015; Marquis and Metzler 2017) rather than implementing the full extent of Movement Composition including both dance and gymnastics. This was the case in the SR interview that was excluded from our study, since gymnastics had been ‘washed out’ from the learning task (c.f. Starck et al. 2020).

Despite the rather high expectations surrounding the execution of Movement Composition, we were able to identify three PE teachers, each with approximately 20 years of teaching experience, who still use the full version of the MC learning task. They all had positive learning experiences from the content area during PETE and were still carriers of its pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1996). Thus, the *what*, the *how* and the *why* of Movement Composition displayed consistency in the transition from PETE to PE. At the same time the *why*, but even more so the *how*, displayed changes in the pedagogical discourse. This finding gives important insights in how content discourses can be constructed in order to become sustainable. More research is however needed covering a broad spectrum of exploratory working methods in different movement cultures, and a wider consideration of their potential transferability to school PE in order to conclude *how* PETE matters.

## Conclusion

This exploratory study has shown that what is articulated as a relevant content area and the way it is taught, learned, and assessed in PETE survives the transition to school PE. Hence, the transition from PETE to school PE does not only involve reproduction of sports and sport-techniques from one context to another. PETE also contributes to the use of creative, collaborative, and student-centred learning tasks in school PE. If this content is considered desirable, teacher educators need to support PETE students in the transition to PE, by implementing and assessing more student-centred working methods in PETE and encouraging PETE students to use more pupil-centred learning tasks during school placements.

## Notes

1. Throughout this article, Movement Composition will be referred to as either a content area or the MC learning task.
2. Other scholars have used the Laban framework as a basis for the analysis of movement qualities in physical education contexts (e.g. Edwards et al. 2020; Meckbach et al. 2014).
3. An additional SR interview was conducted with a fourth PE teacher, who had reported that Movement Composition was a tradition at her school. However, this local version had been transformed into dance composition, without mandatory elements of gymnastics. Consequently, the data was excluded.
4. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, SR interviews were not conducted with these PE teachers. Nonetheless, they provided animated descriptions of how they usually teach Movement Composition.
5. In relation to our previous work, focusing on AfL in the transition from PETE to school PE, these findings indicate how AfL might be used by experienced teachers long after they have passed through the induction phase of PE teaching (cf. Tolgfors, et al. 2021; Tolgfors et al. 2022).

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