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## Teachers' views on the construction, management and delivery of an externally prescribed physical education curriculum: higher grade physical education

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Teachers' views on the construction, management and delivery of an externally prescribed physical education curriculum: Higher Grade Physical Education

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7 Ann MacPhail

8 Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences

9 University of Limerick

10 Limerick

11 Ireland

12

13 E-mail: [Ann.MacPhail@ul.ie](mailto:Ann.MacPhail@ul.ie)

14 Fax: +353-61-330431

15 Phone: +353-61-234155

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27 **prescribed physical education curriculum: Higher Grade Physical Education**

28

29 **Abstract**

30 There is strong agreement that teachers are central to curriculum planning and  
31 development as it is teachers who ultimately decide whether or not, or to what extent, to  
32 implement innovations. By applying Basil Bernstein's (1990) theoretical framework on  
33 the social construction of pedagogic discourse, this paper examines teachers' views  
34 towards the process of a particular curriculum innovation in physical education in  
35 Scotland, Higher Grade Physical Education (HGPE). Also examined are teachers' views  
36 on the consequent subject content and the management of the subject in schools, in an  
37 attempt to identify factors that aided or hindered teachers from supporting and delivering  
38 HGPE. It is suggested that as a consequence of teachers being expected to deliver an  
39 externally prescribed curriculum, de-professionalisation and de-skilling are probable  
40 teacher experiences.

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54 **prescribed physical education curriculum: Higher Grade Physical Education**

55

56 **Introduction**

57 The influences of government policy and assessment requirements over the past twenty  
58 years, i.e., the rise of formally assessed and certificated courses, has significantly  
59 influenced teaching and learning in schools throughout the United Kingdom. Perhaps  
60 within physical education the emergence of formal assessment and certification has been  
61 more of a key development than other 'traditional' subjects such as English, Maths and  
62 Science which have a much longer history of being formally assessed for certification  
63 (Paechter, 2000). In discussing Scottish secondary school physical education Brewer and  
64 Sharp (1999) noted a move towards 'curricula more closely prescribed by an assessment  
65 agenda outwith the formal control of the school physical education department' (p.541).  
66 As a consequence, they were aware of possible teacher de-professionalisation through the  
67 need to implement schemes devised and approved external to the school.

68

69 Bernstein's (1990) model of the social construction of pedagogic discourse allows  
70 examination of the development, mediation and reproduction of curricula using three  
71 fields of knowledge production that he terms 'primary', 'recontextualising' and  
72 'secondary'. This paper focuses on the relationship between the recontextualising and  
73 secondary level, highlighting the tensions that emerge when teachers (secondary level)  
74 are expected to deliver a curriculum constructed by agents and agencies outwith the  
75 school context (recontextualising level). Bernstein's theory is similar to that of Young  
76 (1971) and Goodson (1985) in the belief that the social construction of knowledge and  
77 more specifically, school subjects, are politically driven and consequently demonstrate  
78 particular political interests of the dominating social order.

79

80 **Teachers' role in curriculum development and teacher ownership**

81 The level of influence teachers have over changing developments in curricula to suit their  
82 individual schools is not matched by the influence they possess in the development of

83 such curricula outside of the school context (Penney & Evans, 1999). Even though this  
84 appears to be the case there has been strong agreement that teachers are central to  
85 curriculum planning and development as it is teachers who ultimately decide whether or  
86 not, or to what extent, to implement innovations (Gatherer, 1999). Teachers are more  
87 likely to accept innovations if they are deemed to be practical and do not challenge  
88 teachers' already established ways of teaching, although physical education teachers are  
89 known to be especially resistant to change (Sparkes, 1990).

90

91 The extent of teachers' formal involvement in curriculum development has been a  
92 concern of a number of authors (Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan,  
93 1982). Hargreaves & Evans (1997) suggested that 'It is time for teachers to be the  
94 included vanguard of reform, and not be made its marginalised victims' (p.13). Fullan  
95 (1982) calls for teachers to be genuinely involved in curriculum reform rather than the  
96 assumption that by involving some teachers on curriculum committees an implementation  
97 would be more likely to be accepted by other teachers. As Fullan explained, the majority  
98 of teachers are on the 'receiving' end of new policy and programmes many more times  
99 than they are on the initiating end. Hargreaves (1994) was aware of the lack of  
100 admittance from reformers that the involvement of teachers in educational change was  
101 likely to increase the success of a proposed change. Without such involvement from  
102 teachers, those involved in the construction and production of a curriculum reform are  
103 unaware of teachers' desires for change or for the conservation of their current practice.

104

105 It is widely agreed that teachers are expected by those agents and agencies involved in the  
106 construction of a specific discourse to implement such a discourse (Bernstein 1990;  
107 Apple, 1982). The perceived degree of control that teachers believe they have  
108 encountered in the evolution of a change in the curriculum is an issue which can  
109 influence teachers in making a particular decision in relation to undertaking curriculum  
110 change. This issue is commonly referred to as 'teacher ownership'. The importance of  
111 teacher ownership of curriculum change is stressed by a number of researchers (Kirk &  
112 Macdonald, 2001; Gavin, 1999 & Gatherer, 1989). Kirk & Macdonald (2001) argue that  
113 the opportunity for teachers to have some degree of control over curriculum matters, in

114 what they call the 'local context of implementation', affects the extent of teacher  
115 ownership. That is, the extent to which the contexts in which teachers work are taken  
116 into account when making decisions, with teachers judging changes by their practicality  
117 to the contexts in which they are teaching. Gavin (1999) makes the same argument, 'The  
118 involvement of practitioners in the whole process of planning, developing, monitoring  
119 and reviewing is essential in reflecting ownership, in maintaining confidence and in  
120 influencing the direction of change' (p.444).

121

122 Although teachers' role in curriculum development is very much restricted to the school  
123 context, they are allowed more autonomy and decision-making in such a context.  
124 Writing from an English perspective, Penney & Evans (1999) agree that the construction  
125 of a school subject such as physical education has (in fact) excluded the involvement of  
126 teachers and consequently, what is to be thought of as physical education is decided for  
127 teachers. The major contribution made by teachers in educational reform is by adapting  
128 the physical education curriculum mandates to their individual school contexts. The  
129 modification of curricula by teachers is the rule, not the exception (Kirk, 1990).  
130 However, this does not dismiss the possibility that many individual teachers ask for more  
131 direction and clarity from external agencies as to what and how they should be teaching  
132 (Fullan, 1982).

133

134 Physical education teachers may be less successful or interested in the implementation of  
135 a curriculum development as they would be had they felt they had been involved in an  
136 official role (Kirk, 1992; Sparkes, 1991a & b) and there are current examples of this  
137 occurring. A particular example was when teachers' lack of involvement in the  
138 development of the National Curriculum for Physical Education in England and Wales  
139 resulted in their enthusiasm for the innovative implementation being weak (Penney &  
140 Evans, 1999). MacLeod (1992), in discussing the process of curriculum development in  
141 relation to Standard Grade Physical Education (a two-year course primarily undertaken in  
142 Scotland by students aged 15 and 16 years old), reported how one particular Principal  
143 Teacher of physical education did not identify herself as an owner of such a development  
144 'since she had been only implementing a received product' (p. 170).

145

146 **Bernstein's construction of pedagogic discourse**

147 Bernstein introduces the fields for the production (primary), recontextualising and  
148 reproduction (secondary) of pedagogic discourse and consequently discusses the  
149 relationships between the three fields (how they can be linked to each other) and the rules  
150 of the pedagogic device. The 'primary context' tends to be where the 'intellectual field' of  
151 the education system originates. New ideas are selectively created, modified and  
152 changed to result in developing specialised discourses. As Bernstein emphasises, this  
153 field is concerned with the production of non-pedagogical knowledge rather than the  
154 reproduction of educational discourse and its practice. The 'secondary context' entails the  
155 selective reproduction of educational discourse involving various levels, such as tertiary  
156 and secondary. The non-pedagogical contexts of the primary field undertake a  
157 pedagogical form in the secondary field. In this paper schools and teachers occupy the  
158 secondary field. The 'recontextualising context' is concerned with the transfer of texts  
159 and practices from the primary context to the secondary context, i.e., the transformation  
160 of non-pedagogical knowledge to pedagogical knowledge. This context involves those in  
161 the administration of educational programmes, i.e., in Scotland, the Scottish  
162 Qualifications Authority (SQA) (which emerged in 1997 after the dissolution of the  
163 Scottish Examination Board (SEB)) and the Scottish Consultative Council on the  
164 Curriculum (SCCC) (now subsumed within Learning and Teaching Scotland). Within  
165 each of the stipulated levels there can be some degree of specialisation of agencies.  
166 Higher Grade Physical Education (HGPE) in the school context is the result of  
167 recontextualising principles that have selected and delocated what constitutes HGPE from  
168 the primary context of the production of discourse and relocated, refocused HGPE in the  
169 secondary context of the reproduction of discourse. Figure I illustrates the three fields for  
170 the production, recontextualising and reproduction of pedagogic discourse and the  
171 agencies and agents specific to HGPE working within each field.

172

173 [Insert Figure I about here]

174

175 The SEB and SCCC have been primarily involved in managing the dissemination of  
176 HGPE and in order to understand their official position it is worthwhile discussing the  
177 recontextualising context more. The terms SEB and SQA are used interchangeably  
178 throughout this paper. While it was the SEB that was involved in the construction and  
179 production of HGPE, it is now the SQA who is Scotland's national body for  
180 qualifications at schools, in the workplace and colleges. The SQA have almost identical  
181 duties and powers as those held in the past by the SEB. Its responsibilities include all  
182 secondary school external examinations. It is the job of the SQA to monitor  
183 qualifications and make sure they meet people's needs, are relevant and valued, aiming  
184 'to make sure that everyone who has a stake in education and training in Scotland is  
185 consulted about developments' (SQA, 1999). The SCCC is expected to support and  
186 promote curricular developments with one of its main responsibilities being to issue  
187 guidance on the curriculum to local education authorities and to schools (Clark, 1997).  
188 Reference to the SCCC will be used throughout the paper, as it was the SCCC that was  
189 primarily involved at the time of the research before being subsumed within Learning and  
190 Teaching Scotland.

191

192 In discussing the positions of 'producers', 'reproducers' and 'acquirers' in the pedagogic  
193 field, Bernstein dismisses that one can only occupy only one of the mentioned positions  
194 at any one time, pointing out that there is a tendency to separate producing and  
195 reproducing functions institutionally. The occupancy of a group in more than one of  
196 Bernstein's 'production-reproduction' sites will become evident in this paper by  
197 illustrating that the SEB fulfilled the roles of 'producers' and 'reproducers' in relation to  
198 HGPE.

199

## 200 **Construction of Higher Grade Physical Education**

201 The construction of HGPE involved a number of stages (Author, 2001; Niven, 1998a). A  
202 paper describing the outline proposals for HGPE was prepared and submitted by a  
203 Central Advisory Group of the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) in the  
204 summer of 1990. Approval for a course was given in the autumn of the same year by the  
205 Secretary of State for Scotland (Niven, 1998a). It was the task of a Joint Working Party

206 (JWP) to undertake the necessary work in developing the course and examination. The  
207 selection of the ten individuals (including four teachers) who served on the HGPE JWP  
208 lay primarily with the SOED and a Senior Inspector in physical education. An unofficial  
209 pilot scheme was devised in twelve schools, with the physical education teachers who  
210 were on the JWP agreeing to develop and deliver one of four elements expected to make  
211 up HGPE. A consultation document was issued for comment to a wide range of interested  
212 bodies at the end of April 1992. In light of submissions received from the consultation  
213 process proposals were amended, producing the finalised Arrangements document which  
214 was issued to all presenting centres and interested bodies at the end of January 1993. The  
215 initial phase of dissemination took place at a national conference held in February 1993.  
216 It has been suggested that the national conference was a token gesture in an attempt to  
217 allow people to respond to concerns they had regarding HGPE, as the Arrangements  
218 document was already finalised and distributed and could therefore not be changed  
219 (Niven, 1998a).

220

### 221 **Higher Grade Physical Education**

222 HGPE is the Scottish 'equivalent' to the 'A' level examination in Physical Education and  
223 Sport Studies in England and Wales and the Senior Syllabus in Physical Education in  
224 Queensland (Australia). Although all three target the same age group (17 and 18 year  
225 olds), Higher Grade study has, until the introduction of the Higher Still development  
226 (SOED, 1994), normally been completed within one year compared to two years for 'A'  
227 level and two years for the Senior Syllabus. HGPE aims to develop concepts that are  
228 introduced within Standard Grade Physical Education (SGPE), although SGPE is not a  
229 pre-requisite for students wishing to undertake HGPE.

230

231 The discourse of HGPE is detailed in the 'Arrangements in Physical Education Higher  
232 Grade' (SEB, 1993) document, commonly referred to as the HGPE Arrangements  
233 document. The four Key Features of the HGPE course (at the time this research was  
234 conducted) were Performance, Analysis of Performance, Investigation of Performance  
235 and Personal and Social Development. The first three features were assessed for  
236 certification. Performance was assessed internally and has a weighting of 40% towards

237 the final grade while Analysis of Performance and Investigation of Performance were  
238 assessed externally with a weighting of 40% and 20% respectively. Two activities  
239 contributed to the assessment of Performance and pupils were therefore to study a  
240 minimum of two practical activities. Analysis of Performance was sub-divided into four  
241 main areas that were Structures and Strategies, Preparation of the Body, Skills and  
242 Techniques and Appreciation of Action. From the four areas, schools selected three areas  
243 they considered to be most appropriate to the activities chosen for Performance. The  
244 Investigation of Performance required the pupils to produce an Investigation report on a  
245 specific aspect of performance in one or more physical activities. With the introduction of  
246 the 'Higher Still' initiative (SOED, 1994) to Scottish secondary schools, the format of  
247 HGPE has since changed very slightly in relation to the weightings of the components  
248 and the terminology of the four main areas of Analysis of Performance (Scottish  
249 Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1997).

250

251 The integrated nature of the course is reinforced in the recording of an award. No award  
252 is possible unless the assessment requirements for all three key features have been met.  
253 Consequently, if pupils score exceptionally well in Performance but fail either the  
254 Analysis of Performance examination or the Investigation of Performance they fail to  
255 gain any acknowledgement for what they have scored well in.

256

### 257 **Methodology**

258 Bernstein's three fields of knowledge production and reproduction informed the  
259 construction of the questionnaire. I was interested in teachers' views regarding the level  
260 of involvement and assistance from the recontextualising agents, such as the SEB and  
261 SCCC at the time, in informing their decision to offer, or not offer, HGPE (Author,  
262 2004). This paper focuses on teachers' views on the process of the construction of HGPE,  
263 the subsequent subject content and the management and delivery of HGPE in schools.

264

265 A single-stage sampling process was used where access to the names of 170 secondary  
266 schools, in the largest local regional authority in Scotland at the time, was available  
267 through a regional mailing list. Special schools and fee-paying schools were not included

268 in the sample. A questionnaire was addressed to the Head Teacher of each school asking  
269 if they were willing to allow a member of their physical education staff to complete the  
270 questionnaire. A 93% response rate was achieved, with 87 (almost 58%) returns from  
271 schools offering HGPE (denoted as 'Teach' in the following sections) and 64 (42%) from  
272 schools not offering HGPE (denoted as 'Not teach'). This paper deals only with the  
273 qualitative comments that teachers chose to write at the end of the questionnaire. Any  
274 comments teachers made on topics included in the questionnaire, or indeed topics that  
275 were not included in the questionnaire, were welcomed. Analysis was completed by  
276 manually sorting, organising and indexing the data before comparing, developing and  
277 describing the comments that had been received (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

278

## 279 **Results and discussion**

280 Without prompting to discuss particular issues on completion of the questionnaire,  
281 teachers' comments primarily focussed on three areas. Firstly, the process that was  
282 pursued in constructing HGPE and secondly, the consequent subject content that arose.  
283 The third issue was concerned with the relationship between agents and agencies in the  
284 secondary field managing the delivery of HGPE. This issue is the strongest in identifying  
285 factors that aided or hindered teachers from supporting and delivering HGPE and is  
286 discussed in greater depth.

287

288 (1) The process of construction and the agents and agencies involved  
289 Historically in Scotland decision-making regarding structure, syllabus content and  
290 examinations in relation to school innovation has been centralised (Philip, 1992).  
291 Scottish physical education teachers involved in this study were critical of the process of  
292 constructing HGPE and the agents and agencies that had been involved;

293

294 'As always a bare framework is set out with so called efforts from Moray House  
295 College [the only physical education teacher education training institute in  
296 Scotland at the time], who have never taught the course being brought in to  
297 develop courses. There should be a coherent approach to teaching. Why do all  
298 the physical education teachers have to re-invent the wheel?' (Teach, 20).

299

300 'In my opinion there has to be a far more national-based course, prepared by a  
301 knowledgeable working party who understand what goes on in schools' (Teach,  
302 29).

303

304 The above comments encapsulate three main concerns that are raised in relation to the  
305 HGPE Arrangements document being the intended text for teaching the subject. The first  
306 concern is that the framework is inadequate and will consequently lead to different  
307 teacher interpretations. Second, that those involved in constructing the text were too  
308 removed from the secondary context to have experienced the needs of students and the  
309 delivery of such a course. A third concern, related more to the management of HGPE,  
310 was that teachers were spending time duplicating work that they believed should have  
311 been produced and made available nationally along with the HGPE Arrangements  
312 document. Time is at a premium in schools (Hargreaves, 1994) and teachers do not have  
313 the luxury of being able to afford time to produce materials. Teachers currently appear  
314 unable to afford any substantial amount of time away from their day-to-day teaching  
315 activities.

316

317 Such comments highlight the disparity between the recontextualising agents (in this case  
318 Moray House College, who were responsible for the pre-service training of physical  
319 education teachers, and the SEB) and agents in the secondary field (physical education  
320 teachers) in the process of curriculum change. The implication from such comments is  
321 that teachers are expected to implement a change in the curriculum produced by people  
322 who are not primarily involved in teaching that specific curriculum in schools.

323

324 The level of power, in terms of the construction of the HGPE syllabus that  
325 recontextualising agents exercised in relation to agents in the secondary context was  
326 incomparable. The production of the HGPE syllabus was regulated directly by  
327 specialised departments and sub-agencies of the government, controlling what text and  
328 support materials were made available. The recontextualising agents involved in the more  
329 recent Higher Still reforms for physical education also appear not to have addressed the

330 issue of the extensive preparation of work in the secondary field necessary for the  
331 delivery of a physical education programme (Freel, 1998).

332

333 The consequent and continuous involvement of the SEB in relation to the regulation of  
334 the HGPE course in the secondary context illustrates the level of power that this  
335 recontextualising agent maintains in the reproduction of the HGPE syllabus. The SEB  
336 was not only involved at the conception of HGPE but also continued to prepare  
337 examination papers, mark the examination papers, moderate the internally assessed  
338 Performance element and determine the national pass rate.

339

340 (2) Subject content and the level of prescription

341 The HGPE Arrangements document encourages teachers to create a version of HGPE  
342 that meets the needs of schools. While this does not advocate the involvement of  
343 teachers in the production of the instructional discourse of HGPE, it does acknowledge  
344 the impact that local school contexts can have on the transformation of text between the  
345 recontextualising and secondary field. However, in this study no teacher voiced support  
346 for the flexibility encouraged in the HGPE Arrangements document, with teachers  
347 believing that the HGPE Arrangements document was inadequately prescriptive;

348

349 'Arrangements...are vague and open to misinterpretation' (Teach, 7); 'Staff have  
350 to develop own ideas from general headings' (Teach, 12); 'It [HGPE  
351 Arrangements document] was very vague and much (too much) was left to  
352 individual members of staff on their own to sort out' (Teach, 18); 'As always a  
353 bare framework is set out...There should be a coherent approach to teaching'  
354 (Teach, 20); 'Teachers are all working on their own in the preparation of materials  
355 without proper guidance' (Teach, 29).

356

357 The above comments hint towards a possible link between teachers' reading of the  
358 proposals for the HGPE syllabus as not being prescriptive enough and a lack of support  
359 materials being made available. Numerous comments were made in relation to the latter  
360 issue;

361

362 'Most schools have had to soldier on with their own developments' (Teach 8);  
363 'Almost no useful information on syllabus construction has been produced in the  
364 three years of HGPE. Staff has little or no idea what to teach. Staff has to  
365 develop own ideas from general headings - no one available to advise on material  
366 being used in the course' (Teach 12); 'There were no exemplar materials available  
367 for the Investigation or Analysis of Performance which proved difficult. People  
368 were in fact working blindly on these elements' (Teach 15); 'As at the start of SG  
369 [Standard Grade] each school is basically left to their own devices' (Teach 20).

370

371 It is therefore evident that Scottish physical education teachers were in favour of a more  
372 prescriptive document. There is a fine line between teachers favouring a level of  
373 flexibility that acknowledges the impact that school contexts can have on the  
374 transformation of text between the recontextualising and secondary field and the plea for  
375 a more definitive document. Requests for a definitive document such as a textbook or a  
376 less informal recognised text covering the syllabus have been made by teachers (Douglas,  
377 1998). The following comment from one teacher confirmed Douglas' perception that a  
378 less definitive syllabus makes the teaching of a course more difficult;

379

380 'Initially, as usual, much was expected by the [physical education] department  
381 staff to set up and write the course with in my opinion little support in in-service  
382 development. I did not want my department to go through the programme blind  
383 as to the pace, programme, assessments without a clear idea of expected  
384 performance particularly in the written elements' (Not teach, 20).

385

386 The recontextualising agents' role in the formulation of the HGPE Arrangements  
387 document seemed to be perceived by teachers as being inadequate. Teachers appear to  
388 have made their judgement on not being able to deliver the HGPE syllabus without  
389 having to carry out a substantial amount of work on 'fleshing out' a 'skeletal' syllabus (Not  
390 teach, 23). Although the HGPE Arrangements document allows schools a high level of  
391 independence in planning their courses, the amount of work that such independence

392 involves appears to be unacceptable to those in the secondary context. Due to the gradual  
393 increase of curriculum developments that teachers now have to deal with, the preference  
394 for 'fully fleshed out teaching packages' (Not teach, 6) may be deemed more valuable in  
395 terms of saving time. Such a disparity between the recontextualising agents' expectations  
396 of the time teachers could commit to 'fleshing out' the proposals and the reality of the  
397 actual time teachers had to prepare a school programme could have perhaps been  
398 addressed before the Arrangements document reached schools. For this to have happened  
399 it would have required teachers to have had played a more prominent role in the  
400 formulation of the proposals in the recontextualising context where HGPE was  
401 constructed.

402

403 (3) The management and delivery of HGPE

404 Numerous teachers commented on the difficulty of evaluating the learning and teaching  
405 approaches they had taken towards HGPE without adequate feedback from the SEB;

406

407 'Failure of the Exam Board to disclose details of Analysis of Performance and  
408 Investigation marking detrimental to course evaluation' (Teach 5); 'Difficult to  
409 evaluate your approaches to the teaching of HG as you are not given a breakdown  
410 regarding the Investigations submitted and the actual exam results. Totally  
411 unsatisfactory and a failing of the Scottish Exam. Board. A position they don't  
412 seem prepared to change' (Teach 8); 'The national results from HGPE indicate that  
413 something is far wrong but sadly the majority of teachers do not know where they  
414 have gone wrong. Until teachers become more informed, the future of HGPE is  
415 not looking too bright' (Teach 29).

416

417 Incorporated in the above selection of comments is the belief that the situation regarding  
418 feedback is not going to improve, perhaps implying that teachers are beginning to accept  
419 that the SQA are not prepared to, or are unable to, disclose details of pupils' marks.  
420 Information received from the SEB was statistics on how the school had done in relation  
421 to other schools. The only element that teachers can be confident about having marks for

422 is the internally graded, and externally moderated, Performance. Consequently, teachers  
423 are working blind towards what is likely to produce an effective discourse;

424

425 'Difficult to evaluate your approaches to the teaching of Higher Grade as you are  
426 not given any breakdown regarding the Investigations submitted and the actual  
427 exam results' (Teach, 22).

428

429 '[There is] Far too much uncertainty as to where and what is required of a student.  
430 If as during in-service provision, professional teachers are unsure of what is  
431 required to answer, and indeed understand, already undertaken papers, what  
432 chance do youngsters have?' (Not teach, 25).

433

434 Teachers offering HGPE do so despite the lack of communication from agents and  
435 agencies in the recontextualising field. There was clearly a lack of support and provision  
436 from agents and agencies operating in the recontextualising and secondary field regarding  
437 adequate assistance on assessing HGPE;

438

439 'Having taught HGPE since its inception, I am, at present, really frustrated,  
440 confused and slightly disillusioned because of the distinct lack of feedback from  
441 the SEB (they give you no idea how each individual student performed from the  
442 Analysis of Performance exam and Investigation), the erratic availability of  
443 courses, appropriate guidance for the Investigation, and the lack of exemplar  
444 questions and proper marking instructions for Analysis of Performance' (Teach,  
445 29).

446

447 The above comment includes a number of points in relation to the lack of understanding  
448 as to the roles both are expected to fulfil between the recontextualising agents and those  
449 operating in the secondary field. Firstly, the teacher voices concern that there is a lack of  
450 assistance and feedback from the SEB concerning the disclosure of detailed marks for  
451 individual pupils who have completed HGPE. However, the SQA do not identify with  
452 such a role and consequently the trend is the same for every school subject. Also, the

453 plea for marking instructions for the Analysis of Performance examination is a request  
454 that the SQA are unable to fulfill. Questions or areas of the question papers that have  
455 elicited a particularly poor response from candidates, and the overall distribution of  
456 marks scored in the paper, can effect the final pass mark decided by the SQA.  
457 Consequently, the marking instructions as they appear on the actual examination papers  
458 may not be accurate in relation to the final mark attributed to the paper. The SQA do  
459 give a very brief summary every year in their Annual Reports on how pupils have  
460 performed in the three Key Features of HGPE that are assessed, i.e., Performance,  
461 Analysis of Performance and Investigation of Performance.

462

463 Secondly, 'the erratic availability of courses' is read as referring to the number of in-  
464 service training (INSET) courses that were offered in relation to teaching HGPE. The  
465 lack of INSET provision appeared to result in two teachers abstaining from undertaking  
466 HGPE for the time being;

467

468 'Still not prepared to take on HGPE without adequate training' (Not Teach, 28);

469 'Staff now wish re-training (all Diplomas)' (Not teach, 29).

470

471 However, it was up to individual regions usually under the guidance of physical  
472 education Advisers, and not the SEB, to decide how they would disseminate information.  
473 This may have lead to the availability of INSET courses being referred to as 'erratic' in  
474 the likely scenario that some regions secured more resources and funding to support such  
475 courses and consequently were able to offer more courses. The provision of INSET  
476 courses related to the teaching of HGPE continues to be reported as inadequate (Niven,  
477 1998a & b).

478

479 Thirdly, as mentioned previously, it is the SCCC, and not the SQA, that has the remit to  
480 promote information between the recontextualising and secondary fields. Niven (1998b)  
481 commented on the appropriateness of the HGPE exemplar materials provided by the  
482 SCCC, believing that the selection of topics that had been developed for exemplar  
483 materials did not focus on the kind of information that teachers required. She believed

484 that the lack of relevant documentation discouraged many teachers from implementing  
485 HGPE initially. As mentioned previously, time has been reported as a perennial issue in  
486 the innovation literature. Time is at a premium in schools, especially when changes to  
487 the curriculum take place, and as Fullan (1982) pointed out, "time spent on materials  
488 development - on re-inventing the wheel, for example - takes time away from classroom  
489 application" (p.123).

490

491         Expectation of roles in managing HGPE and (potential) teacher de-  
492         professionalisation

493 The lack of understanding regarding the roles expected to be upheld between those in the  
494 recontextualising and secondary fields is not encouraging towards the possibility of  
495 merging the agents in both sites, and consequently teachers fulfilling the role of  
496 'producers' as well as 'reproducers' of knowledge. The agents operating in the  
497 recontextualising field produced the proposals for the HGPE syllabus and then were  
498 unable (or unwilling) to disclose information deemed useful by those operating in the  
499 secondary field. It appeared to be the case that the SEB had completed their task in  
500 producing the proposals and that it was now the teachers' task to reproduce the  
501 knowledge contained within it. This is illustrated by the following comment made by a  
502 teacher;

503

504         'Questions put to them [SEB] were given [a] standard reply - 'Refer to the  
505         Arrangements document'. As if this cured all' (Teach, 15).

506

507 Consequently, teachers lack of involvement as 'producers' of knowledge may have  
508 constituted a number of problems they were now facing in a bid to successfully reproduce  
509 the HGPE syllabus in the secondary context. Problems highlighted in this paper include a  
510 lack of supporting material and the inability to evaluate the learning and teaching  
511 approaches.

512

513 Such a level of control over the dissemination of information and feedback from the SEB  
514 leaves teachers with no direction on how teaching and learning approaches can or should  
515 be changed in order that more students complete the HGPE course successfully. This

516 may also contribute to teachers using rote learning with students in a bid to prepare them  
517 for the externally assessed elements of the course (SQA Annual Statistical Reports, 1998  
518 & 1999) and subsequently result in a de-professionalisation of physical education  
519 teachers' work. Hargreaves (1994) explained the notion of teachers' work becoming  
520 more routinised and deskilled in the following statement;

521

522 "Teachers are depicted as being treated almost like recovering alcoholics: needing  
523 to adopt step-by-step methods of instruction, or to comply with imposed tests and  
524 curricula in order to be effective" (p.14-15).

525

526 Hargreave's comment is relevant in reviewing the SQA Annual Statistical reports for  
527 1998 and 1999. Withholding of information by the SEB appears to have resulted in  
528 teachers consequently being very cautious about straying from the text in reproducing the  
529 syllabus in order to fulfill the requirements set by those in the recontextualising context.  
530 Both reports state that a rather prescriptive and limited approach has been adopted  
531 towards the Investigation of Performance element of HGPE and that there was evidence  
532 that candidates had been preparing for the Analysis of Performance examination through  
533 rote learning of answers. The significance of this is that teachers' sense of ownership of  
534 HGPE is minimal, having to teach the subject in a prescriptive way that they believe is  
535 more likely to result in a pass mark for the candidates. Bryce (1999) believed that  
536 assessment in Scottish schools had become 'more conspicuous than curriculum' (p.657)  
537 and Brewer & Sharp (1999) discussed how the effects of external assessment procedures  
538 on physical education influenced teachers' practice of primarily teaching to fulfil the  
539 knowledge and understanding obligations of SGPE and HGPE syllabi. McGowan (1993)  
540 reinforced the notion of the de-professionalisation of physical education teachers' work in  
541 relation to the delivery of HGPE, evident in the following statement;

542

543 '...we [the physical education profession] are now subject to centrally produced  
544 curricula and teachers are cast more in the role of curriculum implementors than  
545 curriculum innovators, evidence perhaps of a move towards de-professionalisation  
546 of teaching' (p.29).

547

548 Helping students pass the exam has become the major preoccupation for teachers with the  
549 worth of the subject matter taking second place (Kirk, 1988). In discussing the English  
550 examination system over twenty years ago, Woollam (1979) believed that rather than  
551 examinations serving the curriculum, the opposite has happened in physical education  
552 where syllabi has been written to meet the requirements of the examination board. Even  
553 today, this appears to be the situation where the end product is deemed to be more  
554 important than the learning process.

555

### 556 **Conclusion**

557 This paper examined how teachers' views towards the way in which a curriculum  
558 innovation was constructed impacted on their views of the consequent subject content  
559 and the management and delivery of the subject in school. Returning to Bernstein's  
560 theoretical framework of the social construction of pedagogic discourse, he notes that the  
561 major activity of the recontextualising field is constituting the 'what' and 'how' of  
562 pedagogic discourse. Subsequently, if teachers are not involved in constructing the  
563 pedagogic discourse it can only be expected that they will require specific knowledge to  
564 deliver the particular discourse. Tensions and conflicts between recontextualising and  
565 secondary agents and agencies are likely to be heightened when teachers' interpretation  
566 and reconstruction of, in this case, HGPE in the secondary field differs from the way it  
567 was expected to be delivered by those operating in the recontextualising field. As  
568 Paechter (2000) believes 'it does not pay to introduce an educational innovation without  
569 thinking about what it would feel like to be on the receiving end of the changes, either as  
570 a teacher or as a student' (p.156).

571

572 The implication from this study is that the curriculum appears to be shaped in the  
573 secondary field in relation to the amount of information and assistance from the  
574 recontextualising field. The relationship between agents in the recontextualising field  
575 and secondary field was very much one-way. The SEB set out the proposals that teachers  
576 were expected to follow and did not appear to entertain any concerns or feedback on the

577 proposals from teachers. Consequently, it might be suggested that the SEB exercised both  
578 direct and indirect power over the teaching and assessment of pupils in relation to HGPE.

579

580 There is a lot of support in the literature for teachers to be central to curriculum planning  
581 and development, accepting that it is ultimately teachers who decide whether or not to  
582 implement an innovation. In reality this is rarely pursued. An alternative way of  
583 addressing the management of a syllabus in the secondary context and transferring the  
584 power of agencies external to schools to those operating in schools, i.e., teachers, has  
585 been developed and is currently being conducted in secondary schools in Queensland,  
586 Australia (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001). This paper emphasises the need for such  
587 developments to extent from Australia and inform an overall strategy that will result in  
588 the construction of physical education being a collaborative venture between all  
589 interested parties in education systems worldwide. This is turn may lead to those with a  
590 remit to construct and support the implementation of curriculum to be concerned with  
591 making sure everyone who has a stake in education and training is consulted and  
592 involved in curricula developments.

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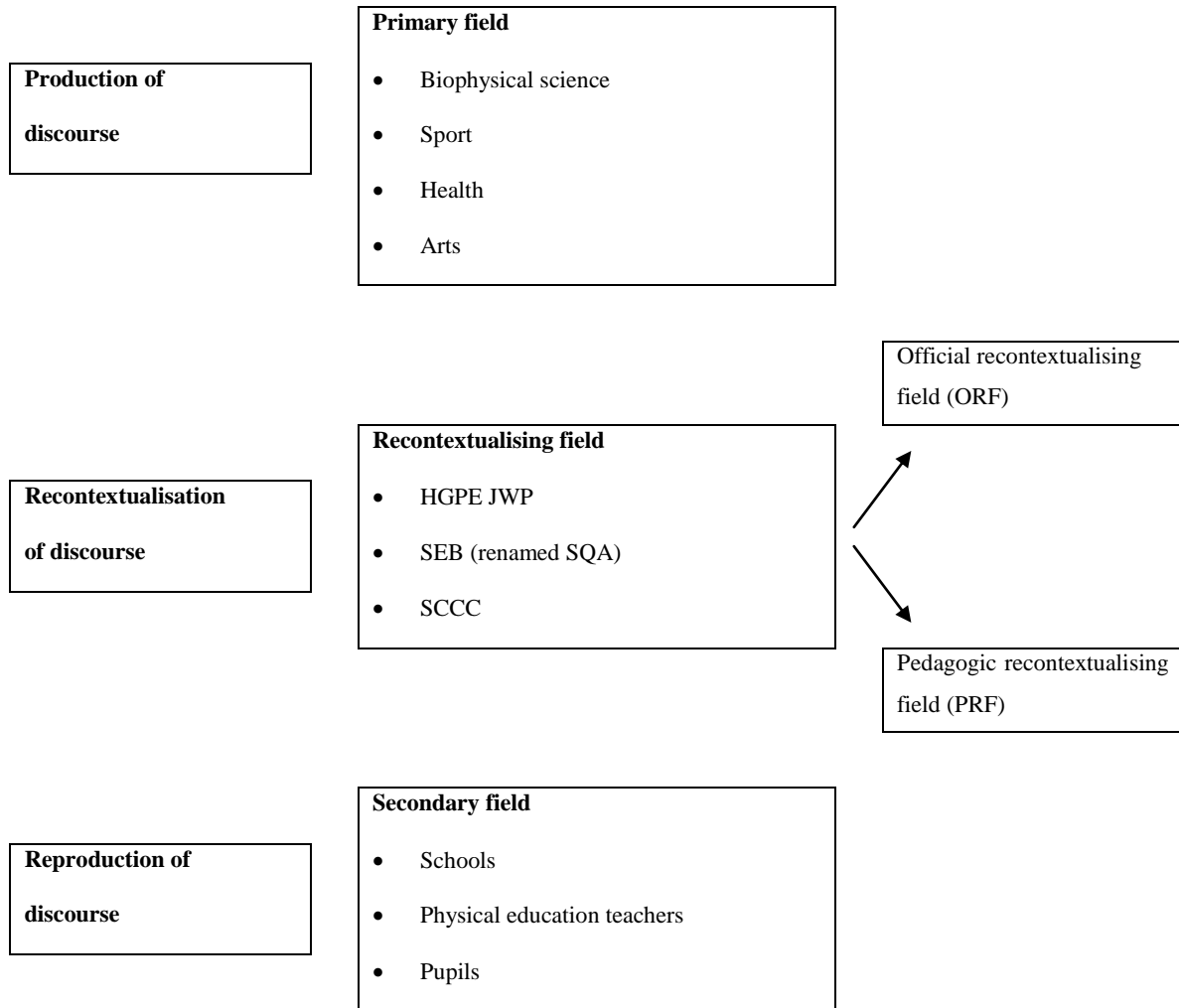
699

Teachers' views on the construction, management and delivery of an externally prescribed physical education curriculum: Higher Grade Physical Education

700

701 Figure 1: Bernstein's construction of pedagogic discourse (examples of agents and agencies operating within  
702 each field given in relation to HGPE)

703



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