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## Using Narrative as a Tool to Locate and Challenge Pre Service Teacher Bodies in Health and Physical Education

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*Abstract: This paper reports on research that has explored the use of narrative as a pedagogical tool in pre service teacher education. Specifically, we pursue the use of narrative to engage with pre service teachers' embodied experiences [their lived body] and the ways in which these experiences are in turn currently influencing their 'living bodies' in regard to what Health and Physical Education (HPE) is and how it should be taught. Data in the form of an assemblage of pre service teachers' narratives are presented to show how both the lived and living body contributes to thoughts and ideas about HPE. Discussion also reflects on the pedagogical merits of using narrative in pre service teacher education. We contend that narrative has a potentially important role to play in pre service teachers coming to better understand their bodies and can assist in moving them beyond what they experienced as HPE as school students.*

### Introduction

From a corporeal perspective, the body is central to everyday life. While the education domain is entrenched with the dualistic separation of the mind and body (Turner, 1984; Shilling, 1993; Evans & Davies, 1993; Armour, 1999) this research foregrounds the lived unity between body-mind and specifically, the body and mind of pre-service teachers in Health and Physical Education (HPE). As Armour (1999) has observed, those we educate do have bodies – they are embodied and that embodiment is sometimes overlooked in the education domain. Following the work of Evans, Davies & Rich (2009); Garrett & Wrench (2012) and Iisahunter (2011) who have attempted to locate bodies in teaching, this research pursues whether pre-service teachers' 'lived' bodies are influential to their 'living' teaching bodies in HPE. In essence our 'lived body' is our body's experiences in the past; happenings and encounters that we have been exposed to which are embodied (internalised). Our 'living bodies' are conceptualised as 'in the present.' We are who we are now because of our lived bodies' experiences, which are invariably played out in the present day affecting our thinking and doing (effect). Below, we discuss each of these concepts in more depth.

This paper examines how narrative (story telling) might be used as a pedagogical tool for better understanding and prospectively challenging the ways this influence is played out. This reflects that two foci were central to this research. Firstly, how the lived body impacts (if at all) upon the living body in relation to beliefs and perceptions of teaching HPE. Secondly, the effectiveness of narrative as a tool for connecting the pre service teachers' lived bodies to their living bodies. The intention was to highlight the unity between bodies and pedagogical practice ('we are our bodies'; 'we practise our bodies'; 'our lived out experiences are our bodies'). Data is presented in the form of an assemblage of pre-service teachers' narrative

accounts (stories) that were collected over the course of a semester of teaching in 2012. We provide insights into the importance of HPE teacher educators coming to better understand how their bodies influence their everyday pedagogical thinking and practice and the ways in which the use of narrative may enable pre service teachers to productively engage with the body in their professional lives.

### **Impetus for the Study**

Prior to this study, the primary researcher's teaching and interactions with students indicated that their embodied experiences [lived body] in regard to HPE at primary/secondary school, was affecting their living bodies, particularly in relation to their thoughts about teaching HPE and their ideas pertaining to how HPE should be taught. Albeit in a positive or negative way, the influence was very apparent. In combination with our previous work focused on the experiences of ex-competitive swimmers (McMahon & Dinan-Thompson, 2008; McMahon, 2010; McMahon & Penney, 2011; McMahon & Penney & Dinan-Thompson, 2012; McMahon & Penney, 2012) this pointed to the sustained impact of the lived body upon the living body specifically in regard to pedagogic practices and relations. We were thus inspired to turn attention to pre service teachers' understandings of and views relating to HPE teaching, and to explore use of narrative as a pedagogic tool that may provide an opportunity and/or space for the pre service teachers to better identify with their lived and living bodies. Our previous research (McMahon & Penney, 2011) as well as others (Chan, 2012; Garrett, 2006; Hickey & Fitzclarence, 1999) who have also engaged with narrative in some way within the education context lent support to the use of narrative as the primary tool in this project. In past work particularly, we have seen how story telling can facilitate elements of emancipation and specifically enable participants to identify and better understand connections between their lived and living bodies (McMahon & Penney, 2011).

### **Defining the Lived and Living Body**

Lived and living bodies firstly must be understood in terms that counter the mind / body dualism, by emphasising a single entity that has experienced and/or is experiencing the world. Blackman (2008) defines the 'lived body' as lived, subjective experience of corporeality. This might include our lived experience of the body as it came known to us in health and illness, through our sensual experience, through its relationship with the world or in relation to the body parts. The concept of the lived body unites perspectives that go beyond exploring how our bodies are represented to instead ask and interrogate how we lived our bodies. Charlseworth (2000) provides us with another perspective, explaining it is a body which is sentient and which has moved and engaged with the world through a form of corporeal consciousness. Merleau-Ponty (1962) recognises that our bodies are our sole means of communication with the world. "Perception, as an active and interpretive, embodied process, immerses the human body in its lived world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 102).

The concept of the lived body has a close synergy to the concept of embodiment, defined as "a textual surface upon which a person's life is inscribed" (Sparkes, 2004, p. 157). This is very close to the notion of practice as articulated by Turner (2000, p. 10); "to form into a body; to invest with a body and to collect into a body". Embodiment is the ensemble of corporeal [tangible; physical; of or pertaining to the body; bodily; corporal] practices which produce and give a body its place in everyday life. Embodiment locates or places particular

bodies within a social habitus. Jackson (1990) captures the essence of the lived body in describing the notion of embodiment thus:

...even though my body seems the most private and hidden part of me, I carry my life history in my body, almost like the way the age rings of a sawn tree trunk reveal the process through time. My personal history of social practices and relationships is physically embodied in the customary ways I hold my body, imagine its size and shape, and in its daily movements and interactions (Jackson, 1990, p. 48).

While literature is arguably saturated with work centring on the 'lived body', comparatively little sociological work addresses the living body. Our emphasis is that it must always be acknowledged that the living body is a subconscious enactment of embodied experience – that of the lived body. Mol and Law (2004) explain “we are our body, as part of our daily practices, we also do our bodies. In practice, we enact them” (Mol & Law, 2004, p. 4). As such, our 'living bodies' are our bodies in the now, enacting our embodied experience and that of our lived body.

## **Literature Backdrop**

As there are various themes of literature pertinent to this research, we have organised the literature backdrop into three sections entitled; 'narrative', 'using narrative in education' and 'the body'.

### **Narrative**

Firstly, it is important to establish exactly what is meant by narrative and how it was used in this research. Simplistically, narrative can be described as any written or verbal representation (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993). In the analysis sense, Gubrium and Holstein (1999, p. 561) refer to narrative as the “examination of the diverse stories, commentaries, and the conversations engaged in everyday life”. For us, narrative is story including all representations of story and the term is thus used interchangeably in this paper. Moon (2010, p. 15) refers to story as the “description and maybe reflection on personally experienced events that have sufficient unity and coherence to be identified as stories. The material might be reflective in writing in a journal or blog, oral or in another format”. Foucault's contention (1997, p. 232) that the act of telling is a practice that enables individuals “to effect...operation on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality” is pertinent in this regard. Further, as indicated above, our previous research (McMahon & Penney, 2011) showed narrative to be a useful tool in connecting the lived and living bodies of swimmers. More specifically, narrative and autoethnography enabled participants to organise their embodied experiences “into temporally meaningful episodes” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1) and the act of storytelling had an emancipatory effect (McMahon & Penney, 2011) for those who engaged with it. Douglas and Careless (2008, p. 35) reaffirm the creative and transformational potential of utilising story saying, “stories stimulate new ways of seeing the world.”

### Using Narrative in Education

Chan (2012) more recently utilised narrative in undergraduate teaching in Hong Kong as a means for encouraging proactive learning which in turn had positive results. Chan utilised autobiographic sessions and self inquires into the pre service teachers' lived experiences with a focus on understanding experience, and reflecting on experience, to create in-depth understanding of self and others. By utilising narrative in class activities, Chan created space for self inquiry to occur that enabled pre service teachers to become active learners who constructed and reconstructed learnt concepts. Garrett (2006) also utilised narrative, in particular story telling into physical education teacher education (PETE) programmes. Garrett presented 'real' student voices to pre service PETE teachers with the intention of encouraging an appreciation for the multiple subjectivities developed in relation to physical activity for young women. As a result, Garrett (2006) highlighted the importance of storytelling (presenting real life accounts) particularly in PETE programmes stating that "the process of storytelling can create a safe context for student teachers to focus on lived experiences and challenge taken-for-granted understandings. It can provide an opportunity to live through another's experience and reveal worlds that are otherwise closed (p. 344).

Our research differs somewhat to Chan's (2012) and Garrett's (2006) studies in that we employed narrative as a life tool for pre service teachers, which can be utilised in the present day and later as practising teachers. The research process sought to enable pre service teachers to draw connections and connect the dots between their lived and living bodies through story-telling centring on bodily experiences (embodied and in the now). Making this connection is essential to pre service teacher education because as Prain and Hickey (1995) highlight:

...the kind of discourse children experience in physical education deeply affects their thought processes and, hence, the nature of what is learned. This relates not only to learning defined narrowly in terms of particular skills or techniques but also to students' whole sense of the possibilities and meanings of the subject (p. 88).

Narrative also provides opportunities for the body's voice of each of the pre-service teachers to take centre stage, featuring in each of their stories. Becker (1997, p. 93) states that "bodily experience and bodily concerns are deeply embedded in various elements of narrative." Narrative provides opportunity to make sense of experiences as:

...we not only tell stories *about* our bodies, but we also tell stories out of and through our bodies. Therefore, the body is simultaneously cause, topic, and instrument of whatever story is told. In this sense, the kind of body that one has and is becomes crucial to the kind of story told" (Smith & Sparkes, 2007, p. 219).

As discussed below, pre service teachers had the opportunity to write and depict their bodily experiences, and to present and share with their fellow peers with the intention that resonance or knowledge acquisition may occur. Thus, when a narrative activity was central to class activities, pre service teachers were provided with opportunity to seek some clarity of their lived and living bodies.

## **The Body**

Underpinning this work is the contention that it is important for all educators to locate, acknowledge and position the body in teaching. Bringing bodies back into the picture is crucial for education (O'Loughlin, 1995 as cited in Hung, 2007). The concept of embodiment and lived experience in education is what sets us apart, is what creates realities of difference for all those involved in education. Pre service teachers' lived bodies thus bring about a multiplicity of subjectivities and difference, which in turn impacts upon their beliefs, ideas and practices (living bodies) in education. The concept of embodiment has also appeared in the work of educational theorists such as Giroux and McLaren (1991), who found the student body to be an "organ of mediation" in school, bringing about a connection between lived experience and the living body and how it is enacted in the classroom environment. As O'Loughlin (1995, p. 2) points out, our bodies are "lived experience". Thus, they "have understandings of the world which are independent of any sort of cognitive map; these understandings are like a set of invisible but intelligent threads which stream out between the body and that world with which the body is familiar". More recently Garret and Wrench (2012) recognised the importance of both discursive and 'lived' experience of the body as means to understand how future HPE teachers construct knowledge, and experience, think and speak about the body. Their work also highlights the importance of this research, particularly their notion of how the lived body affects knowledge, experience and how one thinks and speaks about the body.

## **Positioning the Study**

This study was conducted with 79 pre service teachers enrolled in Bachelor of Education (Primary) at a regional mid-sized University in Australia. The Bachelor of Education (Primary) is a pre-service teaching program which aims to prepare beginning teachers to work in the early years of schooling [Kindergarten to Year 8], also providing support for continuing professional learning in educational theory and practice. The pre service teachers who participated in the study were commencing their second year of a four year degree and were enrolled in the core unit 'Introduction to Health and Physical Education'. McMahon (Author 1) was the coordinator of this unit. The unit is the first of only two HPE units that are taken by these pre service teachers. One of the aims of this unit is to develop the pre service teachers' knowledge and skills for planning, teaching and learning across the HPE curriculum with an emphasis placed on integration into the various curriculum areas involved in everyday teaching.

Pre service teachers involved in this project were enrolled internally, attending lectures and tutorials in the face to face format. Pre service teachers were contacted directly during the first lecture by the primary researcher/unit coordinator of the subject. Information about the project was outlined and the pre service teachers were notified that they would not be doing anything additional to the normal work required in lecture and tutorial activities and that their identity would be kept anonymous in the research. Consent was then obtained by an independent third party during the lecture break, who also allocated each student with an identifiable number to ensure identifiable information was removed. The researchers were thus not privy to any pre service teachers' names at any time throughout this research process and the pre service teachers are referred to by this number in this paper.

While all 79 pre service teachers consented to participate in the research, only 34 (22 female and 12 male) completed all of the storied tasks. This was due to non attendance at tutorials for various reasons, meaning that some consenting participants missed some of the

narrative tasks. Tutorial attendance was not compulsory. The 34 pre-service teachers who did attend all the tutorials and completed all of the narrative tasks for the 13 weeks of the semester have subsequently been included in data analysis and discussion. This figure represented 65 percent (females) and 35 percent (males) respectively.

### **Using Narrative as a Research and Teaching Tool**

In this study, story was used as the primary pedagogical tool in all narrative tasks. It served as a means for locating the lived and living body, including ideas and experiences in regard to HPE. Varied modes of storytelling activities and mixed media were employed throughout the 13 week semester in lecture and tutorial settings. Specifically, activities involved;

- Oral story telling (where students got to discuss their stories in a face to face format);
- Written narratives in storied format as well as a blog format;
- Graphic representation (students portrayed their lived body in HPE through images/pictures/drawings); and
- Embodied stories of experience from practising HPE teachers.

Specifically, table 1 below outlines what we did and how we did it.

Week	Activity
1	<p>‘Written story’ task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a story about a HPE experience that you can remember?</li> <li>• What happened? How did this experience make you feel?</li> <li>• How do you feel about teaching HPE?</li> <li>• As a pre-service teacher, what do you think is the most important thing/s for your future students to achieve in HPE?</li> </ul>
2	<p>Oral storytelling task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students discussed their stories of experience written in week 1 in a face to face format in their tutorial group.</li> <li>• Peers listened and were able to ask questions about the experience.</li> <li>• These conversations were recorded by an independent third person and later transcribed and used as part of the data collected in this research.</li> </ul>
3	<p>Online blog:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students used a storied format to re-tell what they liked about their previous HPE teachers and what they disliked;</li> <li>• These stories were shared amongst fellow students in their tutorial groups.</li> </ul>
4 & 5	<p>Graphic representations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students made use of graphic representations to tell a story about their embodied experiences in regard to HPE/sport during their schooling years.</li> </ul>
9	<p>Oral storytelling task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students discussed the different HPE pedagogical approaches which were learnt and experienced during tutorials with a focus on the positive and negative aspects of each. They also discuss HPE pedagogical practices they experienced, discussing the positive and negative aspects of each.</li> </ul> <p>Shared Narrative embodied accounts of practising HPE teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the lecture, the unit coordinator shared the embodied experiences of a practising HPE teacher. Lived and living body accounts were told (see extracts further below).</li> </ul>
10	<p>Journal task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students recorded their feelings about the different pedagogical approaches from their lived experiences in a personal journal. Specifically, they were ask to record what they would like to implement pedagogically in their own practice and why?</li> </ul>
13	<p>‘Written story’ task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write how you feel about teaching HPE now? As a HPE teacher, what do you think is the most important thing for your students to achieve? How do you feel the use of story has helped you to understand your embodied experiences and your ideas in the present about teaching HPE?</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Implementation of Narrative Activities**



In conjunction with the use of narrative, the concept of embodiment was also a key theoretical component of the unit. lisahunter's (2006a; 2006b) work on embodiment was presented as part of the course readings in week 3 of the semester. In week 12 of semester, research published by McMahon, Penney and Dinan-Thompson (2012) was also engaged with as part of the course readings. Core concepts from these readings were also included in lecture material by the unit coordinator. As well as this, narrative accounts from practising HPE teachers revealing embodied experiences (their lived and living bodies) were presented during week 9. The narrative accounts of these practising HPE teachers included stories from their adolescence as well as narrative accounts from the present day in their current roles as HPE teachers. These narrative accounts were collected as part of another research project conducted by McMahon (2010) and served to highlight a vivid connection between their lived and living bodies. A small section of these accounts (due to word length restrictions) are presented below.

*Carly (11 years of age training with her swimming coach)*

*I finally make the time for the lap that my coach wants. It is so hard though. It was 100 percent effort. I thought that I was feeling strong. I thought that I was swimming well but I was wrong. I slug my way through the next ten laps. I just make the times but my body starts to become fatigued. I find myself questioning my fitness. I should not be hurting this much for these times. On the fourteenth lap, I touch the wall and lift my head to hear my time.*

*Coach: "Carly, 35. You are making this set up at the end of the session." I feel deflated, demoralised. It is 6.30pm. The rest of the squad gets out of the pool but I am not allowed as I have to repeat the set. I don't know how I am going to do 34's now at the end of an eight kilometre session when I couldn't do it earlier. My body feels fatigued from the long day.*

*Carly: "Why am I the only one that has to stay in? Half the other guys didn't make their times!"*

*Coach: "You better get on with it otherwise we are going to be here all night. Champions don't complain."*

*I dive in for the first 50. I am so angry and start to cry. I cry really hard as I throw my arms over in the butterfly motion. I touch the wall after the first lap and lift my head to hear my time.*

*Coach: "34. Right, just need to do another 19 at that pace."*

*I complete the next five laps. My times get slower and slower. I started off with a 34 but I am just so exhausted now and am unable to hold that pace.*

*Coach: "You are dropping off, get a move on."*

*I climb out of the pool and instead of diving in for the seventh 50 metre, I sit on the side. I start to sob. I can see that my coach has noticed that I have stopped swimming but he does not come up to me. Instead he leaves me sitting on the side of the pool crying. I sit there for a long time. My body is now shivering from the cold, from sitting for so long. I notice that the time is 7pm, which means I have been sitting on the side for nearly half an hour (McMahon, 2010).*

*Carly – Present day as a HPE teacher.*

*We only have 20 minutes to go of class. I look around at the kids...they are having a good time, laughing and giggling with each other but are not doing what I asked.*

*How hard can it be to follow instructions?*

*I stop the class.*

*Carly: "Can everyone come over here please?"*

*As they gather around me, I stop and pause. I am trying to take deep breaths because I know it is not right to yell at them.*

*Carly: "when I organise a game of hockey, I expect that you follow the rules that we have learnt and play the game properly. We have learnt how to dribble a ball yet most of you refuse to do it the way I have taught you."*

*A student interrupts me.*

*Student: "C'mon Miss. We are just having a bit of fun."*

*Carly: "Do what I ask otherwise you will be staying in at lunch time."*

*The students resume the game. A few of the boys are still mucking around and have not taken what I have said seriously.*

*Carly: "Stop the game. Could everyone go and get your lunch now and bring it back here. We are going to play hockey for the entire lunch time period. If you don't get it right at lunch time, we will do it again tomorrow at lunch time."*

*I notice that tears well in one of the quieter girl's eyes. She has noticed that I am looking at her.*

*Carly: "No point getting upset. If you cannot all do it right, you have to expect consequences" (McMahon, 2010).*

While the links between Carly's embodied experience and her current practise were not made explicit by the lecturer, the connection was clearly evident to the pre service teachers.

Narrative tasks were implemented as part of tutorial and lecture tasks and all pre service teachers were presented with the same activities (online/face to face/consenting/non-consenting). While various modes of narrative tasks were implemented throughout the semester, pre service teachers were never told why they had to undertake the tasks nor were the aims of the research project discussed. In all tasks, except for the assignment in week 4, which was not used as part of this project even though it involved a narrative task, an independent third person collected all of the narrative accounts. The lecturer and the tutors were not involved in this process. The narrative accounts were not presented to the chief investigator (lecturer) for analysis until after semester results had been finalised. This was to limit the chief investigator's position of power in and through this process and the possible influence over the outcome or direction that investigators were wishing to pursue.

### **Analysing Narrative Accounts**

Relational analysis (Kirk, 1999) was utilised to analyse the data. Specifically, the authors explored the "pedagogic palette" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 52) of individual narratives generated by each pre-service teacher. The data was explored with particular attention paid to pedagogical themes including the content, approach and social encounter of the HPE experience. Each pedagogical theme was highlighted and tracked in each weekly activity by a means of "connecting the dots" (Klein, 2000).

It became very quickly apparent to the investigators that there was a distinct theme in regard to the lived pre service teacher bodies and HPE. This theme was that pre service teachers either possessed positive or negative lived body experiences in HPE. It also became evident that those students who had embodied positive HPE experiences also possessed a positive outlook in regard to teaching HPE. Moreover, those students who had embodied negative HPE experiences felt negative about the possibility of teaching HPE. However, it also became apparent that in regard to the pre service teachers' predetermined pedagogical ideas about what HPE teaching is and how it should be taught, those pre service teachers who had embodied negative HPE experiences were somewhat conscious of their embodied experiences (lived body), and were adamant that they were not going to make the 'same mistakes' as their HPE teachers. Those students who had embodied positive HPE experiences

did not necessarily possess positive ideas in relation to HPE pedagogy particularly in relation to how this area should be taught. These pre service teachers, according to the independent third person involved in this project were also initially somewhat closed off to narrative and learning new ways of being as they felt they had all the tools to be effective HPE teachers. While these pre service teachers appeared reluctant to engage with any form of narrative in the first three weeks of semester, they still completed the tasks. The main reason which was voiced was that they did not see the purpose of ‘writing’ and ‘telling’ and they would be rather ‘doing’ more PE. It was only when they saw their peers having ‘light bulb moments’ in about week 3 to week 4 of the semester when their reluctance appeared to transform into more of an ‘openness’ to the possibility that engaging with narrative offers. These ‘light bulb moments’ included becoming conscious to the connection between the past and present and verbally expressing how their past experiences in HPE were influencing their body in the present day.

The stories presented below are unaltered accounts of a selection of the pre service teachers’ voices. Because of restrictions in regard to word count, only a selection of stories is presented. The data is nevertheless representative of themes. The accounts are an assemblage of oral tellings, journal extracts and online blogs which present an assemblage of lived and living bodily accounts. The extracts included represent an equal ratio of male to female pre-service teachers (i.e. 4 male/4 female). Although the data presented represents an equal ratio of male to female pre service teachers, it does represent an unequal proportion of male to female pre service teachers who participated in this research. This was not purposeful, but rather represented various themes that were drawn from the data and subsequently presented. Out of these 4 male students, 2 are mature age students (older than 25) and 2 attended university upon completing high school. Out of the 4 female students, 1 is a mature age student and 3 attended university immediately after leaving school. Before the stories were chosen, all stories were analysed and categorised into either positive or negative embodied experiences. From this, they were sorted into similar themes. For instance, 10 pre-service teachers who had negative embodied experiences in relation to HPE expressed how isolated they felt when they were picked last by their peers for games. These particular pre service teachers also expressed that they were not going to allow students to pick teams for games in lessons as part of their future pedagogical approaches. From these various themes, we were able to locate similar threads (as outlined above) which are represented in the stories below. As narrative activities were incorporated into each tutorial task for the 13 weeks of semester, it is impossible to present accounts from each week. In the data that follows we have presented journal writings from the first week of semester and the 13<sup>th</sup> week of semester to reveal to the reader the impact narrative had on the students’ bodies over the course of the semester. In these extracts (presented below), pre-service teachers were provided with guiding questions which assisted (but not restricted) them in their body’s writing. These questions are detailed in table 1 above (see weeks 1 & 13 for details).

#### **Negative**

##### ***Pre Service Teacher 26 – Before***

*HPE for me caused much anxiety. I recall one day in primary school, actually most days in fact, teachers would always use a particular method in sport or PE classes. This method was in regard to allowing students to pick their own teams. I remember, I had actually been away sick for a few weeks and on the day that I returned to school, we had our usual sports class. On this particular day, I was picked last and could quite clearly hear the whispers of the other students from my class. They were saying things like; “she will still be weak from being so sick” and “she is not good enough for our*

*team. "I was shattered and suddenly felt sicker than I actually had been over the past few weeks. The teacher at the time did absolutely nothing to stop these whispers even though I know she heard them. From these experiences, I don't feel very confident about teaching HPE. On prac, I had to step in and run a PE class and I totally choked. All of my fears came flooding back. The important things in HPE is for students to gain motor skills and to learn how to play as part of a team rather than individually.*

**After**

*It is really important to cater for the child holistically, as we need to ensure that we reach them emotionally, mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. It is important for the students to understand health and wellbeing and to develop their knowledge in the 5 dimensions of health. Health and wellbeing is a lifelong skill and involves many factors. It is also important for students to feel included rather than excluded. I found writing and talking about my embodied experiences difficult and painful. I did not think that my experiences had really affected me until I had to write about them. I liked that some of my fellow students also shared their stories with me which I also learnt a lot from. Together, we moved on from our crap PE and sport experiences.*

**Pre Service Teacher 21 – Before**

*I had a fair bit of involvement with sport at school, this was mainly due to me attending a private school and it was compulsory to participate in two competitive sports each year. Despite this compulsory attendance to competitions and training sessions, I was never very good. I was often one of the slower students and in some instances got teased because of it. This didn't make me feel too good about myself or attending competition or training sessions. It annoyed me how the PE teachers would always be best mates with the students who did well – ignoring the rest of us. I am not sure that I would be overly confident in taking a HPE class as a permanent thing. I hope to teach an early childhood class and think that I would be ok to take them out for a game. However, if I had to be a PE teacher in a high school context, I think I would rather quit teaching. A main thing to achieve in HPE would be a well rounded and healthy student.*

**After**

*HPE should set students up to be lifelong active people with positive embodied experiences and acceptance of difference. It is not about teaching students to become elite athletes but to be able to participate in all aspects of HPE to the best of their ability and to also celebrate the diversity of people. There were a number of aspects of this unit which changed my view of HPE. Embodiment was one of these. Being able to write about my embodied experiences helped me to realise why I disliked HPE so much. The way we are now is a result of what we have experienced throughout our lives. Recognising that students will have diverse embodied experiences as well makes me aware that I need to get to know my students well in order to cater for their differences and to include them in the decision making.*

**Pre Service Teacher 20 – Before**

*Growing up, I had a very minor walking problem. It meant little inconvenience in general everyday life but I did find that I had problems playing sports. Being a male in a rural town, there was not much variety in the amount of sports offered. The predominant sport in the town and at school was football. It seemed that is all the PE teachers cared about and did in our compulsory lesson each week. Because of my problem, I was not able to play this sport. This made me feel extremely isolated growing up as I felt that I was not only left out of school activities, but also the entire sub culture of the town in which I lived. This in turn affected my outlook on sport and PE. The PE teachers did nothing to support my disability in PE lessons so I was just left sitting on the side lines. As a consequence, I am not excited to teach HPE. One of the most important things to achieve is as simple as a positive attitude towards PE ensuring many skills are learnt.*

**After**

*I have a better understanding of how students embody their learning experiences. So much clicked for me in this subject. Learning about embodiment and getting to write about the past really helped me to realise the connection between past and present. This knowledge will assist me as a future teacher. Also, the opportunity to express visual literacy within a HPE context was liberating. It allowed for an academic understanding of embodiment to be expressed through the personal, which facilitated a deeper understanding that moved beyond the academic - an understanding that will inform my teaching across the curriculum.*

**Pre Service Teacher 31 – Before**

*As a teenager, HPE was a required subject. Most of my experiences in this subject were negative which made me not want to attend class. Just one example of my negative experiences was in year 8. I was pushed to run the beep test and got constantly yelled out by the HPE teacher for not doing my best. This incident occurred many times, not just in this beep test. It also happened to other people in the class who were not good at sport. This teacher also forced kids who were sick to complete the PE practicals. I think that these bad memories have impacted upon me wanting to teach HPE myself. I feel concerned and scared about teaching HPE because of my past experiences. I also worry about the negative impact I could have on my students as my teacher and HPE had on me. I am not sure I want to be responsible for that. The most important thing to achieve in HPE is a healthy lifestyle. This is because many younger students are obese and do not get their 30 minutes of exercise a day.*

**After**

*I now realise how important it is to have a balanced approach to HPE rather than one that is based on performance and perfection in sports. I wanted nothing to do with this subject at the beginning. Unfortunately it is compulsory if I want to gain my teaching degree. However, writing about my experiences has helped me to realise why I hated HPE so much. I think that I will definitely incorporate similar writing activities, opportunities to reflect when I am a teacher. I also really appreciated the opportunity to explore my creative side in the pictograph assignment which also helped me to learn about myself and how my experiences have affected me in addition to the writing tasks.*

**Pre Service Teacher 38 – Before**

*The school that I went to along with the HPE teachers generally supported those who were seen as better sports people and those people who were out there having a go were ignored. It did not really worry me at the time because the friends that I hung out with were also not very good at sport and they were treated the same as me. So, it was not like I was the only person it was happening to. But what really made me angry was that the HPE teachers we had were all male and they only spoke to male sport students. Being a female in the class was hard as we weren't given anything. I don't think this has affected my thoughts about teaching HPE. To me, HPE people are not my type of people – they are ignorant and I would rather avoid them and it altogether if I can. The thought of teaching HPE makes me nervous. For me, team work, confidence, learning to be physically active, having fun, co-operation are things that are essential to HPE.*

**After**

*I have a journal at home so I really liked the opportunity to write about my experiences. Just like in my journal, the opportunity to write in this subject has helped me to gain some clarity over my experiences. Specifically, the most profound experiences that I had throughout this unit were the thinking and reflection that I undertook as part of the embodiment assignment. I see very clearly that everything we say and everything we do affects the way others might see themselves. What my PE teachers said and did to me affected me.*

**Positive**

**Pre Service Teacher 23 – Before**

*In high school, HPE was compulsory, however competing at sport carnivals was not. I was a student who always competed and performed well time and time again in HPE. Coming from a primary school where everyone had to participate in carnivals, I felt as though only the good people participated in high school carnivals and those who were not comfortable or who could not be bothered weren't made to compete. I don't think this helps to promote health and physical education. High school students should be made to participate in competitions and if they don't do it, they should be given punishment. How lazy – they are just going to end up obese and cost our health system millions. All participation needs to be compulsory. If I was to teach HPE, I would be*

*quite excited. PE needs to be hard physically and not a bludge subject. Once they achieve in sport, they will gain confidence, just like I did.*

**After**

*There are 5 dimensions of health that are all equal in importance and need to be addressed in both teaching and as a person. Therefore, all of this needs to be catered for in the planning and delivering of lessons. My students should be catered for in my planning to ensure they achieve success in PE – if they are not, then it is bad planning by me. If they achieve success, they will want to do it. Learning and writing about my embodied experiences has really assisted in my thoughts of teaching HPE. When I look back now on my writing from each week, I can see how far I have come. It helped me to see why I believed sport was the most important part of PE in week 1.*

**Pre Service Teacher 11 – Before**

*I loved PE at school. I remember when I was in grade 10 at an all girls' school, the HPE teacher would ask me and a couple of other girls who were good at netball who should be selected in our school representative netball team. I like that our HPE teachers looked to us and asked our opinion. That way, we got to choose a team that got on and people who I wanted to play with. I remember in that year that I won the best and fairest award for the local division one netball so my positive year must have rubbed off on me. I feel excited about teaching health and physical education. I have always enjoyed the subject and like to keep physical in everyday life. It is important to get the unmotivated students moving. I will also be seeking advice from the really good athlete students. They have (in my opinion) more knowledge in their chosen sport than some of the HPE teachers.*

**After**

*Writing about my feelings and about the personal experiences that I had in health and physical education has helped me to understand my past experiences in HPE. It has also made me realise how many things were not catered for in HPE at school. While I felt catered for personally, I now realise that my HPE teachers were not very inclusive. Even though I loved the attention that I got from them, I can now see that some students who were not very good at sport were not given the same treatment as I was given. So, I think the most important things in HPE now are: health and information services; encouraging all students to participate in HPE - not just the students who are the best and exposing students to a variety of sports. The combination of writing about my experiences and the embodied learner has had the most profound effect on me as it has made me think about how I can make HPE enjoyable and productive subject for my students in the future.*

**Pre Service teacher 37 – Before**

*I was heavily involved in the sporting community in both primary and secondary school. As a shy kid, I found it really useful to be able to interact with people in an informal and relaxed environment and this allowed me to come out of my shell*

*somewhat. I found it so easy to make friends in the relaxed environment at the gymnasium. As part of a team, communication was essential and being in the netball team did wonders for my confidence. Sport has had a very positive influence in my life and has allowed me to form bonds with people and step out of my comfort zone. I am really excited about the prospect of teaching HPE. I did the first year of Human Movement before moving into primary education, and have therefore gained some foundation knowledge in regards to what is required from a PE teacher. I think HPE is a good opportunity to encourage kids to get active and I also believe that PE is an essential component in kids' schooling life. I was made to do the beep test in PE. This was such a useful activity, it made me realise how unfit I was. My PE teachers also brought in this policy where there was no junk food allowed – I think this helped me with my eating. With the obesity epidemic that is developing in Australia, it is important for kids to stay active and be healthy – a healthy lifestyle with the right diet and compulsory exercise has positive repercussions on all areas of a child's life. I would definitely be making every child do the beep test and ensure lunch box checks were implemented into my school. There won't be any obesity in my school.*

#### **After**

*I enjoyed reminiscing into my schooling experiences and I was also able to see a connection to my beliefs now as a future teacher and what I experienced as a kid. There were a number of aspects that challenged my thinking. Embodiment was at the top of these – the way we are now is a result of what we have experienced throughout our lives. My teacher used to give me the beep test and check my lunch box. I thought this was appropriate and wanted to adopt it in my teaching at the beginning of the semester. My initial thoughts were definitely linked to what I experienced at school. I did not really see it as an issue because I coped fine and I saw myself as being healthy and active. Being able to understand why I had these initial thoughts has helped heaps in acknowledging what I should adopt and what I shouldn't. Doing the beep test is not inclusive nor conducive (I think) to lifelong participants of physical activity. It was not a sudden revelation but a process that occurred over the course of the semester through thinking about what I experienced and hearing others' stories.*

#### **Discussion**

The presentation of data in this format intended to enable the reader to engage with the participants' stories, become integrally involved, making meaning through their individual reading, thought and discussion (Gray, Ivonoffski & Sinding, 2001). With this perspective, it is recognised that attempting to articulate any definitive conclusions is arguably problematic, as it potentially interrupts the meaning making process for the reader. Thus, we stress the need to acknowledge that understandings presented below are ours, and the connections that we have made in this research, others' might see differently.

The durability of embodied experiences was revealed through the data as pervading not only the pre-service teachers' thoughts in regard to the possibility of teaching HPE, but also their pedagogical ideas about how HPE should be taught, the content that should be covered and areas of importance. The data highlights the various ways in which the pre-service teachers embodied experiences have permeated speech and practices up to 20 years after being first experienced. The durability (Lee & Macdonald, 2010) of pedagogy experienced by the lived body reveals the extent of corporeal internalization and the



centrality of the lived body to the habitus [a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions] (Lee & Macdonald, 2010).

A large proportion of pre-service teachers who had embodied negative HPE experiences also felt negative about the possibility of teaching HPE. Subsequently, their living teacher bodies were fractured [damaged]. Their '*fractured*' living bodies (adapted from fractured identities; Wainwright et al., 2007) exemplify a wounded body/self revealed through their telling. This is evident in pre service teacher 21's account below:

*I was often one of the slower students and in some instances got teased because of it. This didn't make me feel too good about myself or attending competition or training sessions. It annoyed me how the PE teachers would always be best mates with the students who did well – ignoring the rest of us. I am not sure that I would be overly confident in taking a HPE class as a permanent thing. If I had to be a PE teacher in a high school context, I think I would rather quit teaching. A main thing to achieve in HPE would be a well rounded and healthy student.*

Given that the living and living bodies of pre service teachers are brought to the fore in this research, the durability of perceptions in regard to HPE are evident in the stories revealed by the pre service teachers. The data points to a continuation of perceptions in regard to HPE from schooling into adulthood and in some cases the ongoing acceptance and reproduction of pedagogical practices that pre-service teachers were exposed to as children. We recall pre-service teacher 37's voice at the beginning of the project to exemplify reproduction of pedagogical practices.

*I was made to do the beep test in PE. This was such a useful activity, it made me realise how unfit I was. My PE teachers also brought in this policy where there was no junk food allowed – I think this helped me with my eating. I think HPE is a good opportunity to encourage kids to get active and I also believe that PE is an essential component in kids' schooling life. With the obesity epidemic that is developing in Australia, it is important for kids to stay active and be healthy – a healthy lifestyle with the right diet and compulsory exercise has positive repercussions on all areas of a child's life. I would definitely be making every child do the beep test and ensure lunch box checks were implemented into my school. There won't be any obesity in my school.*

Resonating with Prain and Hickey's (1995) research; this paper highlights how the lived body deeply affects pre service teachers' thought processes and, hence, the nature of what is learned. "This relates not only to learning defined narrowly in terms of particular skills or techniques but also to students' whole sense of the possibilities and meanings of the subject" and thus, their embodied experience in HPE (Prain & Hickey, 1995, p. 88). As outlined in the lived and living body excerpts included above, the pre service teachers' bodies were pedagogy "carriers of precepts which give the body a form, and control it to submit it to norms in a way more efficient than thought. The body is the emblem where culture inscribes its signs as blazons" (Vigarello, 1978, p. 9). The pedagogic device (Bernstein, 2000) can be seen as operating through and expressed in pre-service teachers' living bodies as they recycle embodied experiences.

While the pre service teachers' responses to narrative and the positive impact that was revealed in this research cannot be generalized, the data presented in this study affirms that narrative can be a useful tool in locating and connecting pre service teachers' lived bodies to their living bodies. In this article we have tried to bring to the fore that pre service teachers' lived and living bodies, while undoubtedly personal, are inextricably linked to how in an individual sense, they feel about teaching HPE and their ideas in relation to how HPE should be taught. We recall pre-service teacher 23 to exemplify this.

*Lived body:*

*I was a student who always competed and performed well time and time again in HPE. HPE was compulsory, however competing at sport carnivals was not. Only the good people participated in high school carnivals and those who were not comfortable or who could not be bothered weren't made to compete. If I was to teach HPE, I would be quite excited. All participation needs to be compulsory. PE needs to be hard physically and not a bludge subject. Once they achieve in sport, they will gain confidence, just like I did.*

*Living body:*

*There are 5 dimensions of health that are all equal in importance and need to be addressed in both teaching and as a person. Therefore, all of this needs to be catered for in the planning and delivering of lessons. Students should be catered for in my planning to ensure they achieve success in PE – if they are not, then it is bad planning by me. If they achieve success, they will want to do it. Learning and writing about my embodied experiences has really assisted in my thoughts of teaching HPE. When I look back now on my writing from each week, I can see how far I have come. It helped me to see why I believed sport was the most important part of PE in week 1.*

In this study the use of narrative, where pre service teachers were able to write about, tell and depict their lived and living bodies in relation to HPE enabled a method of self discovery and knowing. It was a tool that connected their past to the present. Engagement with the process of generating narratives served to cast the beam of consciousness (Bordo, 1997) over their bodies. We saw how the pre service teachers' embodied experiences were being played out through their living bodies in the present day, specifically in relation to their thoughts about teaching HPE and their ideas about how HPE should be taught. Thus, we contend that narrative embedded in pedagogy can be seen as empowering the pre service teachers, by enabling them to continue to seek connection between their lived and living bodies and the role it plays in education in the present day. Narrative provided a means of generating better understandings of 'how did I get here', 'why do I now think about HPE as I do' as a student teacher. Such understandings are arguably an essential foundation for 'thinking differently' in and about HPE.

## **Conclusion**

This research acknowledged the body as a site through which lived experience can be perpetuated, including the reproduction and recycling of experiences and pedagogy in HPE. We contend that locating, acknowledging and positioning pre service teacher bodies is important for all educators to assist in moving students beyond what they experienced as school students. This study showed ways in which narrative can be utilised to this end. In our view it is essential that pre service teachers have the opportunity to work with narrative to draw connections between the past and present in order for them to identify how the past is being played out through their living teaching bodies.

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