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‘Visions’ for children’s health and wellbeing: exploring the complex and arbitrary processes of putting theory into practice.

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It could be claimed that the priority of any Government should be to look after the interests of the public it serves. Much of this role includes attempting to actively develop and implement policies and programmes that best contribute to or enhance general standards of living. Addressing health and wellbeing, it follows, is a reasonable vision for any Government to aim towards. Within the context of sport and physical activity for children the messages tend to be about the positive effects of increased exercise and are generally motivated by concerns about patterns of physical health and the prevention of disease in later life. While these are also considered important by parents and teachers, they may not necessarily be their prime concerns. Consequently, there is a much more complicated process where adults construct visions of what childhood health and physical activity 'should look like'. Debates about the effectiveness of putting such ‘visions’ into practice invariably focus upon subjective and objective interpretations of wellbeing or the mechanisms for measuring impact of the intervention. In addition, academics from the social sciences contribute further to the debate by offering more critical explanations, often through theories that attempt to reveal the complexity of these forms of knowledge and the arbitrariness and unpredictability of measuring the impact of such ethereal constructs.

The discussion in this paper explores these complex processes by drawing upon our experience conducting funded research for large scale sport and physical activity interventions. For the purposes of this paper, we focus upon recent experiences conducting research for Government agencies introducing national physical literacy programmes in England and Wales. The example provides an opportunity to consider the multifaceted ways in which three ‘interested’ groups (government agencies, academics, and teachers) construct ‘visions’ of children’s wellbeing and what they actually want from nationally coordinated interventions, even before the programme is able to reach its intended target (children).

Visions: looking after other people’s wellbeing

Often, when policy is framed in terms of an overall objective of obtaining greater wellbeing, the initial

focus is not necessarily concerned with broader visions but rather single issues. For instance, much of recent Government policy in England aimed at the welfare of children has been prompted more by focus upon a ‘children as victims’ discourse, fuelled by high profile cases of apparent failings in Children’s Services to protect vulnerable children (Powell and Wellard 2008). Using the example of children’s wellbeing, recent policy in England affecting children (such as, Every Child Matters 2004, The Children’s Plan 2008) has consequently adopted measures which, intentionally or not, construct children as potentially at risk from a range of threats. On the one hand, this interpretation of children’s wellbeing can be viewed as a positive step towards protecting children, whilst on the other hand, can equally be seen to restrict opportunities for children to experience and learn about the wider world on their own terms. (Lester and Russel 2008, Furedi 2008)

Conflicting messages about what is ‘good’ for children have had direct impact upon the ways in which children are able to experience their bodies and explore spaces. Particularly within the context of sport and physical activity, messages about the positive effects, are generally described within the context of physical health and the prevention of disease in later life (Sallis et al 1999). Research has also tended to concentrate upon the relationship of the benefits of physical activity, sport and play to cognitive and academic development; mental health; crime reduction; and reduction of truancy and disaffection (Bailey 2005). The focus on the role of physical activity, sport and play has emerged from a general belief that the health and wellbeing of children should be a national concern, in a way which presents young people as being ‘at risk’ of not doing enough physical activity. Consequently, in the quest to address the perceived imbalances within social wellbeing, there has been much focus on children’s bodies and minds, particularly in relation to physical and educational development. For example, UNICEF attempted to incorporate a measure of external ‘reality’ and subjective responses to identify a league table or ‘dimensions of child wellbeing in rich countries’ (UNICEF 2007)).

While it is reasonable to suggest that the underlying agenda for an international organisation concerned with the interests of children should be related to addressing the problems of global child poverty, in wealthier ‘western’ countries, or as Connell (2007) describes as ‘the Metropole’, there has been more focus upon children’s wellbeing expressed in terms of ‘health’ and potential risk of obesity (Gard and Wright 2005). Physical activity, sport and play have therefore become even more appealing to policy-makers and educationalists seeking explanations for childhood behaviour and for connections between this and, in particular, cognitive development (considered a key aspect of wellbeing). Indeed, wellbeing and health have been defined as important ‘products’ of children’s physical activity, sport and play, thus providing the basis for their inclusion in educational curricula and out-of-school programmes and

provision (Bailey et al 2009). In their concerns to address the perceived ‘problems’ of children’s health, policymakers have invariably targeted schools as a prime site for introducing mechanisms to address them. However, as Gard (2011) points out

From the public health perspective, schools are simply assumed to represent new target populations, little different from any other, without any sense that unique challenges might exist or that new methods might be called for.

Gard 2011: 404

Where public health policies are generated with well-intentioned motives related to protecting the interests of children, an unintended (or in some cases intended) consequence is that continued focus upon specific outcomes (such as tackling obesity or increasing physical activity levels) has assigned many other equally important aspects of a young person’s development to the side-lines, which ultimately could be considered as detrimental to the central quest for overall wellbeing (Gard 2006, Wellard 2013). As a result, there remains continued lack of recognition of the multifaceted interplay between the physical, social and psychological ways that individuals develop an orientation towards their own embodied identity and subsequently whether they interpret health related activities as personally meaningful or not.

Defining wellbeing

Much of the debate above can be seen to be fuelled by lack of clarity over what wellbeing actually means. While some consider the concept less problematic and, indeed, approach it in terms of a more measurable ‘object’ which invariably incorporates economic determinants (Tennant et al 2007, Dolan & Metcalfe 2012) we see that pursuit of a uniform definition is always going to be fraught with tensions (Ahmed 2010, Evans, Wright and Davies 2004, Vernon, 2008,). However, while we consider attempting to define wellbeing is always going to be problematic, it is important to look briefly at why it is problematic in the first place. If we think of wellbeing in philosophical terms, we are drawn into the ontological assessment of an individual state of being. In this case, wellbeing is often contemplated in terms of individual pleasure and states of happiness. Vernon (2008) attempts to look at the meaning beyond the actual or intrinsic feeling of pleasure and suggests that although wellbeing derives from happiness it is less subjective. In a similar manner to the contemplation of happiness, most of the questions relating to it are framed in terms of ‘how do we achieve it’. As Vernon suggests, part of the modern day obsession with finding happiness is influenced heavily by consumerist discourses where ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ is something that in itself becomes pleasurable and this fuels a market place

of easy, pleasurable luxuries which invariably (and ironically) creates unhappiness (Vernon 2008:23).

Consumerist discourses also generate a greater perception that consumer choice is a right in itself. Graham (1995) noted how the business model of 'consumer choice' was being applied to American schools in the latter stages of the 20th Century. In doing so, this approach opened up debate about the notion of 'listening' to student voices in the context of them being customers. The idea of considering a student in terms of a 'happy' customer created uneasy tensions with existing philosophies within education and healthcare where the decisions practitioners were making were ultimately believed to be 'for the good' of their students or patients. Graham's ideas were generated during a time when there was much work produced on the effects of consumer lifestyles (for example; Bourdieu 1986, Urry 1995, Featherstone 1991, Tomlinson 1990), where the notion that individual happiness or wellbeing has been shaped through a quest to constantly keep up with others reflected a contemporary formulation of what is required to achieve a perceived ideal state of being. These ideas very much incorporate a socio-cultural perspective of how our relationships with others affect perceived states of happiness or wellbeing.

Relationships of power

It is reasonable to assert that there are complicated relationships of power that affect the way that individuals can interact with others and, indeed, 'exist'. These operate through forms of knowledge, economic power and formal and informal structures that contribute to the management of bodies and society (Shilling 1993). However, rather than attempt to make claims that there are dominant forms of power, available to certain groups, that are consciously oppressing other groups it is more appropriate to explore the forms of power that are operating (or prevailing) in order to understand how they are being acted upon or reacted to. To this extent, a Foucauldian interpretation of discourses of power provides an extremely relevant approach to investigate sport and physical cultures (Andrews 1993, Smith Maguire 2002). By adopting this approach, it is suggested that rather than attempting to eliminate oppressive power, we must consider power as omnipresent in every interaction and action (Andrews 1993) and instead of omitting power altogether, we must investigate how it is used within physical activity, exercise and sport (Markula 2003).

When Foucault refers to power he is not referring to a 'substance', instead he discusses power as a particular form of relation between people. The distinctive aspect of power is that some individuals can

shape the actions of others, but not necessarily in a coercive manner. Through ever present inequalities, power relations are always provoking positions of power, but these positions are specific in each location, and changeable. Power is omnipresent. In addition, power is always coupled with resistance; this resistance is not external to power relations. In a similar way to power relations though, resistance is not regular, it is moveable and changeable within the complex network of power relations (Foucault, 1978). Put in another way, a relationship of power is not an act upon another individual but rather it is an action upon another action (Foucault 1978, 1979). For power relations to exist, the 'other' has to be deemed as an individual who acts, and a number of reactions, results and responses must be possible when faced with this power relationship. Power relations are entrenched into the whole society and within social structures and are never stable or finite (Foucault, 1980, 1985).

Consequently, despite the notion that dominant groups, governments and social institutions possess power, Foucault (1978) argues that they only symbolise power which can be ended (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Foucault refused to understand power as something that was owned by some, and used to control those with no power (Smith Maguire, 2002; Andrews, 1993). He explained that these dominant groups do not simply inherit their dominant positions because of the power they possess, but instead they gain their dominance because of the changeable working and strategic use of 'discourses' (Pringle and Markula, 2005). It takes the analysis of history and power in order to understand these workings and gain the opportunity to change them (Markula and Pringle, 2006). The continued utility of applying Foucault's genealogical approach to relationships of power is neatly summarised by Phipps (2014), when she describes the reason for her use of this approach in her study of contemporary feminism and body politics was fuelled by a concern with;

How the discussions themselves are constructed: the concepts and rhetorics or 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980:131) deployed, the political allegiances being made, and their contextual conditions of possibility.

(Phipps 2014:4)

While we do not propose to present, in this paper, a genealogy of power within the context of children's health and wellbeing, we are, nevertheless, seeking to understand the will to truth operating in relation to 'wellbeing'. In doing so, we need to ask the three central questions that Foucault (1985) considered crucial in the process of forming enunciative modalities. These relate to identifying who is speaking (what institutions are speaking), the site of the discourse and who is the listener (Foucault 1985:50). Posing

these questions allows us to reveal the relationships of power that are operating *before* an intervention is put into practice. Thus we might apply these questions to help us understand the knowledge structures at large which are shaping perceptions of wellbeing and what a healthy child should ‘look like’. In this case, the institutions that are speaking are Government agencies, academics and educators who are formulating how an intervention should be developed. Each ‘group’ can be seen to have a broad ‘shared’ vision for the enhanced wellbeing of children. They are similarly linked through contemporary discourses of public policy, informed by a mix of medical and economic theory and generated through scientific and western capitalist discourses. However, at the same time, each could be seen to have differing interpretations of what wellbeing is as well as contrasting agendas and ideas for how such a vision can be translated into practice.

A vision for wellbeing: Developing Physical literacy in children

In this paper, rather than look at the impact of a specific intervention, and bearing in mind the theoretical arguments put forward by Foucault above, we concentrate upon the initial stages in the formulation of an intervention that is considered as a possible mechanism to encourage child wellbeing. In this case, the example we explore is a Government funded programme established to develop the Physical Literacy of children within the school setting. Part of the process in this intervention was the inclusion, at the outset, of an independent, academic organisation (our research centre) to provide an evaluation of the project. This was also to include teacher’s feedback in an initial pilot study prior to national roll out the following year. Having identified three specific groups that were instrumental in the interpretation and ‘shaping’ of the programme, we explore the ways in which the concepts of childhood health, wellbeing and physical literacy were understood by the protagonists. One way to consider these complex relationships can be seen in the figure below. This is provided as a simple illustration of *some* of the often competing forms of power that are operating at any one time and highlights the competing and conflicting interpretations of a concept that at face value is ‘shared’ (Figure 1. below).

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Figure 1: Relationships of power operating between Government, Academics and Teachers.

The relationships that operate between government agencies, academics and teachers are dynamic and constantly shifting. There are, however, forms of power that can be seen to be more beneficial to one group than another. These are indicated by the direction of the arrowheads in Figure 1.

In critical sociology, debates about the role of the state in everyday life are abundant. For instance Habermas' (1989) description of the private and public sphere has been interpreted in various forms. However, as Bennett (2006) suggests, the advantages in superimposing a Foucauldian perspective on the historical processes that Habermas is concerned is in how it

makes thinkable a much greater variability in the relations between government, culture, and the social as a consequence of the ways in which cultural resources are organized to act on the social in different ways in accordance with shifting governmental conceptions and priorities.

(Bennett 2006:99)

While we do not intend to consider the dynamics of the 'state' in detail, we are mindful of the influence that this literature has had on the way we explore children's health and wellbeing. Indeed, in the same paper, Bennett (2006:87) draws upon Hunter's (1994) notion of 'secular holiness' which is itself a critique of the perceived position of the critical intellectual as detached from the bureaucrat. Consequently, the relationships of power that are illustrated in Figure 1 are intended to highlight the interconnectedness rather than disconnectedness of the institutions operating within these discourses of power. We continue by exploring the influences (forms of power) that ultimately shape the way that each group 'sees' the intervention.

Government Agencies

The role of government agencies is increasingly seen in terms of the way that they can 'manage' social and political problems and convert them into market terms. According to Phipps (2014),

through channels such as government policy, advertising and popular culture, neoliberalism has become a normative framework, based on the idea of citizens as rational and self-interested economic actors with agency and control over their lives.

(Phipps 2014: 11)

Thus, for example, obesity is interpreted within the neoliberal context that Phipps (2014) describes as an issue of individual responsibility and lifestyle choice rather than as related to broader social determinants such as inequality and class (Evans and Wright 2005). By recognising the influence of contemporary social discourses upon the way that knowledge is generated allows us to penetrate deeper into the relative

quagmire that is wellbeing. For instance, Ereat and Whiting's (2008) research into the ways in which wellbeing is defined and interpreted within an English government department reveals the contrasting way in which it is understood. In their research, they attempted to offer ways in which it can (or should) be understood in order to maintain consistency.

We would suggest that the first and most important way to make sense of how 'wellbeing' behaves in contemporary discourse is this: wellbeing is a *social construct*. There are no uncontested biological, spiritual, social, economic or any other kind of markers for wellbeing. The meaning of wellbeing is not fixed - it cannot be. It is a *primary cultural judgement*; just like 'what makes a good life?' it is the stuff of fundamental philosophical debate. What it means at any one time depends on the weight given at that time to different philosophical traditions, world views and systems of knowledge. How far any one view dominates will determine how stable its meaning is, so its meaning will always be shifting, though maybe more at some times than others.

(Ereat and Whiting 2008:9)

The researchers found that for many of the respondents 'wellbeing' was not necessarily a familiar term and was difficult to apply the concept in a context which readily appealed to personal sentiments. In most cases, when pressed, the respondents offered interpretations which related to health and access to basic provisions considered necessary for a reasonable standard of living, such as food, water and housing. To an extent, they were applying similar descriptions of indicators of poverty, which itself has constantly been reassessed (Dornan et al 2004, Alcock 2006). However, a central issue which helps unified thinking about standards of living is its relationship to economics. In the case of wellbeing, Ereat and Whiting (2008) found that what could be considered an apparently central issue in a government department's strategy was not uniformly understood. Much of this ambiguity related to age old debates of theory and practice. Whereas an issue like poverty, although open to theoretical debate as a concept, can be addressed in terms of economic measures to 'reduce' levels and increase overall standards of living, in the case of wellbeing the philosophical visions do not sit so easily with the operational requirements, particularly in the way it can be measured. Although it may be considered as a useful template, according to Ereat and Whiting (2008) 'the operationalised definition will never *fully* represent the broad ambition. It cannot, in that it does not fully meet wider societal understanding of wellbeing, and perhaps was never intended to. (2008:19)

Nevertheless, within the context of a government agency, there is little time (or possibly little enthusiasm) for philosophical debates about the complexities of defining wellbeing. In the programme we were involved in, wellbeing was seen as unproblematic by the government agency responsible for it in that it was considered an achievable outcome of the intervention. The perception was that through the introduction of a programme that could develop a child's physical literacy it was considered reasonable to assume that the overarching intervention would be providing opportunities to promote individual responsibility and healthy lifestyle choices. However, the initial 'thinking' behind a concept such as physical literacy could be seen to be influenced by previous thinking about the role of sport and PE in society. In this case, according to the agency involved;

Physical literacy is the outcome of high quality PE and school sport, it helps primary school children's development as competent, confident and healthy movers at an early stage. It builds their motivation, confidence, physical competence and understanding of movement, providing them with better grounds to sustain their lifelong participation in physical activity.

(Youth Sport Trust 2013)

Physical literacy was considered an outcome that would emerge 'within' PE and sport provision, particularly in the teaching of core movement skills, and it could be argued that the historical formulation of PE in the UK that Kirk (1992) outlines plays a significant part in the way that the concept is approached. This particular understanding of Physical literacy can be seen to be in contrast to other interpretations and variations on the theme, such as , 'health literacy' (Kilgour et al 2013), 'sport literacy' (Pill 2010) and 'movement literacy' (Kentel & Dobson, 2007). For example, a similar national strategy being rolled out at the same time in neighbouring Wales claimed;

The Vision for Sport in Wales is that "Every child and young person is provided with the skills and confidence from an early age to be physically literate through high quality, engaging experiences"

(Sport Wales, 2010:31).

In this case, the programme introduced by Sport Wales was a whole school intervention that focussed upon numeracy and literacy as an outcome that could be addressed through physical literacy via PE and school sport. Consequently, the perception and interpretation of physical literacy is being very much shaped by the socio-politico and historical 'location' of the government agency tasked with implementing the intervention.

Academics

As academics we are readily aware that we are also social actors residing within the field that we attempt to understand. As such, we recognise that we are also not immune to an audit culture (Sparkes 2007) and the complex relationships of power operating within an academic climate governed by performance indicators (Ball 2004). Our 'position' as academics as well as researchers commissioned to explore the impact of a public funded programme also creates many tensions. At the same time, the researchers involved in the project had differing academic 'histories' that could be seen to have been shaped by what might be considered conflicting theoretical approaches drawn from sociology, politics, policy and psychology. Nevertheless, in attempting to understand physical literacy we established a 'baseline' guided by the concept developed by Whitehead (2010). Here physical literacy is described as 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the lifecourse' (Whitehead 2010).

While this definition is incorporated in the overarching mission statement for the intervention that we are using as an example, we cannot be certain that the government agency coordinating the intervention and the schools taking part would necessarily be interpreting the theoretical 'position' in the way that we have. In this case, one that acknowledges the philosophical origins of a concept derived through influences from existentialism, phenomenology and embodiment (Whitehead 2010, Wellard 2013). It also means that we have immediately placed ourselves within a competing knowledge structure where physical literacy is understood as a 'monist' concept with the mind and body not seen as separate. Consequently, we are at once, separating ourselves from the established discourse operating within contemporary social thinking where the two are generally considered as separate and social structures have been developed in ways that accommodate this distinction (Evans et al 2004). Nevertheless, the monist approach to understanding physical literacy appeals to our academic sensibilities as well as the general 'vision' that we have established in creating a university based research centre.

For it is in defining our 'humanness', that we consider an individual's physical embodiment is just as important as the cognitive and emotional. This suggests that all learning has by definition a physical aspect, where, at the very least, our physical capacity determines our level of engagement with society. For us, physical literacy is a state of 'being' that can harness a practical sense of the body's possibilities where the sense of self we develop is primarily based on the feel we have of our body and the way it connects us to the world (Burkitt 1999:76). Consequently, physical literacy promotes the idea that each

individual has their own potential physical ability and within the context of school based PE the focus should be on providing opportunities and learning experiences for individuals to discover their own physical potential.

Our understanding of the concept and the context in which we see the purpose of the intervention is that to become physically literate, a child needs to be able to perform basic movement competencies (within their own physical capacity), apply these in a variety of situations and activities, understand how they can learn further, independently and have the internal motivation to do so. However, rather than considering physical literacy as a direct pathway to skills acquisition a central part of this 'learning' process is through fun, enjoyment and play, for both children and adults (Wellard 2013). Awareness of the concept of Physical Literacy is useful in that it helps us start to take into account the varying ways in which PE and Sport (as well as physical activity) is interpreted.

Laying our 'cards on the table' does not necessarily put us in direct opposition to the other key groups within this intervention. Indeed, there are many more connections that are revealed in the process of adopting such a reflexive stance.

Teachers

The influence of Government policy initiatives has created what Ball (2004) describes as a performative culture which has played an increasing role in the way that schools have developed mechanisms to respond to national directives. Evans et al (2007) demonstrate how a performative culture has influenced the ways that schools are able to operate and ultimately interpret and disseminate 'knowledge'. They suggest that,

Such changes have been underpinned by a powerful culture of individualism which has celebrated the notion that everyone, irrespective of background, has equal capacity to succeed and 'get on' in work, sport, leisure and health through the pursuit of excellence, self-improvement, individual initiative and personal responsibility, at the expense of acknowledging how these processes may be conditioned and constrained by the social and material conditions of people's lives. (Evans et al 2007:55)

In particular, there has been an increasing status of the role of health within school understanding of the rationale for PE and sport. To the point where

Most teachers would now rationalise it's (the NCPE) provision and emphasis in the curriculum with reference to their capacity to help resolve health concerns, invoking unproblematically the equation more sport = more health. (Evans et al 2007:57)

The requirements of performativity have ultimately caused the complex discourses of health to be reduced to a focus upon weight, diet and exercise. These concerns are driven by what they describe as 'new health imperatives' which 'prescribe the lifestyle choices that many young people should make, particularly in relation to physical activity and diet.' (Evans et al 2007:57)

As a direct result, programmes that are considered as mechanisms to tackle these new health imperatives, such as the ones that we describe in this paper and many others are being uniformly introduced into schools. These are not always compulsory, but are, nevertheless, framed within compelling discourses that position or posit the benefits of applying sports based interventions upon children's wellbeing. In this way, a programme that purports to develop physical literacy while generally being considered positively by government agencies and schools alike is considered thus so because of the prevailing discourses of wellbeing and children's health rather than as an informed knowledge of the concept of physical literacy. For example, the following responses were generated in group conversations with teachers about what they understood by physical literacy.

One of the team was coming in to talk to the target groups...Anyway at break one (teacher) said 'what's this meeting? What's Physical Literacy? It's not PE is it?'

I'd say being able to explain how your body is moving, having the vocabulary with which to move your body about and also to say how it felt when you did that so that you can improve and know what to do next.

I feel even stronger now that with physical literacy, children develop self-confidence, strength (to write and aid hand writing), co-ordination. They also learn to listen, apply skills to everyday planning. Have fun. Understanding their bodies and knowing what their bodies can do!

When I first mentioned physical literacy to the children they went ‘oh no, we’re not writing again are we?’ and ‘I didn’t realise we had to think as well!’ They just thought we’re doing PE, we’re doing physical things, it’s got nothing to do with emotions or higher level thinking skills...it’s amazing how they parcel things up. So I explained about all the parts of the brain they were using doing the activities and then the penny dropped.

All of the teachers taking part in the workshops demonstrated understanding of the physical component of physical literacy, and how important this was to children’s enjoyment of a range of activities through childhood and beyond: There was a general feeling that their role as teachers was to encourage children to ‘enjoy physical activities and develop the skills to be able to successfully participate in any activity they wish’. This reflected a broader mantra about the importance of equipping the children with the necessary skills needed to cope in the adult world and appeared to correspond with the neoliberal agenda of individual responsibility within a market economy described earlier in this paper. While there were several teachers who conveyed a holistic understanding of the concept, incorporating the physical, cognitive and affective elements in their responses, the need to have effective tools for ‘measuring’ their programmes as well as the children’s performance in the activities suggested a much stronger influence of the requirements from the performative culture operating in schools.

While it was not surprising that responses from the teachers featured an interpretation of the ‘physical’ it was also noticeable how the acceptance of ‘literacy’ as an element associated with the learning process in PE was unchallenged. Questions about whether or not PE should be concerning itself with literacy were not raised. However, their concern to have appropriate ‘tools’ to measure physical literacy might be further indication of how discourses of assessment (Wright and Burrows 2006) have become even more prevalent in schools.

Conclusions

Discussion in this paper has focussed upon the tensions between the rhetoric of individual expression as well as the restraints of a performative agenda and highlights the ways that young people are more likely to be restricted by the requirements of schools which are invariably unable, or find it difficult, to resist the directives of broader social policy. However, although the argument for developing a national approach to delivering sport and physical activity to young people is based upon all schools receiving similar

provision, it is not always the case that what happens at the ground level is necessarily the same in every school. As Swabey and Penney, (2011) suggest, there is often slippage between the aims of policy and the how it is interpreted and put into practice by teachers. In many cases, there may be resistance to new directives from teachers for pedagogical and/or political reasons. For instance, Green et al (2007) in their examination of participation in sports in secondary schools in England and Wales found that the involvement of 15-16 year olds in different sports and physical activities varied substantially according to the school they attended (2007: 76). They suggest that, 'neither changes in NCPE since 1992 nor the broadening of PE curricula by teachers have resulted in the displacement of competitive sports or 'traditional' team games' (Green et al 2007:83). At the same time, however, there is evidence of newer sports and individual games being incorporated but any change, according to Green et al, needs to be read alongside the evidence of continuity.

Dudley et al (2011) in their review of physical education and school sport interventions suggest that 'PE teachers, researchers, and education and health policy makers need more evidence on how the diverse nature of PESS practice and pedagogy can play a central role in positively influencing young people's physical activity participation, movement skill proficiency and enjoyment of physical activity' (2011:374). It is with this in mind that we suggest it is also important to recognise the multiple relationships of power that operate to inform the construction of discourses that shape (current) visions of children's wellbeing.

The point being made in this paper is that there are many power relationships operating within the various groups considered to have a vested interest in the wellbeing of children. The discourses that inform understanding of concepts such as wellbeing and childhood health shape the way that, for instance, obesity is interpreted in schools. As Pringle and Pringle (2012) point out, these forms of knowledge need to be recognised as complex so that critical reflections can be made about how to negotiate them in the most appropriate way. Nevertheless, revealing the complexity of conflicting interpretations does not always imply that such interventions are doomed to failure. Large scale national interventions are important in that they often provide experiences of physical activities from a different perspective and, possibly, a foundation for later adult leisure pursuits. It may also be the case that these interventions can offer mechanisms to change conventional thinking about what wellbeing might look like through the exposure of such complexities. In the process of developing and delivering a large scale intervention many different forms of 'resistance' are exposed, such as the resistance that teachers present to external demands. As Tinning (2010) suggests, it is not necessarily the case that all PE teachers will harbour health agendas in the prescribed form, or are fixated on elite performance. Indeed, within the context of

many sport and physical activity interventions it is not always the case that the deliverer would necessarily be a PE teacher. In many primary schools, the first point of contact is often a head teacher with no specific PE background. Thus, resistance might be seen not only 'within' PE in terms of reaction to external directives, but also among mainstream teachers, with differing perceptions of the role PE and the broader benefits of school sport.

Our intention throughout this paper has been to generate reflection upon the complex ways that power relationships are negotiated and, in doing so, offer the opportunity to question the value of seeking uniform visions of wellbeing. We also hope to prompt further debate about the role and idea of PE, in the way that Kirk (2010) has described. There are many questions that have arisen relating to the way that PE is provided, taught and perceived by not only PE practitioners themselves, but by a range of other 'interested' parties. Consequently, while we acknowledge that it is important to keep the experiences of the children and young people, who are ultimately the beneficiaries of such schemes, as the central focus in research about their wellbeing, it is equally imperative to remain alert to the processes that inform the construction of broader societal knowledge bases. Ultimately, in the outcome orientated environment that we live in now and the prevalence of externally funded initiatives in schools, although the intended visions may be achieved (on paper) and through conventional evaluation methods, we suggest it is in the complex and divergent pathways, and consequent diverse experiences these large scale national interventions provide, where greater impact on children's overall wellbeing will be established.

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