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Still feeling like a spare piece of luggage? : Young Disabled People's Construction of Embodied Identities within Physical Education and Sport

BY

Hayley F. Fitzgerald

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy

Loughborough University

Abstract

This thesis explores young peoples' experiences of physical education and sport and considers the ways in which these experiences contribute to identity formation and understandings of self. Ten young disabled people attending two secondary schools in the Midlands of England participated in a series of focus group discussions and completed free-time diaries. In this study, I focus on the insights of young disabled people as much physical education and sports research has failed to account for the insights of these young people. Theoretically, I draw on social and medical model understandings of disability and extend these understandings by employing Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual tools. In particular, these tools bridge the structure/agency dichotomy found within medical and social model understandings of disability.

The data generated from this study reveals multifaceted relations between school, physical education, sport, the family, friends and role models. Within and between these spheres, young disabled people begin to understand themselves and the position and meaning of physical education and sport in relation to their lives. Within a school context, it is evident that a paradigm of normativity prevails and is expressed through informal and formal discursive practices. Indeed, the physical education habitus serves to affirm this normative presence and is manifest through conceptions of ability that recognise and value certain characteristics and competencies more than others. In this context, students measured themselves, and perceived they were measured by others, against a mesomorphic ideal. In addition, masculinity was expressed in a manner that valued competitive and aggressive forms of activity. Within physical education, value was also placed on high levels of motoric competence. For the focus group students, *difference* is embodied within physical education and serves to reinforce wider practices within school that distinguish disabled students as different from other students.

Beyond a school context, this study explores students' understandings of their free-time experiences and, in particular, free-time sport. Although students had different experiences of free time, it is clear that this sphere of life is an important

site for understanding and positioning themselves in relation to others. Indeed, there are similarities between free time and school (physical) education in relation to the ways in which normative values associated with the body and conceptions of performance prevail. For a small number of students, it appears that the family habitus has disrupted these normative values and constructed disability and sport positively. This study also highlights the limited extent to which different sites of participation and mediators interrelate in order to support any kind of continuity or progression in sport. Although the key mediator within multiple sites seem to be parents, their support remained isolated to specific issues within sites rather than providing support between sites.

Taken together, these findings reveal a number of substantive issues that have emerged from this study, including the role schools and physical education play in reproducing social inequalities, disability as a fluid and contradictory construct and the notion of complex sporting identities. This thesis concludes by discussing the implications of this study in relation to researching with young disabled people, the practice of physical education and the provision of disability sport opportunities. This study demonstrates not only the complexities of identity formation but also the fluid position that disability has within this process.

Material Published and Presented from the PhD

Conference Presentations

Fitzgerald, H. (2003) 'Still feeling like a 'spare piece of luggage? Physical Education and young disabled people' Poster presented to the United Kingdom Disability Studies Association Conference, Lancaster, September.

Fitzgerald, H. and Gorley, T. (2003) 'Inclusive' PE: Insights from young disabled people' Paper presented to the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Edinburgh, September.

Fitzgerald, H. and Kirk, D. (2005) 'Physical Education and the embodied identity of disabled students' Paper presented to the SIG/ Research on Learning and Instruction in Physical Education, American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, April.

Fitzgerald, H. (2005) 'Using Bourdieu to understand experiences of physical education and sport' Paper presented to the International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity, Verona Italy, July.

Fitzgerald, H. (2006) 'Are you a 'Parasite person'? Researching with young disabled people' Invited Speaker Researching Youth Sport: diverse perspectives, Loughborough University, Loughborough, October.

Publications

Fitzgerald, H. and Jobling, A. (2004) 'Student centred research: working with disabled students' in J. Wright, D. Macdonald and L. Burrows (eds.) Critical inquiry and problem solving in physical education: working with students in schools. London: Routledge.

Fitzgerald, H. (2005) 'Still feeling like a spare piece of luggage? Embodied experiences of (dis)ability in physical education and school sport' Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy. (10) 1: 41-59.

Fitzgerald, H. (2006) 'Disability and Physical Education' in D. Kirk, D. Macdonald and M. O'Sullivan (eds.) The Handbook of Physical Education. London: Sage Publications.

Fitzgerald, H. and Bass, D. (2007) 'Disability, Sport and Exercise' in J. Merchant, B. Griffin and A. Charnock (eds.) Sport and Physical Activity: The role of health promotion. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

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I dedicate this thesis to my loving and inspirational mum and dad. Over the past few years, my mum has kept me grounded in the realities of living with a disability. Dad has always been so proud of me and I do so wish he was here to celebrate this graduation.

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Chapter One

YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SPORT AND EMBODIED IDENTITIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A PhD has often been described as a journey. For me, this journey started a long time before I formally enrolled to do this study. In this chapter, I first introduce the reader to some of my experiences prior to embarking on this PhD. By doing this, I hope to provide an insight into the breadth of understandings I have developed and that continue to influence my thinking and attitude towards physical education, sport and issues relating to disability. After this, I outline the precedent for the study in relation to three core issues. First, I focus on recent policy and programme developments promoting inclusion within physical education and sport and the need within this changing environment to gain the views of young disabled people. Second, I problematise the relationship between dominant notions of physical education, sport and disability and the subsequent need to theorise these contradictory notions. Finally, I outline the theoretical framework informing this study and highlight the usefulness of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual tools and, in particular, how these enable the structural limitations of the social model of disability to be overcome in order that the embodied identities of young disabled people can be explored. The chapter proceeds by outlining the research questions and concludes by providing an overview of each of the chapters.

As a very 'able' sports performer, I lived for my physical education lessons. In fact, school for me revolved around physical education; without this subject I would have found school quite unbearable. In my mind, the purpose of being at school became apparent when I was doing physical education or other extra curricular sports-related activities. My memories of school centre on these experiences and I chose to put at the back of my mind all the other horrible subjects I endured in order to get my weekly kick of physical education. I have no doubt that wanting to be at school to do physical

education helped me to eventually pass some exams. When I left school, as a sixth form reject, I selected courses at college, and eventually university, with some emphasis on sport and I also continued to be surrounded by other 'sporty' people. Like many, I know my motives for continuing studying focused on Wednesday afternoons and being able to carry on doing more sport. Sport has played, and continues to play, an important part in my life.

It was a long time before I recognised that not everyone shares the feelings I have towards physical education and sport. The panic I felt in every English lesson at the thought of the teacher saying, 'Hayley, your turn to read' or 'Your spelling results are ....' was horrible, and I had not realised that some people also felt like this about physical education. Whilst at university, I began to do various coaching qualifications and voluntary work. It was during this time that I started to work with different groups of young disabled people. At this time, I also began to reflect on, and compare, my experiences of life to those of the young participants I was working with. Why was it that at my school I could not remember any disabled people being there? Where did they go? What sort of physical education did they experience? Did sport figure in any way in their lives? Over time, I got to know many young people and found out more about them and their experiences. I began to understand how the liberating physical education experiences I had received were not evident in many of the recollections and stories I heard. For some young people, physical education did not feature at all in their school experiences and for others, particularly those who experienced a mainstream education, there were not many positive reflections. Eventually, my work also focused on sport for disabled people. During this time, my sport development and advocacy work gave me a strong sense of the ways in which disabled people are disadvantaged within society and a feeling that this continues not to be right or just.

When I became a Research Associate at Loughborough University, I was able to use the mechanics of research I had learnt from my undergraduate and postgraduate studies to conduct numerous interviews and develop various questionnaires with teachers and sports development officers with the aim of finding out about the

experiences of young disabled people in physical education and sport. As a new researcher, and drawing on the experiences of my advocacy work, I became increasingly aware that there was something important missing from the evaluation work I was conducting - the views of the young disabled students. At this point, I was intrigued to find out more. Was it just our evaluations that were positioned in this way? How had other evaluations or research included young disabled people? What was already known about the physical education and sporting experiences of young disabled people? As I began to explore these issues, I discovered a body of literature focusing on 'disability studies' and this continues to help me develop and guide my thinking. When I read *Doing Disability Research* (Barnes and Mercer, 1997), I could not put it down (something I have managed to do very easily with many other texts). Hidden away in my office in Victory Hall, I spent a week reading and re-reading this book and it helped me to begin to see research in a different light and ask critical questions about 'why' and 'how' we all do research. At this time, I also began to read literature within physical education and sport and was at a loss to understand why this body of literature said so little about young disabled people's experiences. I have now spent seven years engaging in research focusing on young disabled peoples' experiences of physical education and sport. This PhD forms part of my ongoing commitment and belief that researchers (within physical education and sport) have a responsibility to include, and listen to, the voices of young disabled people.

1.2 OUTLINING THE PRECEDENT FOR THE STUDY

1.2.1 *Every Child Matters* – Inclusion and gaining the views of young disabled people

> "Today's children and young people experience wider opportunities and benefit from rising prosperity, better health and education that those in previous generations. However, there is still more to do. Whilst most children and young people are doing well, a significant minority experience problems that may lead to poor outcomes both during childhood and later in life."
> (Department for Education and Skills, 2003:1)

Since the publication of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003), increased prominence has been given to a range of issues concerning the lives of children and young people. A number of organisations, including schools, have been given responsibility for working in ways that will improve the life chances and opportunities of all young people. In addition to these developments, many public services, providers of physical education and sport are increasingly asked to promote opportunities that support the principles associated with 'inclusion' (Sport England, 2001). This concern has been coupled with a notable increase in the variety and nature of resources that physical educators and development officers can draw upon in order to work in positive ways with young people. Although these developments are recent, it is important to note that some time ago Hellison and Templin (1991) alerted us to the complex questions that they considered were unanswered in relation to working with disabled students:

> "How prepared are you to teach the child with Down Syndrome, or the student with muscular dystrophy, or the kid with a congenital heart defect, or the hyperactive student? What are the rights of these students or any other students with disabilities. Do you want to teach these children? Are you legally obligated to teach them? Should they be mainstreamed into your class?"
> (Hellison and Templin, 1991: 33)

I would suggest that these questions have stood the test of time and, in promoting a reflective approach to teaching physical education, many of these questions remain equally relevant to teachers in our schools today. However, as thought provoking as these questions are, they have always struck me as somewhat incomplete. For example, teachers may successfully navigate themselves through the 'ifs', 'buts' and 'whys' of these questions and eventually feel comfortable with the conclusions they draw. I would suggest this, then, provides us with one side of the story. In my view there is another, equally important, story to be told about young disabled people themselves and their views and experiences of physical education and sport. This story remains largely untold. As I have indicated elsewhere (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003a), I hold researchers within physical education and sport responsible for disregarding, ignoring and trivialising the voices of young disabled people. This study attempts to redress this

imbalance and places at the forefront the views and perspectives of ten young disabled people. Through a series of focus group discussions and the completion of free-time diaries, the thesis provides an insight into the physical education and sporting lives of these young people and explores the ways in which these experiences impact on their construction of embodied identities.

1.2.2 Problematising understandings of disability, physical education and sport

Even with the developments outlined above, within schools and the wider community the concern remains that physical education and sport continues to reinforce and perpetuate disadvantages that many disabled people encounter in their everyday lives. For example, this inequitable reality is exposed by a recent large-scale survey in England that concluded that young disabled people participate less and undertake a narrower range of physical education and sporting activities than their non-disabled peers (Sport England, 2001). Moreover, the conclusion reached by Penney (2002) concerning equity and inclusion illustrates a bleak state of affairs: "…. The challenges that these matters pose are considerable and, regrettably, the support needed in responding to them may not always be forthcoming, either within or beyond school" (Penney, 2002: 125). As teachers work towards the requirements of the National Curriculum Physical Education (DfEE/QCA, 1999), and others within the community attempt to facilitate sporting opportunities, many assumptions are made about the nature of the experiences in physical education and sport of young disabled people. As I outlined above, these assumptions are often adult orientated and not viewed from the perspectives of young disabled people. In addition, normative assumptions underpin understandings of physical education and these are contrary to dominant views of disability. In some respects, the notions of physical education and disability are mutually related in that both focus on physicality. However, there is considerable tension between these two notions in relation to the way in which physicality is understood. Within physical education, this is essentially about developing and refining techniques, practising, adhering to rules and performing. In contrast, disability often signifies a deficiency of the body. The tension, then, arises when disabled bodies are expected to conform to the accepted and normalised practices dominating physical

education and sports discourse (Barton, 1993). A question to consider: Are the dominant practices of physical education in schools best serving young disabled people? I suggest that this question remains largely unanswered as physical educators and researchers have failed to adequately theorise or sufficiently account for the experiences of young disabled people in physical education and sport. I propose that it is only when the experiences of young disabled people are understood that we will be in a better position to then consider how, and in what ways, physical education and sport can be reconstructed to provide more young people, including young disabled people, with a lifelong desire to participate in physical activity.

1.2.3 Theorising embodied identities of young disabled people

Disability is often viewed from one of two perspectives. The 'medical model' legitimises disability on medical grounds and presents a disabled person as individually deficient. In contrast, the 'social model' centralises the structures and organisation of society as the cause of disability (Finkelstien, 1980; Oliver, 1996). Within physical education and sport, the social model seems to have become the orthodoxy, in terms of discourse, for understanding disability. Having said this, it has also been recognised that research outputs within this field seem to have essentially reflected medical model understandings of disability (DePauw, 1997 and 2000). Within physical education, I would suggest that this situation demonstrates that researchers have yet to fully understand what the social model of disability actually is, its limitations and, indeed, the ongoing discussions regarding competing or alternative perspectives. In other words, physical education and sport have yet to sufficiently critique understandings of disability and the implications for the practice of physical education and sport. Set within this context, this study addresses the recent call by Aitchison (2003) for researchers within leisure (and I believe these comments are also relevant to physical education and sports researchers) to move beyond the discursive boundaries of the field and engage with wider discourses. In particular, Aitchison (2003: 956) points to the utility of engaging with disability studies in order to develop 'inter-subject field discourses' between leisure and disability. In seeking to contribute to this cross-fertilisation of this discourse, I centre my concerns on the embodied

experiences of young disabled people within a physical education and sporting context. I believe positioning my research in this way will contribute to understandings within physical education and disability studies of the ongoing and growing dialogue found within disability studies that has extended understandings of social model perspectives by exploring the notion of embodied identities of young disabled people.

Meanwhile, beyond a physical education context, the medical and social models of disability have been criticised for an over reliance on either structure or individual agency. What these competing perspectives illustrate is that the notion of disability is contested. Indeed, this debate is not merely limited to critiques between medical and social model supporters. In particular, some social model advocates continue to deliberate the extent to which 'individual experiences' of impairment can be incorporated into understandings of disability (Morris, 1991; Patterson and Hughes, 2000). In this context, a number of writers within disability studies have explored the possibilities of utilising Bourdieu's conceptual tools in order to bridge the structure/agency dichotomy (Edwards and Imrie, 2003). Within physical education and sports research more generally, a number of writers have employed the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and explored social spaces within physical education (Hunter, 2004), the social construction of gender (Gorely *et al.*, 2003) and conceptions of 'ability' (Evans, 2004; Hay and Hunter, 2006). This study builds on this research and the writings within disability studies in order to shed new light on the embodied experiences of young disabled people within physical education and sport. This study focuses on six key research questions. Each of these is outlined in the following section.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As I propose, the purpose of this study is to explore the embodied experiences of young disabled people within the context of physical education and sport. Primarily I will focus on physical education and free-time sports contexts. However, it is worth noting that these sites are not isolated from other wider spheres of life and I also

explore the interrelationship between physical education and free-time sport and other mediating factors, including the broader school experience, family, friends and role models. Six key research questions underpin this study and centre on gaining the perspectives and views of young disabled people. Each of these questions also focuses, to differing degrees, on the theoretical and conceptual framework guiding this study. The six key research questions are supported by a number of subsequent questions. These secondary questions provide a more defined focus in relation to a particular aspect of this study.

The first two key research questions focus on the context and nature of the research participants' experiences of physical education and free-time sport.

Research Question 1

What is the nature of the young disabled participants' experiences of physical education and school sport?

a) What physical education and school sport activities do the young participants undertake?

b) What is the context of the participants' physical education and school sport experiences?

c) What relevance does physical education and school sport have to the young disabled participants within and beyond a school setting?

Research Question 2

What is the nature of the young disabled participants' experiences of free-time sport?

a) What free-time sporting activities do the young participants undertake?

b) What is the context of the participants' free-time sports experiences?

c) What relevance do physical education and sport have to the young disabled participants within and beyond a school setting?

My third and fourth research questions draw on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and seek to explore the ways in which the disabled participants understand their own experiences of physical education and sport.

Research Question 3

How do the young disabled participants in this study understand their experiences of physical education and school sport?

a) How do the young disabled participants understand the social practices with physical education and school sport?
b) In what ways do young disabled people attempt to gain, retain and convert capital within physical education and school sport?
c) In what ways, if any, do the young disabled participants challenge or resist the social practices within physical education and school sport?

Research Question 4

How do the young disabled participants in this study understand their experiences of free-time sport?

a) How do the young disabled participants understand the social practices within free-time sport?
b) In what ways do young disabled people attempt to gain, retain and convert capital within free-time sport?
c) In what ways, if any, do the young disabled participants challenge or resist the social practices within free-time sport?

My fifth and sixth research questions continue to draw on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and seek to explore the ways in which the participants' experiences of physical education, school sport and free-time sport contribute to identity formation.

Research Question 5

How do the young disabled participants' experiences of physical education and school sport inform their sense of self and identity?

a) What practices operate within physical education and school sport that contribute to how the young disabled people in this study understand their sense of self?

b) In what ways, and to what degree, do wider discursive school practices contribute to how the young disabled people in this study understand their sense of self? In what ways is this manifest in a physical education and school sport context?

c) In what ways do peers, family and other stakeholders inform the identity of the young participants? In what ways is this manifest in a physical education and school sport context?

Research Question 6

How do the young disabled participants' experiences of free-time sport inform their sense of self and identity?

a) What practices operate within free-time sport that contribute to how the young disabled people in this study understand their sense of self?

b) In what ways, and to what degree, do wider discursive free-time practices contribute to how the young disabled people in this study understand their sense of self? In what ways is this manifest in a free-time sport context?

c) In what ways do peers, family and other stakeholders inform the identity of the young participants? In what ways is this manifest in a free-time sport context?

My research questions were informed by a range of literature reviewed later in chapter two. As part of this review, I present the work of Bourdieu and explore the utility of working with his conceptual tools in relation to exploring the physical education and sporting experiences of young disabled people (see 2.4). It is important to note that my research questions were informed by and implicitly reflect an association to Bourdieu's conceptual tools. More specifically, my research questions focus on exploring the experiences of disabled students within a range of social contexts including school, physical education, family and friends. Bourdieu's conceptualises

these different spheres of life as 'fields' and suggests that by considering people engaging within these kind of multidimensional and overlapping spaces we can appreciate the ways in which people go about their social life (2.4.2). All of my key research questions, in different ways, reflect an interest with the field of physical education and sport. In addition, a number of my secondary research questions reflect an explicit concern to explore the interrelatedness of fields (i.e. the secondary questions associated with research questions 5 and 6 express a concern to explore the relations between physical education and sport, and family, peers and other stakeholders). Within the context of fields, Bourdieu suggests that individuals manoeuvre, through 'social practice' (see 2.4.5), and seek to acquire and retain different forms of 'capital' (see 2.4.3). Again, this feature of Bourdieu's thinking that is explored through a number of research questions in this study. For example, research questions 3 and 4, and the associated secondary questions, seek to explore the nature of capital valued within physical education and sport and the ways in which students attempt gain, retain and convert capital. By using the notion of 'habitus', in combination with the other conceptual tools, Bourdieu provides a means of conceptualising human embodiment. Indeed, understanding the ways in which the students construct their embodied identities is a central aspect of this study and reflected in research questions 5 and 6.

Taken together, these research questions provide the basis for exploring the insights and opinions of young disabled people in relation to their physical education, sporting experiences and identity formation. It is worth noting that although I centre my concerns on the experiences of young disabled people I believe that the arguments developed in this study carry with them important messages that are relevant to the physical education of many young people.

1.4 OVERVIEW AND CONTENT OF THE CHAPTERS

In this chapter, I have presented a broad rationale relating to the focus of this study. In doing this, I have identified a number of key research questions that this study will focus upon. I indicate that I will utilise the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu in order to explore the physical education and sporting experiences of young disabled people. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which physical education and sport contribute to the embodied identities of young disabled people. Chapter two extends the discussions and provides the contextual and theoretical understandings that underpin my research. In particular, I set the scene by exploring the developments within education that have increased concerns to work towards inclusion. I also consider and critique the nature of empirical research that has focused on young disabled people within physical education and sport. After this, I engage with literature found within disability studies and explore the ways in which the notion of disability has evolved. What is evident from this literature is that disability is contested and understood in different ways. Indeed, some concerns have been expressed regarding a need to account for 'experiences' of disability. To this end, I introduce the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and consider their usefulness for exploring the embodied identities of young disabled people.

In chapter three, I discuss the methodological assumptions and concerns that have informed my research design, generation strategies and data analysis. As I have already indicated, this study focuses on gaining the views and perspectives of young disabled people. From this perspective, I first explore literature concerned with engaging disabled people in research and highlight the ways in which researchers have often excluded these young people from the research process. After this, I present the data-generation methods employed in this study. A qualitative focus is adopted by engaging in a series of focus group discussions with students from two secondary schools. This data is also supported with activity diaries that yielded quantitative data about the nature of participants' everyday lives. In this study I draw on the principles of grounded theory and I discuss how Bourdieu's conceptual tools complement this approach to data generation. Chapter three also includes a reflective dimension and I

consider my position within the research and the evolving nature of the research.

The data generated from this study is presented in the next two chapters. Chapter four is the first analysis chapter and focuses on the school context. It has been suggested that school is a significant site in which a young person's identity is constituted and constructed (Hirst and Baldwin, 1994). In this chapter, I explore institutional embodied disciplines and informal discursive practices that prevail in the two schools in this study and the ways in which these inform the habitus of young disabled people. Throughout this chapter, I draw on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu, particularly the notion of habitus, capital and practice (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). More specifically, I use these conceptual tools to explore the ways in which participants in this study understand their experiences of physical education and school sport, and I explore how these experiences inform their understandings of self and identity. As part of this discussion, I consider the position physical education and school sport occupies in relation to the students' broader school experiences, the nature of capital valued within physical education and the extent to which students possess relevant capital. I proceed by focusing on the ways in which difference is embodied within physical education through the habitus and discuss how activities and spaces are regulated and how students were often given different kinds of exemptions. Finally, this chapter addresses a variety of issues focusing on friends and considers the ways in which the structure of physical education and sport supports existing friendships and nurtures new friendships.

Having examined the school context, chapter five moves on to discuss the ways in which a number of other mediating factors contribute to the construction of embodied identities. In doing this, I continue to draw on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and focus on the family, free-time sport, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people. I explore the ways in which these mediating factors contribute to the students' understandings of self in relation to physical education and sport. I examine the position of sport within free-time and the connectivity between physical education and (non)-participation in free-time sport. Cote and Hay (2002) and Kay

(2000) have suggested that the family remains a key context in which such interests are developed and nurtured. Set within this context, I explore the ways in which family discourses of disability are embodied within the habitus and expressed through positive and negative constructions of disability and understandings as non-disabled. After this, I consider the family as a resource and a site in which focus group students may reproduce and disrupt the family sporting habitus. The family is not the only site in which sporting tastes and interests are developed and I also explore a range of other mediating stakeholders who shape the tastes and interests of young people. As the chapter proceeds, the focus remains on the key mediating factors of the family, free-time sport, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people. However, within these contexts, consideration is also given to the ways in which capital is acquired, retained and converted. Finally, chapter five explores the ways in which focus group students mobilise their agency in order to challenge and resist the experiences they encounter within physical education and free-time sport. As this chapter progresses, it is clear that these mediating factors are multifaceted and interrelated, reflecting the complex social world young people occupy.

Chapter six draws discussions from the previous chapters together by highlighting a number of key themes that emerged from this study. In particular, I discuss the role of school and physical education in reproducing social inequalities. Within this context and more broadly, disability is conceived as a fluid and contradictory construct in which the young people in this study manoeuvre between, and within, school and free-time contexts and continually (re)negotiate what it is to be disabled. As a consequence of this ongoing negotiation, complex sporting identities emerge that are contingent upon time, place and space and serve to reinforce different constructions of disability. This chapter concludes by considering the implications of this study in relation to inclusion in schools, the practice of physical education and the provision of disability sport opportunities. In addition, I discuss a number of possible directions future research could take and other pertinent issues researchers should consider.

Chapter Two

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY: DISABILITY, IDENTITY, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter extends the discussions from chapter one and provides the contextual and theoretical understandings that underpin my research. My research interest is with young disabled people, their physical education and sporting experiences and identity formation. I have drawn on three areas of literature to inform my thinking: the sociology of physical education and sport, disability studies and the work of Pierre Bourdieu. By considering this literature in combination, my thesis will provide new understandings and insights into the experiences of young disabled people and the influences that physical education and sport have upon the process of identity formation.

This chapter begins by focusing on education, physical education and young disabled people. In particular, this chapter contextualises contemporary legislation and policy concerning the education of disabled students. As these discussions develop, an understanding is gained of the position and place young disabled students occupy within physical education and the broader context of sport. Consideration is also given to research that focuses on physical education and the experiences of young disabled people. Although this research is limited, I review available participation data, research centring on disabled adult reflections and young disabled students' views. Although my research focuses on the views and perspectives of young disabled people, in this chapter, I also review research focusing on physical education teachers' perspectives relating to including disabled students in physical education.

Having set the scene relating to the broader developments promoting the inclusion of young disabled people in (physical) education, this chapter proceeds by

conceptualising the notion of disability. I discuss and critique the medical and social models of disability and highlight the small but growing body of literature that focuses on understanding disability from an embodied position. I also explore the ways in which understandings of disability have informed the nature of research undertaken within the field of physical education and sport. In reviewing research that has been undertaken in relation to physical education and issues of disability, this chapter will explore the extent to which research in this area has helped us to better understand current physical education practice in schools. This chapter then focuses on Bourdieu's conceptual tools and I discuss the ways in which fields, capital, habitus and practice can be used to help to understand the experiences of disabled students within (physical) education and sport. Taken together, this chapter provides the contextual and theoretical concepts that are central to this study. As already indicated, I commence by exploring the broader circumstances that have influenced young disabled people's contemporary position within (physical) education.

2.2 EDUCATION, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE

This section focuses on education, physical education and young disabled people. I first contextualise contemporary legislation and policy concerning the education of disabled students. Within this context, I specifically attend to the notion of 'inclusion' and the ways in which this concept has been interpreted and understood. The section proceeds by highlighting the structures in place that may support young disabled people to participate in sport beyond a school context. After this, I draw on empirical research and examine the position and place young disabled students occupy within physical education and the broader context of sport.

2.2.1 Contemporary legislation informing the education of young disabled people

> "The way schools are organised, what they teach, how it is taught – and the host of other features that make up the school curriculum – are expressions of how a wider society is organised, of what it values (and of how in the past it has come to value these things)." (Clough, 1998: 5)

Historically, the education of young disabled people has been dominated by an ideology of 'special educational needs'. For many young disabled people this has meant education in a segregated special school. Within this context, it is argued that the special school system is a means of social control and serves to perpetuate the social oppression of disabled people (Oliver, 1996; Tomlinson, 1996). From this perspective, Allan (1996) suggests that the 'medical gaze' described in the work of Foucault can be directly related to young disabled people at school. Since the 1940s, legislation has sought to re-position young disabled people within the education system. For example, the 1944 Education Act advocated the education of young disabled people in mainstream schools. Critics, though, suggest this legislation largely failed and encouraged Local Education Authorities to provide more impairment-specific segregated schools (Tomlinson, 1982). The Warnock Report (1978) promoted the notion of differing forms of integration including 'locational', 'social' and 'functional'. This report also abolished statutory categories of 'handicap' and 'educationally subnormal'. The 1987 Education Act introduced the process of 'statementing' in order that individual needs could be identified and appropriate support given. However, many commentators continue to be sceptical of this process and argue that it does not adequately address the needs of disabled young people. More recent legislation includes the Education Acts of 1993 and 1996 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. The Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 came into force in September 2002 and made it unlawful for schools, colleges and other education providers to discriminate against disabled young people. Much of this legislation continues to promote a shift from the segregated education of young disabled students to the 'inclusion' of young disabled people in mainstream settings.

This kind of legislation has also been supported by other international commitments to inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). Indeed, the right of young people, including those with a disability, to experience physical education was unanimously agreed upon during the 1999 'World Summit on Physical Education'. The Berlin Agenda for Government Ministers states: "All children have the right to: (1) the highest level of

health; (2) free and compulsory primary education for both cognitive and physical development; (3) rest, leisure, play and recreation" (Doll-Tepper and Scoretz, 2001: 115). The Berlin Agenda was subsequently adopted at the UNESCO World Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for physical education and sport (MINEPS III). Set within this broader context of legislative change, inclusion within physical education has become increasingly discussed and debated. The following section explores this concern.

2.2.2 Physical education and inclusion

As I discuss in the next section, inclusion is a concept that is understood in different ways. However, it is worth noting that the notion of inclusion has been recognised by many writers for some time as an important quality that physical education should strive to promote (Hellison and Templin, 1991; Siedentop, 2002). For example, Siedentop (2002) argues that the goals of youth sport are centred on educative, public health, elite development and preserving goals. If the educative goal dominates a sports programme "…. it would be as inclusive as possible, attractive to diverse children and youths, modified physically and emotionally to fit developing bodies, talents, and spirits" (Siedentop, 2002: 394). In this context, the educative goal serves to impart on young participants, amongst other things, new and useful skills, qualities associated with cooperation and leadership and a sense of belonging. In addition to this recognition, inclusion is acknowledged at a policy level in England and Wales and the National Curriculum (NC) established that all students are entitled to a 'broad and balanced curriculum' (DfEE/QCA, 1999). The NC sets out that teachers must ensure students are enabled to participate and identifies a number of principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum. These principles include:

(1) Setting suitable learning challenges:

'Teachers should aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as is possible.'

(2) Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs:

'When planning teachers should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve including …. pupils with disabilities.'

(3) Overcoming barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils:

'.... a minority of pupils will have particular learning and assessment requirements which go beyond the provisions described.'

(DfEE/QCA, 1999: 28-30)

Even before the National Curriculum Physical Education (NCPE) was implemented, there was some recognition that this curriculum may not facilitate access for some students to particular physical education activities. Indeed, the NCPE Working Group acknowledged that the delivery of traditional team games was likely to present difficulties to teachers in their attempts to include young disabled students in physical education (DES/WO, 1991). Furthermore, following the introduction of the NCPE, critics continue to suggest that the discourses of inclusion embedded within this curriculum will remain difficult to achieve as they are set within a context that leaves unchanged other long-established discourses that are unlikely to promote inclusive practice (Penney, 2002).

In recent years, and in part as a result of policy and legislative developments, physical education teachers have begun to draw on a diverse range of resources to assist them with their practice. For example, national and locally based programmes have been developed. In the United States these include the 'I CAN' curriculum (Wessel, 1983), project 'ACTIVE' (Vodola, 1978) and 'Project UNIQUE' (Winnick and Short, 1985). Similarly, in Australia programmes such as 'Willing and Able' (Downs, 1995), project 'CONNECT' and Sports Ability have been developed. In the UK, 'TOP Sportsability' and 'Elements' programmes have been implemented in school and community settings. A range of guidelines has also been developed to support inclusive practice in physical education (Downs, 1995; National Assocation for Sport and Physical Education, 1995; Hillary Commission, 1998; Block, 2000). This has been coupled with the publication of a number of syllabuses that address, to differing degrees, issues of inclusion (DfEE/QCA, 1999; Ministry of Education, 1999). It is anticipated that all these developments will provide positive and inclusive physical education experiences

for many young people, including those who happen to be disabled. Indeed, it is claimed inclusive physical education not only contributes to broader benefits (such as those associated with physical, health, cognitive and psychological factors) but may also offer a number of additional benefits including:

(1) Opportunity to develop social skills necessary for interaction with others,
(2) Opportunity to develop friendships with peers with and without disabilities,
(3) Opportunity to interact with age-appropriate role models among able-bodied peers,
(4) Decreased isolation,
(5) Increased expectations and challenges,
(6) Attitude changes among peers and increased acceptance,
(7) Increased appreciation of difference,
(8) Greater understanding of disability rights and equity.
(DePauw, 2000: 363)

Having outlined the understandings of inclusion expressed through the NCPE and the range of resources and programmes available to support inclusive practice, the proceeding section discusses the confusion that continues to prevail in relation to what constitutes inclusive practice.

2.2.3 Physical education and inclusion confusion

Even with the kind of legislation and programme developments identified above, Vickerman (2002) notes there is often confusion about what actually constitutes inclusion or inclusive practices. Indeed, Ainscow (1999) concluded that the concept of inclusion is 'grand' and 'elusive'. The elusiveness of inclusion arises because of the differing understandings and perspectives regarding the notion of inclusion and other associated concepts, such as mainstreaming and integration. According to Farrell (1998), 'mainstreaming' is about a disabled student spending part of the school day alongside non-disabled classmates in a mainstream setting. For some, this arrangement may be perceived as inclusive. However, it has been argued by a number of commentators that this kind of arrangement often only promotes the 'integration' of

disabled students. In this respect, the school system remains unchanged and extra provision is made in order to support a disabled student. In contrast, it is suggested that inclusion moves beyond the placement of a disabled student and, instead, emphasis is placed on inclusion as a process. In this context, inclusion is understood as a means of increasing participation in learning by all students in order that their educational needs can be met (Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Barton, 1998; Cheminas, 2000; DePauw and Doll-Tepper, 2000; Slee, 2001).

> "Inclusion is a process. Inclusive education is not merely about providing access into mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded. It is not about closing down unacceptable systems of segregated provision and dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system. Existing school systems – in terms of physical facilities, curriculum aspects, teaching expectations and styles, leadership roles – will have to change. This is because inclusive education is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice."
> (Barton, 1998: 85)

According to this account, inclusion is a process that is engaged in through changes to various dimensions of a school's structure and practices. The lack of clarity concerning the notion of inclusion is particularly evident when considering disabled students within physical education and school sport. Indeed, what one teacher considers to be good inclusive practice may be interpreted by another teacher very differently. For instance, in a recent study, the following teacher explained how she had promoted inclusion in extra curricular netball.

> "Now what we've also done, we've got her [the disabled student] as the mascot for the team. I've explained that she can't take part in the games because the other schools would not take into account her disability .... she knows she's part of the team because she's the team mascot. She's also coming along to the cheer leading as well because again there's no physical contact involved."
> (Teacher, cited in Institute of Youth Sport, 2003: 32)

There are many questions to ask in relation to this teacher's (inclusive) practice. Is this what inclusive physical education should look like? Why is the teacher so adamant that the student cannot take part in the game? Why does the teacher think the other school would not take account of the student's disability? Why is it that the role of mascot is considered appropriate for the disabled student? Why is it that the student has to accommodate the game rather than the game accommodate the student? As highlighted in the Institute of Youth Sport (2003) report, it was not evident from the interview if the student had approached the teacher to become the mascot or if the teacher initiated the idea. In either case, perhaps additional consideration should have been given to the consequences of the student adopting this role; for example, the stereotypical image of disability that this may reinforce and the kind of impact this role will have on the disabled student's sense of self and identity. I discuss the notion of disability later by exploring the differing ways in which disability has been conceptualised and understood.

Although the discussion presented above focuses on issues relating to inclusion and young disabled people, it is important to note that for some time a number of authors have expressed broader concerns about the nature and practices within physical education. For example, it seems to be widely acknowledged that physical education is charged with promoting and nurturing lifelong active lifestyles (Fairclough *et al.*, 2002; Green, 2000). However, it has been argued that this purpose has yet to be realised as "…. There is very little evidence to suggest that, since the first appearance of sport-based physical education in universal secondary schooling, programs have been able to achieve their aim of promoting lifelong participation" (Kirk, 2002: 3). This kind of claim has subsequently been refuted by a number of other scholars (Green, *et al.*, 2005) who suggest the changing nature of physical education, incorporating 'lifestyle' activities, has raised levels of participation. Nonetheless, Evans and Davis (2002: 30) pose the question "Whose voices, which students, what communities are silenced or ignored in contexts of physical education?" The account given over by Macdonald suggests many people are ignored.

> "Professionals in exercise, physical education and sport may have served well the talented, able-bodied, skilled, physically fit, educated, middle classes. But what about the majority of our population."
> (Macdonald, 2002: 184)

Implicit in this observation is a concern that physical educators are serving some but not others. A number of other commentators also feel physical education is failing to serve all, and much has been written on issues such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Schempp and Oliver, 2000). However, as I indicate later (2.2.7), with the exception of a number of studies (Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000; Sport England, 2001), the actual nature of young disabled peoples' physical education and sporting experiences remains largely under researched. In the meantime, I focus the following discussions on the sporting organisations and structures supporting disabled people to participate in sport.

2.2.4 Sports organisations supporting disabled people

According to Thomas (2003: 111), the historical development of disability sport organisations in the UK is best described as "short but turbulent". Today, the structure of disability sport is complex and reflects a breadth of interests and concerns. Figure 1 provides a summary of the key organisations supporting disabled people in sport.

Figure 1 – Organisations supporting sports participation by disabled people

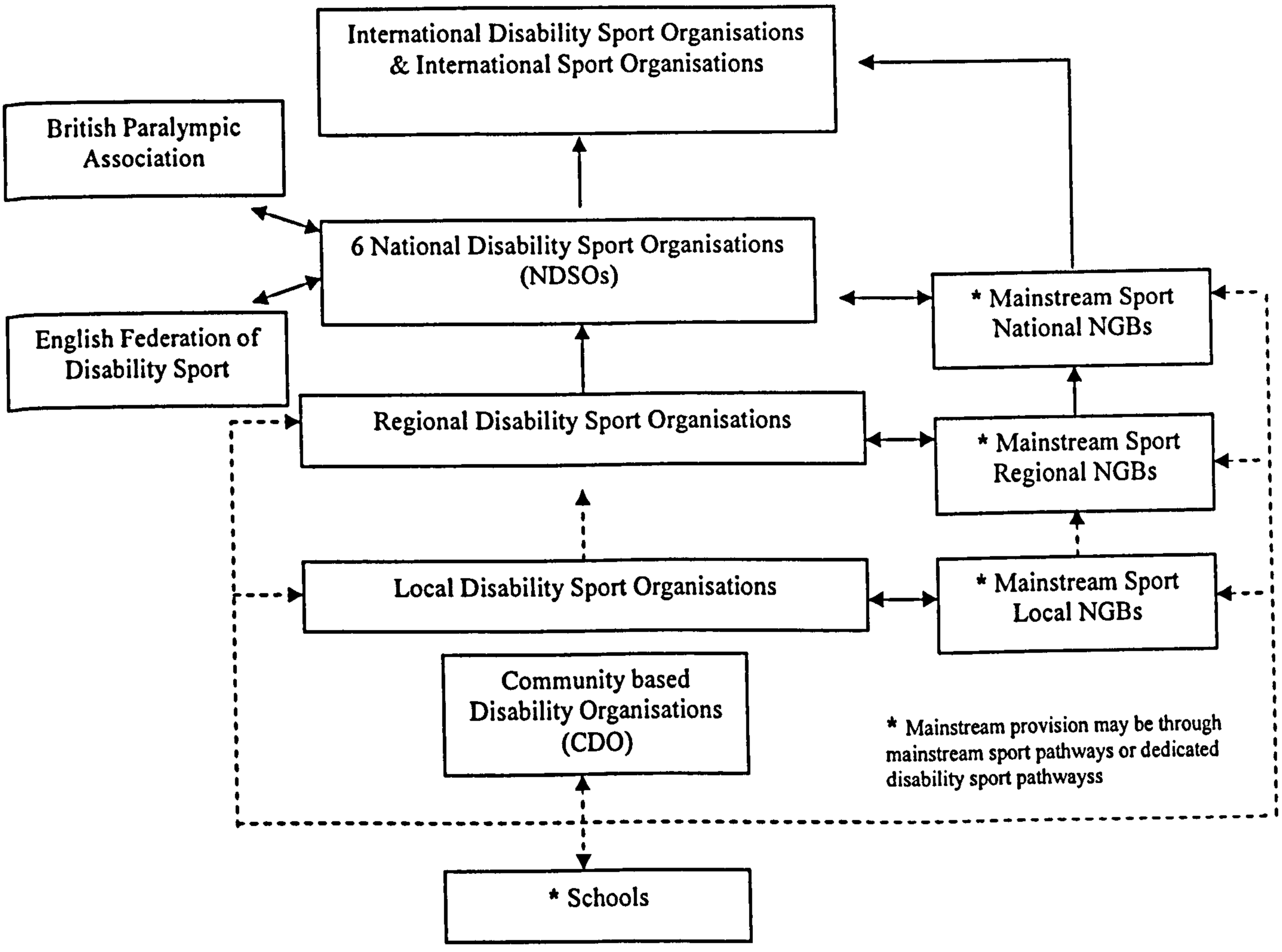

Figure 1 illustrates that a disabled person can experience sport in four key contexts - through schools, through community-based disability organisations providing a variety of opportunities including sport, through disability sport organisations, and through mainstream sports organisations. Within mainstream organisations, disabled people may participate with mainly non-disabled participants or dedicated disability sport opportunities that national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) organise. Importantly, the pathway a disabled person takes will not necessarily be linear and is likely to reflect considerable cross-cutting between these differing organisational contexts.

One of the key developments in recent years relating to the structure and organisation of disability sport was the creation in 1998 of the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS). The EFDS was developed in response to the outcomes of a National Disability Sports Conference and further wide-ranging consultations. The EFDS has a mission "to be the united voice of disability sport seeking to promote inclusion and achieve equality of sporting opportunities for disabled people". In part, the EFDS was formed to provide a more co-ordinated approach to the planning and provision of sport for disabled people. The six NDSOs continue to work towards their own development programme, while at the same time are represented within the EFDS management structure. Increasingly, sport organisations are developing pathways and support mechanisms for talented performers. The future of disability sport, and in particular the EFDS, continues to evolve and is currently part of a national 'equity review' centring on a number of national equity organisations (Sports Structures, 2005). Having discussed the structures supporting sport for disabled people, I next move on to considering the patterns and nature of physical education and sports participation by disabled people.

2.2.5 Patterns of participation

Over the last twenty years, the number and scale of research projects focusing on patterns of participation by young disabled people has steadily increased (see for example; Stafford, 1989; Borrett *et al.*, 1995; Penney and Evans, 1995; Simeonsson *et al.*, 2001; Sport England, 2001). Prior to this research, medical model understandings of disability dominated and influenced research agendas and research extensively focused on areas such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor learning and motor development (Hoover and Wade, 1985; Pyfer, 1986; Broadhead and Burton, 1996). However, more recent studies have sought to determine patterns of participation and, in doing this, some have also presented comparisons with non-disabled young people. For example, a large-scale survey of 2,293 young disabled people was conducted recently by Sport England (2001) in England and Scotland. The data generated by this survey work provides a clear indication that young disabled people fair less favourably in physical education and sport than their non-disabled peers. In particular, this survey

found that fifty three percent of primary aged disabled students and forty one percent of secondary aged students spend less than one hour in physical education lessons each week. This figure is significantly less than the time spent participating in physical education by non-disabled young people. The survey also found that young disabled people do not have access to as full a range of activities within the NCPE as their non-disabled peers. Echoing previous findings of earlier (Stafford, 1989; Penney and Evans, 1995) and more recent research (Smith, 2004), games activities and athletics were highlighted as activity areas that disabled students were likely to experience to a lesser extent.

The Sport England (2001) survey also revealed that fewer disabled students take part in after-school sporting activities (thirty nine percent fewer than non-disabled students). According to Smith (2004), this situation is largely a result of broader practices by teachers within school physical education that tend, more often than not, to support after-school clubs focusing on games activities that are competitively orientated. This practice within an after-school context has led Penney and Harris (1997: 41) to conclude, more generally about after-school clubs, that the opportunities offered are "more of the same for the more able".

While acknowledging this recent survey undertaken by Sport England (2001) is useful, it should also be recognised that this kind of participation data inevitably falls short of providing in-depth understandings of experiences. However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, physical education and sports researchers seem disinterested in exploring insights from the perspectives of young disabled people themselves (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003a). Indeed, this largely continues to be the case, even though over ten years ago Barton (1993) signalled that the lack of engagement was perhaps a fundamental weakness in understandings of physical education and sport.

> "Merely adopting a curriculum for able-bodied people without some critical dialogue is unacceptable. The voice of disabled people needs to be heard and seriously examined. This is absolutely

> essential in the teaching of physical education."
> (Barton, 1993: 52)

Having said this, it should be acknowledged that a small body of research is emerging that engages disabled adults and young disabled people, and contributes to some extent to our understandings of disabled peoples' physical education and sporting experiences.

2.2.6 Disabled adults' reflections on physical education and sport

Research involving disabled adults has tended to focus on their experiences of sport rather than school physical education. Some of this research highlights the positive qualities associated with participation in sport, including enabling 'bodies' to be experienced in new and positive ways, improving perceptions of physical characteristics, increasing confidence to participate in new activities and enhancing social integration (Blinde and McClung, 1997; Blinde and Taub, 1999; Martin, 1999). Although this research seems positive, it should be remembered that many disabled adults are disadvantaged by what DePauw (1997) describes as the 'invisibility of disability in sport'. In this context, participation data (Sport England, 2001) indicates that disabled adults, like disabled young people, are often excluded from participation in sport. Indeed, research has identified a range of issues that may lead to non-participation, including inaccessible facilities and programmes, discriminatory attitudes of staff, lack of additional support, negative experiences of physical education and sport, and the treatment of disabled people as a homogeneous group (Health Education Authority, 1999; French and Hainsworth, 2001; Disability Rights Commission, 2002). These kinds of reasons for non-participation illustrate, from a social model perspective, the ways in which society contributes to the lack of participation by developing inaccessible facilities and programmes and holding stereotypical attitudes and prejudices. Importantly, it would seem that previous experiences of physical education can impact negatively on some disabled adults' subsequent decision not to take part in sport later in life.

Research recently undertaken by Brittain (2004a and 2004b) focuses on twelve Great Britain Paralympic track and field athletes' reflective accounts of their physical education experiences. The athletes reveal, amongst other things, that when their physical education teachers exhibited beliefs aligned with the medical model perspective on disability, such as those beliefs reinforcing deficit perceptions, this perspective negatively affected their physical education experiences. The athletes highlighted how this perspective sometimes limited the nature of their experiences in physical education and also, at times, adversely affected their self-confidence to later engage in physical activity and sport. In settings where physical education teachers had positive views of disability it seemed to be the case that physical education experiences would be more positive.

> Interviewer: "How did your PE teachers react to you?"
>
> Athlete: "I think they were pretty good really. I think very much their opinion was that I did everything unless I said otherwise, which was really good really, because I did."
> (Athlete, cited in Brittain, 2004b: 88)

The importance of teachers' attitudes towards disability has long been known (Lavay, 1987). However, as we will see later in this chapter, many teachers feel unprepared to teach disabled students. The accounts from Brittain's study, along with other autobiographies of disabled athletes (Grey-Thompson, 2001) and research relating to broader life experiences (Swain and Cameron, 1999; Viscardi, 2001; Disability Rights Commission, 2002; Shelley, 2002), provide a range of insights into the way in which physical education and sport can impact on the lives of disabled people. For a long time, this data generated from studies of disabled adults provided the only accounts of disabled peoples' experiences of physical education and sport. Young disabled people, who currently experience physical education, have seldom participated in research.

However, as I highlight in the following section, there are a small number of notable studies that are beginning to fill this gap.

2.2.7 Young disabled peoples' experiences of physical education and sport

The general failure to engage with young disabled people within the research process is evident in many fields of study. Indeed, it would seem that young disabled people have typically been perceived from a medical model perspective and often considered as lacking the capacity to actively participate within the research process (Ward, 1997; Shakespeare and Watson, 1998; Priestley, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2002). This is not to say that young disabled people have not featured in physical education research, but it should be noted that their presence has, in the past, essentially been as 'subjects' to be observed and studied rather than engaged with. Within a physical education context, it seems somewhat of a missed opportunity that researchers have failed to recognise the value of engaging with young disabled people. Indeed, it seems crucial that future change within physical education must be grounded with insights from the young people this curriculum area is meant to serve.

The research that has generated insights from disabled students provides a real sense of experiences they encounter within physical education. According to Goodwin and Watkinson (2000), disabled students' experiences of physical education can be considered in terms of 'bad' and 'good' days. A bad day is one in which disabled students are "…. rejected, neglected, or seen as objects of curiosity by their classmates" (Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000: 151). During bad days, students often feel a sense of isolation and exclusion from their physical education lesson. This kind of experience is evident in the research undertaken by Borrett *et al.* (1995), who provided the following commentary for one disabled student's experience of physical education.

> "During PE lessons she goes to have special needs tuition on basic literacy skills. She has no PE except for the swimming sessions

> which, in any case, are not organised by the school."
> (Borrett *et al.*, 1995: 38)

More recently, other research has also affirmed the exclusion of disabled students in physical education and sport. It seems physiotherapy continues, for some students, to be a staple substitute for physical education (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a).

In contrast, 'good' days promote 'a feeling of belonging, the chance to share or partake in the benefits of the program, and the opportunity to participate skilfully with classmates' (Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000: 154). Belonging seemed to be associated with participation in the physical education class with the physical education teacher and classmates rather than focused work with a support assistant. Indeed, it would seem that students feel particularly isolated from the main physical education class when they are only experiencing physical education with a support assistant (Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a). According to Goodwin and Watkinson (2000), on good days students are able to articulate the benefits of participation in physical education such as those related to fitness, skill development, knowledge acquisition and other health related benefits. Finally, good days also enabled other classmates to witness the disabled students' skilful participation in an activity. In this respect, students exhibited comparable performances to their non-disabled classmates or made a contribution that was seen as important to the outcome of a game during the physical education lesson. Having explored the literature focusing on disabled peoples' experiences of participation in physical education and sport I now discuss teachers' views and perspectives in relation to inclusion and young disabled people.

2.2.8 Physical education teachers' perspectives and the pedagogy of inclusion

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, issues relating to inclusion have become increasingly prominent within physical education discourses. However, as Vickerman (2002) points out, even though there are a myriad of policies and guidance documents

in this area, there still remains a lack of clarity regarding what actually constitutes inclusion and inclusive practice. When considering the experience of teaching David, a disabled student, Bailey offers the following reflective commentary:

> "But what about everyday PE lessons? We cannot say it has been easy. There have been times when we have not done what we should. Sometimes the weather, the activity and group do make integration almost impossible. On occasions David himself has chosen what he will do. On occasions he has chosen to participate but perhaps in isolation. He has very rarely opted out."
> (Bailey, 1997: 18)

Bailey's account provides a sense of the journey a teacher and disabled student embarked on in order to enable physical education to be experienced within a mainstream setting. In this pre-NCPE era, it is probably not surprising that Bailey talks of 'integration' rather than inclusion. But what are the pedagogic motives driving Bailey's desire to provide physical education for David? Is she concerned to ensure David is integrated into the mainstream (Farrell, 1998), or does she aspire to inclusion (Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Barton, 1998; Cheminas, 2000; DePauw and Doll-Tepper, 2000)? In this instance, we can only speculate about the kinds of outcomes Bailey was seeking to attain and the broader educational philosophy underpinning them.

More recently, Smith (2004) undertook a small scale study of teachers' understandings of inclusion. This research confirms that teachers have differing understandings of what constitutes inclusive physical education. Some teachers conceptualise integration and inclusion as different processes, while other teachers make no distinction between these two notions and articulate them in similar ways. The following comment made by a teacher in Smith's study seems to indicate that disabled students fit more readily into dimensions of the curriculum that include 'skills' and 'fitness' rather than team games.

> "I think the difficult ones to include pupils with disabilities and special needs are team games. It's alright in situations when you are developing skills and fitness but when it comes to the actual game there is not a lot you can actually do."
> (Teacher, cited in Smith, 2004: 47)

In relation to this point, and other responses from teachers, Smith (2004: 47) concludes that 'it would appear that, at present, many students with SEN [Special Educational Needs] are being required to "fit" into the curriculum - that is to say, it seems they are being "integrated" into, rather than "fully included" in, mainstream PE'. As Vickerman (2002) and Smith (2004) note, the difficulty arising from differing understandings of inclusion is the impact this has on the pedagogy that is practised to include (or integrate) students within physical education.

Although physical education researchers have attempted, to a limited degree, to clarify teachers' understandings of inclusion, more concern seems to have focused on identifying factors contributing to effective inclusive practice. The difficulty in reviewing this research is that much of it fails to adequately define, from the outset, what is considered to be inclusive practice. Much of this research has been driven by a quantitative methodology (see for example Heikinaro-Johannson and Vogler, 1996; Hodge *et al.*, 2002). For instance, Heikinaro-Johannson and Vogler (1996) found a combination of factors, including perceived competence, positive attitudes, specific knowledge and instructional skills, each contributed to successful 'integration'. A limited number of other studies (Heikinaro-Johansson *et al.*, 1995; LaMaster *et al.*, 1998; Vogler *et al.*, 2000; Lienert *et al.*, 2001; Morley *et al.*, 2005) have also generated interview data and perhaps shed more light on the factors identified by Heikinaro-Johannson and Vogler (1996) that contribute to effective inclusion in physical education.

LaMaster *et al.* (1998) considered the experiences of six primary physical education specialists. Through previous research undertaken by the authors, each of these specialists had previously been identified as 'effective' teachers. The study revealed that the teachers adopted multiple teaching styles when they were attempting to

deliver inclusive physical education. For example, some teachers discussed the use of an individualised teaching style and one teacher acknowledged that, inclusion leads to a more individualised teaching approach (LaMaster *et al.*, 1998). Other teaching styles identified included peer teaching, direct teaching and modifications of lesson plans and equipment. In the context of teaching styles adopted, it was concluded: "It is clear that inclusion has increased the complexity of the teaching environment for these teachers" (LaMaster *et al.*, 1998: 72).

The research conducted by LaMaster *et al.* (1998) also found that teachers believed the lack of initial teacher training they received in this area adversely affected their ability to deliver inclusive physical education effectively. The issue of insufficient initial teacher training and continued professional development is also evident in other research. Indeed, it has been suggested that even when teachers have received training in this area, some still remain concerned about actually teaching disabled students (Lienert *et al.*, 2001; Morley *et al.*, 2005; Vickerman, 2002). A key issue in relation to initial teacher training seems to be related to the balance of practical and theoretical experiences incorporated into courses (Morley *et al.*, 2005). Hodge *et al.* (2003) conducted a qualitative study of students using self-reflective journaling to explore the meaning of practicum experiences for student-teachers enrolled in a course with an inclusion-based practicum requirement. The authors concluded that student-teachers' attitudes and perceived competency were favourably influenced by what they viewed as challenging, rewarding and meaningful practicum experiences.

A number of research studies have also found that the level of support received during physical education may affect the extent to which effective inclusion is promoted within physical education (Lienert *et al.*, 2001; Morley *et al.*, 2005). Indeed, Morley *et al.* (2005) recently concluded that support assistants were frequently assigned to other curriculum areas rather than physical education, and when assistants support physical education teachers they often lack training in the area of disability and physical education.

In terms of the breath of activities undertaken by disabled students, research has highlighted that specific activities within physical education are experienced to a lesser extent (Stafford, 1989; Penney and Evans, 1995; Smith, 2004). Echoing these findings, it is evident from the research completed by Lienert *et al.* (2001) that teachers remain concerned about how they can support inclusive physical education for team-based activities. The following comment made by a teacher illustrates this point:

> "And they are pretty much able to do the programs that I have for first and second graders, but as they become older and the activities become more complex, like a basketball game, they get lost and start reclusing (sic) themselves. They are not as active because they feel uncomfortable."
> (Teacher, cited in Lienert *et al.*, 2001)

The issue of activity type has also recently emerged in research undertaken by Morley *et al.* (2005), who also confirm that activities involving team play provide additional challenges for teachers as they work towards inclusive physical education.

In general, it is claimed that inclusive physical education will contribute to many positive outcomes. Indeed, it has been argued that disabled students and their non-disabled peers may both be the beneficiaries of inclusive practices (DePauw, 2000). However, it has not been until relatively recently that research has begun to explore the nature of these perceived, and often taken for granted, benefits to inclusive physical education. Indeed, Place and Hodge (2001) suggest that the empirical data available in this area still remains somewhat limited. Research underpinned by a quantitative approach, and focusing on the perspectives of non-disabled classmates, indicates that these students perceive inclusion positively (Slininger, Sherrill and Jankawski, 2000; Verderber *et al.*, 2003). For example, Verderber *et al.* (2003) administered a survey underpinned by the theory of reasoned action and found that non-disabled young people had favourable intentions, attitudes, beliefs, and subjective norm influences towards participation in inclusive physical education activities with peers experiencing severe disabilities. In contrast, other studies found that non-

disabled classmates perceived inclusive physical education less positively (Elley *et al.*, 2000). In another study, which focused on teachers' perspectives, it was believed the positive outcomes of inclusion relating to socialisation, skill and fitness far outweighed the negative effects (Lienert *et al.*, 2001). Having said this, teachers also indicated that a lack of support during physical education lessons often limited the extent to which these outcomes could be achieved.

This section has focused on education, specifically physical education, and has highlighted the ways in which contemporary physical education is attempting to address an agenda within education based on inclusion. I contextualised contemporary legislation and policy concerning the education of disabled students. This section also identified the complex structures in place that support young disabled people to participate in sport. After this, I discussed research focusing on disabled people and their experiences of physical education and sport and I highlighted the often negative experiences of physical education and the impact this has on participation beyond this context. Finally, I explored empirical research focusing on physical education teachers' perspectives and the pedagogy of inclusion. The following section now moves on to explore in more detail the notion of disability.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISING DISABILITY

Considerable reference has already been made in this study to the notion of disability. In this section, I discuss the different ways in which disability is understood and highlight the contested and evolving nature of this concept. I first of all briefly consider the ways in which a disabled body is seen as different and contrary to notions of the body beautiful that are increasingly concerning people in society. After this, I explore the medical and social models of disability and the ways in which these inform our understandings of disabled people and their position within society. I then explore the way in which a growing number of writers are challenging these orthodox understandings of disability and instead focusing on the 'lived experience' of disability. This section ends by drawing on these understandings of disability and positioning physical education and sports research within them.

2.3.1 Positioning the disabled body within society

> "We all have bodies, but not all bodies are equal, some matter more than others: some are, quite frankly, disposable."
> (Braidotti, 1996 p.136 cited in Meekosha, 1999 *The Disability Reader*)

Implicit in this statement is the notion that we live in a society that places differing values on bodies. Indeed, within contemporary society youthful, slim, toned and sensual bodies are held with the highest regard (Wright, 2000; Oliver, 2001; Shilling, 2003). However, this kind of view of the body serves to perpetuate many social inequalities as not everyone can fulfil this criteria with their body (Shilling, 2003). Indeed, some have argued a 'cult of the body' has emerged which promotes unhealthy body practices. Bodies perceived as not achieving the criteria of the 'body project' are often seen as undesirable and viewed in negative ways.

> "... able-bodied and healthy 'normality' is equated with virtuousness. Those minds and bodies which are not well maintained are translated into objects of shame and scorn."
> (Barnes *et al.*, 1999: 64)

> "The rise of commodity culture to prominence in western societies has resulted in the ageing body and the disabled body becoming sources of great anxiety. A body that does not function 'normally' or appear 'normal', that is confined to a wheel-chair or bed, is both visually and conceptually out-of-place."
> (Lupton, 1994: 38)

Non-conforming disabled bodies may be perceived by others as 'spoilt' (Goffman, 1968) and 'flawed' (Hevey, 1992). Disabled people, then, have been 'othered' (Shakespeare, 1994; Garland Thomson, 1996) and non-disabled people often respond by distancing themselves from people with impairments. In this context, 'othering' is conceived as "…. the process by which they are constituted as strangers in the contemporary world" (Hughes *et al.*, 2005: 7).

> "The word 'disabled' is used as a blanket term to cover a large number of people who have nothing in common with each other, except that they do not function in exactly the same way as those people who are called 'normal'. Consequently, this large number of people are considered 'abnormal'. We are seen as 'abnormal' because we are different; we are problem people, lacking the equipment for social integration. But the truth is, like everybody else, we have a range of things we *can* and *cannot* do, a range of abilities both mental and physical that are unique to us as individuals. The only difference between us and other people is that we are viewed through spectacles that only focus on our inabilities."
> (Brisenden, 1986, cited in Shakespeare, 1998: 22-23)

In order to understand why it is that disabled people are often understood in these terms, it is useful to review the notion of 'disability'. Thomas (2004: 569) recently suggested that answering the question 'what is disability?' is a "…. beguilingly simple question". However, as the following sections illustrate disability is contested and viewed in differing ways.

2.3.2 Medical model of disability

In the twentieth century, the disabled body has been seen as a naturalistic form, defined and legitimised within medical terms. It has been argued that this individual/medical approach to disability was driven by a desire to diagnose and treat the disabled person.

> "To acquire an impairment is to become the object of professional attention. This 'expert' defines an individual's needs and how these should be met. The aim is to overcome, or at least minimize, the negative consequences of the individual's 'disability'."
> (Barnes *et. al.*, 1999: 21)

During this time, medical specialists, including those focusing on rehabilitation, developed and sought to 'help' disabled people to cope or fit in with 'normal' life. "Able-bodiedness became the benchmark against which physical and intellectual 'normality' was judged" (Barnes, *et al.*, 1999). The medical influence on disabled people also provided the catalyst for other professionals to make judgements about

their lives, including education, work, welfare and other resources. From this perspective, the disabled person is regarded as a tragic victim, deemed to be abnormal and deficient and this is then attributed as the cause of their disability. Disability, typically then, becomes a defining feature and this often leads non-disabled people to assume that to be disabled is to be unfortunate, useless, different, oppressed and sick (Hunt, 1966). The medical model is not the only way in which disability can be understood. In the following section, I introduce the social model of disability.

2.3.3 Social model of disability

In contrast to the medically underpinned view of disability, an alternative model has emerged that challenges the personal tragedy view of disability. The social model has been described by many as the "…. emancipatory force in the lives of disabled people" (Tregaskis, 2002: 457). It has been argued that the social model "…. 'speaks' from the standpoint of disabled people and therefore voices an opinion that has, throughout modernity, been silenced by the paternalism of a non-disabled culture" (Patterson and Hughes, 2000: 35). Central to the social model is the challenge it places on the naturalistic category of disability. This model supports the view that disability is an artificial and exclusionary social construction that penalises people with impairments. In Finkelstein's terms this inevitably positions disability as a form of social oppression (Finkelstein, 2001). In this context, proponents of the social model believe that people with impairments are disabled by a society that is not organised in ways that take account of their needs (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990, 1996 and 2004). A key tenant of the social model is the distinction between impairment and disability, as Barnes explains:

> "Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment. Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers."
> (Barnes, 1991: 2)

One of the first accounts underpinned by a social model perspective was that

developed by Finkelstein (1980). In this seminal work, Finkelstein emphasized a modernist materialist explanation and argued that three phases of historical development have informed the way in which disabled people are perceived. First, during pre-industrialisation, disabled people lived within the community and participated in cottage-based industries. In this setting, disabled people were positioned with the poor and unemployed at the lower end of the social hierarchy. The everyday life of non-disabled and disabled people at this time was relatively inclusive. Second, the rise of capitalism led to industrialisation and, with this, a greater regulation of working practices. In this new market economy, disabled people could not complete as effectively as non-disabled people. Therefore, disabled people were increasingly perceived as passive and dependent and were confined and segregated from mainstream society in medical institutions.

> "Once 'inside' they were constituted as objects of care that had been rescued from destitution. These places were far from benevolent. They were stark warehouses with strict prison-like regimes, and their inmates were defined as the 'deserving' recipients of bourgeois philanthropy or miserly forms of state assistance."
> (Patterson and Hughes, 2000: 38)

At this time, intellectual thought influenced by the work of Charles Darwin also served to reinforce the inferior position of disabled people and eluded to understandings that perceived disabled people in negative terms.

> "The feeble-minded are a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self-support or of managing their own affairs .... Every feeble-minded person, especially the high-grade imbecile, is a potential criminal."
> (Fernald, 1912, in a lecture given to the Massachusetts Medical Society, cited in Armstrong, 1998)

According to Finkelstein, it is this kind of powerful thinking that continues to shape the understandings contemporary society has of disabled people. In phase three, Finkelstein predicts that, with the development of new technology and a shift in

thinking, people with impairments will reintegrate into the mainstream of society and disability will disappear. This analysis provided by Finkelstein has been criticised for being "…. over-simplistic and over-optimistic" (Barnes, 1999: 74). In particular, critics suggest it attributes a simple relationship between the mode of production and perceptions of disability. Furthermore, it assumes technological developments will have positive outcomes for disabled people (Roulstone, 1998). Although this analysis is problematic, its strength lies with the principle argument that disability is a social construction and that it is the social context in which people with impairments are oppressed.

Oliver (1990 and 1996) extends the work of Finkelstein by focusing upon the ways in which British capitalist society disables people with impairments. In particular, Oliver argues that all societies function on the distributive principle, allocating goods and services on the basis that everyone is able to work. Those who cannot work are defined as 'in need'. As a result, 'disability' has become a structurally defined category underpinned by a needs-based distribution system. This needs-based structure has then been used as a means of oppressing disabled people. These materialist accounts have been critiqued primarily for their focus upon capitalist economics as the cause of oppression and disability. In addition, it has been argued that such accounts often ignore the experiences of multiple oppression, such as those relating to disability and gender (Lonsdale, 1990; Morris, 1991; Zitzelsberger, 2005), ethnicity (Vernon, 1996), sexuality (Shakespeare *et al.*, 1996) and impairment (Morris, 1991; Hughes, 2000). In this context, it has been suggested that the social model fails to sufficiently account for differences between disabled people (Williams, 2000). In response to these limitations, a number of writers are increasingly advocating understanding disability from a position that enables 'lived experiences' to be better understood. I discuss this next.

2.3.4 'Lived experiences' of disability

Fundamental to the social approach to disability has been the separation of impairment and disability. However, some commentators have argued that this has excluded 'the

body' from the experiences of impairment (Morris, 1991; French, 1993; Pinder, 1995; Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Hughes, 2000). Meekosha also believes this is the case:

> "...maintaining dichotomies of nature/culture and mind/body; denying human agency in dealing with impairment. Focusing only on the disabling affects of a prejudiced and discriminatory society with a political project geared to changing institutions, beliefs and practices leaves the impaired body as untouched, unchallenged: a taken-for-granted fixed corporeality."
> (Meekosha, 1999: 175)

Indeed, it has been suggested that "…. within disability studies the term 'body' tends to be used without much sense of bodiliness as if the body were little more than flesh and bones." (Paterson and Hughes, 1999: 600) In this context, Marks (1999: 611) suggests "…. Individual [medical] and social models of disability represent two sides of the same coin". What Marks is suggesting here is that by pathologising the body (the medical model) and focusing on structural issues (the social model), both models are implicated in failing to consider the individual beyond these restricted understandings.

Those that support including impairment in discussions relating to disability suggest this exploration will provide a deeper understanding of disabled peoples' experiences of life. Indeed, a number of writers have argued that impairment is socially constructed and, as such, should be part of discussions that focus on disabled peoples' experiences (Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Hughes, 2002). Some writers have already embraced impairment in their work, including those working from a feminist perspective. For example, French (1993) concluded in her work that, even when all social barriers are removed, some impairments will continue to exclude disabled people from specific activities. Advocating an approach supporting the inclusion of impairment into discussions relating to disability is not without its critics. These critics believe that supporting such a position would be counter productive for disabled people as the 'political' focus of disability would be lost. Indeed, Shakespeare (1992) argues:

> "The achievement of the disability movement has been to break the link between our bodies and our social situation and to focus on the real cause of disability i.e. discrimination and prejudice. To mention biology, to admit pain, to confront our impairments, has been to risk the oppression seizing on evidence that disability is really about physical limitation after all."
> (Shakespeare 1992: 40)

The support given for an embodied notion of disability that embraces the experiences of impairment corresponds with the social constructionist understandings of the body (Barnes *et al.*, 1999: 93). However, many sociologists positioning themselves from this perspective have not recognised the disabled body (Turner, 1992; Shilling, 2003). Having said this, it should be acknowledged that within medical sociology a number of writers focus their concerns on the sociology of chronic illness and disability (Bury, 2000). These writers have generally not received a warm welcome from those located within disability studies, whose primary concern focuses on social oppression (Barnes and Mercer, 2003).

2.3.5 Identity and young disabled people

> "…. the children were constantly reminded that they were essentially different from their non-disabled peers, but they were also compelled to conform to specified ways of speaking, ways of walking, table manners and so on."
> (Davis and Watson, 2001: 674)

It has been suggested that many spheres of life impact on the ways in which young people construct their identities. For example, in Holroyd's (2002) study, school, the family, peers, the media and physical culture were considered key sites in which young people socialise and engage in 'identity work'. Indeed, the extract above illustrates within a school context the ways in which young disabled people may be constructed as 'different' in relation to their non-disabled peers. Priestley (1999) suggests that the identity of young disabled people is shaped by the way they 'become known' through institutionally embodied disciplines and discourses. These discourses can be formally sanctioned means such as statementing, differentiation, adult support

mechanisms and separate 'units'. In addition, informal discursive practices relating to how peers and teachers talk about disabled students can contribute to identity formation. Priestley also argues that identity is shaped by the way in which young disabled people 'make themselves known' through self knowledge and speaking out. In this way their identity selection is maintained through the creation of narratives about the self (Giddens, 1990). Speaking out can sometimes lead to resistance of adult-formulated educational discourses (Corker, 1999; Priestley, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2002). Indeed, resistance can come in many forms, including silent, body language, aggression, humour and disassociation with other disabled young people (Low, 1996; Davis and Watson, 2002).

Such resistance illustrates an understanding of a young disabled person not as passive and vulnerable but rather as a responsive social actor (Priestley, 1999; Kelly, 2005) who is able to reject, refine, accept or redefine the identity labels attributed to them (Allan, 1996). However, as Priestley (1999: 99) points out "…. disabled children are not simply free to 'reinvent' themselves at will" as they are constrained by power relations, disabling environments and disabling institutional arrangements. Hughes *et al.* (2005) also believe there are forces operating that limit the fluidity of identity.

> "…. for some people identity may be beyond the control of the individual and may in fact be re-enforced and even predicated upon forms of social and spatial organisation. Such processes can be difficult, if not impossible to escape if one wishes to do so and they may, at the very least, circumscribe one's project of self-identity." (Hughes *et al.*, 2005: 6)

Even though these forces may constrain young disabled people, it is important to note that not all young disabled people adopt the same fixed identities (Allan, 1996). Indeed, Corker (1999) found that young people identify with disability in a variety of ways. In some instances, young disabled people see themselves with an impairment and identify with other impaired young people. Other young people see their disability as a characteristic that renders them different from their peers. For some young people,

the notion of disability has contested boundaries. For example, some young disabled people may label others as disabled but not themselves. In other instances, young disabled people suggest that everyone is disabled or different in some way. It would seem that the identity of a young disabled person is not one that merely centres on disability and may be fluid and determined by a range of factors (Corker, 1999; Priestley, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2002). In the last four sections I have explored the different ways in which disability is understood. In the following section, I specifically consider the ways in which researchers within physical education and sport have conceptualised disability.

2.3.6 Understandings of disability within physical education and sport research

To a large extent, the historical development of physical education and sport for disabled people has been influenced by medical model understandings of disability and also other developments within physical education that found their roots within the field of medicine (DePauw, 1997 and 2000). Indeed, for some time, notions of teaching physical education to disabled students were dominated by concerns to address health-related problems. In this context, the educational dimension was often lost to that of physiotherapy and other associated medical interventions. In some instances, these kinds of therapeutic remedies were seen as the only movement dimension to a school curriculum that disabled students should experience (Halliday, 1993). The marginality of physical education within schools for disabled students was also evident through the training of special schoolteachers who frequently did not receive any instruction during their initial teacher education in physical education.

The body of research that developed from the 1940s focused on medically orientated issues and, until the 1980s, emphasis was placed on work within the subdisciplines known to us today as exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor learning and motor development (Hoover and Wade, 1985; Pyfer, 1986; Broadhead and Burton, 1996). For example, Pyfer (1986) describes research undertaken between 1930 and 1969 as descriptive in its design and focusing on, amongst other things, studies exploring the incidence, evaluation, or correction of postural problems and identifying specific

motor problems associated with participation in physical education and sport by young people experiencing particular disabilities. A later review undertaken by Broadhead (1986) confirms the continued interest of researchers to evaluate the 'performance' of disabled people. Indeed, a raft of assessment tools have been developed, including for example the 'Bruininks-Oseretzky Test of Motor Proficiency' (Bruininks, 1974) and the 'Test of Gross Motor Development' (Ulrich, 1985), in order to identify the development stages of disabled people. Since the 1950s, in some countries, this kind of research focus continues to be supported by 'specialists' within physical education referred to as practitioners of Adapted Physical Activity. Much of this research is positioned within a positivist paradigm and underpinned by quantitative methods of data collection. From this research perspective, disability and 'the disabled body' has extensively been treated as an object.

A number of writers have acknowledged that data generated from this work consequently only provides a partial understanding of the experience of disability and its implication for practice (DePauw, 1997 and 2000). Indeed, DePauw highlights a key shortcoming by suggesting:

> "To most in our field .... The object of our study is the body or specific aspects of the performing body, but traditionally our study has not focused on the body as whole, the body in a social context, or the body in connection with self."
> (DePauw, 1997: 419)

More recently, the complexion of research relating to physical education and disability has begun to embrace issues relating to participation in a way that understands disability as something more than a biological category. In part, the research agenda has widened as a result of broader changes within society and the need to explore these changes and consider the implications they have for the practice of physical education. In particular, the increasing desire to promote inclusive education already discussed in 2.2.2 has contributed to this shift in research emphasis. Researchers have extended their research interests and sought to define and describe inclusive physical education, explore the values and perceptions of teachers, and consider the

pedagogical implications of inclusive physical education. Although this particular strand of research has inherited some quantitative dimensions from the past, it has extended understandings by adopting a qualitative focus and proportion to a social model perspective.

In this section, I have discussed the different ways in which disability is understood and highlighted the contested and evolving nature of this concept. I have explored medical and social understandings of disability and the ways in which these understandings inform the position of disabled people within society. I have also presented an alternative way of conceptualising disability that challenges the medical and social model understandings of disability. Finally, this section has considered the ways in which physical education and sports research has embraced these different understandings of disability. The following section now moves on by introducing the work of Pierre Bourdieu and, in particular, outlines the conceptual tools that he offers that will help me to understand the embodied identities of the young disabled people in this study.

2.4 BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTUAL TOOLS

In the previous section, I explored the evolving and contested understandings of disability. I progress in this section by introducing the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu. I first consider the notion of embodied identities and the utility of understanding disability from an embodied perspective. In this respect, I highlight the way in which the structure/agency dichotomy of the social and medical models of disability can be remedied by employing Bourdieu's conceptual tools. In particular, I explore the ways in which these conceptual tools aid our understanding of young disabled peoples' social experiences and construction of embodied identities. In this section, I present each of Bourdieu's conceptual tools separately. However, in chapters 4 and 5 I use these conceptual tools in combination and, as Brown (2005: 4) suggests, this allows "…. us to explore better Bourdieu's intended relationality, especially his attempt at addressing the issue of agency and structure in terms of

articulating the *relations of production* between the individual, their body and society".

2.4.1 Social practices and embodied identities

In section 2.3, I explored the ways in which disability can be understood. It is clear that within contemporary society the understandings attributed to disability continue to stimulate much debate. For example, supporters of the social model of disability advocate a political imperative centring on social oppression that seeks to change the ways society disables people with impairments. More recently, some writers have expressed concerns regarding the lack of 'bodiliness' evident within the social model (Paterson and Hughes, 1999). Both these examples illustrate how aspects of structure and individual agency have been used to provide explanations of what it means to be disabled. The latter debate also reinforces the current view that the socially constructed body is becoming central to political and cultural activity (Giddens, 1999; Shilling, 2003).

Indeed, it has been argued that within contemporary society the body has become a 'project', a malleable commodity to be refined, reshaped and reproduced in order that its keeper can (re)negotiate their place(s) in social life. In this context, the body can be understood has an evolving entity, as Shilling explains:

> "We now have the means to exert an unprecedented degree of control over bodies, yet we are also living in an age which has thrown into radical doubt our knowledge of what bodies are and how we should control them."
> (Shilling, 2003: 3)

The work of Bourdieu is a useful framework to understand the social practices of people in society and, in particular, social processes that constitute and construct a person's embodied identity. I will use Bourdieu's conceptual tools, or more specifically his ".... temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work" (Wacquant, 1989:50), to understand the social life of a group of young disabled people. By using Bourdieu's conceptual tools in relation to young disabled people, it is

possible to move beyond a structural focus offered by the social model of disability and the biological reductionism of the medical model of disability.

> "One of the central themes which unifies Bourdieu's work is the attempt to understand the relationship between 'subjectivity' – individual social being as it is experienced and lived, from the personal inside out, so to speak – and the 'objective' social world within which it is framed and towards the production and reproduction of which it contributes."
> (Jenkins, 2002: 25)

In other words, the actions of an individual are connected to culture, structure and power and are not merely conscious or unconscious responses. In this context, Bourdieu suggests that the body is in the social world and, at the same time, the social world is in the body (Bourdieu, 1990a). By understanding social practices in this way, it has been suggested that Bourdieu moves beyond the subjective/objective dichotomy (Swartz, 1997; Jenkins, 2002).

2.4.2 Fields

According to Bourdieu, social experiences encompass time and space and are divided into a number of social arenas/practices called 'fields' (e.g. work, leisure, school, family). Within these multidimensional spaces, individuals are positioned according to the 'capital' they hold. By participating in fields, capital can be acquired and converted into power, status and symbolic forms (and other forms of capital). According to Bourdieu, the activity within fields to acquire or retain capital results in struggles as participants seek to manoeuvre and position themselves favourably. Participants comply with a set structure and practices of the field and, in doing this, legitimise and reproduce such practices (Jenkins, 2002).

Fields are relatively autonomous and do not have specifically defined boundaries. As such, as the distribution of capital shifts and changes, so too may the nature of a field. However, change within a field is not unlimited and the habitus of participants serves to stabilise and mould, to some degree, the overall composition of a field. Bourdieu

believes that to have explicitly defined boundaries is to position fields uncomfortably close to positivist understanding, rather than reflecting a relational view of the social world. By taking this position, it has been argued that this encourages "…. the researcher to seek out underlying and invisible relations that shape action rather than properties given in commonsense categories" (Swartz, 1997: 119). Bourdieu has been reluctant to encourage a specific definition of fields. However, he has offered this overview:

> "…. A field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.)."
> (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002: 97)

By using Bourdieu's notion of fields, I can locate young disabled people in different spheres of life and, in so doing, explore the interaction, overlap and importance of these fields. I will centre my concerns on the field of physical education and free-time sport but, like Holroyd (2002), will also explore a number of associated fields including school, family and peers. Although not specifically related to the notion of fields, much has been written about young disabled people in relation to a number of spheres of their life. I believe that these broad areas in which social experience take place could be considered in relation to Bourdieu's notion of fields.

<u>School</u>

As I have already indicated in sections 2.2.7 and 2.3.5, school is a significant site in which the process of identity formation is developed. Indeed, it has been argued that "Disabled children are confronted on a daily basis with ways of speaking about disability that influence their experience and their sense of identity (Priestley, 1999: 93). In this kind of context, Bourdieu views school as one of the most important fields

in which capital can be acquired and converted (Harker *et al.*, 1990). It has been suggested that the school experience of young disabled people can sometimes lead to discriminatory notions of 'normality', 'difference' (Davis and Watson, 2001), 'same' and 'other' (Priestley, 1999). I believe that within a school context it will be interesting to explore the practices operating within this field that contribute to how young disabled people 'become known' and 'make themselves known' (Priestley, 1999). This will enable an understanding to be gained of the discursive practices that prevail and the ways in which these inform the habitus of young disabled people and, consequently, how they respond to such practices.

Peer relations

Gaining and maintaining friendships is an important part of life; without friends, life can become increasingly lonely (Jobling *et al.*, 2000). The experience of friendship for young disabled people is not straightforward. Watson and Priestley (2000) found that friendships with other young people were sometimes difficult to maintain where the young disabled person lives a distance from school and when child-centred spaces at school were not accessible to all students. This study also found that in some instances non-disabled and disabled friendships were very strong. However, such friendships sometimes emphasized a 'helper' role of the non-disabled person or were premised on the disabled person 'passing' as normal. Relations for young people experiencing severe and profound learning difficulties with non-disabled peers are often minimal and reflect segregated and isolated experiences (McConkey, 1998). I believe that using peer relations as a field will provide an understanding of the attributes that are valued as capital within the field and the practices that ensue to gain or accumulate capital in this field.

Family

When not at school, young disabled people spend much of their time in the company of family members. In this context, they often undertake many of their free-time activities with their family (Anderson *et al.*, 1982; Jobling *et al.*, 2000; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003b). I believe that the family should be considered as an important field in

which to explore the influences this has on disabled young people. For example, Bourdieu sees the family as an arena in which skills are developed and become embedded in the habitus of young people. According to Bourdieu, it is these skills that can then later be used to acquire capital in other fields. For young disabled people in particular, it is the habitus within the family that will inform the outlook that these young people have about their identity (and as part of this, their understanding of disability), and this will also inform the nature of their sporting tastes and interests. In relation to the family, consideration could be given to questions such as 'in what ways does the habitus of the family inform a young person's sense of self'? and 'how is disability positioned within this understanding'?

Physical education, school sport and free-time sport

In section 2.2.7, I discussed physical education and school sport and highlighted a number of young disabled people's reflections of their experiences. In addition, in section 2.2.4, consideration was given to sporting experiences beyond a school context, and I outlined the complex structures facilitating sporting opportunities for disabled people. Within the broader context of inclusion and a drive to enhance school-club links (DfES, 2002), all young people, including young disabled people, are being encouraged to engage in, and continue, sporting activity beyond a school context. In this environment, it is therefore important to account for young people's experiences of physical education, school sport and free-time sport and to explore the ways in which young disabled people come to understand their position within, and between, these sporting contexts, as well as how this informs their understandings of self.

2.4.3 Capital

As already indicated, individuals within fields are positioned according to the capital they hold. This capital can be 'economic', 'social' and 'cultural'. In these forms, capital can be understood as something that is tangible and embodied. Capital can be acquired and converted. In this respect, capital can be used like an asset with 'exchange value' (Shilling, 2003) and an individual may seek to improve or maintain

their position within a particular field (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994; Robbins, 2000). However, Bourdieu has indicated that the interchange of capital is not equally proportioned and often economic capital is more readily converted into culture or social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). In this context, Bourdieu also argues that economic capital holds a superior position and value than all other forms of capital. Bourdieu also suggests that individuals are limited to the levels of investment in a particular form of capital available to them and are reliant on others within the field to recognise their capital as valued (Shilling, 2003). In addition, the value and convertibility of a particular form of capital is not definite and will be influenced by the symbolic worth attributed to specific resources (Shilling, 2003).

In addition to the three forms of capital highlighted above, Bourdieu also refers to 'physical' capital and suggests this is the embodied state of cultural capital. Shilling (2003) however disputes this idea and suggests physical capital should be seen as capital in its own right. Physical capital, then, includes physical attributes and abilities. By focusing on the body in this way, Bourdieu is recognising that the body is "a possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms, which is integral to the accumulation of various resources" (Shilling, 2003: 111). Some questions to consider in relation to capital are, 'what is the nature and value of the capital held by young disabled people in the fields identified earlier?' 'In what ways do young disabled people attempt to gain, retain and convert capital?' 'Do young disabled people perceive that their disability impacts in any way on this process of capital accumulation or conversion?'

2.4.4 Habitus

"Habitus is located within the body and affects every aspect of human embodiment" (Shilling, 2003: 113). It is "…. a bridge-building exercise" (Jenkins, 2002: 74) that immerses the relations between structure and agency by incorporating society into the body. According to Bourdieu, the habitus serves to overcome the binary between structure and agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). This particular quality of habitus has been challenged by Jenkins (2002), who argues that on closer inspection

Bourdieu's notion of habitus remains deterministic and rooted within social reproduction. Bourdieu constructs structure and agency relationally and sees objective structures as having subjective consequences. For Bourdieu, social life can only be understood by considering the embodiment of individuals within particular fields through their habitus. It is only when individuals participate in fields that they will become "endowed with the habitus" (Bourdieu, 1993: 72). From this position, an individual will be judged on their ability to deploy the relevant habitus within a particular field. Therefore, if an individual's social action is compatible with the style, manner and customs of other participants within the field, they are likely to be accepted as a member. By conforming and accepting these practices, individuals within a field reproduce these conditions. Habitus is "…. a product of history" (Bourdieu, 1990b: 54) and, over time, produces an individual's life history of social experiences that is unique to the individual but also comparable with the habitus of other members of the field (Light and Kirk, 2001). Bourdieu suggests that habitus is an "open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002: 133). However, Bourdieu also suggests that the nature, degree and possibility of significant change are constrained by a 'system of circular relations' that will not lead to transformation. Habitus, then, should be considered as an embodied social, physical and cultural world that influences and guides (but does not totally determine) the behaviour and actions of individuals.

The most observable outcome of habitus is 'tastes'. These are "…. the processes whereby individuals appropriate as voluntary choices and preferences, lifestyles which are actually rooted in material constraints" (Shilling, 2003: 111). Tastes are conscious expressions of habitus that are embodied and affect people's sense and understandings of their body (Shilling, 2003). According to Bourdieu, tastes are embedded in "…. the earliest learning experiences, reinforced by all subsequent social experience" (Bourdieu, 1990b: 160). Some questions to consider in relation to habitus and tastes in this study include, 'what kind of sporting habitus dominates in physical education and sport?' 'To what extent is this physical education habitus evident in the practices of

the focus group students?' 'What is the nature of the sporting tastes of the participating students?' 'In what ways are these sporting tastes expressed and what material constraints influence the young people's sporting choices and preferences?'

2.4.5 Practice

"Practice mediates between habitus and social fields" (Light, 2001:6) and, according to Jenkins (2002), has three distinctive features. First, it is located in time and space. In this respect, time can be considered as a constraint and resource for social interaction. As social interaction takes place, it occurs in space. Movement in space always involves movement in time. Second, practice should not be considered as random or accidental. In fact, it is not consciously – or not *wholly* consciously – organised and orchestrated. Bourdieu refers to this action as 'practical logic' and uses the metaphor of 'a feel for the game'. Within this game "Most people, most of the time, take themselves and their social world somewhat for granted: they do not think about it because they do not have to" (Jenkins, 2002: 70). In part, the process of learning facilitates a position in which actors develop a 'second nature'. The third feature of practice described by Bourdieu is the recognition that individuals can exert their own agency through 'strategising'. As I indicate earlier, practice is situated relationally with habitus and fields and, as such, embeds particular dispositions that replicate social differences and are evident within the social conditions of their production. As such, the social oppression experienced by many disabled people can be situated through the embodiment of certain tastes, and practice serves as a means of reproducing the social inequalities experienced by disabled people. A question to consider in the context of practice is, 'how do young disabled people understand and interpret practice in social fields?'

2.4.6 Using the work of Bourdieu

As discussed earlier (2.2.1 and 2.2.2), within contemporary society greater emphasis is now being placed on inclusion. In relation to young disabled people, it has been noted by Priestley (1999) that little is known about their experiences of mainstream education. Furthermore, I have pointed out elsewhere that physical education

researchers have failed to sufficiently account for the experiences of young disabled people (Fitzgerald, 2003a). I believe the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu (fields, practice, habitus, capital) will provide a useful framework for understanding the social life of the young disabled people in this study. For example, by using the notion of fields, I will be able to locate young disabled people in specific spheres of life and, in so doing, explore the interaction, overlap and importance attributed to these fields.

As I highlighted in 2.3.3, the social model of disability has been used extensively by academics working within disability studies and activists promoting disability rights to articulate the oppression and discrimination disabled people encounter. I believe that at a structural level, this model provides a powerful critique of the way society represses disabled people. Supporters of the social model have been particularly concerned to distinguish between 'disability' and 'impairment' and, in this way, move beyond medical understandings of disability. However, by taking this position, proponents of the social model have been criticized for failing to account for the individual experiences of disabled people. It should be noted that writers positioned within medical sociology have paid some attention to issues relating to individual experiences such as 'pain management', 'adaptation' and 'coming to terms' with disability (Shakespeare and Watson, 1997). However, by focusing on these issues, this body of work has been confined and criticised for focusing on medical model understandings. The experiences of disabled people are clearly much broader than those relating to these issues. I believe the work of Bourdieu, particularly the notion of habitus, is useful for understanding the interrelated nature of a disabled person and society. By considering habitus, a bridging exercise is able to take place between the structural dominance of the social model and the currently narrow interpretations of agency that are evident in medical sociology. In particular, using Bourdieu provides the opportunity to understand disabled peoples' social experiences within fields in an embodied sense.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an insight into the contextual and theoretical frameworks underpinning my research. In order to contextualise my study, I initially focused on contemporary legislation and policy concerning the education of disabled students. After this, I explored the position and place young disabled students occupy within physical education and the broader context of free-time sport. This chapter also presented a critique of the medical and social models of disability and outlined how disability can also be understood from an embodied position. This chapter also focused on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu and I discussed the ways in which fields, capital, practice and habitus will be useful for exploring the experiences of disabled students within (physical) education. Having set out the contextual and theoretical frameworks of this study, the following chapter attends to methodological issues.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the theoretical framework of the study. In this chapter, I discuss the methodological assumptions and concerns that have informed my research design, generation strategies and data analysis. In doing this, I draw on the analogy of Patton: ".... research like diplomacy, is the art of the possible" (Patton, 1990: 13), and I describe what was possible in this research. The chapter begins by exploring literature concerned with engaging with disabled people in research. I highlight the ways in which research focusing on disabled people has traditionally engaged with *others* about *them*. However, a paradigm shift recognising young people as 'active social agents' has, in part, provided a catalyst for reconcecptualising young people, including young disabled people, as (more) legitimate social actors who are able to articulate their experiences and have valuable contributions to make within the research process. The chapter progresses by considering more specifically the data-generation strategies employed in this study. This study focuses on ten disabled students attending two mainstream schools and, in order to gain insights into their physical education and sporting experiences, two key methods of data generation were employed. First, each participating student completed four activity diaries that yielded quantitative data. These diaries provided information about the nature of participants' everyday lives. Second, a series of focus group discussions were undertaken with students. This study is essentially underpinned by a qualitative approach to research. In this respect I have sought to intricate ".... well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, I also chose to include the activity diaries that generated quantitative data. I therefore discuss the advantages of employing these two distinctive, yet complimentary, approaches. Finally, the grounded theory approach to data analysis is presented and I provide an illustrative example of the processes involved in generating

this data.

3.2 ENGAGING WITH YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE

3.2.1 Research about disabled people

Historically, research focusing on disabled people has been underpinned by a medical model understanding of disability (2.3.2). In this context, disabled people have frequently been treated in research as passive recipients to be researched *on* rather than *with*. The views of the medical profession and other associated 'experts' are often seen as the legitimate sources to generate research information from about disabled people (Mercer, 2002). Within this research environment, it is not surprising that many disabled people have become hostile and suspicious of researchers. Hunt (1981) described researchers as 'parasite people' and, drawing on his encounters with (non-disabled) researchers, concluded that we are on the side of the oppressors, interested in our own research careers and exploitive of disabled people. Later, Oliver (1992) echoed these sentiments suggesting:

> "Disabled people have come to see research as a violation of their experience, as irrelevant to their needs and as failing to improve their material circumstances and quality of life."
> (Oliver, 1992: 105)

A medicalised imperative is also evident in research concerned with physical education and sport. Indeed, as discussed in 2.3.6, since the 1950s a professional body has developed and, according to many aligned to the field, is a major area of study that has contributed significantly to research concerned with disabled people. On closer inspection of this body of research, it is clear that a medicalised focus consumes the research activity and output of these researchers (DePauw, 1997 and 2000).

For some, one issue of concern centres on *who* is doing the research; if it is a non-disabled researcher then this is deemed inappropriate. For example, Branfield (1998) and Oliver (1992) argue that non-disabled researchers have not experienced

discrimination and prejudice like many disabled people and, therefore, cannot possibly understand these experiences.

> "Non-disabled people are not where we are and can never be. This is the political impossibility of their relation to the disability movement."
> (Branfield, 1998: 143)

In this context, it is argued that research perpetuates social inequalities and serves to reinforce the disempowerment of disabled people (Barnes and Mercer, 1997). As a non-disabled researcher, I recognise that I have not experienced oppression in the same way as many disabled people and cannot begin to understand the impact that this has on experiences of life. However, I would also argue that to exclude non-disabled researchers is to preclude the possibilities of research endeavours that do contribute to understandings of the ways in which disabled people are oppressed within society (Kitchin, 2000).

In response to the dissatisfaction with research, disabled activists and academics established a new paradigm driven by an emancipatory philosophy (Oliver, 1992 and 1997). It has been suggested that emancipatory disability research is underpinned by praxis-orientated research that exposes social oppression and supports political action in order to transform society (Humphries, 1997). A number of central tenets feature in emancipatory research, including a rejection of the individual/medical model of disability, support of partisan research, reversal of researcher/researched relations and the promotion of diverse choice in methodologies (Mercer, 2002). According to Stone and Priestley (1996), the aspirations of emancipatory disability research have still to be achieved by many researchers. Within physical education and sports research there seems to be an increasing trend to 'talk' of *doing* emancipatory disability research. However, on closer inspection, the majority of these works have yet to fully understand the epistemological and ontological thinking supporting this paradigm (Fitzgerald, 2006). Although I acknowledge the value and importance of an emancipatory paradigm, and indeed have in the past drawn on aspects of this thinking, particularly in relation to methodologies and researcher/researched relations

(Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003a and 2003b; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a), I have not drawn on this thinking explicitly in this study. Indeed, the extent to which any researcher initiated research can reverse researcher/researched relations seems to be limited given that in many instances it is the researcher initially taking ownership of the research and setting the broad agenda or focus of the research. Within a school context this researcher/student relationship is also likely to be constructed in a similar way to that of teacher/student (Edwards and Alldred, 2001). Having said this, my study recognises and seeks to place value on young participants' views. It is this issue that I explore next.

3.2.2 Engaging with young people

Within contemporary society, there is now extensive legislation and policy supporting the idea of gaining the views of young people and involving them in decision making (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Education Act 1981 (as amended by Education Act 1996); Children and Young People's Unit, 2001). According to Alderson (2001), these rights have extended the nature of legislative responsibility for young people from protection and provision to 'participation rights'. In the context of student and self advocacy, a growing number of innovative examples now exist within education of engaging students and involving them in decision-making (Rafferty, 1997; Holdsworth, 1999 and 2000; Cruddas, 2001; Harding, 2001; Barnardo's, 2002). These examples serve to illustrate the immense abilities of young people to be 'agents of transformation' (Fielding, 2002). However, it has been argued by a number of writers that these kinds of developments are not widespread and have not impacted extensively on policy or school practice (Corker and Davis, 2000). Indeed, Graham (1995) points out that teachers often take for granted insights from young people and frequently draw their own conclusions about their experiences. According to Cook-Sather, this attitude is driven by a feeling that the 'teacher knows best'.

> "…. we educators and educational researchers must seriously question the assumption that we know more than the young people of today about how they learn or what they need to learn in

preparation for the decades ahead."
(Cook-Sather, 2002: 3)

Within a research context, there is growing recognition that the views of young people are important and that they should be seen as positive contributions to understanding their lived experience(s). This recognition positions young people as active social agents who are able to articulate their experiences and express their own views (Davis *el al.*, 2000; Christensen and Allison, 2000; Alderson, 2001; Barnardo's, 2002; Christensen and Prout, 2002; Thorne, 2002; Garth and Aroni, 2003). This is a view of young people that I support as I believe if questions are being asked about young people, it is best to ask these young people themselves. In this context, young people become central to any discussions and are not 'talked about' by others.

3.2.3 Young disabled people as 'active' social actors

When consideration is given to young disabled people, it is evident that much research mirrors the way in which young people (3.2.2) and disabled people (3.2.1) are perceived within society. Typically, researchers listen to the views of parents, carers and professionals and dismiss young disabled people as illegitimate sources of research information (Ward, 1997; Shakespeare and Watson, 1998; Priestley, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2002). Without insights from young disabled people it is difficult to see how teachers or researchers can effectively and legitimately advance change within physical education. Indeed, I believe that we cannot advocate for young disabled people within physical education as we actually know very little about their experiences. In relation to physical education and sport, it should be recognised that, "The reality experienced by children and young people in educational settings cannot be fully comprehended by inference and assumption" (Lloyd-Smith and Tarr, 2000: 61). Therefore, I take the position that young disabled people should have a greater voice in research since they have valuable insights and opinions that should be heard and, where appropriate, celebrated.

Although young people are increasingly becoming actively involved in research, this study did not work with students in this way. Indeed, the relations between me and the research participants represented a more traditional position in which I instigated the research, identified the central focus, developed data generation strategies and analyzed the data. In this research context, the research participants are involved in the process of data collection (as respondents) and did not actively contribute to other dimensions of the research process. That said, I placed value on the views and perspectives of the research participants and with this in mind I now introduce the schools and young people that participated in this research.

3.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

3.3.1 Participating schools

This study focuses on the physical education and sporting experiences of young disabled people. In part, school constitutes an important site in which young disabled people are likely to experience physical education and where they may also experience other sporting opportunities informally and through out-of-hours learning. Therefore, I considered that focusing the research within a school context would offer a number of distinct advantages. First, a school environment provides a setting where students come together and therefore potentially provides an access point to engage with young people. Indeed, within a broader social and political environment in which inclusion has been, and continues to be, promoted, it would have been less straightforward to identify and recruit young disabled people for this study through other channels. Second, given that the focus of this research is on physical education and sport, it seems appropriate to centre the generation of data in situ. Participating students were, therefore, likely to be familiar with the environment within which they would be questioned. Moreover, I also envisaged that I would benefit from this arrangement and would possibly gain a brief, but valuable, insight into the broader school context in which the participating students are positioned. Third, having previously conducted

research in a number of schools within this County Sport Partnership[1], I had already established relations with a range of key stakeholders and anticipated they would act as a broker in order to facilitate my introduction and subsequent research activity in a number of local schools.

The research could have been conducted in a number of school contexts, including special schools, specialist sports colleges, designated schools or mainstream schools. Each of these contexts would have provided an interesting focus for the study. At the time I was planning this study, I had already conducted research in a number of special schools (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003a and 2003b) and, as part of my work programme, was scheduled to conduct some research in designated and specialist sports colleges (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a). My interest for this study was, therefore, directed towards mainstream schools with no designation or specialist status.

Following preliminary discussions with key stakeholders within the County Sport Partnership (including Partnership Development Managers, School Sports Co-ordinators and Disability Sport Development Managers), a number of schools were identified as potential participants. Six schools were informally approached by two stakeholders and, following positive responses, I initiated further discussions. After more detailed discussion and negotiation with each school, three agreed to participate in the research. During the first year of data generation, at one of these schools the key contact left and the member of staff I subsequently liaised with was less enthusiastic about facilitating the research at the school. Although I made many attempts to discuss the research and renegotiate the terms of access with students, this was not achieved. I found establishing contact with the staff member increasingly problematic, and there seemed to be little interest to participate in the research. The decision was made not to pursue this third school. This study, then, focuses on the data generated from the remaining two schools. A brief profile of these is presented below.

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[1] A County Sports Partnership (CSP) is a partnership of different agencies and organisations that come together in a county area and facilitate sport through a co-ordinated single system.

(a) School 1 – South Parade

South Parade School is a comprehensive school serving students aged 11 to 16 years. It is located within the Midlands and is described as one of the largest schools in the city. Approximately 1,200 students attend the school and boys outnumber girls by approximately 120. The school is located on the outskirts of the city and comprises one large, single site. South Parade's last OFSTED report stated that the school catchment area comprises of lower than average social class households and 22 percent of students claim free-school meals, a level marginally above the national average. Twenty percent of students in the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Of the students attending the school, 30 percent are on the special educational needs register. The school identifies 4.5 percent of students as having English as an additional language. The OFSTED report states that all students, including disabled students, have full access to all curricular and other activities at the school. The physical education department has access on the school site to a sports hall (four badminton court size), a smaller hall (one badminton court size), four outdoor tennis courts and extensive playing fields.

(b) School 2 – St. Anne's Mount

St. Anne's Mount School is a comprehensive, single site school serving students aged 11 to 16 years. It is located within the Midlands and situated in a residential area of the city. The school is currently oversubscribed, with 900 students enrolled. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The latest OFSTED report stated that the overall proportion of students with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of students with first languages other than English is above average. The OFSTED report states that all students, including disabled students, have full access to all curricular and other activities at the school. The physical education department has access to a new sports hall (four badminton court size), fitness suite and dance studio. Across the road from the school are playing fields that the physical education department uses for lessons and out-of-hours learning.

3.3.2 Participating young people

The students participating in this research form the basis from which my discussions focus. As such, the students are a vital part of this study. As I have indicated already, I consider them to be active social agents who are able to articulate their experiences and express their own views. Although I only spent a short period of time with these students, I was able to make a number of observations about each participant. These are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - An introduction to the research participants

Name	Age (at first focus group)	School	Sex	Information
Andy	13	St. Anne's Mount	M	Andy has mixed feelings about PE. He was most happy when talking about Boccia and his contribution to the Boccia team . Andy is friends with James and would frequently come to his defense when other members of the focus group disagreed with him. He was confident during the group discussions and always ensured he got his point across. Andy has dyspraxia.
Steve	13	St. Anne's Mount	M	Steve also had mixed feelings about PE and indicated he much prefers ICT. Was confident and self assured. Academically a high achiever and was not friends with any of the other focus group members and seemed to be a loaner. Steve has cerebral palsy and an arm amputated.
Dave	13	St. Anne's Mount	M	Dave has a hearing impairment. He seemed popular with other focus group members. Dave tended to listen more than make comments or contribute to the discussions. The other group members openly questioned him and seemed to give him space to respond. Again, Dave has mixed feelings about PE.

James	13	St. Anne's Mount	M	James enjoys PE at school and was happy to talk about his experiences. He is popular with the group and is considered to be a good boccia player. James has cerebral palsy and uses a walking frame.
Adam	14	St. Anne's Mount	M	Adam uses a wheelchair. He was very reserved in the focus groups. Adam does not like PE and was generally negative about school.
Anne	13	South Parade	F	Anne uses a wheelchair after acquiring a disability five years ago. Anne was less confident in the focus groups and seemed largely disinterested in the discussions. She dislikes PE and was often challenged by Tom about her views.
Tom	13	South Parade	M	Tom uses crutches to support his walking because he has a degenerative disease that is causing his muscles to waste over time. He is friends with Robin. Tom has mixed experiences of PE and was confident to talk about these during the focus group discussions.
Robin	13	South Parade	M	Robin has always used a wheelchair, he enjoys PE lessons. He is friendly with Tom and they talk a lot about football! During the focus groups he was less vocal than other participants.
Ruth	14	South Parade	F	Ruth experiences a moderate learning disability and came to the school at the age of 13 from a special school. She indicated she was Jane's friend but Jane did not reciprocate this feeling. Ruth indicated that she does not like PE. She seemed to enjoy the experience of the focus group.
Jane	13	South Parade	F	Jane is visually impaired and disliked PE. Jane prefers ICT and maths. She openly shared her views about PE during the focus groups. Jane is not friends with any of the

				other focus group members and seemed to take every opportunity to distance herself from other focus group members.

The liaising teacher at each of the three schools played a significant role in identifying and selecting participating students. In conducting this research, and drawing on the experience of other school-based research I have completed (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003a and 2003b; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a), I recognise the pivotal role that such teachers play in brokering research to students, parents and other members of staff. At a more practical level, it should also be acknowledged that these teachers facilitate meetings with students. Without this support, the process of negotiating with tutors, arranging rooms and ensuring students are aware of the meetings would be difficult to progress from my 'outsiders' position. In addition, it should be recognised that these members of staff have specific knowledge and insights of students attending their school that I would otherwise find difficult to attain (Institute of Youth Sport, 2000). Having individually briefed the liaising teachers, I anticipated they would identify and select students that represented the range of disabled students attending the school.

The recruitment of students attending South Parade School was relatively straight forward with parents and students providing informed consent to participate in the research. However, the parents of three potential participants from St. Anne's Mount School would not provide consent for their child's participation in the research. According to the liaising teacher, two of the parents did not identify their children as disabled and, therefore, did not want their child to be involved in the research. The third parent expressed concern that their child would miss other important school opportunities during the time that the research activities would take place. Although it was not my intention to target boys specifically, the five students from St. Anne's Mount School were all boys. Following initial attempts to recruit a range of students, and the negative response, the teacher resorted to more pragmatic reasons associated with timetabling and willingness to participate. This subsequently influenced the

composition of this focus group.

3.3.3 Research ethics

In relation to research ethics a number of guidelines and codes of practice informed the way in which this study was conducted. In particular, the '*Loughborough University Code of Practice*' and the '*Revised Guidelines for Educational Research*' were followed (British Educational Research Association, 2004). As part of a larger Institute of Youth Sport research project, the research activities undertaken in this study gained approval through the University Ethical Advisory Committee. This process of approval involved paying attention to, amongst other things, issues relating to gaining informed consent and participant withdrawal. These concerns were particularly relevant in this study as it focuses on young disabled people's views and perspectives. Indeed, the University code of practice and British Educational Research Association consider these participants to be 'vulnerable young people' and as such require researchers to be sensitive to the way in which informed consent is obtained and how participants are treated throughout the research process. In relation to informed consent, at a school level the head teacher at each school formally agreed to participate in the study. In addition, parents of potential research participants were sent a letter and information sheet about the research. The information sheet outlined in plain English the purpose of the study, the data collection methods, how students would be involved in the study, the right to withdraw and contact details for further information. The letter asked parents to discuss the research with their kid and return a signed consent form (signed by a parent/guardian and the student) if the student was willing to participate and the parent/guardian agreed. Once informed consent had been received a 'Question and Answer' session (see Figure 3) was arranged at each school and gave students an opportunity to ask questions about the research and their involvement in the study. This initial meeting also provided an opportunity to reinforce the right of students to withdraw from this study at any time. Furthermore, on several occasions prior to and during each meeting with students they were reminded of the ongoing opportunity they had to opt out of the research.

3.3.4 Overview of data generated

Ten students participated in this research from St. Anne's Mount School and South Parade School. The students engaged in three key data-generation activities over one academic year. Figure 3 illustrates the timelines and generation strategies adopted at both schools.

Figure 3 - An overview of the data generated

Generation Strategy	Description	Date
Exploratory meetings	Meetings took place with the liaising teacher on at least three occasions prior to engaging in the research with students	July 2003 - October 2003
Question and Answer session	One introductory meeting at each of the three schools with participating students and liaising staff member	October 2003
Focus group discussion	Focus group (1) with students at each of the three participating schools	October 2003
Pre and post EMA-AD diary meetings	Twenty eight pre and post diary meetings were held with students from two schools	October – December 2003
Focus group discussion	Focus group (2) with students at the two participating schools	March 2004
Focus group discussion	Focus group (3) with students at the two participating schools	June 2004

In addition to the generation strategies identified above, I kept fieldnotes. I recognised, as Lofland and Lofland have argued, that fieldnotes are a vital part of the research process.

> "Aside from getting along in the setting, the fundamental concrete task of the observer is the taking of fieldnotes. If you are not doing

> so, you might as well not be in the setting."
> (Lofland and Lofland, 1984: 72)

I followed the advice of Bailey (1996) and did not limit my note taking to merely 'field contexts'. For example, during the initial brokering with county-wide stakeholders I began to write fieldnotes. Indeed, I acknowledge as Lofland (1971) has indicated that fieldnotes can begin to be taken at a much earlier stage of the research process than during data collection. The nature of my fieldnotes also varied and largely reflected the description given by Bailey:

> "[Fieldnotes] .... becomes filled with descriptions of people, places, events, activities, and conversation, and it becomes a place for ideas, reflections, hunches, and notes about patterns that seem to be emerging."
> (Bailey, 1996: 55)

In essence, I used fieldnotes as a means of recording observations, informal conversations and to provide a space for my own reflections. As I have already indicated, I recognise the importance of developing relations over time with schools and the young people involved. In the following section, I discuss the strategies I adopted to enhance relations with the liaising school staff.

3.3.5 Developing relations over time with schools and the young people

From the outset of this research, I was conscious that I would have to develop relations with staff and students at the participating schools over at least one academic year. As I have already indicated, shortly after my first focus group discussion at one school, relations were hampered and subsequent research activity affected by a staff change. Indeed, following lengthy discussions with the newly designated member of staff, I was unable to secure continued co-operation at the school. This episode, relatively early in my study, made me acutely aware of the need to establish a good relationship with the two remaining schools and to retain contact with the liaising teachers, even during periods when I was not generating data within the schools. This concern was also coupled with a desire to ensure the schools or staff benefited, at least

in some small way, from myself or this research. In each school, my strategy for maintaining relations and providing some kind of benefit differed.

At St. Anne's Mount School, the liaising teacher was enrolled on a part-time Masters course at a local university. With this member of staff, I positioned myself as a 'critical friend' and on a number of occasions provided feedback on essays and directions with references. Over time, email contact and telephone conversations became mutually beneficial. However, at essay deadlines I found the teacher's demands to be considerable. On reflection, I recognise these were likely to be no greater than the requests I was making to the teacher and students at the school. At South Parade School, I provided a number of different benefits. For example, following my second preparatory meeting with the liaising teacher, I wrote this observation in my fieldnotes:

> "John spoke quite a lot about been confused/lacking an understanding of the organisations and structures supporting disability sport. Was he tapping me up for some info? Maybe I should offer some pointers?"
> (Fieldnotes, 06/07/03)

Shortly after noting this, I offered to forward John some information about local and regional disability sport organisations. This offer received a positive response and I was able to provide further sources of information and contacts. At the request of John, later in the year I agreed to talk to a group of GCSE students about disability sport and also attended the school sports day. By engaging in research in a manner that would provide some benefit to the liaising teachers, I felt that I was positioning myself, to some degree, as a 'responsible researcher' (Edwards, 2002) as I was considering the ways in which my presence in the school could make a positive contribution to the liaising staff. In both schools, though, I also recognise that these staff members seemed less interested in the actual research I was conducting. Even after engaging in lengthy discussions about how I could present the research within the schools, I was positively discouraged from talking about this study and other research relating to physical education and disability. I recognise that I had initiated and driven

the research agenda and that I could have perhaps done more to have collaborated with school staff to develop a more mutually agreed research focus.

3.5 ACTIVITY DIARY – ECOLOGICAL MOMENTARY ASSESSMENT (EMA)

3.5.1 Rationale for using EMA

As I have already discussed, the key data-generation strategy used in this study is focus group discussions. Although I anticipated this generation strategy would provide a rich source of qualitative data, I also employed EMA as a means of generating quantitative data. By adopting a qualitative and quantitative approach, I acknowledge there would seem to be some epistemological tensions. However, like Hammersley (1992), I support the view that, in combination, these collection strategies can effectively coexist and enable even richer data to emerge. The purpose of using this quantitative strategy was to generate supplementary contextual data about the participating students' lifestyles that would support the qualitative data generated from the focus groups.

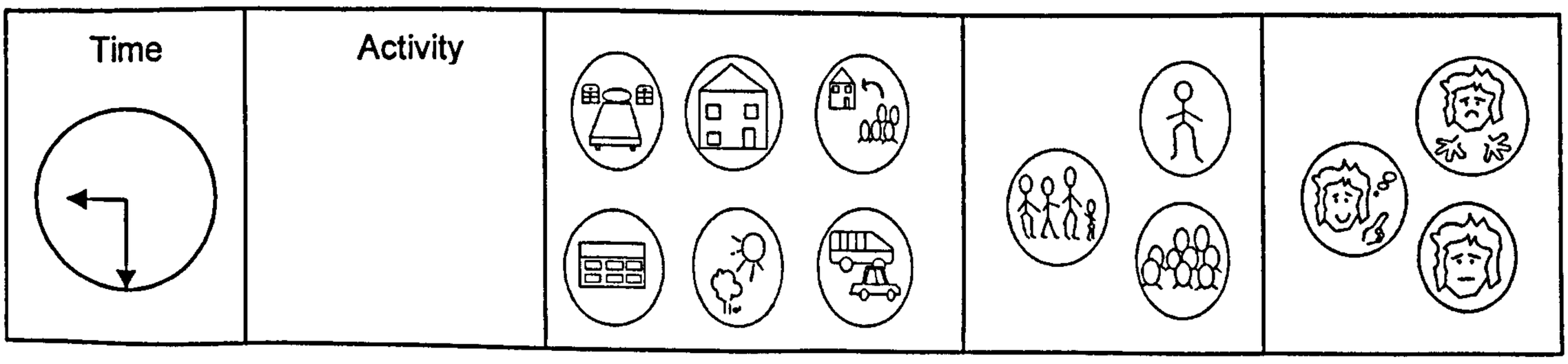
EMA has been designed to capture the temporal and emotional state of research participants (Stone and Shiffman, 1994) and provides 'snapshots' (Csikszentmihalui and Larson, 1987) of time-bound experiences. EMA has been used in a range of educational research contexts, including the study of teachers' lives (Maslach, 1982; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) and youth development (Hektner, 2001; Hunt and Csikszentmihalui, 2003). According to Stone and Shiffman (1994), three key features underpin EMA: (a) data are assessed as they occur at a specific point in time, (b) participant assessments are based on the same criteria and are repeated, and (c) participants' assessments are in situ. In the context of this research, I anticipated that EMA would enable an insight to be gained of the participating students' broader lifestyles and specifically the way in which sport is positioned within the lives of students.

3.5.2 The development of the EMA Activity Diary (EMA-AD)

The EMA-AD was adapted from one previously developed for Project STIL at Loughborough University. Project STIL was a three-year project within the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, funded by the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health. The project aimed to investigate the prevalence and correlates of specific sedentary behaviours, and how sedentary behaviour and physical activity interrelate with adolescents' lifestyles. Although I did not intend to use the EMA-AD for the same purpose as the STIL project, I believed responses to the STIL diaries would provide useful profiles of the young people in my study. The STIL diary and EMA-AD were designed to capture weekday and weekend day behaviours. Weekday behaviours did not account for behaviours during the school day (for example, school physical education).

I adapted the STIL diary in a number of ways to make it more accessible to a wider range of young people. My EMA-AD has much of the written text replaced with line drawings and, where possible, pictured symbols were used[2]. The EMA-AD consists of four key dimensions that are time bound and, when completed, provide a detailed profile, at a student level, of: activities undertaken, where activities are undertaken, who activities are undertaken with, and feelings about activities. Figure 4 provides an illustrative example of an EMA-AD segment.

Figure 4 - EMA-AD diary segment



[2] The EMA-AD was developed over a two year period with students from schools participating in a range of Institute of Youth Sport evaluations and research projects. Students provided feedback on earlier versions of the diary and based on this feedback changes were made to the EMA-AD.

Structuring the diary in this way required students to circle or mark a pictured symbol. Where participants were required to write or draw 'what they were doing', a key was developed of the seventeen behaviours identified during the STIL project[3]. It should be noted that during the meetings with students prior to the completion of the diary, they were briefed about the symbols and checks were made to ensure they understood these meanings. The key enabled participants to identify the symbol that related to the activity they were doing. They then wrote and/or drew their response. It is important to note that the time slots in the EMA-AD were changed from 15-minute intervals (used in the STIL diary) to 30-minute intervals. All these changes were made in response to feedback from young people during earlier development trials of the EMA-AD.

3.5.3 Research participants and using the activity diary

Each of the five students from South Parade and St. Anne's Mount schools completed EMA-AD on four days. This included three weekday and one weekend day. All these diaries were completed during the same term, and the days were randomly spread over four different weeks. For logistical reasons, I also administered the diaries during different weeks at each school. I visited the school and students on each Monday before the three weekday diaries were completed by students and met with students on the Friday before the weekend diary was completed. Each of these meetings provided an opportunity to remind students of the information I wanted them to give and to ensure they understood how to complete the dairy. These meetings also provided an opportunity to encourage students to complete their diary. At these meetings, students indicated which day of the week they were planning to record their activities. I noted in my fieldnotes on several occasions that students tended to allocate their diary to days when they anticipated they had *'less homework'* to complete. I recognise that this may have affected the inputs given and, consequently, the daily profiles. However, I was also aware that many of the students actually perceived this diary task as homework and, therefore, were not willing to be burdened with a lot of homework and

[3] Behaviours: sleep, personal care, eating, motorised travel, active travel, TV/video, computer, sitting & talking, shopping, listening to music, telephone, homework, reading, hobbies, play, chores & sport.

the diary at the same time.

> "The time commitment for completing the diary seemed to be a big issue for Ruth and Robin. They are less happy with the idea of having, as they put it, 'extra homework'. I'm not sure if they will actually complete the diary."
> (Fieldnotes, 02/10/03)

The day after students had suggested they would complete their diary, I met with them briefly. Where possible I met with two students together. In a sense, I used these meetings to check that students had completed their diary, exploring gaps and clarifying content. Although I had stressed to participating students that their contributions were not assessed in any way, this seemed not to deter a number of students, including Steve, from asking me for their 'mark'.

> [Meeting after completing first weekday diary]
> "Steve wanted to know what 'mark' he'd got. I thought I'd made it clear that this wasn't homework. I need to make sure everyone knows it's not marked. What can I do to give them something back?"
> (Fieldnotes, 12/10/03)

To some degree, I acknowledge I was meeting with students to ensure they were completing the dairy and this may have been perceived by the students as a form of assessment. In light of students' comments and other feedback from students, I developed a 'file' for each. This was subsequently presented to them at our meetings and focus groups and provided them with something tangible that they felt they were achieving.

3.5.4 Data generated from the activity diary

For each student, daily frequency counts were calculated for each of the seventeen behaviours. Individual weekday profiles were aggregated to give an overall weekday profile for each student. From this, the prevalence of each behaviour, on weekdays and weekend days, was computed by summing the number of reports per day for that behaviour and dividing by the total number of daily reports, then multiplying by one

hundred to give a percentage (for example, the percentage of daily interval spent in sleep, personal care, eating etc.). Tables 1 to 10 provide a profile of each student.

Table 1 - Andy (St. Anne's Mount School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	5.0%	6.5%
Personal care	5.0%	6.5%
Eating	10.0%	3.2%
Motorised travel	5.0%	12.9%
Active travel	10.0%	12.9%
TV/Video	25.0%	12.9%
Computer	15.0%	12.9%
Sitting and talking	-	-
Shopping	3.3%	16.2%
Listening to music	5.0%	6.5%
Telephone	-	-
Homework	5.0%	3.2%
Reading	10.0%	-
Hobbies	-	-
Play	1.7%	-
Chores	-	6.5%
Sport	-	-

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	53.3%	48.4%
With family	36.6%	45.2%
With friends	10.0%	6.4%

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	35.2%	
Have to do	37.4%	
Nothing else to do	27.5%	

Table 2 - Steve (St. Anne's Mount School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	-	-
Personal care	3.5%	3.2%
Eating	8.5%	6.5%
Motorised travel	10.0%	6.5%
Active travel	13.5%	3.2%
TV/Video	20.0%	29.1%
Computer	23.5%	35.5%
Sitting and talking	3.5%	-
Shopping	3.5%	-
Listening to music	-	-
Telephone	-	-
Homework	13.5%	12.9%
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	-	-
Play	-	-
Chores	1.5%	3.2%
Sport	-	-

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	70.0%	71.0%
With family	30.0%	29.0%
With friends	-	-

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	53.9%	
Have to do	22.0%	
Nothing else to do	24.2%	

Table 3 - Dave (St. Anne's Mount School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	3.7%	6.5%
Personal care	3.7%	3.2%
Eating	5.4%	3.2%
Motorised travel	5.4%	6.5%
Active travel	10.7%	12.9%
TV/Video	28.3%	12.9%
Computer	10.7%	16.1%
Sitting and talking	-	-
Shopping	3.7%	16.1
Listening to music	5.4%	-
Telephone	-	-
Homework	3.7%	3.2%
Reading	10.7%	3.2%
Hobbies	-	-
Play	-	-
Chores	1.6%	3.2%
Sport	7.0%	12.9%

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	71.6%	22.6%
With family	21.5%	58.1%
With friends	7.2%	19.4%
How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	46.0%	
Have to do	33.3%	
Nothing else to do	20.7%	

Table 4 - James (St. Anne's Mount School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	3.5%	-
Personal care	4.9%	3.2%
Eating	6.4%	3.2%
Motorised travel	14.8%	12.9%
Active travel	-	-
TV/Video	29.6%	25.8%
Computer	9.8%	12.9%
Sitting and talking	1.5%	6.5%
Shopping	6.4%	6.5%
Listening to music	-	6.5%
Telephone	-	-
Homework	4.9%	3.2%
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	1.5%	-
Play	-	-
Chores	3.4%	6.5%
Sport	13.3%	12.9%

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	34.4%	38.7%
With family	49.2%	41.9%
With friends	16.4%	19.3%
How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	48.9%	
Have to do	27.2%	
Nothing else to do	23.9%	

Table 5 - Adam (St Anne's Mount School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	-	-
Personal care	4.7%	6.5%
Eating	9.4%	3.2%
Motorised travel	14.1%	12.9%
Active travel	-	-
TV/Video	36.0%	25.8%
Computer	17.3%	12.9%
Sitting and talking	-	-
Shopping	4.7%	16.1%
Listening to music	3.3%	6.5%
Telephone	4.7%	-
Homework	4.7%	3.2%
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	-	6.5%
Play	-	-
Chores	1.4%	6.5%
Sport	-	-

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	60.3%	45.2%
With family	34.9%	54.8%
With friends	4.8%	-

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	31.9%	
Have to do	25.5%	
Nothing else to do	42.6%	

Table 6 - Anne (South Parade School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	1.6%	3.3%
Personal care	4.8%	3.3%
Eating	9.7%	6.7%
Motorised travel	14.6%	6.7%
Active travel	-	-
TV/Video	34.0%	20.0%
Computer	14.6%	20.0%
Sitting and talking	3.4%	-
Shopping	4.8%	10.0%
Listening to music	-	3.33
Telephone	3.4%	3.3%
Homework	4.8%	6.7%
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	1.6%	-
Play	-	3.3%
Chores	1.6%	3.3%
Sport	1.6%	10.0%

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	32.2%	33.3%
With family	51.5%	59.9%
With friends	16.1%	6.7%

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	19.6%	
Have to do	56.7%	
Nothing else to do	24.0%	

Table 7 - Tom (South Parade School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	-	-
Personal care	4.5%	3.2%
Eating	4.5%	6.5%
Motorised travel	10.4%	6.5%
Active travel	-	3.2%
TV/Video	31.8%	29.1%
Computer	13.6%	6.5%
Sitting and talking	5.9%	-
Shopping	3.2%	12.9%
Listening to music	1.4%	-
Telephone	-	-
Homework	3.2%	3.2%
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	4.5%	-
Play	7.7%	9.7%
Chores	3.2%	6.5%
Sport	5.9%	12.9%

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	31.9%	22.6%
With family	60.8%	67.8%
With friends	7.6%	9.7%

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	30.9%	
Have to do	41.2%	
Nothing else to do	27.8%	

Table 8 - Robin (South Parade School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	-	3.6%
Personal care	1.6%	-
Eating	5.4%	3.6%
Motorised travel	16.2%	3.6%
Active travel	-	-
TV/Video	23.2%	49.9%
Computer	21.6%	
Sitting and talking	1.6%	-
Shopping	5.4%	10.7%
Listening to music	3.8%	-
Telephone	1.6%	-
Homework	7.0%	-
Reading	-	-
Hobbies	-	-
Play	5.4%	7.14%
Chores	5.4%	7.14%
Sport	1.6%	14.3%

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	28.6%	39.3%
With family	68.0%	53.5%
With friends	3.6%	7.1%

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	40.5%	
Have to do	28.6%	
Nothing else to do	30.9%	

Table 9 - Ruth (South Parade School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	3.9%	-
Personal care	-	6.5%
Eating	5.5%	3.2%
Motorised travel	5.5%	12.9%
Active travel	-	-
TV/Video	44.4%	38.8%
Computer	-	-
Sitting and talking	-	-
Shopping	11.1%	16.1%
Listening to music	7.2%	6.5%
Telephone	-	-
Homework	-	3.2%
Reading	11.1%	6.5%
Hobbies	-	-
Play	-	-
Chores	11.1%	6.5%
Sport	-	-

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	63.0%	71.0%
With family	37.0%	29.0%
With friends	-	-

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	37.6%	
Have to do	21.2%	
Nothing else to do	41.2%	

Table 10 - Jane (South Parade School)

Activity	Aggregated Weekday Behaviours	Weekend Behaviours
Sleep	-	-
Personal care	4.9%	3.2%
Eating	4.9%	6.5%
Motorised travel	4.9%	6.5%
Active travel	14.8%	3.2%
TV/Video	19.7%	29.1%
Computer	31.0%	19.4%
Sitting and talking	-	-
Shopping	1.5%	12.9%
Listening to music	-	6.5%
Telephone	-	-
Homework	14.8%	12.9%
Reading	3.4%	-
Hobbies	-	-
Play	-	-
Chores	-	-
Sport	-	-

Who are you with?	Aggregated Weekday	Weekend
On my own	75.0%	58.1%
With family	21.2%	29.0%
With friends	3.8%	12.9%

How do you feel? (Aggregated week & weekend)		
Want to do	60.0%	
Have to do	20.0%	
Nothing else to do	20.0%	

3.6 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

3.6.1 Rationale for using focus group interviews

Focus groups have been used in a range of fields and have increasingly been used within educational research (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). According to Krueger (1994), a focus group is "…. a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger, 1994: 6). Discussions are *focused* in that they are underpinned by discursive exchanges centred on specific issues. In this study, the focus groups were initiated to seek the views and perspectives of young disabled people about their physical education and sporting experiences. Focus groups are also *interactive* (Morgan, 1997), as they seek to promote a discursive exchange in which the discussions of participants can influence the direction and nature of the discussion. Moreover, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that focus groups provide an effective context in which individual participants can discuss, challenge, or reaffirm their views. Consequently, focus group participants "…. are influencing and influenced by others" (Krueger, 1994: 19). In this 'dynamic, interpersonal process' (Simons, 1984), focus groups open up the possibilities for participants to listen to the views of others, consider their position, share with the group and debate the perspectives articulated.

As already indicated (3.3.2), each focus group consisted of five students. Prior to arranging and discussing the composition of students in each focus group, I had considered the ways in which these groups could be structured. For example, contrasting opinion is evident in the literature. Lewis (1992) suggests 'friendship groups', and Cohen *et al.* (2000) argues that 'relative strangers' enable effective dynamics within and between focus groups. Although I considered both of these criteria, I was aware that, given the specific interest in my study with young disabled people, these might not be applicable in each school context. Moreover, I was also keen to ensure young people experiencing a range of impairments were included in this study, or at least to reflect the nature of disabled young people attending the participating schools. Consequently, the composition and nature of the group was influenced by the liaising teachers' ability to secure the initial co-operation and school

time for students experiencing different impairments.

3.6.2 Key themes of focus group sessions

A series of three focus group discussions were undertaken in each of the participating schools. Having the opportunity to engage with the students on a number of occasions allowed for some degree of backtracking and clarifying. Indeed, fieldnotes (3.3.3) made immediately following the session and memos (3.7.2) associated with segments of transcript provided the key means for identifying issues that I wanted to explore further in subsequent sessions. I approached each of the focus group discussions with a relatively flexible outlook and guided the students through a range of issues. During the initial focus group discussion, I explored the theme 'who are you and where are you from'. This theme enabled broad contextual data about the students' families, schools and free-time interests to be gained. In order to build a rapport with the students, I actively contributed to this theme and shared my own experiences and background with them. During the second focus group discussion, I focused on 'school PE' and was able to draw on the discussions that students had initiated in the previous focus group session and discuss in more detail issues focusing on school physical education. The final focus group session centred on 'your free-time' and I was able to instigate a number of discussions based on the EMA-AD data the students had generated (3.5.4).

Although I attempted to focus on these three key themes, I also felt it was important to give the students their own space to talk about issues that they wanted to. This often meant they strayed from the key issues underpinning my research questions (1.3). Having said this, this approach sometimes opened up other opportunities to discuss issues that impacted indirectly on students' experiences of physical education and free-time sport. When students found their own direction and focus of discussions, I merely served as a facilitator (Watt and Ebbutt, 1987). On other occasions, where students had less to say and did not seem interested in listening or expressing their views, I found I had to play a more active role in promoting discussions. Sometimes I also served as a mediator if, for example, students were communicating in ways that

did not support an ethos of sharing and listening respectfully. These qualities had been identified by the students during a 'Question and Answer session' (3.3.3) prior to engaging in the focus groups. During these occasions, I felt positioned more as a 'teacher' as I was regulating the students in the way that they expected teachers to at school. This position was also reinforced by the EMA-AD and the students' perceptions that this diary was homework that I was marking (3.5.3). There seemed to be a continual shift and tension in relation to 'who I was' and although I adopted a range of strategies to position myself as a non-teacher (Christensen and James, 2000; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Punch, 2002a) these seemed to only marginally or temporarily locate me as a non-teacher.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Using grounded theory and working with the data

"The grounded theory perspective is the most widely used qualitative interpretative framework in the social sciences today" (Denzin, 1994: 508). According to Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory enables the "…. discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 2). This inductive approach centralises the analysis of data in order that theory can be generated to articulate an understanding and explanation of the data. There continues to be much debate about the value of the grounded theory approach and concern has been directed at the oversimplification of complex meaning in data, the focus on procedure and the desire to maintain minimal prior knowledge relating to the focus of the research (Thomas and James, 2006). In relation to this latter issue Glaser has suggested:

> "In our approach we collect the data in the field first. Then start analyzing it and generating theory. When the theory seems sufficiently grounded and developed, then we review the literature in the field and relate the theory to it through integration of ideas."
> (Glaser, 1978: 31)

Glaser goes on to argue that adopting this approach prevents the theory from been predetermined as preconceived concepts will not be driving the development of theory. However, concerns have also been expressed about the viability of

approaching research in this way and Selden (2004) raises a number of pertinent questions in relation to Glaser's position:

> "Would lesser previous knowledge generate better results? Should one really avoid reading the literature before conducting one's own empirical studies? How could one know of or sustain interesting issues to investigate? .... Is it possible to realize the planning of a project and ignore the literature concerned?
> (Selden, 2004: 123)

In this study, I use the principles of grounded theory as a means of providing ".... a map and a compass to navigate the open terrain of qualitative inquiry" (Thomas and James, 2006: 791). I take a position similar to that of Charmaz and adopt a 'constructivist' grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2000). From this perspective, prior knowledge and understandings are acknowledged and recognised within the data generation process. Indeed, I believe that it is inevitable that understandings I have developed in relation to my sports development and advocacy work will inform, to some degree, my thinking and consequent theoretical development (see 1.0).

Furthermore, like Miles (1983: 119) I recognise that theory is not developed in isolation but rather informed by a ".... rough working framework". In this research, the framework includes drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual tools and different understandings of disability. In this respect, I discuss later, how I draw on these conceptual tools and understandings in the extended memos I draft and subsequent theoretical development. That said, it is important to note that I used these conceptual tools to guide my thinking rather than explicitly using them to direct my theorising. In this context, it was the data and the process of data generation that underpinned the theory building. More broadly, I would suggest a constructivist approach to grounded theory is complemented by Bourdieu's conceptual tools because each emphasise the centrality of context and meaning. In this respect, both are concerned with understanding social reality, as it is constructed, and in doing this seek to move beyond a superficial level of everyday knowledge and understanding.

Following the advice of a number of authors, I started the process of data analysis

while also engaged in data generation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Atkinson, 1996). It is suggested that this simultaneous process facilitates a flexible and reflexive approach to conducting qualitative research. As indicated earlier (3.3.3), I kept fieldnotes and this information, at times, also provided a means of making a number of preliminary observations about the data I was generating. As part of this process of generation and analysis, I also attempted to transcribe the focus groups as soon as possible following these discussions. At times, this was not always possible and, on one occasion, two months lapsed before I transcribed one focus group. From this experience, I recognise that where I was able to transcribe immediately after a focus group discussion, my familiarity and understanding of the content and nature of the discussions was enhanced.

As part of the process of data analysis, I read and re-read the transcripts a number of times. This process enabled coding categories to be attributed to different segments of text. Coding is considered a key dimension of the process of data analysis (Miles and Humberman, 1994; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The codes evolved in a manner that reflected a deepening level of analysis as the theory emerged. The repeated nature of this process, involving backtracking in order to revisit data, sometimes resulted in the emergence of new or re-defined coding categories. As part of the process of data generation, I used memos to develop and refine my thinking in relation to different aspects of the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). More specifically, memos enabled my thinking to develop in relation to particular segments of data. At other times, memos provided the mechanism through which relationships between different coding categories could be identified. In addition, memos provided the way of articulating connections between data, wider literature and the supplementary data generated from the EMA-AD. I moved backwards and forwards, between the transcripts, codes, memos and literature, in order to compare and contrast the generating data. Through this process, the emergent theoretical framework was also open to revision and refinement in order to ensure it fitted with the data.

3.7.2 Generating data - an illustrative example

In order to illustrate the analytic process involved in generating data from the focus group discussions, I provide below an extract from a focus group session and highlight the decisions that were made regarding this segment of data. In doing this, I envisage a practical insight will be gained into the way in which I worked with the data. Initially, simple codes were noted and short memo annotations used to distinguish between categories of data. For example, initial codes differentiated between the varying contexts of sporting engagement: school physical education [**SPE**], after-school sports clubs [**AFSC**], free-time sport involving active participation [**F/TSA**] and free-time sport involving passive consumption [**F/TSP**]. Figure 5 below illustrates the ways in which these initial codes were attributed to an extract of a focus group discussion.

Figure 5 – Extract illustrating the codes and short memos

F/TSA check this is in free time? **DPos – Self** constructed this way in other sites of participation [MRO2]	Robin: "It's like my dad he always said I can do anything I want and my disability can't stop me. Yeah, like I've been climbing."
DNeg – C is Ruth referring to Robin's disability?	Ruth: "You can't climb Robin."
DPos – Fam/Self very positive view of disability. Is this reflected in the sporting tastes of the family and Robin's involvement? [MRO3]	Robin: "Yeah I've been climbing, so I can. Cause I have a chair it doesn't mean I can't do things. My mum and dad have always got me doing things. My dad says 'if you want to do it, you've got to do it yourself'. Like I'll have my own place one day and they won't be there so I have ago at everything. It's other people that are the problem not me. You know the worst thing to happen is like I fall out of my chair."
DNeg – C is Ruth referring to Robin's disability? [MRU2]	Ruth: "I still don't know how you go climbing."
F/TSA check this is in free time? **DPos – Self** able to rearticulate normalised view of climbing [MRO4]	Robin: "Listen I don't have to be walking on my legs to go climbing, you just don't get it." **HF:** "Okay guys I think Ruth was just wondering what kinds of changes are made so you can climb."

In this extract, I code the discussion as centring on free-time sport active participation [**F/TSA**], although I note in a brief memo that I need to clarify with Robin that he was talking about this context of participation. Indeed, throughout the initial coding of the transcripts, these short memos served as an important means of asking questions about the data, and sometimes this also involved clarifying particular issues with the participating students.

Following a further examination of the data, more specific categories emerged that represented either particular issues relevant to the different contexts of participation or issues that reoccurred within and between each of these contexts. For example, in relation to issues reoccurring within different contexts of participation (and indeed contexts outwith sport), codes were attributed to different understandings of disability: positive construction of disability [**DPos**] or negative constructions of disability [**DNeg**]. As I illustrate in the earlier extract, these codes were specific, associated with the person viewing disability in this way and accounted for students' own views or the students' perceptions that this was the view of teachers, family or friends (classmates, school friends and free-time friends). As I became submerged in the data, categories were refined further and reflected my deepening understanding of the data. For example, the initial four codes differentiating between the varying contexts of sporting engagement were extended to also acknowledge participation in disability sport. This was denoted with '**-D**' at the end of the code (although this is not illustrated in the extract above).

After identifying and refining a range of categories, I then engaged in a further level of analysis that enabled more detailed explanations to be given to the categories and, where relevant, the relationships between them. This was facilitated by the use of longer memos that also considered the data in combination with theory (Bourdieu's conceptual tools, models of disability, understandings of inclusion). These extended memos were separated from the transcripts in word files and given a unique reference in order that the memos and transcripts could be identified and linked together. Memo

MRO3 is included in the extract illustrated earlier. It referred to the following memo:

> "Robin draws on the views of his family (particularly his mum and dad) in the way he constructs his understanding of himself and disability. According to Bourdieu (1998), the family is a key site in which dispositions of the habitus associated with behaviour and attitudes are embedded within young people's sense of self. Over time, it seems that Robin's mum and dad have promoted a social model perspective of disability (Oliver 1990 and 1996) through the dispositions of the family habitus. This is reflected in Robin's 'can do' attitude to climbing and other aspects of life, including getting his own place and looking after himself. Robin conveys a disposition that positions 'other people' as the problem. It is evident [also see MRO4] that Robin is aware of, and challenges, discriminatory attitudes towards his disability and normalised understandings of sporting ability (needing two functional legs to go climbing). As Priestley (1999) and Kelly (2005) suggest, young people are able to question and resist some of the experiences they encounter. In the focus group context, Robin challenged the views of other focus group members [also see MRO4]."

By using these detailed memos, I was able to progressively develop a theoretical understanding of the data. This process also enabled me to map out themes and relationships between categories. At this stage, I found it useful to draw visual representations of the emergent themes and their relationships (Miles and Huberman, 1994). My starting point for this was the different contexts of sporting participation, but this later progressed to also include a number of other themes centring on school, family and capital. This process enabled me to map out the relationships between themes; for example, the nature of capital valued in different contexts of sporting engagement and the extent to which capital in one context was valued in another context. As this process of analysis developed further, I was able to identify themed headers and sub headers for the categories emerging from the data. These provided the organising structure for the analysis chapters.

3.7.3 The dynamic and emergent nature of the research process

During this study, I often looked back in my PhD files to either remind myself of the point I had got to or to reflect upon how my thinking had emerged. At the beginning of 'PhD File 1', my ideas can at best be described as vague and lacking any real

direction. A similar observation was made by my supervisor when I proudly gave him my first A4 side of ideas, only to politely be told that I perhaps needed to refine my thinking a little further. When I review my PhD now, I can see the progress I have made from those early days. As Peshkin (2000) describes, research is an evolving process and this continued to be a feature of this study. Indeed, there are a number of aspects of this study that evolved over time in directions that I had not originally anticipated. First, my initial research questions shifted from rather broad and general questions within physical education to more focused questions exploring disabled students' experiences of physical education. These questions subsequently changed further to embrace broader free-time experiences that may encompass sport. Furthermore, I also recognised the need to position physical education experiences within wider experiences of education and, therefore, attended to this issue in my research questions. Second, the number of schools that initially agreed to participate in this study changed from three to two. As I indicated earlier (3.3.1), relations with the third school deteriorated following a staff change involving the key liaison teacher and a decision was made not to continue researching in this school. At this point, I re-evaluated my data-generation plans and considered the possibilities of gaining the co-operation of a new school or the viability of continuing with the two schools I had already begun to generate data from. After exploring the possibilities with a number of new schools, it became apparent that gaining access would be a lengthy process and extend beyond the period of data generation that I had allocated. My plans in the remaining two schools did not change significantly, although I became more focused in these schools and ensured additional efforts were made to maximise the responses I gained from the EMA-AD diaries. As I have already described, I also became more concerned to ensure relations with the liaising teachers were sustained during periods when I was not researching in the schools (3.3.4).

3.8 CONCLUSION

The methodology underpinning this research is based upon a belief that if we want to seriously consider the ways in which physical education can best serve young people then we need to engage with young people to explore their views and perspectives.

This study has adopted a predominantly qualitative approach to data generation, through the use of focus group discussions. In addition, I have highlighted in this chapter the way in which I have also incorporated some quantitative data into this research, through the development and use of an activity diary (EMA-AD). Furthermore, a grounded theory approach to data analysis has been presented and I have provided an illustrative example of the processes involved in generating data.

Given that this chapter has identified the methodologies this study has followed, consideration can now be given to the data that emerged from these generation strategies. The following chapter considers the school context and the ways in which young disabled people articulate their sense of self within and through physical education and school sport. After this, chapter 5 focuses on other mediators of sporting tastes and interests and their significance in relation to informing constructions of embodied identities.

Chapter Four

THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMBODIED IDENTITIES AT SCHOOL AND THROUGH PHYSICAL EDUCATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data generated from this study is presented in two chapters. This first analysis chapter focuses on students' understandings of their school experiences and, in particular, physical education and school sport. In this chapter, I will specifically attend to three of my research questions and, in doing this, will explore the nature of the young disabled participants' experiences of physical education and school sport (Research Question 1). In addition, I will consider how the participants in this study understand their experiences of physical education and school sport (Research Question 3). Furthermore, I will explore how experiences of physical education and school sport inform the participants' sense of self and identity (Research Question 5). Chapter 5 focuses on free-time experiences. Although I have presented school experiences somewhat separately to free-time experiences, it is worth remembering that these spheres of life are interrelated, with one informing the other, to a greater or lesser extent at different times and in relation to different issues. Consequently, in my analysis chapters I sometimes refer to both school and free-time experiences.

As I have already indicated, school is a significant site in which a young person's identity is constituted and constructed. Indeed, these formative years of adolescence are particularly important for young disabled people as they may come to terms with, and begin to understand, their identity (Anderson *et al.*, 1982; Hirst and Baldwin, 1994). It has been suggested that "Disabled children are confronted on a daily basis with ways of speaking about disability that influence their experience and their sense of identity" (Priestley, 1999: 93). In this kind of context, Bourdieu views school as one of the most important fields in which capital can be acquired and converted (Harker *et al.*, 1990). As such, school is a site in which the relevant physical education and sporting habitus can be developed in order that young people may want to

continue to engage in sports-related activities in later life.

Physical education, though, is only one dimension of school life. This chapter begins by exploring the institutional embodied disciplines and discursive practices that prevail in schools, and the ways in which these inform the habitus of young disabled people. In particular, it is evident from the students in this study that the notion of SEN and disability were incorporated and reproduced within their everyday practices at school and also ingrained within students' understandings of themselves. The chapter proceeds by considering informal discursive practices and highlights the significance of teacher and student talk and the ways in which these contribute to the constitution of focus group students' identities. It seems from the data generated that teachers and peers often used the discursive categories of SEN and disability in negative ways. Following this, the chapter explores the ways in which teachers use the categories of SEN and disability as a means of additional regulation and control on the focus group students. At times, students recognised the inconsistencies in the ways they, and non-disabled peers, were treated.

Having considered these broader dimensions of the focus group students' experiences of school in relation to 'becoming' and 'making known' (Priestley, 1999), I progress by specifically exploring physical education experiences. This includes considering students' perspectives of the position and importance of physical education within schools and the perceived relevance for their future active lifestyles. The chapter then explores the nature of capital valued within physical education and the extent to which students possess relevant capital. It seems from the data generated that students were positioned as 'part timers' within physical education and they were unable to deploy the relevant habitus within physical education. I then proceed by focusing on the ways in which difference is embodied within physical education through the habitus. In particular, I discuss how activities and spaces are regulated and how students were often given exemptions. This chapter then addresses a variety of issues focusing on friends and considers the ways in which the structure of physical education supports existing friendships and nurtures new ones. Students highlighted the notion of

'helpers' as friends sometimes, although these helpers were not friends but rather were enlisted by teachers to support the focus group students. Finally, the interrelationship between school friends and other dimensions of life is explored and highlights the limited degree to which students were able to continue their friendship beyond a school context.

4.2 BECOMING KNOWN AS 'OTHER' AND 'NORMAL' AT SCHOOL – *"We're what they call the SEN group" (James)*

As I have already indicated, physical education and school sport are only one dimension of the curriculum. Indeed, there are also other curriculum areas and practices within schools that inform students' understandings and impact on their experiences. In this section, I begin by exploring the wider school experiences of the focus group students. I focus on how institutional embodied disciplines and discursive practices operate in schools and the ways in which these inform the habitus of the focus group students. After this, I explore school as a regulatory site and consider how the ways in which students perceive their SEN or disability increases the nature of control imposed on them. Finally, within this broader school context, I examine the complexity of self and the ways in which understandings of disability and normativity can be simultaneously embodied through the habitus. By exploring these issues within this wider school context, this section provides the basis from which experiences of physical education and school sport can be positioned and understood.

4.2.1 Institutional embodied discourses

It has been suggested by a number of writers that school is a significant site in which young people begin to understand themselves and others (Vertinsky, 1992). In this context, the people, curriculum and organisation (Hamilton, 1977; Kirk and Colquhoun, 1989; Kirk, 1992; Bourdieu, 1993) all have a role to play in embedding and reproducing cultural norms and practices. Indeed, according to Priestley (1999), school is an important site in which the identity of young disabled people is shaped. Priestley (1999) suggests that identity is constructed, in part, by the way in which young disabled people 'become known' through institutionally embodied disciplines

and discourses. A number of the formally sanctioned means identified by Priestley (1999) were evident during the focus group discussions. For example, the notion of SEN, while not considered to be a direct signifier of impairment or disability, was recognised and often used by many of the focus group students. As will be evident in the discussion that follows, students did not necessarily share the same understandings or meanings of SEN and disability. Students in both schools freely used the notion of SEN. This seemed to be firmly embedded within their vocabulary and broader sense of self, or as Bourdieu would suggest 'endowed with the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1993). Students sometimes talked about themselves and SEN. For example, Andy commented: "*I have a Statement, SEN.*" In other instances, students talked in relation to themselves and others. This is illustrated in the following response given by James.

> "Yeah, we're what they call the SEN group. This is extra to us and makes us different from everyone else."
> (James)

Like Andy, James recognised an 'extra' dimension attached to SEN. In his case, he attributed this label to himself and others. Interestingly, the other four focus group students at this school seemed not to challenge, or object, to this label being given to them on their behalf. When students discussed the meaning of SEN, words such as 'special', 'different' and 'extra' were used. Moreover, when meanings were explored beyond this superficial coding, it was apparent that students conceptualised SEN in different ways. Ruth rationalised SEN in the following way:

> "I'm SEN, this means I'm special in a good way and more special than loads of kids. It's extra but not everyone gets it."
> (Ruth)

In this context, SEN is perceived as something that represents a positive quality. However, when James discussed in more detail what he meant by SEN, and in particular the notion of '*different*', it is clear that his understandings of SEN were less positive.

> "SEN tells them all I'm different and I'm not good at something and I'm bad and I'm different than me class and I'm bad at stuff." (James)

In this account, SEN is considered in negative terms and, to some degree, signifies deficiency. During this discussion, James found it difficult to specifically articulate the ways in which he perceived himself to be different or bad. On the occasions he was able to do this, it was interesting to note that other focus group members objected to the examples he gave and were keen to ensure I knew he was in fact good at many things and "*just like everyone else really*" (Dave). These discussions illustrate the tension between the sometimes negative meanings associated with SEN and the ways in which students perceived themselves contrary to these understandings. At the other focus group school, the meaning of SEN was also debated and, in this exchange, two students highlight the perspectives they hold.

> Robin: "SEN means you are different, not the same as the others. I'd say [different] in a good way."
>
> Anne: "I know what you mean like but you're seen as bad."
>
> Robin: "I'm not bad."
>
> Anne: "Yes, yes, I know but what I'm saying is like well people well it's not good and people think it's bad. Do you really see it as good?"
>
> Robin: "I'm well ye, why, I'd say I'm good not bad."

This is only part of the lengthy discussion between Robin and Anne. The conversation ended in disagreement, with Robin insisting that SEN equated to positive differences between people and Anne insisting SEN was understood in negative terms. Again, this exchange demonstrates the complex nature of the young people's understandings and interpretations of themselves and their relationship with the notion of SEN. Indeed, Robin's comment earlier is essentially referring to a view *he* has constructed of SEN and Anne is referring to the way in which she feels *others* perceive her. Indeed, Anne illustrates through her comments that she is acutely aware of the ways in which other

people perceive SEN and how this may not match up to the understandings that students like Robin have of SEN. In relation to 'others', when asked who these people were, students suggested a range of individuals, including teachers, support staff, parents, family members and friends. Indeed, I discuss later the different ways in which staff and peers talk about disabled students and the influence such discursive practices have on the focus group students' sense of self. What is clear from the students' discussions is the way in which SEN has been incorporated into their everyday practice and embodied within the habitus (Bourdieu, 1993). However, by embodying this discursive category it may be that many of the students are, in fact, reproducing and aiding the legitimation of SEN within a school context. In addition, through their social action of the focus group, students may be contributing to the construction of themselves that is seen by others as different and, largely, in negative terms.

In addition to students recognising and using the notion of SEN as a discursive category, it was evident from the focus group discussions that SEN was often equated to students receiving or needing *"extra help"* (James). This kind of 'extra help' could also be considered as an institutionally embodied discipline (Priestley, 1999) and is expressed by Adam and Steve as receiving assistance from a support worker.

> **HF** "So they call you the SEN group. What does that mean then?"
>
> Adam: "I don't know, I don't know where it comes from, something to do with Simon [the Support worker]."
>
> Steve: "Yeah if you [are] SEN you get a support worker."

The presence, or indeed absence, of adult support seemed to be an important institutionally imposed material constraint that, for some students, emphasized otherness. A number of students seemed more comfortable than others to discuss their experiences or feelings towards receiving extra support. Although experiences seemed to be varied, discussions were often individualised to a specific support worker in relation to a curriculum area or wider school experience. Indeed, we will see later in

this chapter that in the context of physical education, some students believed their Support Assistants constrained rather than enhanced their physical education experiences (Morley *et al.*, 2005). In this discussion, Tom identifies a number of specific functions that he sees the support worker as fulfilling. In these instances, the support worker is acknowledged as making a positive contribution to this aspect of Tom's school experience.

> "With my crutches I can't hold a lot of stuff, I'm okay with one bag, I get help carrying stuff, picking up things. Sometimes Clare [Support Assistant] gets my lunch."
> (Tom)

Although Tom recalled this kind of positive experience with Clare, he also highlighted incidences similar to those found by Skar and Tam (2001) where having a support worker seemed to negatively impact on broader school experiences. Tom was particularly frustrated with the lack of opportunities he had to "*chill and hang*" on his own or with other friends. A few focus group students also highlighted occasions where they believed the presence of a support worker impinged on their activities or social interactions. It seems from Tom's experiences, and that of other students, that feelings and relationships with support staff seemed to be relatively fluid and largely contingent upon school context, activity and mood. For example, during the focus group discussions Tom referred to the same support worker as 'great', 'just like a friend', 'bossy', 'horrible' and 'boring'.

Some students, in this case Jane and Anne, were initially ambivalent about disclosing that they actually received any additional support.

Anne: "I have Mary helping me in PE. She is my SA [Support Assistant]."

Jane: "Ye I've seen her [in PE] she doesn't help me. I don't need help like you."

Anne: "Well I don't, she's not helping me. I, well she is just like watching out for me. I don't need help."

Jane: "You do, you need it more than me!"

Unlike the experience of Tom, these two students, who often shared a support worker during physical education, seemed to want to downplay the support received. However, later in the focus group discussion when Ruth disclosed she did not receive assistance during physical education, Anne and Jane were united in their attempts to marginalize and devalue Ruth's experience. The following comment made by Anne reflects a more reciprocated and consensual understanding of themselves and working with a support worker.

> "Yeah, you don't get SA. Well I'd say you know what happens it cause the teachers don't think of you, don't think you've got talents and think there's no need to help, you know you can't be helped, like there's no point. Whereas me and Jane, the teachers see we'll get better and need their help. We've got a SA."
> (Anne)

There is a striking solidarity in this response when compared to the previous exchange between Anne and Jane and this discussion illustrates an inconsistency and, to some degree, fluidity in the way in which receiving support is articulated and more importantly how this is, or is not recognised as capital (Shilling, 2003). And in this case it seems that as a disabled student you could be othered, and indeed experience social marginality (DePauw, 1997), because of the adult support you receive and also othered for not actually receiving any support.

4.2.2 Teacher and peer talk

Within a school setting, social relations with teachers (Lavay, 1987) and peers (Adler and Adler, 1998; Ungar, 2000) represent important contexts in which peers and teachers talk about (disabled) students. These engagements, in part, provide the time and space (Jenkins, 2002) in which identity is constituted and constructed (Lavay, 1987; Priestley, 1999). The focus group students in this study are immersed in their school experiences. As such, they will interact on a daily basis with other social actors and it is through this social engagement that they are exposed to the 'talk' of others.

Indeed, we have already seen in the previous section how Anne was acutely aware of the ways in which she believed *other* people perceived students labelled as SEN. The consequences of teacher talk are evident in other research and reflections (Swain and Cameron, 1999; Groves and Laws, 2000; Brittain, 2004a and b) and illustrate the longer-term impact that such social interaction can have on the construction of identity and sense of self. The following accounts illustrate that students are aware of teacher talk. For example, students believed some school staff seemed to identify with them essentially through a discursive category of SEN.

> "…. some teachers see us all together, one SEN group. Mr. Johnson and Miss Green don't know my name." (Tom)

> "The other day I got in a bit of trouble, I'm not going to say why and Mrs. Wood, she said 'come over here', she looked at me and went on 'you're in the SEN group aren't you?' " (James)

Other students also recalled instances where SEN was used by school staff as a way of individually recognising students or as a way of grouping SEN students together. In both instances, a number of students considered this articulation of SEN to be extremely depersonalising and believed this label became the key signifier used to jointly associate focus group students together. And in the latter case, it seems that some staff were homogenising students experiencing SEN in the same kind of way that people experiencing disability are often grouped (Watson and Priestley, 2000). In this context, no distinction or recognition is made of the differences, rather than similarities, between students labelled SEN or disabled. Interestingly in both schools, with the exception of physical education, students only had one time-tabled session a week where they came together as a SEN group. Indeed, unlike a class or registration group these students did not often come together formally. However, it would seem from the comment of James that Mrs. Wood perceived there to be a more closely aligned relationship between SEN students than there actually is in place at the school. The consequence of the grouped labels imposed on students is evident in their comments; as they indicate, they perceive that they are not identified as individuals.

What was evident from the focus group discussions was that students also recognised that staff sometimes used a discursive category of disability to identity with students.

> "I was in the [lunch] line and heard Mrs. Smith call me 'the disabled pupil'. She said 'let the disabled pupil go to the front'. I've got a name and it's not disabled. Then it was, well all of them looked at me."
> (James)

In this instance, as Davis and Watson (2001) found, it would seem that James had a disabled identity imposed on him. As Priestley (1999) suggests it is likely that those privy to these kinds of situations may also begin to define and reproduce their understandings of disability based on the discourse of disability presented in this kind of incident. On this occasion, as the discussion with James unfolded, it became apparent that he reluctantly took up the offer to queue jump. Indeed, James recognised that there are at times some short-term gains to be attained from these situations. In this case, James indicated that he received a wider choice of lunch options, which he may not necessarily have been offered if he was positioned towards the back of the queue. Similar gains were also perceived in relation to physical education. These are discussed later.

It has been recognised by a number of writers that peers are an important social field that influence and contribute to young people's behaviour and construction of self (Jenkins, 1996). Many accounts given by the focus group students also positioned peers, like school staff, as playing a significant role in reinforcing notions of otherness. The 'stereotyping' (Jenkins, 1996) by peers of disabled students seemed to be commonplace and, in a few extreme instances, was coupled with the use of derogatory language. For example, Tom recalled one of his peers telling him *".... not over here, go play in crips corner"*. When reflecting upon this comment, Tom indicated: *".... it's true I do play in the corner and there's Ian, Kevin, Glen on and off"*. In this instance, as Wyness (1999) suggests, the students had created their own space within this broader site of school. Indeed, Tom explained that the corner was

strategically selected as this positioning enabled stray footballs to be easily retrieved. As this discussion unfolded, it appeared that these students played together during break times because they were originally discouraged from playing football with a larger group of non-disabled students. However, what was also evident from further discussions was that Tom, Ian, Kevin and Glen met together, in the corner, as a group, even when they were not playing football. In this instance, it would seem that their non-disabled peers had not recognised the physical capital that Tom held in relation to playing football and, consequently, precluded him from this activity. Moreover, Tom and his other disabled friends seemed to have also been rejected as legitimate participants in relation to other group activities. Indeed, it may be that the spatial separation practised in relation to football negatively contributed to the ability of Tom and his friends to become "…. endowed with the habitus" (Bourdieu, 1993) and they were consequently rejected as group members. In part, the informal friendship grouping that Tom, Ian, Kevin and Glen had established may also contribute to the perceptions of teachers, like Mrs. Wood, and serve to reaffirm the formal institutional disciplines, such as the time-tabled slot for the SEN group discussed earlier.

At other times, verbal exchanges or offensive language were not necessarily the catalyst leading to negative or discriminatory feelings. Indeed, the responses of peers, an intolerant glance or questioning stare, sometimes caused focus group students to question the extreme reactions they seemed to trigger. In this instance, Robin does not feel like an '*alien*' but perceives he is considered to be one by others.

> "…. the worst time is when I'm the alien from outer space. There's kids don't know you, may be not see you much round, and you go past. I get stared at, yes you know staring, as if I'm so different." (Robin)

For Robin, this candid account illustrates a sense that he feels he is 'sticking out' in some way. In this context, it may be that his physical capital, particularly that associated with physical attributes, are considered by those staring at him as inferior. Indeed, for Robin it may be that some of the staring students perceive his body as the

antithesis of the normative body project (Wright, 2000; Oliver, 2001; Shilling, 2003) that is currently promoted and seems to hold considerable currency within contemporary society. Although students highlighted many incidences or accounts of teachers' and peers' negative constructions of themselves through disability, it is worth noting that some more positive constructions of SEN or disability were expressed.

> "Mr. Smith said to ignore em. He said I'm bril and to ignore the bad kids. He's very positive, I try but sometimes I get fed up of em, people are mean. Mr. Smith said not to listen and ignore it. He reckons I've got a lot more going for me than most of em. He said I can do anything and should. He reckons me frame means I can do stuff differently and he reckons no one can do it like me."
> (James)

In this instance, it is clear that James values the comments made by Mr. Smith. However, the positive constructions articulated here were not necessarily embodied within other accounts given by James, particularly his reflections focusing on his physical education experiences. Towards the end of this discussion, an insight is also gained of a construction of disability as 'different' but, as James suggests, Mr. Smith articulates this in a positive light rather than as a representation of difference expressed through negative terms. Other students also mentioned positive constructions of disability expressed by staff members. However, in one instance this construction was presented in an extreme 'super human', or as Crow (1996: 58) describes, "supercrip" manner.

> "Brian [support worker] says I'm indestructible, like a comic hero and that I can do anything in my chair."
> (Adam)

It would seem from the response of Adam that disability constructed in this way actually continued to reinforce otherness rather than assimilate to a non-disabled norm. However, for Adam it seems that this presentation of self was preferred to being othered in ways that represented largely negative understandings of disability

(Goffman, 1968; Barnes *et al.*, 1999; Oliver, 1990).

The label of SEN and the notion of disability were often seen by students as similar concepts and the net product was perceptions of difference and otherness. Having said this, it was noticeable in both schools that SEN was extensively associated as a "*school thing*" (Robin), while disability was a universally used concept within and beyond the school context.

4.2.3 Disability, control and school

School is a regulatory site (Frost, 2001) in which young people are controlled in a variety of ways. This control is manifest through the organisation of time, space, curriculum and power relations (Bourdieu, 1998; Kirk and Colquhoun, 1989; Wyness, 1999; Holroyd, 2002; Kirk, 2004). The students in this study were acutely aware of the regulatory nature of school. In this instance, Steve recalls the differing modes of regulation that must be adhered to while at school.

> "When you're at school you've got rules about running, mobiles [chewing] gum, uniform, it goes on and on. If you don't stick to em you get in trouble. I think teachers keep their eye on me more, they watch the disabled kids more. It's like I have to be good all the time."
> (Steve)

Steve highlights the multifaceted and complex nature of rules within school and the consequences of non-compliance. At the end of his commentary, he also intimates that teachers pay more attention to him because of his disability. Indeed, within this regulated site, other focus group students also indicated that the discursive category of disability and SEN was used explicitly as a means of added control and regulation: "*.... you can't do that cause of your disability*" (Anne). Indeed, supporting the findings of previous research (Watson and Priestly, 2000), focus group students believed, when compared to their non-disabled peers, that they were exposed to a heightened level of control.

> "Yeah, look everyone at school has to behave, you know what you can and can't do and like if you forget you get told. The rules are the same for everyone but you know, teachers are different with me and, I'm not moaning or anything, but I would say a lot stricter, it was like that at Greenfield School."
> (Andy)

Andy and other students were aware of what seems to be inconsistencies in the way different students are treated and this was particularly frustrating for some students. However, as we have already seen in this chapter (4.2.1) and will again see later (4.6.3), on occasions students were able to use school regulations and rules to their advantage in order to gain exemption from different activities, including physical education. Specific incidences were highlighted by a number of students and illustrate inconsistencies between themselves and non-disabled peers. For example, Adam talks in detail about a disheartening experience relating to a school dance and choir production in which he was restricted from playing a full role.

> "I'm in the school choir and have been in one, two, three productions .... Last year was a joint production with the dance club. We did our practices, and you know we did loads, lunch and night. Let's see, there was six, seven, eight. Yes eight songs, eight new songs to learn and sing well. Cause it was a joint production, the dancers had to sing and we had to dance. I was really peed off Mr. Brown said I couldn't do the dance. It wasn't like all jumping, swinging, spins. It was basic, that's the word I'd use, slow with the song. He [Mr. Brown] said I wouldn't be able to do the dance cause of my disability. So that was it. I had to sit in the corner when the rest of the choir were dancing and I can tell you I felt silly just sitting there. Funny thing is, well, we do dance in PE so what's that, I'd say."
> (Adam)

In this instance, Adam rightly points out an inconsistency: experiencing dance in physical education but not being able to dance within this production. Indeed, it appears that even after his mother inquired about Adam being able to participate in the dance dimension of the production, she was also told this was not possible. For Adam, disability seemed to be used as a rationale for preventing him from engaging in this particular activity. Other students also recalled experiences they were precluded from

that were justified on the grounds of disability.

> Robin: "I wasn't allowed to go on the [school] trip. Well it's the activity day. What it is, is you get to make a choice of what you want to do. So there's all stuff, I went for adventure but it wasn't possible. So I couldn't do it, there."
>
> **HF:** "What do you mean, you couldn't do it?"
>
> Robin: "No, I wasn't allowed. It's like this, Mr. Jones said my chair would get in the way and he said I wouldn't be able to join in like everyone."

A number of other focus group students also identified other occasions where they perceived the notion of SEN or disability was used by staff as a way of getting them to do certain activities or tasks. Students highlighted specific incidences where their disability was related directly to: being told to eat a healthy lunch, handing homework in on time, and being sent inside the school at break time. Students who mentioned these situations were unable to identify any kind of relationship between their disability and the request that was being directed at them. The following exchange with a South Parade School student illustrates this point.

> "When the weather gets bad, that'll mean you get to stay in for breaks. Now if it changes, say oh at the start [of break] and then the heavens open, raining a lot, you can bet Mr. Rushton, Miss Glen they'll come straight over to me, not no one else, me first."
> (Jane)

We have seen, then, that students recollect staff using the discursive category of disability and SEN as a means of restricting and imposing activities on them. Indeed, these episodes demonstrate, as Priestley (1999) found, that SEN and disability are often used in schools as a means of asserting control over students. Consequently, from the focus group students' perspective, little attention seems to have been paid by staff to students' views and opinions as to whether such activities are viable or desired (Garth and Aroni, 2003; Norwich and Kelly, 2004). The experiences of exclusion rationalised on the grounds of disability also illustrate the confusing messages that

some disabled students encounter. In this respect, inclusive practices are advocated within mainstream schools while the reality seems to be that, for some students, they are excluded on the grounds of disability or SEN.

4.2.4 The complex self embodying disability and normativity through the habitus

As this chapter has highlighted, within a school context young people's identities are constructed through informal and formal embodied discourses and discursive practices. It would seem that the practices of others contribute to understandings of self. Moreover, it has been suggested that identity is also shaped by the way in which young disabled people 'make themselves known' through self knowledge and speaking out (Priestley, 1999). Narratives of self (Giddens, 1990) were important for the young people in this study. It is evident from the discussions with focus group students that they were able to articulate for themselves the way(s) in which they wanted to be known through their own representations and self-knowledge.

Some of the focus group students often 'spoke out' about themselves and focused on normative qualities that were not centred in any way on their disability. As Ruth put it: "*I'm like everyone [at school], good and bad at stuff. English is worst; I'm average like most. I'm like most people here*". In this account, Ruth positions herself not at the extremes ('clever' or 'not very clever') but rather at what would seem in the middle of everyone else. Indeed, this is where she perceived her friends to be located and, therefore, she seemed to want to also take up this position. It may be that from this location Ruth believed she would be in a strong position to accumulate the relevant social capital recognised by her friends.

Other students were sometimes keen to assert their qualities associated with understandings in excess of the norm. Indeed, for these students it may be that their friends expect this of them and, unlike Ruth, it is acceptable within their different friendship networks to consider themselves in this way. For example, during each of the focus group discussions Steve came across as particularly self-assured and was always keen to convey an image of himself as '*clever*' and '*good at ITC*'. Similarly,

James repeatedly asserted that he was '*popular*' and Anne often talked about her desire to be a French teacher when she leaves school. These expressions of self were not about how others perceived them but rather understandings expressed through a discourse that embraced self knowledge, and their descriptions were often preceded with an affirmative "*I'm* ...." . In these instances, there also seemed to be well-rehearsed justifications for these claims. For James and Anne, the process of 'streaming' legitimised their self-knowledge.

> "I'm in the top group for French, I got put in this group cause I'm one of the best, I'm better at speaking [French]. My last report was good, I'm thinking about AS and Mr. Andrews reckons I'd be mad not to do it."
> (Anne)

Here, Anne also refers to her school report and the opportunity, supported by the French teacher, to progress to AS level as further confirmation of her embodied self knowledge. Likewise, James was able to justify his 'popularity', and consequently the social and physical capital he had accumulated, by recalling the number of party invitations he had received, the number of other students he knew (including those in a higher year), past girlfriends, and his potential and suitability to be the next Boccia captain.

In other instances, when asserting their understanding of self, focus group students emphasized key aspects of their lives that enabled them to be seen in relation to specific qualities they held. In the extract below, Adam wanted to be known for his singing ability and James for his information technology (IT) skills. Unlike the students highlighted earlier, Adam and James also accompanied their narratives with reference to disability.

> Adam: "I'm in the choir. It's my voice that's important, that's what gets listened to. Being in my chair, well I think no one notices. It doesn't matter."
>
> James: "I feel a bit like that in IT [lunchtime club]. I think I'm the best and no one can beat me."

In this instance, an identity based on their singing and IT status seems to be preferred to that premised on disability. Indeed, here Adam is keen to place his disability at the margins.

As Watson and Priestley (2000) found, there seemed to be fluidity in the ways in which students (dis)associated with a disabled identity. For many of the focus group students, identities seemed to be contingent upon time and space (Hall *et al.*, 1999; Shilling, 2003) with disability taking a greater or lesser position. In this instance, Adam discusses his school day.

> Adam: "Sometimes I feel disabled and then not."
>
> **HF**: "How does that happen then? Why sometimes and not others?"
>
> Andy: "You are disabled."
>
> **HF**: "Go on Adam why is it you sometimes feel disabled?"
>
> Adam: "Let me see, it starts in the morning. I get the bus from home. It picks me up from home."
>
> James: "Yes the bus comes for me, then Steve [points to Steve]."
>
> Adam: "Okay, it [the bus] picks us up but not everyone gets it. You know what happens, Colin, Jack and Ian stand on corner [of school gates] pulling bad, bad faces. One time I'd like to come [to school] on me own. That's not allowed and I have to get the bus. I feel really disabled when I get the bus."

Adam talks at length about the school day and how he delineates between feelings related to 'normal' and 'disability'. In this extract, Adam underlines how getting the bus emphasizes difference. Indeed, being treated differently, the presence of support staff, and associations with the SEN group all contributed to Adam's, and other students', heightened sense of an identity encompassing disability. At times, students seemed to be responsive social agents (Presitley, 1999) and were sometimes conscious of the 'performances' (Giddens, 1999) they were able to enact which may, or may not,

involve locating self in any way as disabled. Often with non-disabled friends, focus group students talked about positioning themselves in similar ways to their friends. This meant positioning their self as non-disabled. The extent to which the focus group students' understandings of self were, in fact, accepted by their peers was not always apparent from the discussions. However, it would seem implicit in a number of earlier discussions centring on teacher and peer talk (4.2.2), and later when I discuss the family (5.3.1), that views of the focus group students may be somewhat different and often based on a disabled identity.

4.3 SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION – *"PE is part of the National Curriculum so we have to do PE" (Jane)*

In the previous section I explored institutional embodied disciplines and discursive practices operating in schools and the ways in which these inform the habitus of focus group students. In this section, and indeed the proceeding sections in this chapter, I refine my focus by considering issues specifically relating to physical education and school sport. I first of all consider the position and value students afford to physical education and school sport. I then consider the extent to which students perceive physical education and school sport as something they may continue to engage in after they have left formal education. Much of this research is premised on the assumption that all focus group students engage in physical education. However, it became apparent from the data generated in this study that this is not always the case. Indeed, the final part of this section discusses the ways in which school staff sometimes initiate episodes of student exclusion from physical education.

4.3.1 Legitimising the physical in education

It is widely documented that physical education operates within the broader sphere of education in which this curriculum area has often been perceived as less legitimate and having a lower priority than other areas of the school curriculum. Some time ago, Carroll (1974: 103) asserted that physical education was "…. still regarded by many as unimportant". This has also been coupled with apathy from the media and politicians (Evans, 1990). However, more recently, Houlihan and Green (2006) have argued that

the position of physical education within contemporary education has moved from one of 'panic' to 'priority'. Meanwhile, attempts to articulate the purpose(s) of physical education have also elicited much debate by researchers and practitioners. During the focus group discussions, the legitimacy of physical education within the broader school curriculum was also sometimes questioned. This is reflected in this exchange:

> Anne: "I'm not sure why we do PE. It's not a proper subject."
>
> Robin: "I guess it's the easy part of the [school] day."
>
> **HF**: "Why do you think it's easy then?"
>
> Robin: "Well it's not a proper lesson. For starters you don't have to write out no activity sheets."

For Anne, and other students, the lack of legitimacy was premised on a number of characteristics that students believe make physical education different from other curriculum areas. In addition to highlighting the absence of written work, students suggested that the physical positioning of physical education outside or in a sport hall, rather than in a *'proper classroom'*, made physical education less legitimate. Furthermore, Robin perceived the absence of desks as contributing to this questioned legitimacy and suggested, "*You need to be in a classroom to do school work and you don't get desks on the playing fields*". Although Robin's point was made in a rather tongue-in-cheek manner, it illustrates that he believes there is a link between desk-based work in the classroom and the legitimacy of curriculum areas. Similarly, Tom mentioned that physical education did not *'feel'* like other school subjects. For Andy, Robin and Tom, customs and practices within other lessons seemed to be embodied within their school experiences and, because of the different practices in physical education, this subject seemed to be perceived as less legitimate. What is also apparent from student responses is the lack of awareness or understanding of the ways in which physical education can contribute to cognitive learning and development. Indeed, a number of students associated physical education with an opportunity to rest cognitive learning processes.

Anne: "What happens is well, well, I can't be thinking all day, it's like science, maths, English, my head's going round and round. God Tuesdays, double science, maths, English."

Ruth: "Oh yeah, I get science and maths."

Tom: "I hate science, I hate it."

HF: "So it sounds like science, maths and English, you have to think a lot? "

Anne: "Ye, my head gets full up. Half the time I don't get it."

Tom: "You're bottom in English."

Anne: "No."

HF: "And what's your head like in PE then?"

Anne: "Oh not full, well, PE, the point is it's a break from proper school stuff."

Tom: "No, come on there's a lot of thinking in PE, like what tee shirt to wear .... Well, not really, technique, tactics."

It is not until the end of this discussion that Tom signals in any way that there may, in fact, be cognitive outcomes from participating in physical education. However, no other students from either school mentioned this as a dimension related to physical education.

Not all of the focus group students perceived physical education as lacking legitimacy or providing a break from other school subjects. Indeed, some students had well-formed ideas about why physical education is undertaken at school, and students identified a combination of reasons for participation. Interestingly, a number of students recognised the formal position of physical education within the National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA, 1999).

> "When you are at school, you have to do subjects. PE is part of the National Curriculum so we have to do PE. The Government makes the rules and we do what they say."
> (Jane)

In this context, by referring to the National Curriculum, it is explicitly evident that Jane is adopting the dominant language within education used by other (adult) stakeholders. This comment also illustrates that Jane is aware of a higher order of authority, in this case Government, which is stipulating the curriculum within schools. Like many school experiences, students acknowledged that there is essentially a compulsory dimension to this curriculum area. Indeed, a number of students focused on the notion that they were compelled in some way to undertake physical education because they were told to do so by teachers in their school. As Dave put it: "*It's [physical education] on my timetable so I have to do it*". As Holroyd (2002) found, it would seem that students recognise a hierarchy in operation in which they are located in a relatively low position and, therefore, are obliged to comply with the teacher, school timetable and indeed Government. Having said this, later I discuss (5.6) the ways in which students were sometimes able to exhort their autonomy (Priestley, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2002) in order to resist, rather than conform to, practices and norms within school.

A number of students from both focus group schools were also able to articulate beyond the formal positioning of physical education within the school curriculum. For example, Ruth and Andy were keen to discuss an underpinning health imperative relating to physical education (Cale, 2000). When talking more generally about the purpose of school, Ruth suggested, "*Your brain and body get a workout. PE is for your body, it gets you healthy*". Although health and physical education were linked together by Ruth, it is interesting that there still remained a separation in which the 'brain' got a workout in seemingly other areas of the school curriculum. This issue of health was also highlighted by Andy who suggested, "*To grow up you need to be healthy. Doing PE, like all that running, that'll make you healthy*". According to Andy, there seemed to be longer-term health benefits that could be accrued from

physical education. However, as I discuss in the next section, not all students envisaged continued participation in physical education-related activities beyond their school experience.

In addition to health benefits, it is widely recognised that physical education provides a context within which sports skills can be developed (Green and Hardman, 2005). A number of students also recognised this dimension of physical education.

> Adam: "In PE you learn different skills. This term in basketball, so you have – passing, shooting, rules, basketball skills."
>
> Steve: "Well we've played lots of basketball."
>
> Adam: "See, yeah but you need to have the skills before [you play]."

In this exchange, Steve was keen to talk about the 'game' that was played. However, Adam focused on the skills developed and seemed to recognise these underpinned the ability to subsequently play a game of basketball. Siedentop (2002) argues that one of the goals of youth sport centres on an educative goal and suggests that qualities associated with co-operation and leadership should be nurtured. One of the focus group students also highlighted the ways in which physical education activities could promote teamwork:

> "If you're playing teams, you have to get on with people, PE gets you working in teams, for starters you have to talk to people you just wouldn't."
> (James)

It would seem from this thoughtful observation that James recognises a key feature of physical education. However, as I discuss later (4.5.1), not all students, including James, always feel classmates are exhibiting these characteristics.

4.3.2 Physical education as an end in itself or something for the future?

The purpose of physical education and its relationship with lifelong physical activity and sport has long been debated (Siedentop, 1994 and 2002; Kirk and Gorely, 2000; Penney, 2000; Kirk, 2002 and 2003; Kay, 2003). Indeed, the desire to develop more sustained and coherent links between physical education and community sport has also been reflected recently in the Government's PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy (DfES, 2002). The challenges this brings for physical education teachers and other practitioners, such as Sport Development Officers, should not be underestimated. Indeed, it could be argued that this is even more of a challenge for facilitating lifelong sports-related opportunities for young disabled people. Meanwhile, a number of research projects have repeatedly indicated that young disabled people participate less and undertake a narrower range of sporting activities, within and beyond the curriculum, than their non-disabled peers (Stafford, 1989; Penney and Evans, 1995; Sport England, 2001; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a). Moreover, the structure of disability sport remains complex and confusing and those not working within this area find it difficult to understand the varied organisations and associations supporting disabled people in sport (Thomas, 2003; Fitzgerald and Bass, 2007).

The discussions with the focus group students confirmed the continued presence of discourses and practices that, for some students, seemed to negatively affect their perceptions and views towards future physical education related experiences. Indeed, the relationship between physical education and such longer term engagement in sport did not seem to be evident in many students' perceptions of physical education. In particular, physical education was seen by Anne and Andy as something merely engaged in while in compulsory education.

> "Well you do PE til 16, then, thank goodness, that's it."
> (Anne)

> "Are you mad, god I won't be doing it [PE]. "You're saying when I

> don't have to do it? Well I won't be doing it. Why would I want to?"
> (Andy)

For both students, it seemed that physical education was very much positioned as a "*school thing*" (Anne) and the thought of continuing after they had left school was not appealing. Even Andy, who enjoyed playing Boccia, did not envisage continuing this activity in the longer term. Anne found physical education "*the worst*" curriculum area and, if she had the opportunity, she indicated that she would "*drop it now*". However, Anne recognised this was not an option and, like Jackson (2001), conceded that she would have to endure this curriculum area during her time at school. A number of comments were made by students that seemed to indicate participation in school physical education had actually put them off wanting to participate in physical activity or sport in later life (French and Hainsworth, 2001; Disability Rights Commission, 2002; Brittain, 2004a). Ruth suggested: "*I'd say PE has put me off sport. I hate sport [at school] and I'm not going to change my mind.*" Although this is a strong reaction, it is perhaps not surprising when considered in the context of later discussions, particularly the ways in which some focus group students indicated that physical education exposed them to feelings of isolation, peer name calling and a sense of inferiority (4.5).

Having said this, other students expressed a desire to continue with physical education-activities once they have left school but indicated that this was unlikely to be possible because of other commitments associated with their lifestyle.

> "The way I see it is you get to do PE [at school], when I become a leaver I'll be busy doing other things and then get a job."
> (Jane)

In this instance, sport would not seem to be a priority for these students, and it was anticipated that other "*more important things*" (Jane) would take priority in the future. The ability to select and prioritise activities seemed to be an important feature that students talked about in relation to their future. Indeed, the idea of selection and

prioritisation in relation to after-school clubs (5.2.3) is an issue some students already had to manage. A number of students identified non-sports related clubs as their priority, rather than after-school sports clubs.

Interestingly, for a few students the thought of not engaging in physical education-related activities in the future was upsetting. Dave felt very strongly about this and suggested life would be quite unbearable if he would not get opportunities to play cricket. As I discuss later (5.3.3), Dave and other members of his family played cricket and he saw no reason why this would change for him once he had left school.

> "It's not just a school thing, Andy. I'll be doing cricket for ever. If it was just at school, I'd be so fed up."
> (Dave)

The perceived relevance and position of physical education within the lives of the focus group students seemed to differ considerably between individuals. As already indicated, students had varied opinions regarding the purpose of physical education and also different perspectives relating to the significance they anticipated physical education would play in their future lifestyles. Indeed, as the discussion that follows illustrates, not all focus group students always experience physical education.

4.3.3 But not everyone does physical education!

The National Curriculum states that all students are entitled to a 'broad and balanced' curriculum. However, as Penney (2002) indicates, this is unlikely to be a reality in a context where the practice of physical education is embedded in a discourse of exclusivity. Indeed, a number of research studies provide evidence of physical education that precludes young disabled people (Borrett *et al.*, 1995; Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a). More recently, Kirk (2005) has affirmed the continued presence of practices in schools that exclude some young people, including disabled students, from physical education. These kinds of experiences clearly contradict the broader philosophy of inclusion that is promoted within education policy (DfES, 2004), and more specifically physical education

(DfEE/QCA, 1999). Although the majority of young disabled people in this study experienced physical education during the school year, it is important to note that some students also experienced episodes where physical education was not offered as part of their school curriculum.

On some occasions, students considered school staff to be the key instigators of their exclusion from physical education. Jane suggested that the negative attitude of the physical education teacher seemed to positively encourage her non-participation.

> "I get asked all the time, 'do you want to sit out'. I feel like if I do it [take part in PE] I'm getting in the way. I say I'm not bothered and the teacher tells me to go to the computers. It's not bad really, getting my homework done at school. What I feel like is, it's like the teacher sorts problems out all in one go, no kit, wrong kit, misbehaving and me. Can you see I'm on the problem pile?"
> (Jane)

In this instance, Jane believed it was sometimes easier for her to do her homework than to challenge the teacher in any way. In this situation, the 'pay off' for Jane was the completion of her homework during the school day. Indeed, we will also see later (4.6.3) the other ways in which students believed they benefited from the exemptions they were given.

At other times, disabled students seemed to be positively encouraged to contribute to other activities, rather than participate in physical education. Students mentioned a range of duties associated with school newsletters, drama productions and open days that they were assigned or, as Steve put it, had "*special responsibility*" for.

> "I'm a reporter for the newsletter. What it means is I get to take photos and write in it .... In the last edition I did the 'House Points'. This was a big job, Smithton were top."
> (Steve)

During this discussion, it ironically transpired that Steve had been excused from physical education on three consecutive occasions in the previous term in order to complete this and a number of other tasks for the school newsletter. What was also evident from further discussions was that other non-disabled students were not allowed to miss physical education in this way. As Steve explained, missing the three physical education lessons to complete newsletter duties was legitimised by the teacher co-ordinating (Mr. Ward) the newsletter and the physical education teacher (Mr. Green).

> Steve: "Mr. Ward had to have a word with Mr. Green, he told him I was doing an important job for the school. I guess Mr. Green didn't mind and let me."
>
> **HF**: "Did you want to do PE then?"
>
> Steve: "Well it's just, I had something to do and it was only PE so alright."

According to Steve, the authority to make this decision lay with these two members of staff and Steve was happy to comply with their decisions. Interestingly, for Steve this incident perhaps also served to reinforce understandings of physical education as a less legitimate subject because it seemed to be something that could be opted out of, unlike any other curriculum area at school.

The issue of safety has been identified in other research (Davis and Watson, 2001) as a rationale given for excluding disabled students from certain activities. Safety was also raised by students as a reason for their non-participation in physical education. Tom recalled how he dislikes the transition in physical education from one block of activity to another.

> Tom: "It gets to me, like changing activities and knowing that they're not for me."
>
> **HF**: "What do you mean, 'not for you'?"

> Tom: "Well, it's a safety thing cause of my crutches. So I get left out. They think I'm going to wack someone with ehm. I don't want to use my chair."

During this conversation with Tom, it seemed that school staff believed he would be better off using his wheelchair more in physical education. Tom was not keen to adhere to this request and, in fact, believed he was more of a liability when using his wheelchair.

> "I use my chair as little as possible, I like walking and want to do it as long as I can and then get them telling me to use my chair. I don't want to, I can still walk and want to keep walking and I think I'm worse in my chair. I've got better control with me crutches." (Tom)

Although it is difficult to comment on the particular circumstances leading to the decision by school staff, and possibly others, to encourage Tom to use a wheelchair more in physical education, it is apparent from Tom's comment that this is not what he would prefer. As I indicate in the methodology (3.3.2), this study focuses on the views and perspectives of a group of young disabled people. However, in the context of the discussions above, it may have also been useful to question teachers and other stakeholders about this particular situation. Having said this, from Tom's perspective, he seemed to be particularly concerned with the lack of concern staff had about his views on this matter. Interestingly, the issue of safety was talked about more by those students using wheelchairs, crutches or frames. When safety was mentioned by these students, it seemed they believed this was not really a safety issue but felt that physical education teachers believed this to be the case. Again, students seemed to be frustrated that their views were not considered by teachers. In addition, as Robin points out, there was also a feeling that teachers were not confident about the students' abilities to control and manoeuvre safely using their wheelchairs or crutches.

> "I'm not daft, I wouldn't go full pelt at someone, I know that'd hurt. No one would do that. I'm looking all the time to see where

> they are, everyone need to do that. I need to watch it and be more careful."
> (Robin)

Robin clearly indicates that he has a sense of responsibility and attempts to be particularly observant during physical education. He also suggests this responsibility lies with other non-disabled students as well, although this seemed not to be acknowledged by the actions of peers or teachers. From this perspective, it would seem that a medical model perspective (2.3.2) dominates, in which Robin, and other disabled students, feel personally responsible for the consequences of their disability.

Discussions in this section have focused on some episodes of exclusion from physical education. It is also important to note that even when physical education is offered to students, this does not enable full participation and inclusion. Indeed, I highlight later in this chapter the differing ways in which exclusion is common practice within the physical education experience.

4.4 CAPITAL THAT COUNTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION – *"It's [an] easy game cause I'm playing" (Adam)*

In this section, I continue to focus on physical education and school sport and extend discussions by exploring the nature of capital valued within this curriculum area. I pay particular attention to a number of contexts, including the values attributed to disability sports in physical education. As I indicated in chapters 1 and 3, there seems to be a tension between the notion of disability and a 'sporting body'. This section goes on to explore the ways in which focus group students understand their bodies in relation to their peers within physical education. Finally, I focus on school sports teams and discuss the ways in which different teams are valued more than others. I specifically examine the values afforded to the focus group students at St. Anne's Mount School who play in the Boccia team. This section draws attention to the variety of ways in which capital is valued within physical education and the limited extent to which many of the focus group students feel positioned in a positive manner.

4.4.1 Values attributed to disability sports in physical education

It is widely recognised that activities undertaken in physical education and sport carry with them value and status. Indeed, according to Bourdieu (1991), participation contributes to the social positioning of those engaging in such activities. The focus group discussions reveal a general feeling from all the students that a number of activities they undertake in physical education and school sport are not perceived in the same, or equal, manner as activities undertaken by other students. One of the contexts in which students most frequently highlighted a sense of inferior-activity status concerned their participation in some disability sports during physical education. Indeed, later I discuss the ways in which Boccia, and more specifically, playing for the school Boccia team, was considered by students, teachers and peers to have differing values attributed to this activity compared with other school teams.

Meanwhile, it is evident from the focus group discussions that when disability sports were engaged in during physical education, focus group students sometimes perceived these activities to have limited value. For example, at one of the focus group schools, disabled students had participated in table cricket during physical education. This opportunity was offered to the students instead of participating in cricket with other non-disabled students in the main physical education class. As Anne put it: *"We get to do table cricket not grass cricket"*. What was evident from the focus group discussion was that students were not given the choice to participate in 'grass cricket' or table cricket; rather they were told they would have to undertake table cricket. Although other students in the main physical education group were not given a choice, the focus group students perceived table cricket as a consolation and as having less value than playing *"proper cricket"* (Robin). Indeed, a number of the focus group students conceded that on some occasions they could understand teachers giving them alternative physical education activities to undertake. However, in the case of table cricket, the focus group students were unhappy with the alternative and at a loss to rationalise why they could not play 'grass cricket'. In the following exchange, the students identify a number of limitations to table cricket.

> Robin: "Have you seen the bat? It's for my baby brother not me!"
>
> Anne: "Baby balls too."
>
> Tom: "Well, there is some skill needed. The bat makes, it makes things tricky .... I just don't think we should do it in PE. Like I would say for me it's more of a fun thing, not proper exercise."

The reference to 'baby' illustrates that students perhaps considered table cricket to be inappropriate for their age and ability. Indeed, all of the focus group students indicated that they had, in fact, played 'grass' or 'proper' cricket previously and could not understand, or indeed articulate, why this opportunity was no longer available to them. The comment made by Tom during this exchange also suggests a feeling that this activity did not enable students to exhaust themselves in ways that they perceived they should within a physical education context. Indeed, if consideration is given to the notion of inclusion (Stainback and Stainbeck, 1990), it is also difficult to see how this experience enables students' educational needs to be met.

Aligned with concerns about the nature of table cricket as an activity were the circumstances in which other students became participants of this activity. Although only mentioned briefly, it is worth noting that a few focus group students were particularly annoyed when other students, who had forgotten their physical education kit or were naughty, had been *"sent"* to the table cricket group. Here, Robin recalls when Jeremy joined the group from the main physical education class.

> "Well, there was that time when Jeremy came in. For starters he'd be late. He said he'd been sent cause he'd got no kit. He messed round and just, well messed round for the whole time of it and then said he'd not be forgetting his kit again, for next week."
> (Robin)

In this instance, it seems that the table cricket group had other temporary members imposed on their table cricket lessons. The rationale for this extended membership was far from positive and instead was granted on the grounds of other students failing to adhere in some way to the rules or expectations of the main physical education class.

According to Robin, Jeremy dismissed table cricket as a game for *"Blue Peter badge winners"* and *"his gran"*. Although the students seemed to be annoyed by Jeremy's conduct in the lesson, they found it difficult to defend in any way the status of table cricket. Having said this, Robin was acutely aware of the broader implications their lack of defence may have on the attitudes of other students: *"Well it'll get round we play [cricket] with baby bats"*. Indeed, we have already seen how attitudes and opinions of peers can influence understandings of disability (4.2.2), and later I also discuss how notions of ability within physical education are also embedded within peer discourses (4.5.3).

Although table cricket, and as I discuss later Boccia (4.4.3), seemed to be disability sports perceived as holding less capital than other sports, there was one disability sport that focus group students perceived had more value attached to it by non-disabled students. Jane explained that last year the main physical education class had experienced three sessions of goalball. Goalball is a Paralympic team sport played with three visually impaired players on each team. All players wear blindfolds and the aim of the game is to roll the ball past the opposition defence and into the opponent's goal. A bell ball is used which enables the players to hear the ball as it approaches. The students at South Parade School believed this sport was particularly popular with many students.

> "We have played a blind sport, have you heard of it, goalball? Everyone played and I'd say it was a good success. It got called 'Don't Dodge', I don't know why. May be 'cause you have to stop the ball. I really liked it. My sight, with me having poor sight I'm like used to the way I see. Now everyone else found it a bit scary. Once you get going, then you, well I'd say everyone got into it." (Jane)

In this instance, all students, including non-disabled students, were given the opportunity in physical education to participate in goalball. It would seem from the arrangement discussed previously in relation to table cricket that all students were not given this kind of opportunity for this activity. Aside from the issues raised by students concerning the age appropriateness of table cricket, it may be that offering

this activity within the main physical education class serves to demystify the ways in which other students perceive this activity. The nature of the activities engaged in during physical education was not the only way in which students perceived they were sometimes valued less than their peers. Indeed, the discussion that follows focuses on the manner in which students understand and compare themselves to other students engaging in physical education.

4.4.2 A legitimate sporting body Versus a (dis)abled body

Central to the notions of physical education and sport is physicality. Indeed, it is a certain kind of physicality that is promoted and practised in physical education. For boys, this is often associated with aggression, prowess, competition and masculinity (Connell, 1995; Hickey and Fitzclarence, 1999; Light and Kirk, 2000), while girls are concerned with issues focusing on femininity (Oliver and Lalik, 2001) and conscious of presenting self to the gaze of others (Henderson, 1996). Importantly, the very nature of these understandings of self contrast with the ways in which dominant notions of disability are recognised and understood. Indeed, DePauw acknowledges the tensions between sport and disability, arguing that "…. sport, as a place where physicality is admired, has presented a challenge for individuals with disabilities and their active participation in sport appears as somewhat of a contradiction" (DePauw, 1997: 423). The tension, then, arises when 'disabled bodies' are expected to conform to the normalised practices dominating physical education discourse that continue to promote and value a type of physicality which is unobtainable to many disabled people (Barton, 1993). The importance of physicality and, in particular, differences in physicality were also prominent in the focus group discussions. Students often compared themselves to other non-disabled peers and talked about the consequences of this for their physical education experiences. As James explained:

> "Most of the boys are bigger than me and I'm not going to get that tall and they're getting bigger and in basketball I haven't got a chance. What its like, well, like I can't get the ball and they don't pass to me and they're bigger and faster and I'll run and try, I'm trying but, that's it, it's hard they're bigger than me."
> (James)

Tom also explains how he feels his physicality is unable to match that of his peers.

> Tom: "I'd say it's easier for everyone in PE."
>
> **HF**: "What do mean?"
>
> Tom: "I'm using, its all coming from one side [of] my body, when I throw, I use my strong arm. No power in the other, watch the others, you see they use both."

Here, the students clearly highlight the ways in which they perceive their physicality as not matching that of their peers. Barton (1993), DePauw (2000) and Davis and Watson (2002) have argued that disabled people are often measured against idealised notions of normality. It was evident from the responses of the focus group students that they, too, were conscious of the ways in which physical education continues to promote and afford credibility and value to those who match the normativity practised in physical education. At times, students expressed frustrations about their inability to attain the norms and standards that others were able to achieve. For Steve, it is clear he believes whatever amount of effort he exerts, he is not going to be able to work towards, or achieve, a level of competence recognised as reflecting a 'good' performance.

> "It doesn't matter how much I try, I'm not going to be as good as the rest of them. I get mad and I can't do well."
> (Steve)

Two of the girls participating in the focus groups also made comparisons with other non-disabled girls. The emphasis of these discussions tended not to focus on physical abilities and competencies expressed through physical education, but rather on other qualities related to femininity and the body beautiful (Vertinsky, 1992; Frost, 2001; Oliver and Lalik, 2001).

> "Some girls are really pretty, thin as ever, wear fashion clothes. In PE, Michelle and Grace show off, they want us to see what they

> are. They walk round like they are models."
> (Anne)

During the discussion with Anne, she recognised the notion of *"competing"* with other girls. This, though, was not in the sense of physical competencies within physical education. Anne considered herself to hold a lesser position than Michelle and Grace. She indicated that everyone wanted to be like Michelle and Grace but no one aspired to the kinds of physical capital that she holds, Anne commented: "*No one wants to be like me*". Indeed, the 'body project' (Shilling, 2003) for Anne seemed to have less opportunities for her reconstruction within the normalised criteria (Oliver and Lalik, 2000 and 2001) strived for by her peers. Anne's experience appears to affirm the view that "Young disabled people find it much more difficult to gain entry to the same symbolic territory" (Hughes *et al.*, 2005: 13) as non-disabled young people.

Although students made comparisons with other often non-disabled classmates, a few students recognised such comparisons carried little value and provided their own positive explanations of their performance. As James and Andy explained:

> "I get fed up, can't do with the races [athletics]. Coming last doesn't mean I'm slow, I'm fast but not as fast as the others!"
> (James)

> "I give myself a mark at the start and end of activity blocks. Fitness 8 and 9, I can't get much better!"
> (Andy)

Both these students have a more positive disposition more generally in relation to their disability, and it is clear they have been able to translate such positive meanings into their physical education experiences. However, the extent to which these understandings are recognised by other classmates seems to be minimal.

The discussions that focus group students had and the comparisons they made were not always restricted to conversations centring on their non-disabled peers. Indeed, between focus group students, particularly at St. Anne's Mount School, there were

also a number of exchanges where students made comparisons with one another. Later in this chapter I discuss a hierarchy in physical education between focus group students that was centred, in part, on their abilities in relation to one another. A discussion between Dave and Adam illustrates that, even when students make comparisons with each other, this also includes reference to non-disabled peers.

> "You [Dave] fit more in PE. You're better than me, the same as the others. You can run fast, it helps. I'm always slower. I try really hard but I'm a lot slower."
> (Adam)

In this explanation, Adam is comparing himself to Dave and clearly positions Dave with a superior physicality. Adam's comment also illustrates that he is making a comparison in a manner that locates Dave closest to the norm, or as he put it "*the same as the others*". This reinforces the normative views and the ways these are aspired to and seen as desirable. I acknowledge these kinds of understandings are not confined to, or specific to, disabled students. Indeed, a recent study by Bramham (2003) illustrates how boys often measure their competencies in physical education against their peers. However, what is important for the students in this study is the way normalised values seem to be imposed on all in physical education, and the affects that this has on the students who fail to match these ideas.

4.4.3 Playing for a school team

During the discussions with students at both schools, it was evident they recognised certain roles and responsibilities at school as carrying social and physical capital (Shilling, 2003). For example, being a 'prefect' or 'house captain' was considered by many of the students to be a privileged position only available to a small number of students who were "*good and popular*" (Ruth) even though, according to Dave, they may also be a little "*square*". Similarly, playing for a school sports team seemed to hold some degree of value and status. It would be far too simplistic, though, to suggest that students attributed all school sports teams with the same degree and level of status. Indeed, focus group students at both schools indicated that membership of the

(boys') football team was the most sought-after and recognised position to gain. As James indicates, the time during football team trials and the announcement of the team seems to be a discussion point for many students.

> "I don't know, I'm not sure why, you get talking about the [football] team. There's a big thing made of it. Mr. Evans puts notices up about the trials and he'll ask some of the boys to go .... The day the team gets put up it's mad, I'm not saying everyone but it's, well, by break you know who's in."
> (James)

The focus group students at St. Anne's Mount also seemed to be aware of the impact this kind of event had on other school staff. At times, a few students were annoyed by the undue attention and considerable credit school staff exhibited towards students in the football team.

> "Last year Martin Williams got in the [football] team. Mr. Griffin [tutor] told us all. It was like no one had ever done it before, he went on about it."
> (Dave)

Interestingly, one student also suggested the physical education teacher lacked any real desire or concern for him to progress in physical education because he did not participate in any high-status school teams, such as football.

> "Well, we're not the best and we aren't in the important school teams. If you're in one then .... You know its like Mr. Evans does the football team and he spends the lesson with the good players and he's not bothered about us."
> (Andy)

The continued concern expressed by many writers about the importance and emphasis placed on competition, team games (Talbot, 1997; Penney and Chandler, 2000; Jones and Cheetam, 2001; Penney, 2002) and elite development goals (Siedentop, 2002) is evident from the comment made by this student and is reinforced by similar views expressed by other students. Interestingly, the student mentioned earlier was in the

school Boccia team and, along with other focus group members, placed considerable value on being part of this team.

> "We had trials. But, and I know there weren't loads of us trying. But it's a school team. You have to go and represent the school. You have to go and play in competitions. It is a proper team. Everyone thinks it's easy to play."
> (Steve)

Although the students had a positive view of Boccia, they continually referred to their physical education teachers and the belief that these members of staff did not afford high status to this activity. The students did not, however, see all their physical education teachers in this way and believed Mr. Jones viewed Boccia positively.

> "The Boccia club is great. Mr. Jones coaches us. He thinks we're good, he tells us even if we play bad. It'd be good if some of the other teachers could see us playing. If we had a game then we'd show them, they'd be shocked."
> (Dave)

These students also believed that some of their peers perceived their membership of the Boccia team as having less status than other teams at the school. For this activity, it could be argued that the students believed the value of their physical and social capital associated with playing Boccia was not as great as that given to those students participating in other activities or playing in other school teams. Indeed, on occasions the students expressed considerable frustration at the lack of recognition afforded to Boccia and the indifferent attitudes of their peers and teachers. It seemed that although the focus group students wanted their participation in Boccia to have an 'exchange value' (Shilling, 2003), this was not the case. Their peers did not recognise Boccia as a legitimate activity through which relevant capital could be accumulated or converted.

Throughout the discussions relating to Boccia, most of the students adopted a social model perspective (Oliver, 1990 and 1996; Barnes, 1991) when discussing this perceived low regard for the sport (4.4.3). In this respect, they compared Boccia to

other activities played at school. They did this rather than focusing on the fact that it was the disabled students participating in this activity. One student suggested Boccia had less credibility and seemed to not be accepted by the wider school population because it was a 'new' school activity.

> "It's new for everyone. We *are* the first [group] to play [Boccia]. When we're in year 11 there'll be more playing. Everyone, like more people, will know about Boccia then."
> (James)

There seemed to be a belief that, over time, this activity would become more widely recognised at school. Indeed, the students seemed to think that changes to the composition and nature of capital in this field were possible, and that this would enhance the value and convertibility of capital associated with playing Boccia. However, for the time being, Boccia did not have the established popularity and value afforded to other school sports.

As already indicated, a certain degree of status seemed to be associated with playing for a school team, particularly the football team. What was also evident from discussions was the additional value attached to being the captain of a school team. In this context, James explained how having the role of a team captain could help to make you 'well known'.

> "Everyone knows who's the football and rugby captain. You get to know .... But not, most people don't know the Boccia captain."
> (James)

However, as the comment made by James illustrates, being the Boccia captain does not necessarily afford you this status. Having said this, within the small group of students that play Boccia, there seemed to be some kudos attached to being Boccia captain.

> [Speculating about who will be the Boccia captain for the next academic year]

Dave: "Next year, I think I'll be the captain."

Steve: "No way, it'll be James. He wins us the games. He can play, he's spot on. He'll be the captain."

Andy: "Yeah, James *is* captain material."

James: "Yeah, I'd like that."

This discussion illustrates how some social capital then could be attained. This, though, did not seem to be recognised within the wider field as a legitimate 'prize' for all to compete for. The following section discusses in more detail the notion of a legitimate participant within physical education and the extent to which capital could be gained or converted within physical education by the focus group students.

4.5 LEGITIMATE PARTICIPATION, GAINING AND CONVERTING CAPTIAL IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION – *"You can tell some of them, they don't want you to be there" (Steve)*

In the previous section, I considered a number of ways in which capital is valued within physical education and highlighted the limited extent to which focus group students believed they were positioned positively. In this section, I extend this discussion by considering the extent to which students perceived they were legitimate participants within physical education. As the discussion progresses, I highlight the ways in which students perceived the need to invest time and energy in dominant sporting activities. After this, I consider an informal hierarchy of 'ability' that seemed to be evident within (physical) education and explore the ways in which the students positioned themselves and others.

4.5.1 Legitimate participants or part timers in the field

Social practices within fields are bound, to a greater extent, by norms, customs and practices (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). Within the context of physical education, the focus group students were aware that various actions of their peers during physical education lessons influenced the extent to which they were

considered legitimate participants within the field of physical education. Some of these actions involved peer-led exclusion from physical education activities and serve to vividly illustrate an absence of 'cooperative' and 'affiliation' dimensions relating to Siedentop's (2002) educative goal to junior sport. Andy recalls a basketball lesson:

> "When we were playing basketball last week remember [Andy looks over to James], no one passed us the ball [James acknowledges this with a nod]. What can you do if they won't pass? No one would pass me the ball."
> (Andy)

In this instance, neither Andy nor James directly attributed their disability as being a factor contributing to this situation, and they both seemed unsure as to why their peers were not cooperating with them.

> "You can shout and shout for it. Shouting loud, you can shout like loud and you still won't. If I get it, I'll pass to Andy and we both get a go then, that's what I do. You know I get fed up of shouting and it's just the same. I don't get what it is."
> (James)

However, it was clear from a later comment made by Steve that although he perceived this physical capital positively (as he previously had when discussing the skills he had acquired to play Boccia), this value seemed not to be recognised by his peers. Indeed, Steve's comment illustrates a sense that his peers do not seem to even accept him within the physical education class.

> "I like doing PE but sometimes when we're with the rest [of the group] you can tell some of them, they don't want you to be there. It's not like I'm the worst. They think I am and that's what it's like all the time."
> (Steve)

According to Bourdieu, an individual will be judged on their ability to deploy the relevant habitus within a given field. Therefore, it may be that Steve's habitus places him at the margins within physical education, what DePauw (1997) describes as

'social' marginality. And even though Steve himself uses a normative comparison (being 'good' at physical education or being 'the worst'), and measures himself in what could be considered as a positive light, he believed he was still not accepted or recognised in this normative way by his peers. In part, it may be that the physical absence from the main physical education class that is referred to later (4.6.2) positions Steve, and the other disabled students, as 'part timers' within the field. Consequently, their social practice and ability to become 'endowed with the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1993) of the field seems to be adversely affected and is exhibited through their peers' lack of cooperation and affiliation within the class. Steve then interprets this lack of acceptance within physical education as relating to his peers' discriminatory attitudes and actions.

> "Cause of me arm and legs, I don't fit in. Well, this is what it is, what I mean is they [his peers] don't think that and they go on about it, like it's the biggest thing and its not. Cause like my arm doesn't make me the worst."
> (Steve)

In addition to peer-led exclusion, the focus group students highlighted name-calling and other put downs as actions by their peers that influenced their experiences of physical education. James, in particular, talked about name-calling during physical education.

> "Some of them call me. Well, I know, it's because of my frame and my walking. They're immature, that's what I think and I'm not bothered, they wouldn't like it, it's not nice and if they call you its not nice."
> (James)

Although James indicated that he was not concerned about this name-calling, a later comment was perhaps more telling about the way he felt and his reactions to this.

> "It doesn't make you feel good about yourself. I get on with things. I ignore them. I sometimes end up shouting and I told Mike his ears

> stick out [James laughs] and they stick out a lot. Let him see what it feels like to be [name] called."
> (James)

Here, James illustrates how he is able to respond to the comments made by Mike. Echoing the findings of Davis and Watson (2002) and Priestley (1999), James shows that he can mobilise verbal resistance and challenge the name-calling targeted at him. However, Steve was less vocal in his response to name-calling, suggesting, "*Yeah, I get it and ignore it. Let em think you can't hear. Let em think you're not bothered*". The name-calling and deliberate exclusion by peers from physical education activities are experiences that other young people also encounter (Groves and Laws, 2000; Brittain, 2004a and b). However, for Steve, Andy and James, these kinds of experiences may reinforce dominant discourses of disability that emphasize deficiency, lack, inability and 'otherness' (Barnes *et al.*, 1999; Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000).

4.5.2 Investing time and energy in valued activities

The experience of physical education exposes young people to a range of (sporting) activities, and although schools are bound by the National Curriculum (DFEE/QCA, 1999), the specific nature of activities offered, and indeed the pedagogy underpinning them, varies considerably from school to school and from teacher to teacher. In this study, it was apparent that at both schools, a number of specific sporting activities dominated. This seemed to impact on the ways in which students perceived these sports and the need to invest time and energy in them. At St. Anne's Mount School, football and rugby were identified as the key sports that the school had a long-standing reputation for promoting, supporting and valuing. The extract below demonstrates that Steve recognised this long-standing reputation.

> "My dad went to St. Anne's Mount and he's said when he was here rugby and football was sports the school had a good reputation for. I'd say its not changed and yeah I'd say its still rugby and football."
> (Steve)

At St. Anne's Mount School, these activities have developed a reputation and standing over time, and it would seem from other comments made by Steve and the other focus group students that they continued to hold value within the school. At South Parade School, the focus group students considered football, hockey and basketball as the main sporting activities the school was known for supporting. The attitudes of the focus group students towards these established and valued sports varied considerably. At St. Anne's Mount School, focus group students had been precluded at one point from participating in football during physical education (5.6.2). However, during this time, students still retained an interest in football and anticipated this would at least position them favourably in relation to the school's broader commitment to football.

> "When I couldn't play I was sad, mad as you could be. It was like they weren't letting me do something everyone at school's into. I was really fed up, I carried on playing at lunch and stuff and like wanted to be doing something everyone's into and so I carried on. I know some people take the piss but I don't care, football is football and it doesn't matter how you play."
> (Steve)

> "I'm like everyone, I love football and want to play. I want to play like kids at school and feel like I'm the same. It makes me feel good, feel like I'm like everyone."
> (James)

Although Steve and James both seemed to enjoy football, it is apparent from these comments that they also wanted to feel like they 'fitted in' with the kinds of interests of other students at school. In a sense, these students were using football as a means of demonstrating that they had similar interests and that they were the same as other students. There may have also been a desire through this interest to improve their social position (Robbins, 2000) through the accumulation of capital.

Rugby was also identified as a key sport at St. Anne's Mount School. However, the focus group students seemed to be less concerned to develop an interest in this activity. As I will discuss later (4.6.1), rugby was not offered to focus group students

during physical education. This seemed to prevent students from holding any level of capital relating to rugby that would have enabled them to feel a sense of association with the activity.

> "We don't do rugby and it's like a big thing, have you seen in the [entrance] hall there're rugby trophies from twenty years ago. I've never played so not got into it and I've not seen it on the tele. I don't know the rules. If I knew a bit more may be I'd get into it but no I'm not into rugby."
> (Adam)

As Adam indicates, it was perhaps not only the lack of insight gained at school but also the limited coverage he was exposed to through the popular media that contributed to his restricted awareness of this activity. Indeed, when the school was celebrating a recent tournament success, Adam, Andy and Steve all felt less able to contribute to these celebrations.

At South Parade School, the focus group students were less agreeable about investing their energies in sporting activities that were perceived as having school-wide value. As this exchange illustrates, Tom was an advocate of supporting school football teams while Robin seemed less enthusiastic.

> Tom: "I like to know how they're doing."
>
> Robin: "No, I'm not bothered, football's not my thing."
>
> Tom: "I'm into football so I like to know."
>
> Anne: "Me too, I like to know if we're winning."
>
> Tom: "You don't like football, I know you don't."
>
> Anne: "I said I like to know the results, then I know what people are on about. I don't look silly if someone's talking about them."

It would seem that the motives for investing, or not investing, time and energy in football differed between students. As I discuss later (5.2.4), Tom has a keen interest

in football during his free-time, so it is perhaps not surprising that he has some interest in the school football teams. Robin also engages in sport in his free-time but expresses less of an interest in school football. In Robin's case, he is committed to wheelchair basketball and the other activities he undertakes at a disability leisure club. Consequently, he considers basketball and other activities at the club to be the focal point of his sporting interests. Interestingly, Anne generally positions herself as not interested in physical education at school or sport in her free-time. However, she describes a small investment in school football results. Her motives seem not to be sports related but rather centred on gaining some degree of social acceptance, indeed social capital, from other students. Anne seems to think that if she can demonstrate this knowledge, she will be able to carry off a persona that reflects, at the very least, a marginal sporting interest. Other students at South Parade School – Jane and Ruth – maintain a disinterest in any of the sports, including those considered to be of value within the school. And unlike Anne earlier, they considered there to be no value in even presenting themselves as having a superficial interest in sport.

4.5.3 A hierarchy of 'ability' within the physical

Within society (Vernon and Swain, 2002), school (Holroyd, 2002) and different impairment groups (Deal, 2003), social hierarchies exist that distinguish individuals and groups of people. Such hierarchies are constantly re-negotiated in an attempt to accumulate, retain or convert different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1985). In this study, it would seem that students were well versed at articulating the positions they perceived they held. Students were also able to identify the position(s) others had allocated them and frequently made comparisons between themselves and other students. Indeed, it would seem that physical education provided a key site within school in which students were categorised according to an informal hierarchy. For some students, positioning within physical education may be far greater than that achieved within other spheres of school life. For example, here Andy discusses Tony and the highly regarded position he holds within physical education.

> "I'm not in his class cause like he's in the bottom one but like in PE he's one of the best, he's good at all sports and PE gives him a chance to feel good and feel like he's doing well. He's not very clever but everyone wants him on their team. People are nicer to him cause he's good at sport and he maybe has more friends." (Andy)

What this extract and others similar to this illustrate is that students can be positioned in very different ways within specific school contexts. Indeed, the focus group students identified three key curriculum contexts – 'academic', 'arty' and 'sporty' – in which students may be ranked. In the previous extract, Tony is considered to be '*bottom*' for most 'academic' subjects but '*one of the best*' in physical education. At South Parade School, Jane was generally positioned by other focus group students as "*very clever*" (Tom) and "*brainy*" (Ruth) and, in relation to physical education, Jane positioned herself as "*the worst*". This latter location was not disputed by the rest of the group but rather affirmed. Similarly, at St Anne's Mount School, Steve seemed to hold the intellectual high ground and was considered by the other focus group students in a similar manner to Jane. Students reacted differently to people they considered to be positioned favourably. This was particularly the case for students occupying elevated positions in all curriculum areas. Jane considered such students to be "*rare*", but she perceived those that were like this to be well-rounded people. This view was not shared by all focus group students; some considered such students to be "*not normal*" (James). As Holroyd (2002) found, to be perceived as excessive – out performing the 'norm' in a range of curriculum areas – was not necessarily a desirable position to hold.

Within a physical education context, I have discussed the ways in which students often felt positioned inferiorly to other classmates, either through their physicality (4.4.2), the nature of the activities they engaged in (4.6.1), or through the views of their peers (4.5.1). In these contexts, the focus group students were often left feeling that other non-disabled peers considered them to be at the bottom of the physical education hierarchy.

"I'd say in PE everyone thinks we're the worst, bottom of the class. That's how people think and they see we're our own little group and can't do everything the same and cause of that we're seen at the bottom."
(Tom)

Although other focus group students generally accepted this observation, there was also a concern to unpack even further, from their perspectives, a rather more complex hierarchy that did not merely reflect a simple division between the focus group students and the other non-disabled students in physical education. Within this hierarchy, it appears that traditional views of ability, combined with gender stereotyping, persisted. Indeed, at St. Anne's Mount School, there was considerable debate between students about the positioning they had between each other and in relation to other students in physical education.

Adam: "Well, out of us, Dave's the best."

Andy: "No you can't say that. Why?"

Dave: "Well, I'd say we're all better than the girls, have you seem them. Apart from Kristy Smith, they're all no good."

Andy: "Yeah, cause we are, we're boys."

James: "Em like I'd say Dave is the best, he can run like the others and can do pretty much everything and he's always the best when we do stuff."

Steve: "I'd say the sporty lads, then Dave, James, then us and then the girls."

Andy: "Yeah really we're like in the middle."

James: "Yeah, yeah, I like what you're saying Steve."

Dave: "Yeah, cause like I'm not as good as the sporty lads but I think I'm not bad."

Adam: "If you're in a chair that's better cause you can go faster, so they've got to be up there."

Steve's suggestion seemed to be received the most positively by other focus group students. Indeed, students seemed to like the idea of been positioned in the 'middle' rather than at the bottom. In addition, there seemed to be a consensus that, in fact, all the focus group students at St. Anne's Mount School were positioned higher than the girls in the physical education class. This seemed to also be seen among the students as an acceptable discourse to promote. At South Parade School, the boys also positioned themselves above the girls, and it is notable that this was unchallenged by the three girls at this focus group school.

4.6 EMBODYING DIFFERENCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE HABITUS – *"I don't have to do cross country" (Anne)*

In the previous section, I considered the position focus group students held in relation to their experiences of physical education. Indeed, for a number of students, this seemed to be inferior and presented as other and different. In this section, I proceed by focusing on the ways in which 'difference' is embodied within physical education through the habitus. In particular, I discuss how activities and spaces are regulated and how students were often given exemptions within physical education. This section illustrates how expressions of difference prevail in physical education and reinforce the marginal position of the focus group students within this context.

4.6.1 Regulating physical education activities

As indicated in 4.2, school is a regulatory site in which young people are controlled by different kinds of rules, regulations and practices. According to Kirk (2004), physical education is also a key site in which this regulation is evident. For the focus group students, the actual nature of the activities they undertook in physical education were regulated, often in different ways to those experienced by their non-disabled peers. For example, the focus group students recognised that they sometimes undertook different activities during physical education than other members of their class. Students described a range of activities they were, at times, excluded from undertaking, including football, cross country, volleyball, hockey, rugby and 'proper cricket'. Here,

Steve describes how initially he was offered a footballing opportunity and how later this was withdrawn.

> "I was told I could do football, I ended up doing fitness .... Yeah, well at first when it started [football] I got to do it .... then Mr. Smith said I needed to do fitness. That's what happened."
> (Steve)

In this instance, the main physical education class continued to experience football but Steve explained that other disabled students and himself were allocated time in the fitness room instead. For Steve, this situation was particularly undesirable. As I discuss in 5.6.2, after student and parental objections, football was offered to these students again. Adam and James were excluded from taking part in cross-country and volleyball.

> "The cross country, I don't have to do cross-country. Well since coming up [moving to the high school] I've not done it."
> (Adam)

> "…. and volleyball, that was last term wasn't it? We didn't do it [other students confirm]."
> (James)

Rugby was another activity many focus group students did not undertake during physical education.

> "We don't do rugby. We do gym or fitness. The class does rugby, they go on the fields out there."
> (James)

There seemed to be mixed feelings about whether students would like to do the activities that the rest of the class were undertaking. For some activities, students seemed unconcerned they were not getting opportunities to experience the same kinds of activities as their classmates. This was particularly the case for volleyball, cross-country and rugby. In relation to not experiencing volleyball, Steve commented: "*I've*

not done it so aren't bothered. I'm not bothered. I don't think I'm missing anything". Here, Steve has a relatively ambivalent view towards missing volleyball and seemed largely unconcerned by this situation. Jane was also not unduly concerned that she missed cross county; rather she seemed to be relieved that she is not required to engage in this activity. As she says: "*Well, cross country is bad .... I'm glad I don't do it*".

Interestingly, many of the focus group students indicated they would undertake these activities if they were part of their curriculum. However, they were also quick to suggest reasons why they perhaps should not have to do them. For example, James suggested that rugby is 'rough' "*Yeah, but its rough and you get hurt, Mr. Jones and mum say I don't have to. So I don't*". Similarly, a number of students considered cross-country to be far too strenuous. As Steve explains: "*The annual cross country is hard work. My mum sends a note in .... I get to watch .... help with the counting*". Interestingly, for James and Steve the differential experiences are legitimised by using the teachers' and their mums' views. Although James suggested he would like to participate in rugby, he seemed happy to accept that he did not do this activity. This illustrates, as Davis and Watson (2001) found, that young people happily comply and willingly accept the judgments made by others if they feel that they will benefit from the situation in some way. On this occasion, reasoning associated with not getting 'hurt' and 'hard work' were deemed by James and Steve as sound arguments for not engaging in these activities. Through the informal discursive practices of their parents and physical education teachers, the students unquestionably accepted as 'fact' that they could not play rugby or participate in cross country. In both instances, the students did not recall any instances in which the teachers explored other possibilities that would have enabled these activities to be more inclusive and instead were perhaps seeking to 'preserve' and 'protect' (Siedentop, 2002).

In addition to identifying a number of specific sports that were not undertaken, some of the focus group students also highlighted occasions where they were initially included in skill practices and drills but were then later excluded from game-play

situations.

> "Hockey's hard, I use one crutch and have a [hockey] stick in the other. I use a light [unihoc] stick .... with the games I sit out, my stick would get a right battering."
> (Tom)

In this instance, some adaptation has been considered in order to include Tom in this activity. However, it is also evident that consideration only seems to have been given to the skill practices and Tom simply 'sits out' during the game play situations. He later suggested he finds this boring.

4.6.2 Regulating physical education spaces

Spatial differences were frequently encountered within physical education by all the focus group students and sometimes emerged as a consequence of the exclusion from the activities discussed previously. In some instances students talked about being separated, placed in completely different locations to their main physical education class.

> Anne: ".... Sometimes go in the Annex Hall."
>
> **HF**: "What's the Annex Hall then?"
>
> Anne: "The old one, we got a new one, err last year. Annex Hall is smaller and old."
>
> **HF**: "Who goes to the Annex Hall with you?"
>
> Anne: "Let's see, Jamie, Jason, yeah Nicola, Mark."
>
> **HF**: "So that's you, you and a few others. Why do you all get to go to the Annex Hall? Why do you?"
>
> Anne: "We're the SEN group."

This kind of experience was not confined to the students at this school. Indeed, other students from St. Anne's Mount School recalled experiences similar to that

highlighted by Anne. At St. Anne's Mount School, the alternative location often offered was the fitness room. The extent to which any 'benefits' relating to 'inclusion' can be accrued from this kind of regulation appear to be minimal, and in this case it is likely that the outcomes will be the opposite to what DePauw (2000) anticipated.

Even when students were in the same location as their classmates for physical education, there were still many occasions when students felt they were located on the periphery of the main class. In a few instances, such as that of Tom discussed in the previous section, this positioning could be as passive observers, sitting and watching classmates from the sidelines. In Tom's case, he was directed by the teacher to do this and took a passive role. However, Ruth describes how she sometimes takes on this passive peripheral role herself in the physical education lesson.

> "When I don't want to do no more, I sit out. They [PE teachers] don't bother me, I'm not lazy. I look at the others doing stuff, when I look at ehm I can see who's doing it right. No one bothers me."
> (Ruth)

For Ruth, she seems to be willingly positioning herself at the periphery of the physical education lesson. However, in doing this she also describes how she remained focused on the class and the activities they were undertaking. In contrast, Tom seemed not to be given any choice about sitting out during hockey games and found this experience boring. Other focus group students who actively participated in physical education talked about their positioning at the corner of the room or having a marginal role within the group. Jane recalled how she and Gemma would sometimes strategically position themselves away from their classmates and teacher.

> "Me and Gemma pair up together .... we keep away from them. For one, I like having space and Gemma reckons Mrs. Ford doesn't come over as much."
> (Jane)

For other students, their marginality was evident in game-play situations (4.5.1), particularly in team games. One student, Steve, talked about feeling *"pushed out"*

during football games. Similarly, Robin was often frustrated that teachers and classmates assumed he always wanted to be the goalkeeper.

> "Robin'll go in goals .... I can't be bothered no more so do. Mr. Roberts said I'm good but that don't mean I have to be goalie all the time."
> (Robin)

According to Siedentop (1994 and 1998), instructional models such as Sport Education provide authentic learning experiences because participants can experience a range of roles played out in a sports club setting, including officiating, playing, managing and score keeping. Indeed, even though Sport Education was not being practised in either school context, some of the focus group students talked about a number of the roles used as part of this model. For example, a few students sometimes got opportunities to support the teacher. James said he was his teacher's '*coaching assistant'*. However, following discussions with James, it seemed that this role was slightly exaggerated: "*Mr. Clarke calls me his assistant coach. I get equipment, put cones out, bibs that sort of stuff*". James indicated that he enjoyed having this responsibility but at times felt that he got to do less physical education himself. He also suggested that other classmates called him the "*PE dog's body*". We can speculate that the teacher may have anticipated that this role would be meaningful and considered so by others. However, this seems to be far from the case and, as James indicates, no additional social or physical capital was attained by having this role.

For students that were supported by other staff, such as Learning Support Assistant (LSAs), there seemed to be mixed feelings about working with these members of staff. Some students had a good relationship with their LSAs. Ruth said: "*Mary is like a friend*". However, for other students the pedagogy implemented by the LSAs sometimes seemed to reinforce a sense of peripheral participation.

> Anne: "I do PE with Mary [LSA]."
>
> **HF**: "So who else is in the class with you?"

> Anne: "The whole class are there, me and Mary partner up and do our own thing."

> **HF**: "So what's Mary like as a partner?"

> Anne: "Good, okay. I'd like to be with Jess [friend] but I'm not allowed."

For Anne, then, any desire to be more involved with her friends during physical education seemed to be constrained by the decisions that school staff had made.

A few other students also expressed concerns over, or questioned, the actual support given during physical education lessons by their LSAs. In one instance, a student suggested that it was him that helped his LSA in physical education: "*I'm better than Mrs. Jones. I help her*!"

4.6.3 Getting exemptions

School and physical education are regulatory sites and are bound by rules and regulations. For some of the focus group students, it was evident from their experiences that they sometimes were given, or indeed negotiated, exemptions. As mentioned previously, students gained a range of exemptions during physical education lessons, including 'sitting out', working on 'special projects' and engaging in alternative activities. On some occasions, these experiences proved to be frustrating for students. However, at other times this was not the case, and students were able to identify other associated benefits of not participating in certain physical education activities. Indeed, it was clear that sometimes students saw this as positive, and they even felt that this gave them an additional degree of social capital over other members of their class. Here Steve talks about not playing rugby.

> "We all get changed and then go to the gym, gym over there. I know Rob yeah and Simon yeah hate rugby and they've asked to come in but they're not allowed. Its just *us* going up to the gym." (Steve)

Similarly, Ruth recalls how other classmates consider her to be 'lucky' because she does not have to participate in cross country.

> "I don't have to take a note for cross country. They [PE staff] know I didn't do it. If anyone else wants to sit out they need a note. Some of them say I'm lucky cause I sit out."
> (Ruth)

Another student suggested it was an advantage not to have to undertake physical education outside in cold weather.

> "We get to stay in when its cold. We're not out there, the others have to go out, some of them don't like it, like Simon, Simon says it's unfair."
> (Andy)

In relation to the experiences of Steve, Ruth and Andy, it is clear that some of the other students recognised they were been treated differently than the rest of the class. As we saw earlier, Simon perceived this situation as 'unfair' and ensured that Andy was aware of his feelings. The 'unfairness' for Simon related to the focus group students not having to do rugby or go outside during the cold weather. Interestingly, this was one of the only occasions when the focus group students recalled their peers questioning in any way the differential practices in physical education. The issue at stake here for Simon was not about Andy's absence from the 'main' physical education lessons; rather it was about the nature of the perceived preferential treatment given to Andy. In this instance, it may be that the discursive practices supporting this segregation serve to normalise the absence of the disabled students from the main physical education lessons. Simply, it could be that the habitus of participants within this field evokes a disposition that positions the disabled students as <u>not</u> being treated differently, as it is the norm for the disabled students not to always be in the main physical education lesson.

It was evident from the focus group discussions that exemptions were not only imposed or granted by teachers and parents but were also actively sought by students. Indeed, the ability to gain exemptions seemed to be a skill that a number of the students were able to effectively negotiate with teachers. From their prior experiences it seemed that students had heightened their awareness of the kind of exemptions

teachers would be willing to offer. Over time, a few students had extended the nature of these exemptions.

> "One time it'd be hard to get inside. If you work at it, you can get more. Now I only have to say it's cold and I'm in."
> (Andy)

This incident not only demonstrates the capacity of young disabled people to be active social agents (Priestley, 1999; Kelly, 2005) but also illustrates the strategic nature of Andy's thinking that can be mobilised in order to work towards an outcome Andy desires.

For a few students, the negotiation with staff and parents involved stretching the truth about how they may be feeling. As James indicated: "*I got out of PE one time. I told Mr. Smith my leg was hurting. I got out of it*". It would seem from the focus group discussions that the students themselves were more perceptive than perhaps their teachers to one another's feelings.

Ruth: "If I'm not feeling well I get excused [from PE]."

Jane: "You get excused all the time."

Ruth: "Yeah, if I'm not well."

Jane: "Come on we sat out the other day …. You were okay."

Ruth: "No I was feeling like I didn't want to do PE. So not so much sick but feeling not right, not feeling up to it. I can't help it if Mrs. Richards doesn't ask too many questions."

Jane: "You were pulling a fast one."

Whether Ruth was feeling unwell or not is not the issue at hand here. Instead, it is the way(s) in which other students perceive Ruth's absence from physical education. In this exchange, Jane challenges Ruth's argument as she considered Ruth to be purposefully missing physical education. It is likely that other students may also form

their particular views about this situation and this could lead to, or reinforce, negative perceptions of Ruth.

4.7 EMBODIED IDENTITIES, FRIENDS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

– "Mr. Woodford kept putting Adrian with me" (Robin)

In this chapter, I have already highlighted the significance of peers within the broader school experience (4.2.2) and, more specifically, within physical education (4.5). Within these settings it is evident that, as a number of authors have suggested (Jenkins, 1996; Adler and Adler, 1998; Jobling *et al.*, 2000; Smith, 2000), peers contributed to a variety of social experiences and, in part, influenced the focus group students' sense of self. In this section, I explore friends in the context of physical education and discuss how the structure and practices of physical education sometimes impinge on friendships, promote new friendships and, in some instances, create a culture of 'helpers'. Although this section reveals that the experiences of students in relation to peer friendships vary, it also highlights the influence that peers have on focus group students' experiences and sense of self.

4.7.1 School friends and physical education lessons

As already indicated (4.2.6), the spatial regulation of students impacted on their experiences and this also contributed, in different ways, to relations with peers and friends during physical education. For a few focus group students, physical education was a source of much frustration as it was structured in a way that meant they could not work with their friends, or as Anne put it, "*get to have a laugh with me mates*". The circumstances leading to this separation from friends were varied. However, complaints from some students centred on the way in which they felt deprived from an important social opportunity to engage and interact with their friends. As Tom indicates, the nature of the separation from friends in physical education was distinctly different from in other curriculum areas.

> Tom: "My best friend at school is Jack. We do most lessons together, some PE we don't."

HF: "Why not in PE? Why is PE different then?"

Tom: "Cause I can't be with him, sometimes I'm with John [support worker] or doing different stuff. I don't think its fair. I'd like to have more choice but don't. Jack is my friend and it'd be good to do PE. I'm not saying we don't, like the other week we did but that's it. Jack goes with Simon, not me."

During the discussion that unfolded, it was clear that Tom was concerned that Simon may "*take over*" the friendship between himself and Jack. Indeed, within this physical education context, Tom believed that the extra time that Simon was with Jack could enable stronger alliances to be formed that may impact on Tom's broader friendship with Jack.

Another student also felt isolated from his best friend, even when they were part of the same physical education lesson. However, the isolation seemed to be self imposed and understood by both parties as the arrangement for physical education lessons. In a sense, for Steve and Matt, this practice had become 'second nature' (Bourdieu, 1977) and not working together during physical education was not questioned in any way.

"My friend's Matt but we don't partner [in PE]. I'm not as good as him and he's one of the best. He goes with Colin they're in basketball and football team. I'm not bothered cause like Matt is my friend and we do other stuff and I don't have to do everything, I get on and do my own thing in PE. I'm not bothered I couldn't keep up with him, you seen him running he's the best."
(Steve)

This comment illustrates that Steve is able to rationalise, to some degree, why he is not a 'suitable' partner for Matt during physical education. What this comment also affirms is the way in which Steve embodies normative comparisons and measures of ability based on performance (Evans, 2004). Unlike Tom earlier, Steve seemed self-assured that his friendship with Matt would not be affected by this arrangement. Indeed, it seemed that other tastes and interests between Steve and Matt were similar; both enjoyed ICT and were members of the ICT club. This influenced a common bond that Steve believed would contribute to their sustained friendship.

A few of the focus group students talked about being "*put with people*". It seemed that, over time, this interaction had been the catalyst for the development of some friendships. Indeed, Holroyd (2002) also found that the school environment, to some degree, regulated interaction between students and that this subsequently influenced friendship networks. This kind of formal cultivation of friendships was also evident in this study, as is illustrated by Robin's comment:

> "Mr. Woodford kept putting Adrian with me. We got on and now we go round together. Last year I went to his birthday party." (Robin)

Robin explained that Adrian was initially a reluctant partner but that the discovery they both were basketball supporters seemed to enhance their friendship. At times, though, Robin and Adrian's desire to discuss the latest football results seems to have gotten them into trouble in physical education lessons and, according to Robin, the physical education teacher recently split them up in order that they could work more productively.

A number of the focus group students also talked about friendships that had been formed informally and for reciprocal benefits. For example, I have already discussed how peer exclusion from break-time activities lead to a number of focus group students getting together and becoming friends. As indicated in 4.2.2, this friendship grouping served as a means through which these students could engage in activities they mutually enjoyed, including football. It is also evident that for Tom this grouping provided an outlet from which experiences of 'exclusion', 'opportunity' or 'gossip' could be shared and discussed between the group. In this context, this group served as an important source of support (Morrow, 2001) and an arena in which issues of concern could be explored.

As Ungar (2000) argues, a close association with a group is likely to promote an environment in which advice is more likely to be sought by group members. Indeed, this seemed to be the case for this group. Tom recalled an occasion when Kevin had

been bullied and the group had discussed the strategies that Kevin could adopt in order to resolve this situation. At other times, discussions focused on the ways in which school rules could be manipulated to gain some kind of advantage or, as we will see later in 5.6, to resist dominant discourses and other discriminatory practices. Another important dimension of the group was to gossip about topics ranging from dating, spots, football, pocket money and teachers. According to Tom, the bond between this group seemed to be strong and likely to continue for some time. In part, it seemed that a number of features held the group together, and Tom was keen to ensure I understood this was not only related to their disability, although it seems from the following account that this was an important dimension.

> "We are good friends .... We are disabled but that doesn't make us friends. We've got stuff in common. Sometimes we do talk about disability stuff. You know that's not it, that's not why we get on, we've got other stuff in common".
> (Tom)

At St. Anne's Mount School, Andy, Dave and James were part of the Boccia team and this experience together seemed to have formed close friendships.

> Andy: "Boccia is a big thing for me, Dave and James. It is like I want to win and we talk about playing. I don't know what we'd talk about if we didn't play."
>
> **HF**: "Would that be bad then?"
>
> Andy: "Oh yeah, I don't know what I'd do and I wouldn't have them as friends."
>
> Dave: "I'd be your friend."
>
> Andy: "Well yeah I know but what I'm saying is maybe we wouldn't have gotten to be friends. So playing Boccia made us friends."

As Adler and Adler (1998) suggest, it seems a shared interest, in this case playing Boccia, was an important catalyst that brought the boys closer together.

The development of friendships was not the only concern of focus group students. Indeed, Adam preferred the occasions when he was not working with his friends as he felt this limited the opportunities his "*real friends*" would see him "*been really really bad at it* [PE]". For this student, the spatial regulations formally imposed were a means of screening his friends from what he believed would expose his lack of ability within physical education. To some degree, it may be that Adam did not want his friends to judge him based on his 'performance' in physical education as this may adversely affect the ways in which his skills or attributes (physical capital) are perceived. Indeed, such scrutiny may also affect Adam's status (social capital) within his friendship group. Ultimately, if Adam does not embody the appropriate habitus, and performance in physical education may contribute towards this, then his friends may reject him as part of the group (Donnelly and Young, 1988).

4.7.2 Physical education as a site where you don't have friends, just 'helpers'

At times, some of the focus group students' reflections relating to friends within physical education were centred on the idea of *helpers*. This was apparent in relation to two distinct kinds of helpers. First, rather than talking about friends, some students talked about other students that helped them. Second, students also talked about adult support workers and sometimes associated these individuals as friends.

As Watson and Priestley (2000) found, non-disabled students sometimes take on the role of helper or guide with their disabled peers. This was also evident from the discussions with focus group students and seemed to be talked about more by focus group students from St. Anne's Mount School. As already indicated, even when the essence of the questioning was concerned with friends, some students chose to actually discuss their helpers.

> "I'm friends with Jess, Jess helps in PE. He's pretty handy to have about. Jess gets bats, balls, helps me round, he works hard for me." (Adam)

In this instance, no mention was made of the helper actually exhibiting any qualities

associated with friendship. However, Ruth's description centred on this helping role and also friendship, although from this comment it seems that this friendship is not to be reciprocated by Helen beyond the physical education context. Indeed, it later transpired through informal discussions with a teacher, that Helen had in fact been allocated to Ruth as part of the volunteering programme Helen was enrolled on.

> Ruth: "Helen is nice she goes with me in PE, she's my friend in PE, she's nice to me and helps me do the skills and stuff right."
>
> **HF**: "Helen sounds nice, is she your friend when you're not in PE?"
>
> Ruth: "Yeah, she says hello to me and that."
>
> **HF**: "Do you see her a lot then when you're not in PE."
>
> Ruth: "Well yeah, well no, she's with her friends."

In another instance, a teacher allocated a non-disabled student to this role.

> "When I had tennis I had to go with Will. I know Will was told he'd got to help me. He wasn't happy, didn't like it. I mean I didn't like it cause I don't know him and he moaned cause he didn't get a good practice, I didn't like tennis."
> (Anne)

It would seem in this case that Anne and Will were not pleased about this situation and both had negative feelings about the situation that was imposed on them.

A number of instructional models in physical education promote, amongst other things, the idea that students should embrace different roles within a physical education lesson, including the roles of coach and leader (Siedentop, 1994 and 1998). However, it would seem from the responses of the focus group students that this essentially involved them adopting the role of participant and their non-disabled peers taking on the role of supporter or helper. The exception was James who, as we saw earlier (4.6.2), was considered by his peers to be the "*PE dog's body*". Indeed, in this

instance, it would seem that this role was seen as somewhat of an inferior job to take on that had little capital associated with it. Many writers have advocated models such as co-operative learning and Sport Education (Siedentop, 2002) as a means of engaging in an authentic sporting experience. There was no indication from teachers at either school that they were following Sport Education or co-operative learning instructional models, but it is interesting to note that some dimensions of these instructional models relating to leadership and support were evident during the focus group discussions. However, in the instances where helping roles were evident, it seems that the focus group students were located in an inferior position. Indeed, it would seem that these formal or informal arrangements of 'helping' led to the stereotyping of disabled students (Watson and Priestley, 2000). In this respect, what seems to be the good intentions of the non-disabled peers and teachers may actually be reinforcing negative views of disability.

4.7.3 Interrelationships between friends and other dimensions of life

In the previous sections I have discussed the ways in which the focus group students configure their friendships within school and, more specifically, through physical education. I have illustrated that school friendships seem to be an important site of social interaction, cohesion and affiliation. Interestingly, only three of the students expressed any kind of connectivity between school friends and other friends beyond a school context. Indeed, for the majority of the focus group students, school remained a discrete site in which 'school friends' were located and did not move into other dimensions of life.

> Tom: "I've got Robin, Mike, Colin, Jeremy, they are my main school friends."
>
> **HF**: "When do you get to see them then?"
>
> Tom: [laughs] "At school."
>
> **HF**: "Just at school, no other times?"
>
> Tom: "Just at school yeah. I'd say they're good friends but I can't

see them away from school, I live too far away."

For some disabled students who do not attend a school close to their home it has long been recognised that extending friendships beyond a school context can be difficult and is often affected by the geographic distance between home and school (Watson and Priestley, 2000; Cavet, 1998). Indeed, this seemed to be the pattern in this study for all the focus group students living a distance away from school. For a few students, occasional trips or meetings were organised with school friends. These seemed to be generally constrained to special occasions such as birthdays or holidays – what Stebbins (2005) describes as 'project-based' leisure – and relied on the willingness of parents to allocate time and volunteer to support the travel arrangements.

Ruth indicated that she was not concerned about not seeing other school friends in her free-time and suggested that she placed more value on 'home friends'. Other focus group students did not share Ruth's view and seemed to be aware that they were missing opportunities to see their school friends. They often recognised this during conversations they had at the start of the school day, when discussions focused on what students had done the previous evening or over the weekend.

> "I like to hear what's been going on [over the weekend], like Chris and Daniel go out a lot and do a lot of stuff and they'll talk about it and I've not got that."
> (James)

Although, like James, a number of students considered they missed these kinds of social opportunities, it was clear they also had found strategies to compensate for the lack of close contact. This included telephoning, texting and emailing their school friends (Castells, 1996). Indeed, Jane saw her email exchanges with school friends as a chance to practise her computer skills and compared these with her friends.

Of the four focus group students (Dave, James, Robin and Tom) later discussed (5.2.4) who participate in free-time sport, only Dave indicated that he had a school friend that

was also a friend at the cricket club he attended.

> "I've always played cricket there, I was in first and then Geoff started the season after, yeah it was. We went to different school so didn't know each other at school. Now we're at Anne's Mount so he's one of my friends. I like it cause we play [cricket] and can have a laugh and then I see him at the club."
> (Dave)

In Dave's case, as Donnelly and Young (1988) and Holroyd (2002) have pointed out, shared experiences, in this instance cricket and school, seemed to draw Dave and Geoff together. Geoff's friendship at school also served to positively contribute towards Dave's sporting identity as a cricketer as, "*he tells everyone we play cricket together*".

Robin and Tom both indicated that they were school friends and it also appeared that they wanted to extend this friendship beyond this context. However, the geographic restrictions highlighted earlier limited any further developments of this friendship. Having said this, they occasionally came together as sporting opponents. During these meetings there seemed to be other players controlling their interactions and this resulted in both students only minimally acknowledging each other. As this extract illustrates, Tom found this situation difficult to manage.

> Tom: "We're in different teams and I have to play against him."
>
> Robin: "Yeah we do, it's a laugh."
>
> Tom: "I feel a bit funny. I don't like it, he's my friend."
>
> Robin: "What do you mean, your team wins?"
>
> Tom: "Yeah we do and we've got a good team and, but you know what they're like they don't like us talking."
>
> Robin: "Well they know we're friends and at South Parade. Don't worry about it Tom."
>
> Tom: "Yeah but you know what happened last time you got told

not to talk to me."

Robin: "Well yeah but that means nothing."

For most of the focus group students, school friends were an important means of social engagement and interaction. Sometimes artificially imposed means influenced friendships. Amongst students there were only limited opportunities to see school friends in free-time contexts, although there seemed to be a desire on the part of many students to have more contact with specific school friends. As such, and unlike the findings of Holroyd (2002), school friends seemed not to be as significant within other spheres of life, particularly free-time.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on students' understandings of their school experiences and, in particular, physical education and school sport. Although the focus group students had different views and opinions of school and physical education, it is clear that for these students school is an important site for understanding and positioning themselves in relation to others. It is evident from the focus groups that discursive practices promoting negative notions of SEN and disability prevail and inform the habitus of students. In relation to physical education, it seems that a certain type of habitus is valued and many focus group students were not able to deploy this kind of habitus. For the focus group students, difference is embodied within physical education and serves to reinforce wider practices within school that distinguish disabled and non-disabled students. The experiences highlighted in this chapter have focused on those within the context of physical education and school sport. This chapter has also attended to the ways in which these experiences are positioned within a wider school experience. Opportunities to engage in sport can also be considered beyond a school setting. Building on the findings from this chapter, the following chapter explores sporting and other associated experiences within a free-time context.

Chapter Five

MEDIATORS OF SPORTING TASTES AND INTERESTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on school and physical education experiences and explored the ways in which the identities of young disabled people are constructed within these contexts. Although school has been identified as an important site for identity work (Davis and Watson, 2001), there are also other dimensions of life that impact on young people and their understandings and sense of self. This chapter builds on the previous and extends the focus beyond a school and physical education context and considers the ways in which a number of other mediating factors contribute to the construction of embodied identities. In doing this, I primarily attend to Research Questions (4) and (6) and focus on the family, free-time sport, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people, and the ways in which these mediators contribute to the students' understandings of self in relation to physical education and sport. Throughout this chapter, I continue to draw on the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu, particularly the notion of habitus, capital and practice (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002). The chapter reveals a complex interface between school, physical education and other spheres of life in which the body is in the social world at the same time that the social world is in the body (Bourdieu, 1990a). In this context, the chapter illustrates the many different ways in which normative values associated with the body and conceptions of performance prevail and are ingrained within the habitus of the focus group students. Having said this, for a few focus group students it is apparent that the family habitus has been disrupted in ways that construct disability and sport positively.

I begin by considering the notion of free-time and the ways in which this dimension of life is configured by the focus group students. Although free-time is constructed as the opposite of 'school time', it is also apparent that the focus group students recognise this time is regulated and constrained. After this, I examine the position of sport within

free-time. It seems from the data generated that for some focus group students, sport does not feature in their free-time experiences, as Andy suggests: *"I'm not bothered about sport, never been"*. A number of students highlighted their dislike of physical education as a key factor influencing their non-participation in free-time sport, including school sports clubs. Indeed, there appears to be little connectivity between physical education and free-time sport. The chapter proceeds by exploring the ways in which sporting interests were expressed by focus group students. In particular, a few students participated in disability sports and others positioned themselves as 'sports fans'.

The chapter then moves on by focusing on the family as a mediator of sporting tastes and interests. Cote and Hay (2002) and Kay (2002) have suggested that the family remains a key context in which such interests are developed and nurtured. The discussion begins by examining the ways in which family discourses of disability are embodied within the habitus and expressed through positive and negative constructions of disability and understandings as non-disabled. After this, I consider the family as a resource or constrainer of sporting interests. I explore how adults within the family have an important role to play in supporting students to get to and from activity opportunities. Sometimes, though, this support is not available, or creates tensions between siblings, and consequently affects engagement in a range of activities, including sport. The family also has the capacity to ingrain its interests onto siblings. I discuss the extent to which focus group students were able to reproduce and disrupt the family sporting habitus. Furthermore, I consider the degree to which focus group students were able to generate and convert valued capital within the family. The family is not the only site in which sporting tastes and interests are developed. Indeed, a range of other mediating stakeholders shape the tastes and interests of young people. The chapter moves on by discussing the part that physical education teachers, other disabled people and sporting role models play in shaping and mediating the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students. I then explore the interrelationship between these mediators and sites of participation.

As the chapter proceeds, the focus remains on the key mediating factors of the family, free-time sport, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people. However, within these contexts, consideration is also given to Research Question (2), specifically the ways in which capital is acquired, retained and converted. In particular, the chapter explores the nature of capital valued within disability sport clubs and the extent to which students perceive they possess relevant capital. In contrast to experiences within physical education, it seems from the data generated that those students who participated in free-time disability sport were generally positioned positively within these contexts. However, the 'exchange value' (Shilling, 2003), or indeed recognition, of this capital within a school or physical education setting was minimal. This, though, did not seem to restrict positive constructions of their sporting identity. This chapter concludes by considering the ways in which the focus group students mobilise their agency in order to challenge and resist the experiences they encounter within physical education and free-time sport. I discuss how students appear to be adept at negotiating situations and resisting discriminatory practices and experiences by challenging, in different ways, family, friends and teachers.

As the chapter progresses, it is clear that the mediating factors I discuss are multifaceted and often interrelated. Although I attempt to address these individually, it is inevitable that there are overlaps in the discussions as these factors converge within and between each other. This perhaps serves to illustrate the complexity of the social world young people live in and the diverse influences that overwhelm them as they develop their understanding of self and their identity.

5.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SCHOOL SPORT DURING FREE-TIME – *"I do a bit of sport down the park with me dad" (Steve)*

The chapter commences by considering the broader notion of free-time and the ways in which focus group students understand this concept. More specifically, I explore how students delineate between free-time and other periods, and the nature of the activities that occupy free-time. After this, I focus on the position of sport within free-

time tastes and interests and consider two specific contexts of sporting engagement, participation through school sports clubs and dedicated disability clubs (including leisure and sport clubs). The data reveals that for the majority of focus group students, active participation through these contexts is not part of their free-time experiences. Having said this, for a small number of students, dedicated disability clubs (leisure and sport) seem to be key outlets through which active sporting tastes and interests are expressed. At the end of this section, I also explore sporting interests as expressed through identifying as a sports fan and consider the extent to which students considered this to be a legitimate means to convey a sporting taste and interest.

5.2.1 The regulation and configuration of free-time

Free-time is considered by some to be time in which people are 'free' to engage in a diverse range of activities of their choice. However, as Haywood *et al.* (1995) and Zuzanek (2006) highlight, the notion of free-time is more complex than this and many influences contribute to the nature of an individual's free-time experience. In a similar manner to the school context (4.2), a 'regulatory' dimension of free-time was acknowledged by many of the focus group students and manifest in relation to a relationship with 'school time', 'after-school' clubs and 'duties at home'. First, the school calendar was articulated as an important mechanism through which free-time could be mapped and seen as opposite to *'school time'* (Ruth). Tom describes free-time in this way: *"My free-time is when I'm not at school .... at night, weekends, big summer holiday"*. Similarly, James and Adam also consider free-time in this way suggesting:

> James: "Free-time is when we're not at school. If you think about it we're at school a lot."
>
> Adam: "No, we don't come on Saturday and Sunday. Any time but nothing to do with school."

What is evident in this exchange and other comments made by focus group students is the significance that the temporal dimension of school has on the way in which free-time is recognised.

Second, there was some debate between focus group students regarding the position after-school clubs had in relation to free-time. Indeed, the physical proximity of these clubs to school led some students to conclude that these opportunities were part of 'school time' and, as such, could not be considered as free-time. As Andy put it: "*Well you're still at school and with teachers, that's not free-time*". In addition, although not related directly to any of the focus group students, it is worth noting that a few students recognised that some students 'had to go' to after school clubs as part of the arrangements put in place by parents. In these instances, it was acknowledged that this situation was not an option freely selected and, therefore, could not be considered as free-time. However, for the focus group students in this study that did attend an after-school club, these were deemed as essentially free-time because the students wanted to attend and participate.

Third, it is evident from the data generated from the EMA-AD and subsequent focus group discussions that some episodes of time away from school were in fact not considered as free-time because they were activities that were imposed on students by others. For some students, chores, homework and personal hygiene were perceived in this way. Robin, and indeed a number of other students, indicated that these kinds of 'duties' were expected and required in order to 'get on' within the sphere of the family. In this sense, students seemed to embrace certain activities as part of their 'practical sense' (Bourdieu, 1992). As Robin indicated: "…. *to get on you have to do them, you know they're part of your routine*". The focus group interviews and EMA-AD revealed that many students perceived these activities as compulsory and typically indicated this in their EMA-AD as 'have to do'. Although students recognised these activities as embedded within their everyday routines, there was some debate about the fairness, and indeed appropriateness, of having to complete these kinds of activities. However, for other students, the prospect of accumulating economic capital either as pocket money or in the form of other rewards (DVDs, CDs, clothes) seemed to lessen the inconvenience associated with completing these tasks.

Another issue emerging regarding the notion of free-time concerned the autonomy and

choice attached to activities undertaken. In this context, most of the focus group students talked about the activities in their EMA-AD and selected 'wanted to do' to as activities that they felt they had more control and choice over. Having said this, there was also a recognition that free-time activity choices were not open ended and that sometimes the desire to engage in a particular activity would not become a reality.

5.2.2 Positioning sport within free-time tastes and interests

Young people, it has been suggested, have busy lives and negotiate complex leisure interests (including sport) within their free-time (Hendry *et al.*, 2002). According to a number of writers, sport is increasingly featuring within the lifestyles of young people (Brettschneider, 1992; Roberts, 1999). However, for a few of the students in this study, sport had no part in their free-time and little was said about sport in relation to family or friends. As Jane suggests, "*Sport is not something I do [in my free-time] that's all there is to say. Who would want to?*" For Jane, there was a less-than-enthusiastic feeling towards physical education and school sport and it also seemed that sport had a minimal role within her free-time experiences. Similarly, Andy and Ruth's EMA-AD revealed the absence of any sport-related activities during their free-time. This pattern was affirmed during the focus group discussions.

> "No I don't do sports in my free-time, I do like in PE but not other times. I don't have interest like some people they go crazy about it. I don't go crazy."
> (Andy)

Ruth shared Andy's sentiments and seemed at a loss to understand the commitment and enthusiasm some people exhibit towards participation in sport. Ruth commented, "*Oh, no I don't do sports, I don't see the point, there's no need, why do it?*". For both of these students, it would seem they have limited interest or engagement in free-time sport. Indeed, their lack of sports and active leisure participation is aligned with the findings of previous research (Penney and Evans, 1995; Simeonsson *et al.*, 2001; Sport England, 2001; Murray, 2002) that suggests young disabled people participate less and undertake a narrower range of activities than their non-disabled peers. For

these young people, it would seem that their position affirms the 'invisibility of disability in sport' (DePauw, 1997) in which disabled people are essentially absent from the practice of sport.

A number of other students also had little to say about their own free-time sporting interests and instead focused on sports undertaken by family members. For example, Steve discussed his father's experience of rugby.

> "I do a bit of sport down the park with me dad. We go down, do passing, tackling. Dad plays for Forest Gate, when he was young he was really good, played for the county and went to France."
> (Steve)

Although Steve positioned his free-time as "*I don't do sport*", it is clear from this comment that Steve was informally involved, to some degree, in rugby. When pressed, Steve was adamant that he did not wish to participate formally in a club setting like his father. As I highlighted earlier (4.6.1), Steve also indicated that he did not want to play rugby during physical education lessons. However, he seemed happy to play with his father in the park because "*my dad spends a lot a time with me and we figure out how to do stuff*". This situation seems to contrast with rugby at school, where there was no indication by students that teachers, or support staff, had worked in any way to consider or adapt rugby-related practices and game-play situations.

Andy also talked about sport in relation to a family member, his mother. As Harrington (2006) found, the pattern of focus group discussions generally centred on the sporting activities of fathers. Indeed, this was one of the only occasions when any of the focus group students mentioned the sporting interests of their mothers.

> Andy: "I'm not sporty, like I'm not bothered about sport, never been. Mum's really into netball. She played at school, never stopped. She plays Saturdays, sometimes I go and watch."
>
> **HF**: "Do you like watching?"

Andy: "Well no, it means I don't get to see the tele and then we go shopping."

Andy indicated in his EMA-AD that the time spent watching netball was something that he "*had to do*", and it seems from this exchange that during this time he would prefer to be watching the television rather than watching his mother playing netball and then going shopping.

In contrast to these experiences, a number of focus group students positioned sport firmly within their free-time tastes and interests. Tom and Dave often discussed specific sports.

Tom: "My mum says I'm mad about football."

HF: "Is she right?"

Tom: "Oh, yeah I am. I play all the time, like watching, keep up with the local league, a bit with the Premiership."

Robin: "You got relegated last season."

Tom: "Yeah, we had a bad year, we will do better."

This exchange affirms the commitment Tom has towards football and, indeed, the breadth of his interests as a spectator and player. It is also interesting to note that other focus group participants, in this case Robin, seemed to be aware of Tom's football interests. Indeed, it transpired during the focus group discussions that Tom's nickname is 'Footy Tom' and that this name is often used by a number of his close friends. This also illustrates the importance that football seems to have on Tom's, and indeed his peers', construction of himself. To some extent, the use of this nickname also afforded Tom recognition in the form of social capital for the interest he had in football.

At St. Anne's Mount School, Dave was also keen to express his enthusiasm and commitment to cricket: "*I'm a big cricket fan, I play all the time with my brothers*".

Like Tom, Dave recognised other people associated him with cricket.

> "My mum goes on about me been able to play cricket before I could walk .... When I was a baby I was given a proper bat. I've played all my life."
> (Dave)

Although slightly embarrassed by his mother's reference to when he was a baby, Dave believed this continued commitment, over a long period of time, demonstrated he is in fact "*serious about cricket*". For Tom and Dave, the family seemed to be an important social arena in which these sporting tastes and interests were developed and nurtured. This issue is discussed in more detail later (5.3.3).

Another issue to emerge from the discussions with Tom and Dave was the distinction they wanted to make between themselves and other people who may not have a 'serious interest' in sport. Dave explained that he anticipated a friend of his, Kevin, would not "*stick it out*" and remain a cricket enthusiast. In contrast, Tom and Dave presented themselves as 'serious' and their sporting interests seemed to be an important part of their identity. Perhaps what this comment also shows is that young people may, from time to time, change their tastes and interests. This was certainly evident from the discussions with a number of focus group students who recalled how they had "*in the past*" (Andy), to use Cote and Hay's (2002) notion, 'sampled' a range of activities, including sports. However, their interest had lessened, or circumstances had changed, and this had ended their participation in a particular activity. There are a number of distinctive contexts in which sport may be engaged (Fitzgerald and Bass, 2007), including after-school sports clubs, mainstream or dedicated (disability) sport clubs, broader leisure clubs and informally with family or friends. The following sections consider these different contexts and explore the extent and nature of participation by focus group members.

5.2.3 The relevance of school sports clubs to students

Out-of-hours learning has become an increasingly significant context in which a range of opportunities are provided for young people. As part of out-of-hours learning, school sports clubs have been identified as having an important role to play in extending, enhancing and enriching the experiences of young people (DfES, 2005). As already indicated, there was some debate between focus group participants regarding the position that after-school clubs had in relation to free-time. However, those students in this study that attended an after-school club considered this to be part of their free-time. Interestingly, only a few of the focus group students indicated that they attended an after-school sports club. At St. Anne's Mount School, four of the focus group students played Boccia and occasionally attended after-school Boccia sessions. As Andy describes, these sessions are usually strategically planned before competitions.

> "…. sometimes we do Boccia after school, mostly like when we're getting ready for a competition. The extra practising does help."
> (Andy)

Unlike other school sports teams, the Boccia team did not train every week. As the discussions unfolded it became apparent that students were aware of this distinction and articulated a number of reasons for this situation. Logistical problems relating to travelling home after clubs seemed to be a key issue. In addition, students were aware of the unavailability of a regular space to practise and play Boccia, as James explained:

> "Mr. Jones has been trying for ages to get the gym, problem is it's used Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Monday netball, Tuesday basketball, Wednesday badminton, Thursday fitness. We should have got it this term but didn't. The [dinner] hall is okay but it'd be better in the gym …. We need a proper space."
> (James)

As I have already indicated, James is a keen Boccia player and frustrated at the absence of a regular weekly after-school Boccia session/club. He was particularly

annoyed that other sports "*got a space*" but Boccia did not. Although James was pleased with the occasional after-school Boccia opportunities, he was far from happy with the space used to practise: "*The [dining] hall is for lunch not sport*". Indeed, it may be that the lack of regular after-school Boccia and playing in the dinner hall also served to reinforce the inferior value and marginality that other staff and students seemed to afford to Boccia. In this case, attending the club, or indeed playing for the school Boccia team, did not "appropriate social energy" (Bourdieu, 1986: 241).

For some of the focus group students, the lack of interest or enthusiasm for physical education was cited as the key reason for not attending school sports clubs. As several commentators have argued, it would appear, for these students, that physical education is not promoting any kind of desire to engage in lifelong activity (Kirk, 2002). As Anne put it: "*I don't like PE so why'd I want to do more?*". Similarly, Ruth also perceived a relationship between physical education and after-school sports clubs and, like Anne, her experiences and views of physical education shaped the view she had of any after-school sports-related opportunities.

> "I have to do PE there's no way I'd do more after [school]. I don't want to do PE so why would I stay later? No way."
> (Ruth)

It has already been noted (4.3.2) that Anne and Ruth dislike physical education and it is probably understandable that they do not wish to engage in any after-school sport. However, some students who had more positive views of physical education did not attend any school sports clubs. There seemed to be a number of reasons for non-participation. First, Steve had another interest and consequently attended the club accommodating this interest.

> Steve: "I go to the ICT club, lunch and after school. I want to do it so I do."
>
> **HF**: "What about any other clubs, any sports ones?"
>
> Steve: "No, I like IT most, I get one."

For Steve, the IT club enabled this interest to be developed further and he indicated he particularly enjoyed the opportunity to mix with other students and staff with similar interests. Also evident from Steve's discussion was that he was only able to attend one after-school club. This meant that on occasions when the Boccia team came together for after-school practices, Steve was absent from these Boccia sessions. Indeed, I discuss later (5.3.2) that arranging transport home following after-school clubs was sometimes problematic and, for some students, restricted their opportunities to participate in more than one after-school club. Meanwhile, for Steve it was clear during the focus group discussions that the prioritisation of the ICT club over Boccia practices was considered rather negatively and an issue that reoccurred during a number of focus group discussions.

> [Talking about Boccia practices]
> James: "We're all there 'part from Steve, he won't come."
>
> Steve: " Yeah, I am I go to the lunch-time practices. I don't miss them."
>
> Dave: "Yeah, but like after school's when we need you."
>
> Steve: "I know but I'm at lunch and you know I can't after school."
>
> Dave: "You can, you do IT. If you do that you can do Boccia."
>
> Steve: "I can't I can't do both."

Both Dave and James interpreted Steve's absence from the after-school practices as a lack of commitment to the Boccia team. Indeed, Steve was acutely aware this was an ongoing issue that Dave and James and the other Boccia players persistently raised. It also seemed to affect Steve's ability to accumulate further physical capital within the Boccia team, as he suggested, "*I mostly get picked last, they don't like me not training*".

Another issue that emerged from the focus groups related to school sports clubs was a belief that after-school sports clubs were elitist. For example, Tom suggested that

football is his favourite activity in physical education and I discuss later the importance of football in Tom's free-time. Even though football was a central feature in Tom's life, he did not want to go to the after-school football club because of concerns about the elitist nature of this club:

> Tom: "I like football a lot, if I could play all the time I'd be happy."
>
> **HF:** "Do you play after school?"
>
> Tom: "Yeah, with me brother and Dad".
>
> **HF:** "What about a school club then?"
>
> Tom: "No I can't go, no."
>
> **HF:** "Why's that then Tom?"
>
> Tom: "I can't go I have to be a good player. I'm not bad, better than me brother, not as good as the boys in the [football] team. The [after-school] club is for them. I'm not good enough to get in the team."

From this exchange, it is clear that Tom believes he is not eligible to attend after-school football because he is not in the school football team and, therefore, does not possess the prerequisite capital (Bourdieu, 1985). Supporting the finding of MacPhail *et al.* (2003), Penney and Harris (1997) and Smith (2004), a number of other students also referred to a perceived high-performance dimension required to access a school sports club. Students mentioned 'high performance', 'high standard', 'talented' and 'best in year' as the qualities associated with someone participating in after-school sports clubs. The focus group students also did not consider their physical capital positioned them favourably in this way. During the informal discussions with the coordinating teacher at South Parade School, it was suggested that all students could attend any school sports club (Fieldnotes 21/02/04). However, it was also acknowledged that even though this was the case, staff perhaps had more to do to encourage students with different abilities. Furthermore, it was recognised that there were a few staff leading after-school clubs who were driven by a desire to succeed at

county and in other school sport competitions and perhaps focused their energies on these outcomes rather than the interests of a wider range of students.

Echoing the findings of previous research (Sport England, 2001; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a), broader issues relating to transport arrangements also restricted some students from attending any kind of after-school club. Indeed, all of the students in this study (apart from Dave) had regular local authority organised transport, either in a mini bus or taxi. For Adam, I have already discussed that travelling in a mini bus made him feel different and he seemed to perceive this as a signifier of his disability (4.2). Other students also suggested that transport arrangements were restrictive. As Steve explained: "*I have to get the bus at 3.45*". Even when family members agreed to collect students, this still meant students were not able to access their choice of opportunities. In this instance, Jane had to decide between a number of opportunities.

> "Mum picks me up on Wednesdays [after drama]. We had a talk and she said she'd pick me up one night. This is the first time. I decided what to do, I'm glad I picked drama. I like IT and chess, Mum would go mad if she had to pick me up more."
> (Jane)

For most of the focus group students, after-school sports clubs were not accessed and remained a sphere of school life that they did not experience. Indeed, it was only the Boccia players (excluding Steve) from St. Anne's Mount School who experienced limited and infrequent after-school sports opportunities. However, some students did engage in sport through clubs and organisations not associated with school. These experiences are discussed in the following section.

5.2.4 Dedicated clubs for disabled people and developing a taste for disability sport

Young disabled people can potentially experience sport through a complex range of networks and organisations. Indeed, in addition to the 'mainstream' organisations supporting non-disabled people, there are also many dedicated disability organisations providing opportunities specifically for disabled people (Fitzgerald and Bass, 2007).

Three of the students in this study experienced sport through this kind of dedicated channel. Two of these students attended 'leisure' clubs specifically for young disabled people. According to James and Robin, these clubs provided opportunities to engage in a range of activities, including sport.

> Robin: "At Riverside Leisure I get to do art, music, sport, computers all stuff like that."
>
> **HF**: "What do you do the most?"
>
> Robin: "Sport and computers. I pick what I want and do it. Mostly sport and computers."

It seems from the discussions with James and Robin that sports-related activities featured significantly during their time at these clubs. Robin was particularly keen to talk about the sports he does at Riverside Leisure.

> "The sport I do is bri, most weeks [wheel]chair basketball and athletics. I've had a go at [wheelchair] rugby, climbing, tennis, they're all proper sports for people in chairs."
> (Robin)

Robin indicated that these sessions were "*better than PE*" and suggested that because these activities were specifically for wheelchair users, instead of 'walkers', he consequently did not feel like he was competing or playing unequally matched opposition. James also indicated that he preferred to participate with people experiencing similar impairments.

> James: "On a good night there'll be six, seven frames and two or three wheelchairs. We're all the same like in a chair, frame and that's fair like we're all the same."
>
> **HF**: "How's that different than PE then?"
>
> James: "Well, like in the big class mostly able bodied kids, like a couple of wheelchairs."

HF: "Which do you prefer, which is better?"

James: "At the club it's a lot more competitive, even like practising we all want to get better and like we'll work. Like if you don't, you won't get better for games and that."

What is interesting about this comment is that James highlights competition as a quality associated with his enjoyment of the sports-related sessions at the club. Indeed, for Robin and James, 'enjoyment', 'success' and 'competition' (MacPhail *et al.*, 2006) appear to underpin the sporting experiences they had in these leisure club contexts. As I indicated in the previous chapter, a number of writers have expressed concerns about the emphasis given to competition within physical education (Jones and Cheetam, 2001; Penney, 2002). However, in this instance, James responds positively to this competitive challenge and, unlike his physical education experience, seemed to feel included and affiliated (Siedentop, 2002) to this group of young people. It is not clear, though, from the discussions with James what exactly is contributing to his positive outlook. As James suggests, is it the opportunity to participate with people experiencing similar impairments, or does he in fact mean people with similar 'abilities' (Evans, 2004)? A number of critical questions emerge from this experience. Why does James prefer the activities he undertakes in this setting? How different are these experiences from those he undertakes in school physical education? Is the pedagogy of the coach different to that of the physical education teacher and, if this is the case, in what ways is it different?

The third student, Tom, engages in a sports-specific disability football club. According to Tom, the club meets once a week, although he only attends every three weeks. The sessions incorporate training followed by a game. In addition, occasional fixtures are made with other teams. Tom's involvement in this club was not evident in his EMA-AD but during the focus group discussions he was keen to ensure I knew of this interest. As Tom put it, "*I rate it as number one, it's my best thing*". A key frustration for Tom seemed to be his inability to attend all the club sessions; he wanted to play every weekend. However, the logistics of travelling twenty miles to the club, and other family commitments, precluded Tom from attending more regularly. For a number of

students, the family was seen as a key resource for supporting travel to and from different free-time and after-school opportunities. Later (5.3.2), I discuss this issue in more detail.

Meanwhile, as a consequence of attending these dedicated disability clubs, James, Robin and Tom had all experienced competitive disability sport. Unlike the other two students, James also experienced competitive disability sport (Boccia) that was instigated through his school (4.4.3). Each of the students seemed to enjoy these competitive opportunities and Robin, in particular, had high ambitions, suggesting in relation to wheelchair basketball, "*I'll go to the Paralympics one day*". It is clear from the focus group discussions that these particular students had some understanding of the competitive opportunities, and player pathways, available within disability sport. However, this was not the case for all the focus group students. A few found it difficult to conceptualise the notion of disabled people competing in organised sporting events specifically for disabled people.

Tom: "I did the 80 meters and got a silver, next year gold."

Anne: "You got silver, I don't believe it. You're really slow. You don't do sports day."

Tom: "No, no this is all disabled athletics."

Anne: "I don't see it. If I was in it I'd come first then."

Tom: "Well no actually you'd be in a different race, you'd be with wheelchair users not me."

Anne: "I've not heard of this, so it's like a proper competition?"

In Anne's case, it is interesting to note that she, along with other focus group members at South Parade School, had engaged in a number of disability sports (table cricket and goalball) during physical education. However, Anne and Ruth had essentially perceived these activities as "*made-up games*" (Anne) rather than legitimate sporting activities played competitively. This also seemed to be the case for a few students at

St. Anne's Mount School, where Boccia was played competitively. Indeed, Dave, Steve and Adam were not aware of the other kinds of disability sports James undertook and, like Anne earlier, seemed to be intrigued to find out more about these activities.

At both focus group schools, it is encouraging that students have been exposed to disability sports. However, it also seems to be the case that students need further support from school staff in order to better understand the range of opportunities and competitive outlets available, either through disability sport or mainstream networks. This, though, would require staff, including physical education teachers, to have insights and knowledge of disability sport themselves. It would seem that currently this is a gap within the professional development of many physical education teachers (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2004; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a). Without such support from school staff, it is difficult to see how young disabled people are going to make the transition from school physical education to community (disability) sport participation and lifelong physical activity. This task will, of course, be complex in its undertaking and, in addition to the prerequisite knowledge previously alluded to, staff will also require a certain degree of sensitivity relating to students' understandings of themselves and their disabled identity. For example, although during the focus group discussions Dave was interested to learn about disability sport player pathways, he was also keen to position his interests in sport firmly within the context of mainstream sport. This was the case even though Dave is a member of the school Boccia team. In general, Dave was more enthusiastic to discuss his cricketing interests and associate himself with this mainstream activity rather than Boccia.

> "I don't do disability stuff, I do normal sport. I feel I belong there; I've gone for ages since I was seven. I know everyone, what goes on, I can see myself there. I feel pretty normal, I'm part of the group, I've got a lot in common."
> (Dave)

Also apparent from this comment is the reference on several occasions to 'normal' and an emphasis placed on 'fitting in' at the cricket club. As a participant within a

disability sport (Boccia) and mainstream sport (cricket), it would seem that Dave affiliates himself more closely with the mainstream cricket setting.

The nature and context in which the focus group participants engage in sport varied considerably between students. Indeed, for some students, such as Ruth, Andy and Jane, active participation in sport did not seem to constitute any significance in relation to their tastes and interests. Sport, though, can also be experienced as a spectator or fan. This dimension of the focus groups' sporting experiences is discussed in the following section.

5.2.5 I'm a sports fan

As Holroyd (2002) indicates, active participation in sport is not the only way in which young people express their tastes and interests for sport. Indeed, a number of the focus group students indicated they were sports fans or spectators. In contrast to active participation in sport, there seemed to be more positive responses to aspects of the focus group discussions that centred on being a sports fan or spectator. Indeed, this dimension of sporting interest seemed to be an important context in which sporting tastes and interests could be positively expressed. This expression of sporting interest also provided opportunities for cultural capital associated with sports-relevant knowledge to be articulated. For the majority of the students, there was a belief that most people are sports fans of at least one team. As Anne put it, "*Everyone's a fan of England*", and Tom suggested, "*all my friends have got a football team*". Similarly, James provided a thoughtful rationale for this widespread interest and enthusiasm for sport.

> "[Sport] is on tele all the time, like it's always on, it's like big news in papers, mags, tele, on the net. It's good cause most of it's football and you get to know stuff quick. I'd say even if you're not into it you will because it's what you see all over the place."
> (James)

According to this account, and those given by other students, it seemed to be inevitable that young people are exposed to sport, and particularly football, through

their contact with different forms of the media. Within this 'pervasive' (Holroyd, 2002) media field, young people are presented with images, views and perspectives that can influence their sense of self. It would seem this context has shaped, to some degree, the ways in which students wished to be presented in relation to being a sports fan or spectator. Interestingly, only one student from each focus group school challenged the commonly heard view that everyone is a sports fan. Indeed, Ruth and Andy both chose to position themselves as "*not into any sports*" (Ruth) and "*no watching for me, I don't like sport at all*" (Andy). In both instances, these students were met with a sense of disbelief from other focus group students that they did not consider themselves sports fans. In response to Ruth, Tom suggested, "*I don't believe you don't support anyone, come on there's got to be one team*". In choosing not to conform to, what seems to be a recognised norm, it may be that Ruth and Andy were perhaps also forgoing the opportunity to acquire any cultural capital related to positioning themselves as a sports fan.

A few students expressed their interest as a sports fan in general terms: "*Yeah I like watching it*" (Adam) and, "*I like any sport on tele*" (Dave). Other students were much more specific about who or what they supported and expressed this through an affiliation to a particular sport, team or sportsperson. For example, Anne suggested she always supports Tim Henman during Wimbledon; Steve was planning to support Great Britain during the forthcoming Olympics; and a number of students highlighted their favourite football or cricket teams. For a few students that did not hold a strong commitment or interest to active sports participation, it may be that expressing an interest as a fan or spectator was an attempt to legitimise and position themselves as holding an interest in sport. However, to merely assert an interest as a spectator or fan, and to not hold other attributes, such as a keen participant or 'good' performer, appeared not to enable students to accumulate what was considered legitimate capital. Indeed, during the focus group discussions at both schools, there seemed to be attempts by some students to demonstrate a "*true commitment*" (Tom) as a sports fan, rather than just "*messing at it*" (Tom). Similar to Holroyd (2002), it seemed that some degree of prior interest, reflected over time, was necessary and, without this,

commitment may be questioned. On this occasion, Robin is interested to find out if Anne actually plays tennis herself.

> Anne: "Yeah, I support Tim, one year I'd like him to win it [Wimbledon]. I watch him every year, he'll be lucky and do it, I know he will."
>
> [Debate between students as to whether Henman will ever win Wimbledon]
>
> Robin: "Are you any good?"
>
> Anne: "Before my accident I used to play and was okay."

Aside from getting teased for supporting Tim Henman, Tom was also keen to establish if Anne had the accompanying knowledge base, cultural capital, to be a supporter. Tom asked a range of questions including, "*What was he seeded, where did he come, did he play doubles, what's his world ranking*"? During this barrage, Anne was given little time to respond to these questions. In this instance, it appeared that Tom was using his questions as a way of conveying to the group his broader sporting knowledge and asserting what he considered to be his cultural capital. At St. Anne's Mount School, Dave and James also seemed to take the lead when contributing to similar discussions and, like Tom, it was notable that both asked more questions to Steve relating to his sporting interests.

It would seem, then, that for Tom, Dave and James, the focus group discussions provided the opportunity to express their tastes and interests in sport and, as such, to affirm sport as constituting a significant part of their identities. Indeed, to be a sports fan was just one of a number of ways in which they articulated their interest in sport; I have already discussed how free-time interests for these students encompassed sport. Here Tom, for example, emphasizes the importance of spectating as well as participating in football.

> "When I say I'm into sport I'm talking about watching like as well. Mostly footy on the tele. At home I've got SKY so get to see all the games. Tele is good cause you see different angles, player cam, replays. One day Dad's going to take me to Pride Park. Half the time the commentators don't know what they're talking about." (Tom)

Tom also later highlighted watching his brother play as another important dimension to his sporting interests.

Within the context of spectating, there also seemed to be debates between students about what kind of spectating held the greatest value. For example, watching on the television was considered relatively accessible to all students and, therefore, seemed to be valued less than spectating a 'live game' at the ground. Having said this, distinctions were also made between watching a local team and a professional team.

> Robin: "I watched me Dad playing [football], he's really good, scored a goal Sunday."
>
> Tom: "Yeah, I see my brother playing all the time. My dad's going to take me to Pride Park. Now that's a big thing like to go and see a game like that you can't do that every week. We watch em on the tele, dad's been to loads of games. You can show proper support when you're there."

In this context, Tom's view is that attending a professional game is far more important than watching a local team play and represents further confirmation of his commitment to sport.

This section has focused on the contexts and circumstances in which the focus group students in this study incorporated sporting tastes and interests into their life. As part of these discussions, it has been noted that family members can contribute to the nature of sport experienced. In the following section, I move on and specifically explore the family. In particular, I consider the ways in which family habitus shapes the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students.

5.3 FAMILY HABITUS – SHAPING AND MEDIATING SPORTING TASTES AND INTERESTS – *"My Mum got me into basketball, she found out where I could do it and pushed me to go .... she really wanted me to go" (Robin)*

Having considered the position of sport within the context of free-time, this chapter continues by focusing on family discourses of disability and considering the ways in which students embody these discourses through the habitus. I then explore the family as a resource and consider the ways in which the family can serve as an enabler and constrainer of sporting tastes and interests. After this, attention is given to the ways in which the focus group students reproduce or disrupt the sporting tastes and interests of their family. Indeed, for some students, disability sport seemed to be a significant sporting interest that they and their family embraced. At the end of this section, I explore the ways in which capital is generated and converted within the family (through sport).

5.3.1 Embodying family discourses of disability within the habitus

Aside from school, the EMA-AD and focus group discussions revealed that the students spend a significant amount of time with their family. Indeed, a number of writers have repeatedly found that young disabled people spend more time, when compared with their non-disabled peers, with family members (Anderson *et al.*, 1982; Jobling *et al.*, 2000; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003b). This pattern of social relations seems contrary to the broader views of other writers (Miles *et al.*, 1998; Wyn and Dwyer, 1999), who have argued that there has been a decline in the significance of the family. More importantly, it has been suggested that this change in family relations has also impacted on the extent to which the family now contributes to young people's understandings and sense of self. It would seem from the discussions with the focus group students in this study that the family remains an important social arena in which understandings of self are constituted and constructed. In Bourdieu's (1998) terms, the family is a key site in which dispositions of the habitus associated with behaviour and attitudes are ingrained within young people's sense of self. In this study, it is particularly important to consider the way(s) in which the family influence how students understand, embrace and respond to disability.

As I have already discussed (4.2.2), within a school context it seemed that the notion, or more specifically, the naming, of 'disability' was commonplace and students, in differing ways, freely used this discursive category. For some students, this also seemed to be the case within family circles. As Anne explained, her mother and father often instigated family meetings to talk about Anne's operations. Indeed, unlike the majority of parents in Kelly's (2005) study, it seems that Anne's parents openly discussed issues of disability with Anne and her siblings.

> "Since my accident I've had six operations and like Mum and Dad have talked to Beth and Sam about em. I'd say we're all okay and open 'bout it. Mum says we all have to face up to my disability, it's not just my problem it's the family's."
> (Anne)

Although Anne welcomed these kinds of open discussions, she was also somewhat irritated that they essentially focused on "*the bad stuff happening to me*". Anne recalled a range of issues that were discussed during these meetings, including her anticipated length of stay in hospital, likely outcomes to the operation, rotors for visiting, arrangements for when back at home and changes to chores for her sisters. From Anne's account, there seemed to be a largely medicalised (Barnes *et al.*, 1999) focus to these discussions as they centred on her operation, rehabilitation and arrangements for her care.

Anne was also aware that these episodes in hospital and rehabilitating at home created, albeit for a short time, considerable disruption to the whole family. This issue is discussed further later (5.3.4). Also evident from Anne's earlier comment is the sense that her family, in this case her mother, is presenting Anne's disability as a 'problem' for the whole family. In this respect, the family seem to be 'dealing' with Anne's disability and there seems to be little recognition, from a social model perspective, of the responsibility that broader society has for disability (Oliver, 1990 and 1996). Interestingly, Anne's relations with her sisters also seem to be affected by the arrangements that were essentially imposed by their parents (Rogers and Hogan, 2003). As Anne put it: "*I get loads of grief off them [sisters] cause they have more*

work". Anne's frustration with this situation was that she was not part of the negotiation process for allocating work and sometimes felt able to continue with a number of chores but was not given this opportunity. Having said this, the intentions of Anne's family seemed to be positive, even though she did not necessarily agree with the focus and outcomes of these discussions.

For a few of the other focus group students, the behaviour and attitudes of family members were conceived in ways that seemed to promote a positive family habitus towards disability. For Robin, this is manifest in a positive outlook towards attempting activities for the first time.

> Robin: "It's like my dad he always said I can do anything I want and my disability can't stop me. Yeah, like I've been climbing."
>
> Ruth: "You can't climb Robin."
>
> Robin: "Yeah I've been climbing, so I can. Cause I have a chair it doesn't mean I can't do things. My mum and dad have always got me doing things. My dad says 'if you want to do it, you've got to do it yourself'. Like I'll have my own place one day and they won't be there so I have ago at everything. It's other people that are the problem not me. You know the worst thing to happen is like I fall out of my chair."
>
> Ruth: "I still don't know how you go climbing."
>
> Robin: "Listen I don't have to be walking on my legs to go climbing, you just don't get it."
>
> **HF:** "Okay guys I think Ruth was just wondering what kinds of changes are made so you can climb."

Two important points emerge from this exchange. First, it is evident that, over time, Robin's father and mother have promoted what seems to be a social model perspective of disability (Oliver 1990 and 1996) through the dispositions of the family habitus. Consequently, Robin himself conveys a disposition that centres, as he puts it "*other people*", responsible if he is not able to do things. The second issue emerging from this exchange is, as I have already discussed (4.5.3), the lack of awareness between

students about one another's abilities. In this instance, Ruth is making stereotypical and ablest assumptions about someone who uses a wheelchair.

Kelly (2005) found negative constructions of disability by some family members. This was also evident through the comments Ruth made regarding her stepfather's reactions to her disability.

> "My stepdad calls me 'special', like 'come on special'. He says he's been nice to me but Stephen [brother] reckons it's from, I went to Greengates [a special school]. I get upset, mum told him to stop but he won't."
> (Ruth)

It is clear from this exchange that Ruth perceives her stepfather is name-calling and, to some degree, this experience is similar to that encountered by other focus group students within their broader school (4.2.2) and physical education experiences (4.5.1). Indeed, in Ruth's case this name-calling seemed to create considerable tensions within the family; she conceded that the end result was usually that "*he winds me up and we all end up fighting*". In general, Ruth seemed very sensitive to any questions concerning her past, particularly the time she had spent at Greengates School. It is perhaps not surprising that she reacted in this way given the seemingly frequent insults by her stepfather, which likely only serve to demean and devalue Ruth's understandings of her prior school experiences, her disability and her broader sense of self. Having said this, it is interesting to note that Ruth considered the notion of SEN in a particular positive way (4.2.1) but this seemed not to be reciprocated through the attitude and behaviour of her stepfather. For Ruth, it would seem that the family is a site in which negative dispositions of habitus associated with her stepfather's behaviour and attitude are embedded within her sense of self.

As this section illustrates, a number of the focus group students were influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of their family and associate either positively or negatively with understandings of disability. However, for one student, Dave, the dispositions of habitus associated with behaviour and attitudes of family members contributed to the

construction of him as non-disabled.

> "We don't talk about my hearing, it's like I've always been like this and my family are used to it. Like I've only ever been like this so it's not an issue. Like my brothers just know they need to look, face me, when they're talking, if they don't I won't hear, they just do it, they always have."
> (Dave)

In this instance, it would seem that Dave and his family are not explicitly embracing discourses of disability within the family habitus. Instead, the 'practical logic' (Bourdieu, 1990b; Jenkins, 2002) within the family seems to be embedded with understandings in which Dave's family "*just know*" what to do in order that he will understand them. His family subsequently construct Dave as non-disabled. Within the deaf/hearing-impaired community, this is an identity often attributed to people experiencing hearing impairments (Padden and Humphries, 2006).

The behaviour and attitudes of the family may contribute to the way(s) in which the focus group students construct understandings of themselves, including their understandings and association with disability. The family is also considered an important resource that young people can draw on. The following discussion focuses on the ways in which the family can enable and constrain sporting tastes and interests.

5.3.2 Family as an enabler and constrainer of sporting tastes and interests

The family is a significant social arena in which young people are nurtured and develop understandings of their embodied identities. Echoing the findings of Simmons and Wade (1987) and Jobling *et al.* (2000), it was evident from the focus group discussions that the family continues to be an important site in the lives of the students in this study. Indeed, I have just discussed the ways in which the family can ingrain, through the habitus, understandings of self in relation to disability. Furthermore, I later discuss the influences the family can have on the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students. Meanwhile, the focus group students also perceived the family, at different times, as a resource or constrainer of sporting, and indeed other, tastes and

interests (Cote and Hay, 2002; Holroyd, 2002). Two key issues illustrating these enabling and constraining qualities are discussed next. These focus on travel arrangements and securing economic capital from parents. However, it is important to note at this point that the family was also considered by some focus group students to be a means of social support in relation to sporting interests. This is discussed in more detail later (5.3.2).

A key resource the students can gain access to, with the support of adult family members, relates to 'lifts' to and from different activities (Kirk and MacPhail, 2001; Harrington, 2006). Indeed, I have already highlighted (5.3.1) how Jane's mother had recently agreed to collect her following an after-school drama club. In this instance, Jane was acutely aware that without her mother's support she would not be able to engage in this activity. Even though Jane indicated she would have also liked the opportunity to attend the IT and chess clubs, she understood this was not possible.

> "…. all three would be great but that'd be pushing it. I'm lucky like mum comes after drama. It's just I'm really interested in the others [IT and chess], in away it's no fair, then like I know I'm lucky, Beth [friend] can't go to any, I know I'm lucky. Mum takes Jill [sister] two nights to gym, so twice for her and once for me. Then like Jill goes to three school clubs, that's not fair but I guess I'm the youngest and Jill's been doing it [gym] for ages ….. and like it's like 40 minutes to get to my school so a guess a pain, it's still not fair."
> (Jane)

During this discussion, Jane attempts to rationalise the way in which her mother prioritises collecting Jane or her sister. As Jane thinks through this situation, she initially attributes age and commitment to gym as key factors contributing towards Jill's more favorable transport arrangements. It later transpires, though, that perhaps the eighty-minute round trip, combined with Jane's mother having to leave work one hour early, may be more significant factors contributing to the nature of these arrangements. It is clear, though, that Jane feels, to some degree, aggrieved by this situation and would like her mother to use the car more to take her out.

Ruth also felt annoyed that she was infrequently given lifts, either in her stepfather's car or by public transport, to activities or experiences she would like to undertake. Although this is only a short extract, Ruth talked at length about enjoying going to the Brownies and she indicated she would have liked the opportunity to attend the Guides.

> Ruth: "I went to Brownies for three years, just three years. Jess [sister] went before, so we went together."
>
> **HF**: "What was it like?"
>
> Ruth: "I liked it. It was fun."
>
> **HF**: "Do you still go?"
>
> Ruth: "No I'm too old, well Jess stopped so I did. Bob [stepfather] didn't take me no more. He takes Jess places but not me, Mum's working so can't take me. I miss going."

A number of other focus group students believed they were less well served when compared to other siblings. Aside from broader tensions between Ruth and her stepfather, what is evident from her comments, and also those of other students, is the significant influence that adult family members have on supporting opportunities through their commitment to 'drop off' or 'collect' students.

Contrary to the experiences of Jane and Ruth, it was also evident during the focus group discussions that a number of students believed they received 'priority' within their family when it came to transport arrangements. James suggested, "*the car's mine, they had it for me*". Anne also indicated that the decision to purchase a second family car revolved around her suggesting that "*after my accident we got a new car, now mum's got one like dad*". It was not evident from the discussions with James and Anne as to the extent to which these cars were actually at their disposal. However, it was apparent from their discussions that they very much perceived the car as a form of capital that was directly associated to them rather than other siblings.

Robin's account reflects a tension between himself and his brother, who perceives Robin as taking priority in the transport stakes. However, Robin seems to be trying to balance, at his activity cost, the extent to which he receives transport support.

> "Without the car I can't get anywhere, I'm stuck in. For starters I couldn't get to Monday Leisure. Mum's learning to drive cause dad can't do it all the time, then I'm stuck. Colin [brother] says I'm spoilt cause dad'll take me anywhere, that's not true like I'm really careful there's loads I can't do, I won't mention cause I know what it means and I'm careful about it."
> (Robin)

In this extract, Robin demonstrates both an understanding and sensitivity towards his brother's needs, although according to Robin this seems not to be recognised by this brother.

It would seem from the focus group students that who receives, and does not receive, transport support within the family unit is premised on differing reasoning within families. Sometimes this would benefit the focus group students, but at other times this was not the case and the family seemed to constrain focus group students' opportunities to engage in activities.

Another dimension of the family that seemed to influence the nature and extent of leisure and sports activities was related to the level of economic capital (Kay, 2000) parents had accumulated, or indeed, would set aside for students. Most of the focus group students were well versed at 'negotiating' for a range of items they deemed as "*something I need to have*" (Andy). Sometimes these negotiations were easier than others, and it seemed where students demonstrated a shared benefit from the purchase of a product or experience parents were, within reason, more willing to accommodate these demands. Dave found his family's passion for cricket meant that he did not have to try hard to gain cricket-related products.

> "I've got all the kit, whites everything. Each season I get my choice of new stuff. I just got one of them big bags your pads and

> everything go in, there're wheels. I look very professional, even my dad don't have one but I'd let him use mine, maybe."
> (Dave)

Similarly, Tom's shared interest in football with his father and brother enabled him to broker for a replica England kit and expensive 'Predator' football boots. As Tom put it "*.... it's the kit dad wants so I get it, he likes seeing me in it.*"

At other times, for those focus group students that engaged in sports-related activities in their free-time, there was an acknowledgement that parents contributed to the costs associated with these activities. For example, I discussed earlier (5.2.4) that Robin regularly attends a disability leisure club and, as a result of this, participates in a range of sports-related competitions. He recalled an extensive list of costs relating to travel, overnight accommodation, food, magazines to keep Hollie (his sister) happy, equipment and training. Even with all these costs, Robin felt he still was relatively restrained and he indicated, "*There's a lot of stuff I want, stuff I want to do but I don't ask. I know we have to be careful. I'd love a basketball chair, there's no point asking*". In this instance, Robin recognised his family are not an unlimited economic resource and there were some products/resources that were unlikely to be attained.

5.3.3 Reproducing family sporting tastes and interests

As a social field in which young people grow and develop, the family can be an important context in which sporting and leisure tastes and interests develop (Cote and Hay, 2002; Kay, 2002; Zabriskie and McCormick, 2003; Harrington, 2006). As Holroyd (2002) suggests, the family can often provide the initial avenue through which sport is introduced to young people. After this, as I have previously discussed, the family can be a source of support, providing the economic capital to sustain participation or facilitate the transport to and from activities. For two students in this study, family tastes and interests associated with specific sports seemed to be deeply embedded within their habitus.

As Harrington (2006) found, sometimes a specific sporting interest was the focal point

of the family. In this study, Tom's family, particularly his father and brother, were keen football players and spectators. Tom also had this interest and football formed a significant dimension of his relations with his father and brother.

> Tom: "I don't know what it is, I've always liked football, I watch [on the TV] with me dad and brother, watch me brother and we all play. We've always done it. We watch England."
>
> **HF**: "Sounds like you're all into football. Why do you think its football you all like?"
>
> Tom: "Well, my dad's into it so me and my brother are, it's always been like that. I guess it comes from dad. We're all into football. there's nothing else, its football."

It is clear from this comment, and others earlier, that football is an important dimension of Tom's life. It is interesting to note that Tom was not able to rationalise the reasons for his interest in football. Indeed, over time, it may be that Tom has embedded his family's sporting interest through the habitus and, therefore, finds it difficult to articulate as "*it's always been like that*".

Similarly, Dave and his family had an interest in cricket and this seemed to be a key activity for bringing the family together. As Dave put it: "*Cricket is a big family thing*". Dave also emphasized that often "*cricket comes first*" and indicated that other day-to-day activities, such as food shopping, are structured around cricket-related activities. According to Dave, even holidays and other family celebrations are arranged around cricket. Dave articulated his interest in cricket as something that was inevitable given the family's interest and commitment to this sport.

> "It's only natural I like cricket, like its always been round me. If we go to the park we play cricket, watch it on tele, go down the club. That's how it is, it's a good job I like it. Well I'm not saying I wouldn't cause if I had a choice, if my family weren't into it, I would be. I'd a done it."
> (Dave)

What Dave infers here is that without his family's interest, he would have still had an interest in cricket. Like Tom, it may be that this interest is endowed within his family's habitus (Bourdieu, 1997) and Dave cannot conceptualise life without this interest.

For a few other students, including Ruth, Anne and Andy, it seemed from the focus group discussions that sport did not feature significantly within their family's tastes and interests. As Anne put it: "*If sport's on the tele me mum and Jan turn it over, they don't like football.*" Similarly, Andy positioned his family as 'non sporty'.

> "Me mum plays netball but apart from that we don't do sport. We're not into it. It's not what we're into at all. If there's nothing else on the tele, dad'll watch football but he's not bothered. He's into computers, that's what me and dad do."
> (Andy)

In this extract, Andy affirms the influence of his family by often referring to 'we' and positing himself, and his family, as not sporty. In doing this, Andy also specifies another key interest he believes best represents the interests of his family. Interestingly, as Andy pointed out earlier, his mother has been playing netball since she was at school. However, Andy, in his categorisation of his family as 'not sporty', seems to be basing his judgment more on his father's interests than those of his mother. In fact, when questioned about his mother's interest in computers, he conceded that it was only himself and his father who were interested in this activity. In this case, family in relation to his father seemed to be more important to Andy. For Ruth, Anne and Andy, it would seem that sport is not considered to be a significant part of their family's habitus. Given that the family is an important site in which sporting tastes and interests develop (Cote and Hay, 2002; Kay 2002; Harrington, 2006), it is perhaps not surprising that these students also do not express through their tastes and interests desires that reflect a sporting habitus. It would seem that for some students, sporting tastes and interests were not reproduced through their family habitus. Instead, a number of students 'disrupted' their family's interests either by not conforming to family tastes and interests or, as I discuss in the following section, by

being the catalyst for introducing new sporting interests to their family.

5.3.4 Disrupting the sporting tastes and interests of the family

In the previous section, it is clear that Tom and Dave have embraced the sporting tastes and interests of family members. In doing this, they conform to and reproduce the conditions of their family's sporting habitus (Harrington, 2006; Roberts, 2001). For other focus group students, the family habitus seemed to be disrupted in a number of ways and, to differing degrees, students attributed disability to this situation. Adam, in particular, was aware he was not reproducing family tastes and interests.

> "I was the first not to get in the school football team. Both me brothers did. I know me dad is really proud of them. Dad'll go to some games, he likes to see how they're doing. Jason said dad brings him bad luck, I don't think he likes dad watching but won't say. They're mad about football. I mean, like I like it but cause I can't play its not the same I don't feel like that. I keep up with some of it but switch off. They go on and on and I wish they'd talk about something else."
>
> (Adam)

Unlike the comments from Tom and Dave earlier, there is not a sense from Adam that the family interest of football is deeply embedded within Adam's habitus. Adam seems to have some interest in football but this is not at the level of his brothers and father. Adam had a strong sense of failing, particularly in relation to not getting into the school football team. The absence of this achievement seemed to be an important marker that Adam used when making comparisons between himself and his brothers. In this context, it may be that gaining a place in the school football team carried important physical capital within his family. Adam, though, was not able to deploy the relevant habitus within his family relating to football. Consequently, Adam's belief that "*I know my dad's disappointed I don't play*" affirms his sense that he is in this way not conforming to what seems to have become a family norm.

In other instances, family sporting tastes and interests seemed to be disrupted, if only temporarily, by the activities of focus group students. On occasions, these disruptions

were to accommodate medical-related needs of students. As Steve suggests, a regular family evening out was affected by Steve's and his mother's absence.

> "Mum does a lot for me, like she drives me round. We used to go to the dogs Friday. I can't, from home me and Mum go physio. Dad and Colin [brother] still go. Mum's not bothered, she doesn't like it but I'd like to. The worst thing is we end going food shopping, it's a pain."
> (Steve)

As Steve indicates, these arrangements directly affect Steve and his mother and they are subsequently 'missing out' on what is a regular family evening out. However, in Anne's account it is a sibling that is affected by her stays in hospital.

> "When I'm in hospital mum and dad visit as much as they can. I know for a fact Beth hates it when I'm in. If Marie's not around she can't go to Guides. I know it's not fair but I need to see mum and dad. Sometimes gran comes but can't drive so's no good."
> (Anne)

Although this was only a temporary arrangement put in place during Anne's stays in hospital, it appears that Anne is particularly aware that her parents visits affect the free-time experiences of her sisters. Perhaps what this situation illustrates is the broader impact that a disabled child can have on the lives of their siblings (Rogers and Hogan, 2003; Meyer, 1997). The experience of having a disabled sibling in the family does not always have negative consequences, though. For a few focus group students, their interest in sport seemed to have been a catalyst for disrupted family tastes and interests in positive ways.

During the discussions with Tom and Robin, it was evident that a number of family members had embraced their disability sport interests. I have already discussed how Tom and his family have an interest in football and, for Tom's father, this interest seems to have been extended into disability football.

> "My dad does the refereeing, we didn't have one so Geoff [coach] asked. My dad takes me to training and games so he's there, so like he said yeah. He's like into football anyway so he knows what he's doing. He had a do a course or, he got a certificate, a proper one from the FA. I mean he's well into it and I mean like is serious. He's not bad at it; I'm going to do it one day."
> (Tom)

Tom's father had become much more than a resource for dropping off and collecting from activities (5.3.2) and is now himself actively involved in Tom's disability football interest. From further discussions with Tom, it was also evident that Tom's playing experiences and his father's refereeing often featured in broader football-related discussions.

Robin's family had also embraced his interest in wheelchair basketball. He suggested, "*it's a big thing with my family*". In his case, his mother had taken a wheelchair basketball coaching qualification, helped during some coaching sessions and was the treasurer of the leisure club he attended. Robin's father often took him to the leisure club and other competitions and tournaments. In addition, Robin's younger brother, Jack, seemed to be a keen spectator, particularly during competitions. Robin described Jack as "*mad about it*" and even suggested Jack had aspirations to become a wheelchair basketball player himself although, as this account illustrates, Robin considered Jack to have some way to go yet before he would be good enough to play competitively.

> "Jack thinks wheelchair basketball is a tough game, he's tried to play but hasn't got the chair control. The game moves too fast and he gets left behind. I think he'd like to play in the competitions but he's not good enough yet."
> (Robin)

What is interesting about this extract is the way in which Jack (Robin's non-disabled brother) appeared to be aspiring to become a wheelchair basketball player. However, Jacks 'chair control' is deemed to be letting him down. Robin also later indicates that, those using a wheelchair to *"get round"* had well-developed wheelchair skills and that

Jack would take some time to catch up to these standards. In this context, and unlike other experiences (4.5), using a wheelchair regularly carries with it distinct physical capital that Jack did not possess.

Robin's family had also been to several Super League games to watch the 'Sheffield Steelers' and, according to Robin, this seemed to heighten everyone's interest in the game.

> "Going to see the Steelers is great. The players are like really go, you wouldn't believe how good they are, like so fast. I'm going to be that good one day and mum and dad will be watching .... Mum goes on the net and finds out when they're playing, we've been to three and we'll keep going like its something we all like, we're all into it, me the most."
> (Robin)

For Tom and Robin, their family's seem to have embraced their sporting interests and in this way seem to have contributed to the positive outlook they both have about themselves and their sporting ability. In this context, their family's seem to have placed value on the disability sports that Tom and Robin undertake. The following section discusses further the notion of generating capital within the family through sport.

5.3.5 Generating and converting valued capital within the family (through sport)

I have already discussed (4.5 and 4.6) the focus group students' experiences of physical education and sport, and highlighted how these experiences contribute to the accumulation of capital (or not) between peers including classmates (4.4). For some students, including Ruth, Jane and Andy, physical education and sport seemed to be a site in which little physical capital could be attained and, consequently, few opportunities were available to convert this capital into other forms of capital. According to Bourdieu (1998), the family is another key site in which various forms of capital can be accumulated and converted. In addition, the family also serves as a significant influence as young people construct understandings of themselves

(Bromnick and Swallow, 1999). Given the significant position that the family seems to have for young disabled people (Anderson *et al.*, 1982; Jobling *et al.*, 2000), it is perhaps not surprising that students focused on the importance of their families as a sphere of life in which various forms of capital were recognised, and sometimes converted into different forms of capital within the family.

For a number of the students, sports-related capital seemed to hold little value, status or convertibility within their families. Instead, importance was placed on other areas of achievement and, interestingly, many of these accomplishments related to experiences from school, including sustained success (measured by high grades) in school subjects, selection for school productions, and publication in school magazines. Here, Jane discusses her high ICT results and the award she gained from her parents in recognition of this success.

> "My marks for ICT are really good mum and dad think I'm doing very well. On my report last year I got A, I got £10. When I do well they give me money. I'm saving for a new computer, I've got to save £200 and then they'll put the rest in. My next report, I'm going to get A for maths and science."
> (Jane)

Ruth also recalled a similar reward system in place for herself and sister when they were in the Brownies and indicated that earning money for the number of badges gained was particularly motivating. In both these cases, it is clear that the accumulation of economic capital was based on key family members, who were in control of economic capital, recognised achievement and then converted this into economic capital. These gains were not always available, though, and for Ruth this seems to be the cause of much disappointment: "*I don't get money for nothing no more*". Within Ruth's family, there seemed to be limited disposable income to distribute around family members and this was a commodity that Ruth could no longer draw on.

For a number of other focus group students, the expression of a sporting interest seemed to be a means of generating and converting valued capital within the family. However, it would seem that the more closely aligned this sporting interest was to the family, the more value that was attributed to students. As I have already discussed, Adam, like his father and brothers, has an interest in football. However, his enthusiasm to watch football and becoming a knowledgeable supporter seemed to be valued less than his brothers' successes at playing for the school team. As Adam discusses, the playing success of his brothers seems to have secured the conversion of physical capital into economic rewards.

> "My brothers get loads of sports kit off mum and dad not just at Christmas. At the start of the season they go down to Sports Soccer and get loads of stuff. I'm allowed to have a [replica] shirt, that's it. Mum and dad say I don't need all the kit cause I don't play. And I know I don't need like the pads and boots but its what I feel and I want to feel like my brothers and it would be nice to wear sporty stuff like them."
> (Adam)

Being like his brothers by wearing the same clothes as them seemed to be something that Adam wanted to do but was unable to because his parents would not buy him the same sports kit. In this respect, Adam's parents did not afford him the same financial resources as they did to their other footballing sons. Perhaps Adam's parents perceive the footballing kit as essential clothing required to play football and do not recognise the value he places on having the kit in order that he can more closely identify with his brothers and the family's interest in football (McKendrick, 2000). Indeed, it has been increasingly recognised that clothing, along with other forms of cultural meaning, provide a channel through which capital can be accumulated (Frost, 2001). This is clearly the case for Adam, who wants to be like his brothers; dressing like his brothers seems to reflect a closer affiliation towards them.

As already discussed, Adam felt he was letting his family, particularly his father down, by not gaining a place in the school football team. Within Adam's family,

considerable emphasis appeared to be placed on sporting achievements. This was also the case in relation to the grades and comments made on school reports.

> "I hate reports, if I could change one thing about school it'd be reports. It's not like I'm bad at school, I'm okay, my report is okay. I'd say my attendance is one of the best. It's just dad looks at PE first and my brothers, they're good at it so get As and I know I'll get C I know before I look, I always get C."
> (Adam)

Again, Adam seemed to have a strong sense that the physical capital his father valued was not evident through his school report, and this lack of achievement seemed to be exacerbated when comparisons were made with his bothers, who Adam perceived as attaining valued capital within his family.

In contrast to the experiences of Adam, the capital that some focus group students, including James, Tom, Robin and Dave, had accumulated within a sporting context did seem to be recognised by their family. Unlike Adam's experiences, for Tom, James and Dave, this resulted in the accumulation of sports-related clothing and other merchandise. In addition, their sporting achievements seemed to be recognised in equal measure to their siblings' achievements.

> "When we're talking about football, dad'll treat us both the same. Like, will talk about my game and Wills', he's fair like that and you can see he's interested in both of us and I'm not missing out. When he starts talking to his mates he doesn't stop, god he goes on and on and I like it 'cause he's telling his mates about my football."
> (Tom)

James, Robin and Dave also mentioned the idea of their fathers discussing their sporting achievements with friends. These kinds of conversations were an important source through which these students recognised the impact that their sporting endeavours were having on their fathers. A key issue for these particular focus group students was that it was extensively their fathers providing the means by which their friends were finding out about their sporting successes. Indeed, this study seems to

affirm the established view that the relations and discourses between fathers and sons serve to reinforce dominant notions of masculinities within society (Hickey *et al.*, 2000). Having said this, Robin also highlighted the way in which his sporting achievements had become an issue embraced by his whole family. Robin explained that the various medals and trophies he had gained are displayed in his family's lounge and he considered this to be an indication of the value placed on his sporting achievements by his parents.

Robin: "My trophies are in the lounge, there's a shelf with them. Dad says he'll have to put a new one up soon cause we're running out of space. Some of my dad's are up there but I've got more, he says he's proud of each one. When Jack's older he wants his to go with mine, he says he's going to get more than me. I know it sounds silly but my mum gets me to say what each are for she says she doesn't want to forget if someone's around and they ask. Most of them say but she still makes me do it. I don't mind or sometimes she gets me to tell people, some of their friends can't believe the trophies I've won."

HF: "So what do you think about having the trophies in the lounge like that?"

Jane: "I think they should go in your bedroom."

Robin: "No I like them in the lounge, I'm proud of them and they're on show."

Tom: "Yeah, that's really cool."

Jane: "Yeah, I think it's good but if it was me I'd think well they're mine so I'd have them in my bedroom."

Robin: "Yeah, but I like it when people see them and they won't in my [bed]room."

During this exchange, all the focus group students seemed to perceive the positioning of Robin's trophies in the lounge as positive, and even though Jane suggested she would want her trophies in her bedroom, she also understood the benefits of the positioning in the lounge. For Robin, it would seem that the physical positioning of

these trophies in such a significant place signaled the value his family placed on his sporting achievements. Robin went on to suggest this space was particularly important to him given that some of his friends, including Jess and Kevin from the leisure club, were disinterested in his sporting achievements. I discuss later (5.5.2) the lack of recognition or value afforded to these achievements within a school context.

In this section, I have focused on the family and considered the ways in which family habitus shape the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students. For some students, the family provides a valuable resource for facilitating sporting tastes and interests, serving as a catalyst to reproduce their families sporting interests or disrupt them through the initiation of disability sport interests. For other students, the sporting habitus of the family does not seem to be reproduced, and this appeared to reinforce negative understandings of self in which the students viewed themselves as not conforming to the sporting norms of the family. In either case, the family is clearly a significant site in which the young people begin to understand themselves, their value within the family and their position within broader society. The family is not the only site in which sporting tastes and interests are developed and nurtured. Indeed, a range of other mediating stakeholders shape the tastes and interests of young people. In the following section, I discuss the part physical education teachers, other disabled people, and sporting role models play in shaping and mediating the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students.

5.4 THE ROLES ADULTS PLAY IN SHAPING AND MEDIATING SPORTING TASTES AND INTERESTS - *"I've met other blind people and some are well great" (Jane)*

The earlier section illustrates that the family is an important site in which sporting tastes and interests may, or may not, be developed. The family is not the only sphere in which such tastes and interests are developed. Indeed, I have already discussed in the previous chapter the ways in which school, particularly peers, support staff and teachers contribute to understandings of self in relation to physical education and school sport. In addition, a range of other mediating stakeholders shape the tastes and

interests of young people. This chapter moves on by discussing the part that physical education teachers, other disabled people, and sporting role models play in shaping and mediating the sporting tastes and interests of the focus group students. Furthermore, I explore the interrelationship between these mediators and sites of participation.

5.4.1 Physical education teachers and support staff

The perceptions that young people have of teachers can influence their attitudes and feelings towards a particular school subject, including physical education (Groves and Laws, 2000; Flintoff and Scraton, 2001; Brittain, 2004a). Indeed, when discussing their physical education teachers, it was notable that the students essentially viewed these teachers in terms of their subject specialism. In this context, the students often referred to specific activities in relation to their teachers. Andy and Adam made the following comments about their physical education teachers.

> "Mr. Evans, he's into football and that's want he does all the time. He's in charge of the team and the coaching and sorting the team out." (Andy)
>
> "Mrs. Smith does the netball and hockey with girls. Once we had her for hockey one time. Gemma says she's good at netball." (Adam)
>
> "Mr. Evans and Mr. Clarke teach the rugby. I've not had them but I've been out and seen it. I heard Mr. Clarke, Mr. Clarke shouts a lot." (Adam)

The focus group students also made comments about other related tasks that they saw their physical education teachers doing. When discussing Mr. Evans, Steve suggested, "*You see him a lot over the hall doing the team lists*". Other students talked about the teachers' attitudes towards them. For example, Adam believed a teacher's low opinion of him generally in physical education, and in his participation in Boccia, related directly to his disability.

"I know, I think Mr. Clarke doesn't see me."

[After being prompted to expand on what this meant]
"Well yeah, yeah and its like I feel like he's looking down on me and he doesn't care and he sees my chair and all things I can't do."

"Some people see my chair and not me and he's [one of the PE teachers] like that. He sees me playing Boccia and just thinks it's easy game cause I'm playing."
(Adam)

In this case, Adam firmly believed this view of him was based on his impairment and essentially founded on a deficit position similar to that evident in the medical model of disability (Barnes *et al.*, 1999).

Another physical education teacher, Mr. Jones, was talked about in much broader and positive terms. Mr. Jones was acknowledged by all the students as being thoughtful and considerate and the students reported having a very positive relationship with him. The students believed Mr. Jones paid much attention to their needs when planning skills and practices in physical education.

> "With my [walking] frame it makes PE harder. I don't use it all the time. In one lesson I use it. *Not* in all of, *not* all the time and Mr. Jones, he'll give me goes [skills/practices] for my frame. I'm not saying I use it all the time. When I don't [use the frame] then there'll be other goes for me. He doesn't leave me out."
> (James)

James believed these kinds of actions contributed to positive feelings in physical education.

> "When I go to PE and see Mr. Jones I know I'm okay and have a good time. He makes sure I'm doing something and so I like PE with Mr. Jones."
> (James)

Interestingly, Mr. Jones was also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and had considerable contact with these students beyond his role in physical

education. A number of the students identified the additional areas of support given by Mr. Jones. One student suggested:

> "I know he's my PE teacher. He's *not just* a PE teacher. If you get troubles, troubles that sort of stuff. Last term there's some trouble with a couple of older lads and Mr. Jones sorted them out."
> (Andy)

Another student reinforced the positive relationship with this teacher and emphasized the pastoral role adopted:

> "I get on with him well. Yeah, really well and he makes sure I'm okay and I know he's there if I need to talk to him, like problems and things happening."
> (James)

Specific characteristics that the student identified about Mr. Jones were his fairness and willingness to 'have a laugh'.

> "He's fair with everyone, with me and the others. I think he's a good teacher. I like him a lot."
> (Adam)

> "You can have a laugh with him. I mean I know he's a teacher but he's easy going and, you know, but not joking around all the time just having a bit of a laugh."
> (Steve)

These comments made by Adam, Steve and the other students illustrate how a strong relationship can be formed with students and how this can be nurtured in a way that contributes to a more positive disposition towards participating in physical education. However, for the other physical education teachers who seem not to have developed such a meaningful relationship, it may be that aspects of the subject that exclude students are more evident through these teachers' practices. Even though these teachers may advocate and believe that they are working towards inclusive physical education, this seems not to be evident from the students' insights. For these teachers,

it could be that wider issues relating to the structure of the secondary school and the normativity of physical education continue to impinge on their efforts to work towards a more inclusive experience.

5.4.2 'Famous' sporting role models

Throughout their adolescence, young people are influenced by a range of individuals. I have already discussed the ways in which friends (4.7), family (5.3) and physical education teachers (4.2.2 and 5.4.1) can contribute to the focus group students' sense of self, understandings of disability and dispositions towards physical education and sport. In addition to these individuals, focus group students seemed to be influenced by a number of famous role models. As Holroyd (2002) found, some of these role models were often music, film or television celebrities. As I have already discussed, the media has a significant place in the lives of young people and this seemed to be an important source from which associations with these celebrity sporting role models were established and sustained (Lines, 2001).

A number of the focus group students identified high-profile footballers as their role models, including Thierry Henry, Steven Gerrard and David Beckham. In this discussion, Tom focuses on David Beckham.

> Tom: "I admire David Beckham, he's on the tele all the time, I mean he's the captain of England, like one of our best players, United would be lost without him. The best thing's his free kick, you should see the goals he gets, unbelievable. He like gets loads of money, millionaires and still does charity work. He's not one of those players just in it for money, he's like me, he's someone who thinks football's bril."

HF: "Is he a role model for you then?"

Tom: "Yeah, he's the one. He's the one I'd have yeah."

Ruth: "What's a role model?"

Anne: "Someone who you think is really good and who is a good example, like Tim Henman."

HF: "Have you got one Ruth?"

Ruth: "No, no."

HF: "You said David Beckham, Tom. Why have you picked him - there're lots of footballers?"

Tom: "He's like a fair player and I think like a lot of players in the Premiership aren't. When I play I'm fair."

What is interesting from Tom's comments in this exchange is the range of qualities he recognises and attributes to David Beckham. Indeed, he indicates that he models himself on David Beckham's spirit of fair play. A few students also mentioned other non-football sports performers as their role models. Steve identified the rugby player Martin Johnson as his sporting role model and suggested, "*My dad says if I work hard I'll play like Martin Johnson. One day I want to be like him*". There seems to be a difference in the way Tom and Steve perceive themselves in relation to their role models. In particular, Tom talks about David Beckham's ability to take free kicks, the money he earns and his fair play on the pitch. Tom, then, positions himself in relation to fair play and seems to be working towards this when he plays football. Steve is clearly influenced by his father and aspires to the standards achieved by Martin Johnson. The concern for Steve, then, is that this may be an unrealistic goal and, in this way, his father seems to be supporting what may be unattainable expectations. It was evident from the focus group discussions that the sporting role models identified were all male and there was no room for female role models (Horne *et al.*, 1999).

Only one focus group student identified a disabled athlete as a sporting role model. However, it would seem from Robin's comment that he continues to be inspired by this Paralympic athlete.

Robin: "My role model is Ade [Adepitan]. He's just a great player. I've seen him play. He's even on the tele. I want to be like him, go to the worlds and Paras."

Tom: "Who's he? What team does he play for?"

Robin: "You know, Ade's in the GB wheelchair basketball team."

Ruth: "Don't know him."

Tom: "No."

Anne: "He's not famous, you can't have him."

Robin: "Well yeah he is, he's a really good player, he is well known."

Tom: "Rubbish he's not like a footballer, not famous like that."

Robin: "Yeah, he is like he's going to the Paralympics, he'll get a medal."

HF: "I think you're right, they've got a good chance, haven't they?"

A number of issues emerge from this exchange. First, even when faced with relatively negative responses, Robin continues to justify his selection of Ade as his sporting role model. He strongly believes that it is Ade he wants to be associated with and was not willing to alter his view in any way, even when confronted with off-putting responses like "…. *you can't have him*" (Anne). In this context, for Robin there seemed to be no gains relating to the social capital he would accrue through his affiliation to this sporting star. Second, it would appear from further discussions that students generally perceived Ade as holding less physical capital than the other sports performers mentioned. Focus group students came to this conclusion based on comparisons they made with other (non-disabled) sporting role models, particularly footballers. In this respect, the focus group students were restricting their views to normalised conceptions of ability and performance (Evans, 2004), based within sports promoted through the mass media. A third issue emerging from this exchange relates to the comments that Tom makes. As a keen footballer and player for a disability football team (5.2.4), it is interesting to note that Tom seemed unprepared to view Ade in a different light given his disability sport experiences.

Although Robin was the only focus group student to associate an elite disabled athlete as his sporting role model, it is worth noting that Andy from St. Anne's Mount School seemed to be aware that there is a lack of high-profile disabled sporting role models for people to relate to or support.

> Andy: "I'm not into sport like but if I was I'd want to look up to someone like me. A disability person doing sport. I know there are but don't know any."
>
> James: "Like Tanni, she's dead famous."
>
> Andy: "No I don't know her."
>
> James: "She does athletics and marathons."
>
> **HF**: "Yes that's right, she's been to a lot of Paralympics and got a lot of golds."
>
> Andy: "No, I don't know, I've not seen her."

Although not identified as a sporting role model of James, it is encouraging that he is aware of a Paralympic athlete and is able to pass this information on to Andy. Thomas and Smith (2003) have argued that the media under-represents disabled athletes and it would seem in Andy's case that the media has not been successful in conveying representations of disabled athletes, in this case Tanni Grey-Thompson. This situation is not surprising to Hughes *et al.* (2005: 5), who have argued that "objects of consumption tend to be sold by mobilising the signifiers of youth and perfection. The signifiers of disability do not appeal to advertisers who wish to market a product or service". Having said this, Andy did not often opt to watch sport on the television so it may not be surprising that he had not been exposed to images of elite disabled athletes.

5.4.3 The significance of other disabled adults

Unlike the experiences of the focus group students in relation to famous sporting role models, it would seem that some students have had, or continue to have, encounters with other disabled people who contribute to their broader outlook on life. For a few

students, this included their participation in sport. For some students, 'one-off' encounters provided a memorable experience and this seemed to contribute to their views of themselves, particularly in relation to their understandings of disability. For example, during her rehabilitation, Anne met Vicki and this seems to have provided Anne with a positive view of living with a disability. Here Anne recalls how Vicki discussed her living arrangements and how learning about this helped Anne to understand the opportunities she would have.

> "Vicki was great, she got a spinal cord injury two years before me. She was the first person I met. She told me how it'd changed her life, some good stuff, some bad stuff. Like I was thinking I'd have to live with me mum and dad forever but Vicki said she'd got her own house and I thought well when I grow up I want to live on my own or with my boyfriend and I can. Vicki got a job, a car, a boyfriend, cat, she's like everyone really and I know I can be like that too. Me mum and dad spoke to her and I could tell it'd made them think about what I can do and they, when we're talking sometimes they still talk about her and what she does, I think they think I can't remember seeing her but I do and one day I'd like to see her again."
>
> (Anne)

Similarly, Jane suggested she had met many visually impaired people and had used these encounters as positive markers to think about her future. Jane was particularly concerned to have a career in IT and seemed to be reassured to hear from other visually impaired people that this was a viable career option.

> "I've met other blind people and some are well great and they tell you about their job and I'll be happy cause its like something I want to do and there's someone blind doing it and I'm well happy cause I know I can."
>
> (Jane)

For other students, sustained contact with disabled adults also appeared to affect their views of disability and themselves. This was particularly the case for Robin and James, who attended disability leisure clubs (5.2.4). For them, it seemed that exposure to disabled adults at these clubs contributed to a positive outlook. Besides identifying

Ade as his sporting role model, Robin also considered the basketball coach, Mike, to be a positive influence.

> "Mike is a great coach. He's into all sports and is very good, like bril. I can see he really enjoys coaching and it's like his job, he coaches at different clubs and schools. He's really busy; you know we're lucky to have him. He says he won't give up cause he wants us to do well. He's training my mum but she won't be as good as him, no way. He wants the team to do well and tries to get us going. When he's not there I don't enjoy it as much."
> (Robin)

James also talked encouragingly about a disabled coach that occasionally supported his leisure club he referred to Brian as "*fantastic, the best*" and suggested "*one day I want to be like him*". James's frustration was that Brian was unable to regularly coach. Indeed, as James discussed this issue further, is was apparent that the leisure club was unable to pay Brain for the coaching sessions and he consequently only worked at the club occasionally.

> "Brian likes us but says he's got to make a living and can't say no to paid coaching. I wish we'd got the money to pay him."
> (James)

Although James had positive views of Brian, he also mentioned other older members that had been attending the club for many years. Indeed, James was conscious that some of these members were relatively negative about the activities of the club and themselves.

> "Well, god they moan all the time. Matt'll go on 'bout how everything's boring, Ian'll say the same, Kev'll say he's not going to come again. I don't know why they come; it'd be better for everyone if they didn't. They look fed up all the time, just fed up. I hope I don't get like that, I won't let myself."
> (James)

James expresses a desire to not be like these club members and in doing this also illustrates a certain degree of agency by suggesting that he will not 'let himself' get like them.

For some of the focus group students, other disabled adults seemed to have an impact on the way they viewed participation in sport, disability and other aspects of their life. However, for Dave it was notable that no disabled adults, including hearing impaired adults, seemed to have impacted on his life in any way.

> "I've not met any deaf people. Apart from, I'd say once, may be twice a couple of really old people using hearing aids but no deaf people like me. I've seen signing on the tele but I don't sign. I've just not met anyone like that. You know if you've got a hearing problem it's not easy to tell so you don't know."
> (Dave)

For Dave then, little contact has been made with disabled adults and, unlike a number of other students, Dave was not able to draw on these experiences in order to reflect upon his understandings of self. However, for the other focus group students, encounters with disabled adults appeared to have impacted on different aspects of their lives. In many cases, the disabled adults had positive influences on the focus group students.

5.4.4 Interrelationship between mediators and sites of participation

With the advent of PESSCL, it is expected that there will be greater continuity between school physical education and sport and community-orientated opportunities for all young people, including young disabled people (DfES, 2002). Set in this context, it would seem that, potentially, physical education teachers have an important role to play in facilitating the opportunities of young people within different sites of participation. However, for the students in this study, physical education teachers seemed to provide marginal support for participation in sport beyond the physical education context. Indeed, earlier in this chapter (5.2.3) I discussed the limited extent to which students accessed after-school sports clubs. For a number of students at St.

Anne's Mount School, one specific physical education teacher was identified as particularly supportive and positive towards the development of after-school sporting interests (5.4.1). In contrast, all other students viewed their physical education teachers in a less than supportive manner and did not recollect any occasions when their physical education teachers had encouraged them to participate in community sport. As Robin put it: *"He's not interested in PE so why would he be bothered after"?* This view is also echoed later (5.5.2) in relation to the exchange value of free-time sport capital in school and physical education and confirms a perspective of the students that positions physical education, and indeed other teachers, as less than supportive or interested in the focus group students' sporting life beyond the school context. Having said this, it is also clear that those students that did participate in free-time sport were keen for their physical education teachers to take an interest in their free-time sporting activities. Robin and Tom believed their current situation was unfair and that the physical education teachers should take an interest in their sporting activities and also actively support more disabled students to progress into community (disability) sport.

> "A PE teacher knows a lot about sport, where to go, do stuff and tells kids where to go. I think more of it should be done for everyone. Like it's good kids get told stuff and we get left out. More disabled kids need to be told where to go."
> (Tom)

As I indicate later (5.5.2), a number of focus group students were frustrated by teachers' lack of interest and it would also seem from Tom's comment that there was a belief that staff should be actively facilitating or promoting free-time sport opportunities.

Mediators including other disabled people (5.4.3), sporting role models (5.4.2) and family members (5.3.1) appear to have contributed, in differing ways, to sports participation. For each of these mediators, though, there seems to be a limited interrelationship between them and different sites of participation. Indeed, echoing the findings of previous research (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005a), there was minimal

connectivity or association made by students either between these sites or through adult mediators. In this study, it would seem that the only mediator between these differing sites of participation were parents. In addition, although according to a number of the focus group students, parents did have some connectivity between these sites, these connections were still somewhat isolated and not wholly supportive of the school-club links advocated through PESSCL. Instead, parents appeared to have at least taken some interest in the multiple sites of sports participation. For example, I have already discussed how parents provided a source of transport support in relation to after-school opportunities and free-time sport (5.2.3). In addition to this, within a physical education context, I discuss later (5.6.2) how parents proved to be a valuable catalyst for lobbying physical education teachers for the reintroduction of football into the curriculum at St. Anne's Mount School. Within a school context, parents also seemed to be mediators of information and ensure staff found out about the achievements and interests of some of the students. Indeed, I discuss in 5.5.2 how one parent seems to have managed to stimulate the interest of a year tutor and this provided a channel for Robin to talk about his sporting endeavours. Beyond a school context, some parents instilled their sporting interests on their child or supported and embraced the disability sport interest of their child (5.3.3). In this study, the interrelationship between mediators and sites of participation seem to be minimal and, apart from parents, little connectivity was evident. The following section moves on by considering the notion of legitimate participation within free-time sport and the extent to which capital could be gained or converted within free-time sport and also between school (physical) education.

5.5 LEGITIMATE PARTICIPATION, GAINING AND CONVERTING CAPTIAL IN FREE-TIME SPORT – *"I play football but it's not for the school so it's down there" (Tom)*

Within the context of the key mediating factors already discussed, including the family, free-time sport, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people, this section moves on by considering the ways in which the focus group students acquire, retain and convert capital within disability sport and physical education contexts. It

seems from the data generated that those students who participated in free-time disability sport were generally positioned positively within these contexts. Indeed, this section discusses the ways in which participation in disability sport facilitated the acquisition of valued capital within this sporting context. This was evident in a number of ways, including the understandings students had of their 'abilities', positive recognition by others and a sense of affiliation to sport through membership of clubs/teams. This section also highlights the recognition of disability sport capital within a school or physical education setting was minimal.

5.5.1 Accumulating social and physical capital in disability sport clubs

As I have already discussed (5.2.4), three focus group students were involved, to differing degrees, in disability sport or leisure clubs. For these young people, this site of participation provided an important channel through which sports-related activities could be undertaken. In contrast with their physical education experiences at school (4.4, 4.5 and 4.6), it would seem that Tom, James and Robin considered themselves to have accumulated some capital within these dedicated disability sport/leisure settings.

Both James and Tom recognised that physical capital could be accumulated over time and, as James put it, "*you need to work hard to get better*". As they recalled their initial experiences at their respective clubs, it was evident that they both recognised the progress they had made since taking up their sports.

> Tom: "When I first played I wasn't good. I'd played a bit but, well, not had the proper coaching. When I first started I could see some lads were really good. Like I'd not seen anyone play with crutches, so it was good seeing them. I'm saying like I wasn't bad but these lads use crutches well. I go training when I can and I've got better."
>
> **HF**: "So how do you think you've got better then Tom?"
>
> Tom: "I'm in the team now, it like took me ages to get in and I want to keep my spot. There's a new lad and, like, I know he wants to play [in the team] but I don't want him to have my spot. Maybe Chris'll go, Ross I haven't seen him so maybe he's gone. The lads say I'm a good tackler so I think I'm okay. I got the 'Players

> Player' last season, what a shock. I want to get it this season;
> Matt's done well it could be him."

According to Tom, when he initially joined the club he did not hold sufficient levels of physical capital that enabled him to feel competent when playing football. Tom came to this decision based on the comparisons he made with other players at the club. However, unlike some focus group students' experiences during physical education (4.5.1), Tom did not see this physical capital as unobtainable and instead felt able to work towards accumulating it through his commitment and training. Gaining a place in the football team, being recognised as a 'good tackler' by teammates, and also attaining an award at the end of season party seemed to be important signifiers for Tom that he had accumulated legitimate physical capital within the disability football club. Tom also seemed to be aware that the physical capital he had gained would not necessarily be permanently acknowledged by others as capital. Indeed, new players seemed to pose a continuous threat to the position of all team members.

At Robin's club, less kudos was attached to playing for a team and representing the leisure club in competitions.

> Robin: "If you're at the club, you get in a team. We need players, Mark ended up playing basketball the other week and he didn't want. We were short and needed one more. He'd been warned but I could tell he didn't want to play; he did us a big favour. If you get picked for other stuff that's when it counts."
>
> **HF**: "Okay, why's that better than getting picked for other things, what do you mean?"
>
> Robin: "Like you play in one comp and get picked, not the team you, you go to a training camp or something and like I'm in for regional tennis and I've been to a basketball camp. Now that's better than the club. People can see I've got potential and I get picked."

It would seem from Robin's comment that he felt more status could be gained from going on to be selected for a training camp, or represent a geographic area, at a

particular sport than from competing for the leisure club. Having said this, according to Robin it, appeared to be the club leader and other volunteers that valued these kinds of achievements most and offered congratulations, praise and further encouragement. Other young members seemed to be more ambivalent towards sporting success, and it appeared at this club that computers and music were the activities that attracted the most interest of members and also the greatest potential to improve members' social position (Robbins, 2000).

In relation to his sporting achievements, Robin suggested "*it gets announced*" and indicated that because club announcements were the cause of much entertainment between the young club members. This, in fact, was something he tried to avoid and sometimes "*forget to tell them*" about his sporting successes in an attempt to minimise this embarrassment. However, his family's involvement in the club often exacerbated this situation and resulted in other family members informing the club leader of his successes. In this instance, Robin seemed to be more concerned to ensure his social capital was not compromised by these kinds of announcements.

> "Jess and Kevin think it's funny and have a laugh about it. They do take the mick, they call me square. The announcements are for people in trouble or like good stuff and you get called square if it's you. Jess and Kevin are really good mates, I need mates like them. They've been at the club for years and know everyone. They're good friends to have."
> (Robin)

One of Robin's concerns seemed to be that Jess and Kevin would not want to be his friend if he continued to be singled out during these announcements in a positive light. Indeed, Robin seemed to value the social capital he had accumulated by becoming their friends and did not want to negatively affect these social relations. In fact, Robin was conscious that he should not talk too much about his sporting achievements to these friends.

> Robin: "They're not interested; it bores them so I didn't talk about basketball and that. I'll like say a bit but I know they don't want to

know. Sometimes Jess'll ask but mostly other stuff."

HF: "So they aren't bothered about your sports and how you're doing?"

Robin: "Well yeah, well sort of, they're my friends so are but they know I get on with it and they're friends and I do other stuff with them so like computers. Like my mum and dad I'd say are who I'll talk to and not Jess and Kevin."

In this instance, Robin seems to be managing his friendship with Jess and Kevin by refraining from talking too much about his sporting interests. He seemed to be happy with this situation and considered the benefits to be their continued friendship.

Within the context of the disability leisure or sports clubs that the three focus group students attended, it would seem that social and physical capital could be accumulated in different ways at these clubs. Indeed, it would seem that at the club that Tom and James attend, club members place value on gaining physical capital and use this as a means by which comparisons are made between members. However, at Robin's club, less value seemed to be placed on physical capital associated with participating and achieving in sport. The following section moves on by considering the extent to which any of the capital accumulated within free-time sports contexts is valued in any way within physical education or school sport.

5.5.2 Exchange value of free-time sport capital in school (physical education)

In the previous section I discussed Tom's, James's and Robin's engagement in disability leisure or sport clubs. Similarly, I also earlier discussed Dave's interest in cricket and his involvement in a mainstream cricket club. It is evident from the EMA-AD and focus group discussions that each of these students has invested time and energy in free-time sports-related activities and has accumulated different levels of physical and social capital. As I have already indicated, young disabled people can participate in sport through a number of contexts. In this section, I explore the extent to which sporting capital accumulated outwith a physical education context is valued within a school context. In Shilling's terms, I consider the 'exchange value' (Shilling,

2003) that capital accumulated during free-time sporting activity has within the school context.

As I have already discussed, Tom is an enthusiastic football fan and player. Indeed, within his free-time, football seems to be an important activity that draws his family together (5.3.3). Having said this, within a school setting it would seem that, apart from Robin, no one is aware of his active participation in football and membership of a disability football team.

> Tom: "No one at school knows I play football in a team. People know I like watching but not playing. No one's interested."
>
> **HF**: "Why do you think people are like that?"
>
> Tom: "When you're at school it's all to do with school. School sport is all to do with school teams, so we've got a football team and I play football but it's not for the school so it's down there. Like for me I guess people see me in PE and wouldn't believe I'm in a football team."

It would appear from Tom's reaction that more attention seems to be given to school sports and, even though football is given high status, it is specifically the school football team that is afforded the most attention. Within his school context, Tom is conforming, to some degree, by expressing an interest in a sport that is deemed to be 'popular'. However, it also seems that an interest in football needs to be articulated in a particular way in order to accumulate recognised physical capital at school. Indeed, contrary to the conclusions drawn by other writers (Walker and Kushner, 1999), it would seem that the social capital often associated with males' sporting participation was not evident in Tom's experiences of playing football. Also apparent from Tom's comment is a continued awareness that students measure and compare one another in a relatively normative way and that this often marginalizes young disabled people (DePauw, 1997; Barton, 1993).

At South Parade School, Tom and Robin also spoke of a lack of desire on the part of teachers to find out more about their interests beyond school. They felt this was particularly the case in relation to their physical education teachers and suggested they "*blank whatever I do*" (Tom) and "*they don't give me the time so don't know what I do*" (Robin). Interestingly, even within this less than supportive environment, there remained a desire on the part of Tom and Robin for the physical education teachers to recognise and engage with them about their sporting interests. As Robin explained:

> "I wish Mr. Robinson would ask about me basketball but I don't think he's bothered. I'd like him to know cause he plays basketball and he's the nicest PE teacher we've got. I'd like to talk to him and see what he thinks and get him into wheelchair basketball. I think if he saw it he'd really get into it."
> (Robin)

In a sense, it seems like Robin and Tom were seeking, in some way, the approval of their physical education teachers. Unlike the apparent lack of connectivity between school football and Tom's disability football, it seems that these students were able to associate and align their disability sports with school sports and would like their physical education teachers to also think in this way. Although none of their physical education teachers had expressed an interest in their free-time sports, it is worth noting that Robin's year tutor was aware of his participation in wheelchair basketball and had recently begun to ask about his progress.

> "My year tutor asks me how I'm doing. She got talking to me mum and was shocked to find out what I'm doing, how good I am. So she asks me a lot now, no one else."
> (Robin)

Robin seemed to be encouraged by the interest that the tutor was developing. However, he appeared to perceive this as a consolation to gaining the interest of Mr. Robinson, the physical education teacher. Shilling (1991) suggested that individuals have different opportunities for converting physical capital into other forms of capital. It would appear for Tom and Robin that their physical capital accumulated in their

free-time was not recognised within a school setting and, therefore, offered no opportunity for convertibility into other forms of capital.

At St. Anne's Mount School, James had a different experience to Tom and Robin; there seemed to be a greater awareness by a number of teachers of his participation in various disability sports. The key instigator, Mr. Jones, a physical education teacher and SENCO, was discussed earlier (5.4.1). Meanwhile, James was particularly proud of the coverage he received in the school newsletter relating to his footballing success.

> "Our team won the finals of [the regional] football and school asked me for a photo and it got put in the newsletter and there was something written about the day. I got four copies gave one to me mum, nan, uncle and got one for the club. I've never been in the newsletter before and I was surprised they put it in. Em, all my friends were coming up to me and saying you're in the newsletter, I was like yeah I know and they couldn't believe I'd got in."
> (James)

On further discussions with James, and later informally with Mr. Jones, it was evident that the feature focusing on James was in the 'Other News' section rather than the 'Sports News' section. Although James was very happy to be in the newsletter, it seemed ironic that this was not positioned in the 'Sports News' section. At one level, it is encouraging that the school has recognised the achievements of James and publicised them in the newsletter. This illustrates that the school, to some degree, is recognising the physical capital James has accumulated through his free-time sporting interests and this has been rewarded with exposure in the school newsletter. However, the position within the 'Other News' category perhaps demonstrates the work that still needs to be done to ensure more school staff recognise the sporting achievements of James. According to Mr. Jones, the head of physical education refused to allocate any of the 'Sports News' space to James's story and indicated that priority had to be given to students representing elite sporting successes (Fieldnotes: 13/02/04). For this head of physical education, there seemed to be no recognition that winning a regional final may indeed be considered an elite performance.

The difficulty faced within school by the focus group students who participate in sport in their free-time was essentially a lack of recognition for the sporting successes they had gained. The process of conversion, then, was problematic given that free-time physical capital was often not recognised or seen as legitimate within a school (physical education) context.

5.5.3 Constructing understandings of self through free-time sport

For the focus group students that engaged in free-time sport, including Dave, Robin, Tom and James, this participation seemed to provide a means through which their identities were often positively constructed. This construction was evident in a number of ways, including the understandings students had of their 'abilities', positive recognition by others, and a sense of affiliation to sport through membership of clubs/teams. Unlike their constructions of self within a physical education context, their physical capital in free-time disability sport was not scrutinised or questioned, but rather was accepted and difference was often recast in positive ways. Disability as constructed negatively as difference within physical education becomes the norm (instead of difference) in disability sport contexts and is seen positively. As James put it: "*Everyone's different so that's normal we're not different just like everyone*". James later clarified his remark by suggesting:

> "We are all different like I've got a frame so's Colin, John's in a chair, Beth's is electric. So we're all different but like normal cause we are normal here. I don't know but I'd say Beth's different cause she's the only girl and from Greentown."
> (James)

It is notable in James's comment that he does not talk explicitly about the specific impairments that his fellow club members experience. In this way, James is not conforming to the medical model of disability (Barnes *et. al.*, 1999) and instead is defining his club members through the means by which they move around. Furthermore, it is also evident that difference still seems to exist within this club setting but is premised on gender and geographic differences rather than centred on negative constructions of disability. Tom was also very self assured and confident

about his ability as a member of a disability football team. Like Robin, Tom talked about the specific qualities that he believed he held and the ways these contributed to the success of his team. Similarly, Robin conceptualised the abilities of himself and other wheelchair basketball players positively. In this account, he focused on one of his positive attributes.

> "I've got a good shot and, say, get half I shoot for go in. I know it's good and they've told me I'll get better and score more. I can see it, one day twenty, no thirty baskets."
> (Robin)

Interestingly, Robin also talked about his non-disabled brother Jack, who sometimes attended the club and participated in the different sports. In relation to Jack's playing ability, Robin suggested, "*he's good but his chair skills let him down, he'll get better*". The use of a wheelchair, which is often constructed as relatively negative, becomes the aspect of Jack's play that is letting him down. The other players who regularly use a wheelchair would seem to be more skilled and practised and can, therefore, use this to their advantage during basketball games. However, Jack does not have this range of experiences to draw on and is consequently considered by Robin to be a less accomplished player. In this context, using a wheelchair skillfully becomes an important means of physical capital that Jack needs to work on in order to acquire the appropriate levels required to be a proficient wheelchair basketball player. The accounts given by these focus group students indicate that, like physical education, ability is constructed in relation to levels of skill and performance. However, in these disability sport contexts, these abilities move beyond the normalised understandings found within physical education (Evans, 2004) and seem to be redefined in ways that enable students to understand themselves in positive ways.

Another important means through which understandings of self were constructed in relation to free-time sport concerned the ways in which sporting achievement was recognised by dominating others (Shilling, 2003). Indeed, the recognition by family, club members, friends and school staff seemed to legitimise the sporting activities

engaged in and any subsequent successes. However, as I have already indicated, students appeared to have differing experiences in relation to the acknowledgments that their achievements gained. For example, Robin's and Tom's families were very supportive and positive about their successes, but Robin's friends at the disability leisure club were less keen to hear about his sporting activities and successes. Meanwhile, school staff also seemed to respond differently to the sporting achievements of students. Sporting success and the acknowledgment of it seemed to create a range of differing responses from people. This also led to the questioning by students about the extent to which they had actually achieved. As James reflected upon a recent disability leisure club footballing success, he questioned how this was actually perceived by other people: "*Is it really any good?*" For James, the need to gain approval from others seemed to limit the extent to which he was comfortable with the notion that there was any significance, or indeed value, to the results of the football game.

In addition to the notion of ability and recognition, it was also evident that students who participated in free-time sport clubs gained a strong sense of affiliation (Siedentop, 2002) to these clubs. All mentioned their particular clubs on many occasions and expressed a strong sense of belonging to them. In this respect, these students felt firmly positioned within the clubs as genuine members, legitimate participants. This contrasts with some of their experiences of physical education, in which students often presented a sense of marginality and limited affiliation to the physical education class. In relation to his club, Tom indicated: "*At the [football] club I fit in, I'm a key player*" and Robin suggested: "*Riverside is very good I'm one of the Riversiders, I'm part of the group. I like it and have got friends there*".

Aside from the experiences of Dave, Robin, Tom and James, for the other focus group students, sport remained something confined to experiences at school and was not part of their free-time experiences. As such, sport still provided, to some degree, a means through which self was constructed, but it often continued to be constructed in the kinds of negative terms experienced through physical education (4.5 and 4.6). In this

way, some focus group students continued to make normalised comparisons with other people they saw participating in free-time sport.

> "When I go to the [sports] centre with mum I see all these really fit people going into the gym, play squash, you know, doing sport and I know it's not for me, I'm not like them. They look fit and normal."
> (Andy)

Andy is clearly positioning himself as not matching up to the ideals (Macdonald, 2002) of these people using the sports centre. In this way, he is also constructing himself as inferior and, in a similar way to his experiences of physical education, is rationaling his lack of suitability to participate in sport as based, in part, on the lack of compatibility between how he perceives himself and the type of person that participates in sport.

5.6 CHALLENGING THE COMPOSITION AND EXCHANGE VALUE OF CAPITAL VALUED IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT - *"We all said we'd tell our parents to say something" (Adam)*

Having explored various contexts of sporting participation within and beyond the school context, this section considers the ways in which the focus group students mobilise agency in order to challenge and resist the experiences they encounter within physical education and free-time sport. First, I consider within a number of contexts the ways in which the students mobilise their agency. For some students, this only occurred within the focus group context, as the students felt unable to resist in a manner that would lead to positive change. Within the context of physical education, I then consider the ways in which the focus group students sometimes challenged exclusionary and normative practices. Indeed, the students appeared to be adept at negotiating situations and resisting discriminatory practices and experiences by challenging, in different ways family, friends and teachers.

5.6.1 Mobilising agency and acts of resistance

Even though there seems to be considerable regulation and control in the lives of

young (disabled) people, there also appear to be occasions when the students mobilised their agency (Priestley, 1999; Kelly, 2005) in order to secure a more favourably situation. Indeed, a recurrent theme that was evident throughout the focus group discussions concerned the students' ability to question and resist, to differing degrees, some of the experiences they encountered. At times, this mobilisation of agency was constrained to questioning within the focus group context; students often expressed their concerns or dissatisfaction with a particular issue or situation. However, it was also apparent that the students had not actively explored many of these issues more widely beyond this focus group context. As Ruth explained, she was unhappy that her sister seemed to get more consideration in relation to the transport arrangements organised by their parents.

> "I'd like go Guides but can't. I don't get taken nowhere. Jess gets it all, it's like she's more, more important. I don't ask cause I know what the answer'll be."
> (Ruth)

For Ruth, it seems that the power relations (Preistley, 1999) within her family are not working in her favour and she does not feel in a position to directly challenge this situation. Having said this, it is clear that Ruth did, at times, mobilise some resistance in relation to other issues (5.3.1), although this seemed to exacerbate the tensions between Ruth and her stepfather. Consequently, for Ruth there seemed to be little she could do to persuade her family that she should be given more support to go to free-time activities such as the Guides.

Other focus group students were also aware of the fruitlessness of taking issue with particular situations, as they perceived the outcome would not positively change their circumstances. Within the context of the family, friends and school, many of the focus group students had a good sense of the issues that were worth pursuing and those that should be left unchallenged. In fact, students seemed to almost calculate costs relative to the potential distress they would have to endure and the likelihood of gaining the desired benefits from their actions. The costs were varied and included: "*Is the grief*

worth it?" (Steve), "*will I upset him?*" (Adam) and "*am I going to get into trouble?*" (Tom). In these contexts, the focus group students demonstrated that they could be astute social agents, able to judge situations and evaluate the merits of their actions.

Some focus group students that mobilised their agency did so to resist situations they were confronted with that they found undesirable. Interestingly, sometimes this resistance would not be explicitly evident to those that may be causing the adverse situation. For example, I have already discussed (4.2.2) how Tom and a group of his friends were excluded at break times from playing football with another group of boys. Instead of complaining or objecting to this situation, either directly to the boys in question or indirectly to a teacher, Tom and his friends created their own group in order to play football. This resistance, then, was not directed specifically at the unfriendly boys but rather provided an outlet in which Tom and his friends could play football. In this instance, an alternative was actively sought by Tom in order to ensure a positive outcome was gained, although in this case it seems that the unwelcoming boys were not challenged in any way about their exclusionary and discriminatory views towards Tom and his friends.

Like Tom, other focus group students seemed to be adept at re-negotiating situations in a non-confrontational way in order to achieve their desired outcome. As this extract illustrates, this sometimes also involved enlisting the help of others in order to present a viable alternative.

> "Dad said I had to stop going [disability leisure club]. He couldn't pick me up no more. Then I was really fed up cause I didn't want to stop like I'd been going two years. He said I'd got to. I had a word with Sam and he had a word with his mum and she said she'd drop me off. She drops me off now."
> (James)

In this circumstance, James was able to resist, in a positive way, the situation resulting from his father's change in shift patterns at work and, rather then merely expressing his disappointment at this announcement, James actively sought a remedy to the

situation in a way that would enable him to continue to attend the leisure club.

5.6.2 Challenging exclusionary practices in physical education

It is evident from the focus group discussions that students sometimes experienced exclusionary practices during their physical education experiences. Such exclusion was varied and included total exclusion from physical education (4.3.3), exclusion from the main physical education group (4.6.2), exclusion from specific physical education activities (4.6.1), and peer-led exclusion from game-play situations (4.5.1). The reactions of the students towards these episodes of exclusion varied and, on occasions, this exclusion was seen as unfair or unreasonable. In other instances, it was considered to have positive consequences. For example, at St. Anne's Mount School, exclusion from 'grass cricket' and participation in the alternative 'table cricket' was received with little enthusiasm. Meanwhile, for other students, exclusion from activities including rugby, cross-country and volleyball received welcoming, positive reactions. During the majority of these episodes of exclusion, these focus group students seemed to accept, or provide relatively limited challenges to, the experiences they encountered.

Although the cause of the various forms of exclusion often originated from teachers, it was evident from the focus group discussions that more efforts were made to challenge other classmates than the teachers themselves. Indeed, peer-led exclusion from other classmates sometimes triggered retaliatory reactions from the focus group students, including verbal responses focusing on name-calling. Perhaps in these situations with other peers, the focus group students felt more able to resist others that held relatively similar positions within school. In contrast, it may be that school staff were positioned more favorably with legitimate authoritative power and thc focus group students felt less able to challenge them.

On a few occasions, though, where the students felt particularly aggrieved, even the teachers were challenged about specific incidences of exclusionary practice. Indeed, football seemed to be popular with the focus group students and exclusion from

football during physical education at St. Anne's Mount School evoked considerable resentment. As Steve put it: "*When I couldn't do football I was really mad*", and Dave suggested: "*It wasn't fair, it wasn't right*". During this period of exclusion, the focus group students explained how they compensated for their lack of footballing opportunities in physical education by playing at other times during the school day. James suggested: "*.... we play at break times, we still do*". James also considered himself to be lucky because he attended a community disability leisure club, which also provided another avenue for him to play football. It seems that at this school, following various protests by the students and other family members, eventually some footballing opportunities were reinstated during physical education for the focus group students. As Adam and James explain, they both approached Mr. Smith, the physical education teacher, and expressed their concern that football was not offered within physical education.

> "We kept telling Mr. Smith we wanted to do football. We all told him we wanted to. On parents' night, my dad even had a word with Mrs. Day [form tutor]."
> (Adam)

> "…. I was really unhappy and told Mr. Smith. …. I know for a fact my mum said something [on parents' evening]."
> (James)

On this occasion, it would seem the students' resistance to the activity content within physical education paid off and, with the assistance of other family members, they were able to mobilise sufficient support, subsequently leading to the reintroduction of footballing opportunities for these students within physical education. This incident illustrates, as Davis and Watson (1999) and Priestley (1999) found, that the students are able to sometimes 'speak out' and resist what they perceive as preclusive discourses. Interestingly, the fact that number of parents raised this issue at parents' evening was not an unplanned coincidence but a well-thought-out tactic engineered by the disgruntled students.

> "We all said we'd tell our parents to say something. We thought if we all said, something would happen."
> (Adam)

The girls at South Parade School also expressed a desire to participate in football during physical education. The girls indicated that they had not raised this issue with any of the physical education teachers, as they already knew this was not a possibility: "*Girls don't do football here*" (Anne). For some, it seems a gender-differentiated physical education curriculum (Williams *et al.*, 2000) continues to override football from becoming a reality within their physical education curriculum and, unlike the boys at St. Anne's Mount School, the girls did not seek to challenge this practice. Given that all girls at South Parade School were excluded from playing football within physical education, perhaps the focus group girls perceived this situation as the norm and, therefore, did not consider it to be an issue they wished to challenge as they were, in fact, conforming to the norm by not engaging in football.

5.6.3 Challenging normative practices in physical education

A number of scholars have repeatedly expressed concerns that the practices of physical education privilege the minority (Wright, 2000; Oliver, 2001; Shilling, 2003) and are premised and practised on normative grounds (Barton, 1993). Some physical education practices evident in the focus group students' schools were also recognised in this normative way, particularly in relation to the skills and practices that students undertook.

> Jane: "The PE teacher is for the best and for the ones who fit into the class."
>
> **HF**: "What do you mean by 'fit in'?"
>
> Jane: "People who can do stuff, do everything maybe not well but like have a go and do what the teachers shows and don't have to figure out how to change it."
>
> **HF**: "Is that what you have to do then, change?"
>
> Jane: "Yeah, mostly me and Gemma."

HF: "What do you think about that then?"

Jane: "I'm okay, me and Gemma are happy together and we'll figure it out."

Jane seems to be relatively content with this situation and, together with her friend Gemma, they appear to work out how to adapt activities and practices. However, other focus group students were unhappy with this situation and considered other students in the class to have a distinct advantage. As Tom put it: *"Sometimes I'd like Mr. Richards to show me how I can do stuff. Like me*". It would appear that more concerns were raised when the focus group students were in the main physical education class rather than in the smaller SEN or disability groups. Indeed, a number of students felt that, by not considering and addressing skill or technique issues specific to them, the physical education teacher was adding to the sense of marginality that the students already perceived. Furthermore, the learning support assistants, although acknowledged as positive, were also perceived as absolving the physical education teachers from their responsibility. This was a particular concern and frustration for Robin, who discussed the ways in which he had tried to resist the physical education teacher not considering his needs.

"What I do with Mr. Smith is I'll ask to see it again. He'll come over to me and I'll be like 'well how should I do it'? If I ask he'll try to help me out but I feel like it's me asking him all the time and he doesn't try with me and if he did, I'd like him more."
(Robin)

This strategy seemed to elicit a positive response from the physical education teacher. However, Robin did not seem totally satisfied with this situation and still believed the teacher could take a more proactive role in supporting various ideas and adaptations: "*It's his job not mine*" (Robin). Although the National Curriculum supports student innovation and discovery (DfEE/QCA, 1999), it would seem, like Robin, that Steve felt the emphasis was far too frequently placed on him. Steve indicated that he occasionally reacted rather aggressively towards the physical education teacher and would shout out "*what about me?*". When discussing this assertive yet forceful

reaction, Steve recalled that the physical education teacher had, in fact, cautioned him for his rudeness. Furthermore, this response appears to have also singled out Steve even more within the main physical education group as he indicated, "*I get stared at when I do it*". Through his reaction, it appears that Steve remains positioned as different within the wider physical education group. Having said this, a number of the other focus group students from St. Anne's Mount were supportive of Steve's actions but were quick to also highlight the negative effect this seems to have had on Steve, relations with his physical education teacher and other students.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on students' understandings of their free-time experiences, in particular of free-time sport. Although the focus group students had different experiences of their free-time and the position of sport, within this context it is clear that for these students free-time is an important site for understanding and positioning themselves in relation to others. This chapter has confirmed that there are similarities between free-time and school (physical) education. Like chapter four, this chapter has revealed the many different ways in which normative values associated with the body and conceptions of performance prevail. However, for a small number of students it appears that the family habitus has disrupted these normative values and constructed disability and sport positively. This chapter has also highlighted the limited extent to which different sites of participation and mediators interrelate in order to support any kind of continuity or progression in sport. Although the key mediator within multiple sites seem to be parents, their support remained isolated to specific issues within sites rather than supportive between sites. This chapter has explored the extent to which the students perceive they possess relevant capital within free-time disability sport and has revealed that those students who do participate are positioned positively within this context. However, recognition of this capital within a school or physical education setting was minimal. Having presented the data generated from this study in two chapters, I now move on to the conclusions and explore the key themes that have emerged from this study.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION: RECONCEPTUALISING (DIS)ABILITY THROUGH THE HABITUS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, I posed the following question: Are the dominant practices of physical education in schools best serving young disabled people? I suggested this question remains largely unanswered as physical educators and sports researchers have failed to adequately theorise or sufficiently account for the experiences of young disabled people. In this study, I address this oversight and place importance on what ten young disabled people tell me about their physical education and sporting experiences. Although I have centred this study on a small sample, I believe this work illustrates the kinds of in-depth insights that can be gained if young people are given opportunities to express their views within a research context. This study focuses on their experiences of physical education and sport and explores the ways in which these experiences contribute to identity formation and understandings of self. Following a number of writers within physical education and sport, I employ the conceptual tools offered by Bourdieu (Gorely *et al.*, 2003; Hunter, 2004; Evans, 2004; Hay and Hunter, 2006). My study also builds on other work found within disability studies (Priestley *et al.*, 1999; Davis and Watson, 2001 and 2002) and extends these understandings by focusing specifically on experiences of physical education and sport.

In this final chapter, I revisit the research questions that have underpinned this study and explore the key themes emerging from these questions. After this, I reflect upon the research findings and the wider implications of these findings in relation to researching with young disabled people, the practice of physical education and the relationship between disability sport and physical education. Finally, I consider future research directions and explore a range of possibilities for further study. In this concluding chapter, I first provide a reminder of the research questions.

(1) What is the nature of the young disabled participants' experiences of physical education and school sport?
(2) What is the nature of the young disabled participants' experiences of free-time sport?
(3) How do the young disabled participants in this study understand their experiences of physical education and school sport?
(4) How do the young disabled participants in this study understand their experiences of free-time sport?
(5) How do the young disabled participants' experiences of physical education and school sport inform their sense of self and identity?
(6) How do the young disabled participants' experiences of free-time sport inform their sense of self and identity?

These research questions are divided between those that focus on school and physical education and those that are concerned with free-time sport. Within each of these contexts, the research questions reflect a concern to explore how the focus group students understand their experiences and the ways this informs their sense of self and identity. Taken together, these questions enable multidimensional understandings to be gained of the embodied identities of young disabled people. In the preceding section, I summarise the key findings from this study and, in doing this, provide an indication of the specific research questions that these findings address.

6.2 SUMMARISING THE KEY FINDINGS

6.2.1 Construction of embodied identities at school and through physical education

Research questions 1, 3 and 5 focus on school physical education and identity formation. In relation to these questions, the data reported in this study illustrates that a paradigm of normativity prevails in physical education. It would seem the physical education habitus serves to affirm this normative presence and is manifest through conceptions of ability that recognise and value certain characteristics and competencies more than others. In particular, the focus group students seemed to measure themselves, and perceive they were measured by others, against a

mesomorphic ideal. For example, in 4.4.2 we saw how James was frustrated when playing basketball because his peers were, in his words, '*bigger*' and '*faster*' than him. In addition, Steve believed he did not '*fit in*' because his arms and legs did not work in the same ways as those of his peers. In both these instances, the students were comparing themselves against an ideal that would be impossible for them to gain. However, it is an ideal that contributes significantly to the extent to which their ability is recognised and valued in physical education. Normative conceptions of ability were also manifest through articulations of masculinity that value competitive and aggressive forms of activity. For the focus group students, not participating in activities that overtly promote these characteristics (such as rugby), and engaging in alternative activities (such as Boccia and table cricket), did not seem to enable capital to be attained through this conception of ability. Finally, the students in this study illustrate how the physical education habitus supports normative conceptions of ability that are manifest through high levels of motoric competence. For example, in 4.4.3 Andy believed that Mr. Evans spent much of his time supporting the '*good*' footballers, while Steve recognised that he was not going to be '*as good as*' many of his peers. It is perhaps not surprising that motoric competencies are valued in physical education contexts that are increasingly driven by agendas seeking to identify 'performances' rather than retaining a focus on educational aspirations. This 'performance' agenda also seems to be promoting normalised understandings of a performative ability that positions young disabled people at the margins of this agenda (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005b).

Interestingly, the skills required to play Boccia seemed to be universally rejected by others around the focus group students as constituting a high degree of motoric competence. This contrasted with the focus group students who were keen to highlight the ways in which Boccia was a skilled game that required commitment and practice. In part though, it may be that Boccia was perceived as holding inferior value as the activity did not have any mesomorphic or masculine characteristics. Similarly, table cricket was perceived by the focus group students as 'not a proper' sport (4.4.1). This seemed to be because they perceived it as not holding any characteristics associated

with masculinity, motoric competence and a mesomorphic ideal. Interestingly, in the case of Boccia, the focus group students contested wider perceptions of the ways in which this activity did not match up to broader ideas of sporting activities. However, their concerns to defend the characteristics and features of table cricket were less enthusiastic, and the focus group students seemed unconvinced by the value of the competencies underpinning this activity. This study found that, within physical education, to deviate from articulations of ability expressed through masculinity, motoric competence and a mesomorphic ideal was to be seen as different. This expression of difference was essentially seen in negative terms – to undertake different activities, participate in different places, to be physically different. In this context, students were often positioned at the margins of the physical education experience and, as these practices continued over time, this seemed to reinforce the differences experienced and expressed by the focus group students and others around them.

6.2.2 Physical education and other places of sporting consumption

In part, research questions 1 and 2 explore the different contexts in which the focus group students participate in sport. It is clear from this study that school physical education is a key site in which the students have opportunities to engage in sports-related activities. This, though, is not the only site in which the focus group students experience sport. Indeed, a number of the organisations supporting participation that were illustrated in Figure 1 (2.2.4) were key sites in which some focus group students engaged in sporting activity. For example, for a few students at St. Anne's Mount School, a Boccia club provided an outlet for participation. The focus group students, though, perceived this particular club as having less value than other school sports clubs (4.4.3). Interestingly, no other after school sports clubs were accessed by students and, supporting the findings of Cale (2000), this reflected a concern that these clubs were primarily catering for students who would represent the school in particular sports teams. In this context, there was a perception that the normative ideals strived for in physical education were also evident in school sports clubs. However, in a school sports club setting, the stakes seemed to be raised even further and articulations of masculinity, motoric competence and a mesomorphic ideal were accentuated to a

level that only enabled the 'best' to engage in this setting.

Beyond a school context, three students participated in free-time disability sport/leisure clubs. The question of the relationship between physical education and community sport is currently receiving considerable attention through the Government's PESSCL strategy (DfES, 2002), which seeks to enhance the continuity between school and community opportunities. In relation to this issue, the data reported in this study reveals a complex interface between school, physical education and other places of sporting consumption. Some students attributed negative perceptions of physical education as a rationale for non-engagement in free-time sports-related activities (4.3.2). In this context, the relationship between physical education and free-time participation in sport results in non participation and, in some senses, this could be considered as an absence of any kind of interrelationship. However, according to five of the focus group students, is it precisely the relationship with physical education that has promoted a lack of interest to engage in sport beyond a physical education context. In contrast, the students that participated in free-time sport perceived a closer relationship with and between physical education. However, this relationship was often limited to a broader enjoyment and interest in physical education and a desire to engage beyond this context. Indeed, it would seem from the focus group discussions that progression into free-time disability sport was not supported directly by physical education teachers but rather other key mediators, particularly the family.

In addition to the sites of participation promoting active engagement in sport, the focus group students also associated being a sports fan or spectator as means of positively expressing an interest in sport and contributing, to some degree, to a sporting identity. The focus group students seemed to more readily associate with this site of sports consumption and felt more able to express their sporting interests in this way. However, even as a spectator/fan, it seemed that other competencies and abilities associated with active engagement in physical education and sport were still used as a means of legitimising the position of students within this site of consumption. To be a

sports fan, the students had to demonstrate a "*true commitment*" (Tom). This was expressed through active engagement in sport, a sustained time as a fan, and knowledge of particular aspects of the sport (5.2.5). It would seem that a paradigm of normativity is not only present within physical education but also pervasive in other places of sporting consumption.

6.2.3 Other mediators of sporting tastes and embodied identities

Research questions 4 and 6 focus other mediators of sporting tastes and embodied identities. In particular, attention is given to the multifaceted contexts of the family, sporting role models, teachers and other disabled people. In relation to these mediators, the data reported in this study illustrates the many different ways in which normative values associated with the body and conceptions of performance are expressed through these mediators and embedded within the habitus of the focus group students. For example, within a broader school context, the students were acutely aware of the ways in which teachers spoke about *them* (4.2.2). More specifically within physical education, the focus group students perceived that some of their teachers acted in ways that demonstrated a lack of interest in their development within physical education. Indeed, the focus group students perceived some physical education teachers were only concerned to ensure these students playing in school sports teams received their attention (4.4.3). However, it also seemed to be the case that there were a same number of teachers that recognised and valued the abilities of the focus group students (5.4.1).

Beyond a school context, a significant social arena in which understandings of disability emerged was within the family. In this context, the family influenced how the focus group students understood, embraced and responded to disability. For some students, such as Robin, disability was constructed positively through a social model perspective. In this way, the family discourse did not individualise disability as the responsibility of the student. In contrast, Ruth reflected more negatively upon her stepfather's understanding of disability and how this affected her sense of self and value within the family (5.3.1). The family was not only an influence of the students'

understandings of disability and their embodied identities; it was also a significant resource and constrainer of sporting tastes and interests. This study illustrates that family members can play a vital role in supporting sporting interests through their commitment to transport and provision of sports-related goods and equipment. These resources, though, seemed to be part of a broader negotiation within the family, and the focus group students faired differently in relation to the resources they gained. As Harrington (2006) found, specific sporting tastes and interests of the family were sometimes reflected through the focus group students. In this study, Tom's family, particularly his father and brother, were keen football players and spectators and Tom also expressed this interest. Similarly, Dave suggested that "*cricket comes first*" for his family and this seemed to be a key activity for bringing the family together (5.3.3).

For other focus group students, the family habitus seemed to be disrupted in a number of ways and, to differing degrees, the students attributed disability to this situation. At times, this was expressed through frustration and awareness that family tastes and interests were not being reproduced. Adam compared himself to his two brothers and father, suggesting "*I was the first not to get in the school football team*". In other instances, family sporting tastes and interests seemed to be disrupted by the activities of the focus group students. A four of focus group students highlighted temporary disruptions in order to accommodate their medical-related needs. Other students emphasized the ways in which other family members had embraced their disability sport interests. Robin's family had embraced his interest in wheelchair basketball; he suggested, "*it's a big thing with my family*". For Tom and Robin, their family seemed to have embraced their sporting interests and their families seemed to have placed value on the disability sports they were undertaking.

Four of the students have had encounters with other disabled people that have contributed to their broader outlook on life. For a few students, this included their participation in sport. For some, 'one-off' encounters provided a memorable experience and this seemed to contribute to their views of themselves, particularly in relation to their understandings of disability. For other students, sustained contact with

disabled adults also appeared to affect their views of disability and themselves. This was particularly the case for Robin and James, who attended disability leisure clubs (5.2.4). For both of them, it seemed that exposure to disabled adults at these clubs contributed to a positive outlook. James also talked encouragingly about a disabled coach that occasionally supported his leisure club; he aspired to be like Brian: "*One day I want to be like him*". In contrast, Dave had had little contact with any disabled adults and, unlike a number of other students, he was unable to draw on these experiences in order to reflect upon his understandings of self. However, for the other focus group students, encounters with disabled adults appeared to have impacted on different aspects of their lives. In many cases, the disabled adults had been positive influences on the focus group students.

6.3 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN REPRODUCING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

A combination of social, cultural and political changes within contemporary society have heightened the prominence given to issues of inclusion and equity, and concerns focusing on disability are also firmly embedded within this discourse (2.2). Indeed, the principles of inclusion are now embraced within education, and more specifically in physical education, through entitlement to a 'broad and balanced curriculum' (DfEE/QCA, 1999). According to Barton (1998), "…. inclusive education is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice" (p. 85). However, it would seem in both schools in this study that the focus group students recollected many experiences that continue to situate the practice of inclusion as something that remains a distant ideal rather than a reality practised in schools. In this study, I have discussed in detail how 'exclusionary practice' operates at an institutional and discursive level and informs the habitus of the focus group students. Cultural norms and practices maintaining exclusionary practices were expressed through the labels given to the students such as 'SEN' and 'disabled'. Needing a support worker to provide extra help and getting 'exemptions' also produced episodes of exclusion. In each of these contexts, the focus group students often positioned themselves, and were positioned by other mediators, as 'other' and

'different'. Peers, like school staff, seemed to play a significant role in reinforcing notions of otherness. This was perpetuated through the stereotyping of disabled students and was manifest through the use of derogatory language, name calling, staring and exclusion from activities. From the insights of the focus group students, their schools seemed to be key sites reproducing social inequalities.

The physical education context also confirmed these exclusionary practices. This is evidenced through the marginalization of the disabled students by allocating different activities, structuring participation in different places, and giving prominence to other bodies perceived as physically superior and more able. Individually, each of these practices may not be considered as exclusionary but rather merely reflecting practices and discourses normalised within physical education. For example, for some time, a range of 'inclusion continuums' (Fitzgerald and Bass, 2007) have existed that support the idea that disabled students are not always best served if they are placed within the same setting as their peers. In supporting this approach, teachers are encouraged to adopt the particular strategy, or combination of strategies, that best serve the needs of the disabled students. The physical education teachers supporting the focus group students may have had positive intentions and supported the merits of the various inclusion continuums. However, what is apparent from the focus group discussions is that, at times, the grouping of the disabled students together and their separation from the main group was perhaps less well thought out. For example, why were the focus group students at South Parade School not allowed to play cricket with the main physical education group but were separated and offered table cricket as an alternative? Had the physical education teacher examined the needs of each student? If this was the case, why had the students been allowed to play cricket previously? It also seems that the students were not asked their views on playing cricket or table cricket. At times, separation seemed to have been based on grouping those labelled SEN or disabled together rather than considering the individual needs of all students. This kind of exclusionary practice within physical education seems to have reinforced broader practices within the schools that emphasize the social inequities experienced by young disabled people.

6.4 DISABILITY AS A FLUID AND CONTRADICTORY CONSTRUCT

Historically, disability has been seen as a naturalistic form, defined and legitimised within medical terms. Medical specialists, including those focusing on rehabilitation, developed and sought to 'help' disabled people to cope or fit in with 'normal' life (Barnes *et al.*, 1999). Disability, typically then, becomes a defining feature. According to Hunt (1966), this often leads non-disabled people to assume that to be disabled is to be unfortunate, useless, different, oppressed and sick. In contrast to the medically underpinned view of disability, an alternative model has emerged that challenges the personal tragedy view of disability. The social model challenges the naturalistic category of disability and supports the view that disability is an exclusionary social construction. As I highlighted earlier (2.3), both these accounts of disability have been criticised for the limiting ways in which the individual is presented and understood. Furthermore, both these models present self and identity as a solid and relatively stable concept with little opportunity for reflexivity and change. In relation to a person's identity and the position of disability within this, Watson (2002) suggests that medical and social model accounts reflect ahistorical, unsituated and decontextualised understandings of identity production that conflate disabled people into a singular group.

Apart from one student (Dave), all focus group students seemed to associate in different ways and to different degrees with disability and SEN. As Watson and Priestley (2000) found, there seemed to be fluidity in the ways in which students (dis)associated with a disabled identity. For the focus group students, identities seemed to be contingent upon time and space (Hall *et al.*, 1992; Shilling, 2003), with disability taking a greater or lesser position. Like Davis and Watson (2001), this study found that educational discourses continue to reinforce discriminatory notions of 'normality' and 'difference'. On the one hand, assimilation to normality is strived for while, at the same time, discursive practices continue to emphasize difference. Indeed, I have indicated in the previous section the ways in which physical education continues to perpetuate normative practices. The disabled students sometimes constructed themselves as different: "*SEN tells them all I'm different*" (James), and at

other times normal: "*I'm like everyone [at school], good and bad at stuff*" (Ruth). In the case of James, he conveys the way in which the label of SEN is presented to others as representing difference. In contrast, Ruth does not emphasize disability or SEN in her explanation of self and instead focuses on her broader academic abilities.

Within a school context, and indeed in broader spheres of life, the young people in this study understood and interpreted themselves and their relationship with the notion of SEN and disability in different ways. The focus group students also referred to the views *they* had constructed and the ways in which they believed *others* perceived them. These different perspectives highlighted contradictions between students and others around them, and these competing perspectives sometimes served to reinforce differences. At other times, the focus group students were responsive social agents (Priestley, 1999) and conscious of the 'performances' they were able to enact which may, or may not, involve locating themselves as disabled. That said, the fluidity of identity is not limitless (Giddens, 1999). In relation to the focus group students' disabled identity, it seemed that deeply embedded understandings of self that were situated and expressed through the family, friends and other mediators continually influenced the young people's understandings of themselves. Physical education and sport serve as an important site in which the focus group students' sporting identities were constructed. The following section discusses the fluid and complex sporting identities of the focus group students.

6.5 COMPLEX SPORTING IDENTITIES

Within a physical education context, I have already highlighted how 'difference' is embodied by the focus group students (4.6). In this context, a sporting identity is essentially articulated through a sense of inferiority and marginality. However, there was some recognition between the focus group students that they were able to express sporting identities that represent positive qualities. For example, playing for the school Boccia team (4.4.3), positioning themselves favourably within an informal hierarchy of 'ability' (4.5.3), and investing energies in 'valued' school sports (4.5.2) were all considered as articulations of positive sporting identities. Nonetheless, even by

expressing these attributes, the focus group students seemed unable to gain recognition from other students or members of staff. Within a school context, there remains an overarching sense that physical education and sporting identities are constructed in ways that do not enable significant and valued capital to be accumulated by many of the focus group students who do not represent the masculine, motoric or mesomorphic ideals valued in physical education. At the same time, these students also found ways, between themselves, to legitimise and construct positive sporting identities (4.4.3, 4.5.3, 4.5.2). However, these constructions were not recognised beyond a small group of students and carried no exchange value outside this context. What these isolated constructions illustrate is that there seems to be possibilities for (re)constructing sporting identities beyond a normative ideal. However, the key features of these identities have yet to be embraced by others within a wider physical education or sporting context.

For a few students that participated in disability sport clubs, it is evident that within these clubs they were generally positioned positively in relation to their sporting identities. For example, Robin ensured his sporting aspirations in relation to wheelchair basketball were known: "*I'll go to the Paralympics one day*", and sought to position himself as a serious sports performer. Interestingly, a few focus group students who had positioned themselves as 'not into sport' found it difficult to conceptualise the notion of disabled people competing and excelling in competitive sport. In particular, Anne reinforced the kinds of normalised discourses of ability perpetuated through physical education. In response to Tom, who had recently won a silver medal at an event, Anne suggested, "*I don't believe it. You're really slow*" (Anne). For the students that participated and were successful in disability sport, it seemed their sporting identities were sometimes questioned within the focus groups by others group members and, as I have already indicated, their sporting status was also unvalued within a school context (5.5.2).

The three focus group students that attended a disability leisure/sports club seemed to have accumulated some social and physical capital. Indeed, at the clubs that Tom and

James attended, other club members placed value on gaining physical capital and used this as a means of comparing themselves with others and confirming their sporting identity. Recognition centring on a sporting identity within a disability sport setting was not linear, and Robin had to balance promoting an overt sporting identity with ensuring that social capital associated with a friendship group was not compromised. As Robin put it in relation to two of his friends, "*They're not interested; it bores them so I didn't talk about [it]*". Within this setting, and particularly when with his friends, Robin was conscious that he should not present an explicit sporting identity otherwise other capital associated with key friendships may be affected.

The data generated in this study illustrates that sporting identities constructed through a physical education context are underpinned by a sense of inferiority and marginalinity. A normalised discourse of sporting identity also prevailed beyond a physical education context. Having said this, at times positive sporting identities were constructed by a few students through disability sport. This serves to illustrate the possibilities that sporting identities can move beyond the normalised conceptions that currently exist.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.6.1 Implications for researching with young disabled people

As indicated in chapter two, researchers have tended not to engage young disabled people within the research process. However, more recently, researchers have begun to embrace the idea of seeking the views and opinions of young disabled people. Indeed, I have highlighted a number of key research projects that have shed new light on the 'lived' experiences of young disabled people (Corker, 1999; Davis and Watson, 1999 and 2002; Priestley, 1999). Within the context of physical education and sport, apart from a few notable exceptions (Goodwin and Watkinson, 2000), researchers have been less concerned to engage with young disabled people. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that often when researchers talk about inclusion within physical education, issues of disability tend to be marginalized a favour of concerns to explore, amongst other things, inclusion in relation to gender, ethnicity and social inequalities.

While these dimensions of inclusion are quite clearly important, researchers need to recognise that inclusion also encompasses issues relating to disability. With this in mind, researchers focusing on the multiple dimensions of inclusion need to give due consideration and attention to issues of disability. Indeed, if 'difference' is to be considered from an "across the board" perspective (Penney, 2002: 116), it is crucial that issues of disability are incorporated rather than marginalized within research. Of course, researchers who have chosen to focus their concerns on issues of disability and physical education, such as many of those referenced in this study, perhaps also need to consider how they can contribute to broader discussions relating to the multiple dimensions of difference and inclusion. By approaching research in this way, it would seem possibilities open up for the issue of disability to become embedded within wider inclusion research agendas instead of perceived as somewhat separate to the core business of physical education research. The implication of this lack of engagement is that physical educators and sports facilitators and providers will have no real sense of the nature of young disabled peoples' lives and the position of physical education and sport within this. This study has explored physical education and sport and also positioned these experiences within the context of other mediating factors. As such, the study serves to illustrate the value of engaging with young people in order to find out about the ways in which they engage in different spheres of their lives.

6.6.2 Implications for physical education and disability sport

Participation data relating to physical education and young disabled people indicates that these young people participate less and undertake a narrower range of activities than their non-disabled peers (Sport England, 2001). The data presented in this study provides a deeper insight than that offered by these kinds of statistics, and perhaps serves to confirm the need to reform the nature and practice of physical education experienced in schools. This is a call that a number of writers have been advocating for some time (Kirk, 1998; Ennis, 1999; Gorely *et al.*, 2003). I would suggest that by using the 'lens' of disability and problematising the relationship between physical education and disability, the normative practices of physical education are immediately apparent and explicitly exposed. Indeed, physical education, as it is

experienced by the focus group students, reflects marginalization and reinforced difference and emphasizes inability. There are a number of strategies that could be implemented in order to address some of the undesirable experiences encountered by the students in this study. In particular, disability sport could be introduced more widely into the physical education curriculum, closer relations could be developed between physical education and community disability sport or disability sport could be disregarded from the physical education curriculum.

First, in terms of teaching and learning, disability sport could be incorporated into the physical education curriculum. This development would be premised on the view that if young disabled people are engaging in sports that were 'designed for them', this should enable more positive experiences. Generally, in this study disability sport seemed to provide an important avenue for a number of the focus group students too positively and actively engage in sport. It is clear that these students enjoyed participation and gained an immense sense of achievement. Having said this, a number of critical questions emerge in relation to the position and place of disability sport within physical education. A central question concerns how teachers should go about embedding disability sport within the physical education curriculum. This innovation requires careful consideration, planning and implementation. For example, should disability sport be presented to all students as 'sports for all' rather than restricted to disabled students. Would adopting this strategy serve to lessen the distinction between disability and 'mainstream' sport? Or might this kind of strategy create an even wider gap between understandings of sporting ability. In this respect the inclusion of disability sports may reinforce, rather than disrupt, normative paradigms that currently place greater value on 'mainstream' sport within physical education. The teaching of physical education is clearly more than the subject matter; in this case I am proposing more attention is paid to disability sport. Within this context, it is important to remember that the nature of the pedagogy underpinning delivery may also need to be addressed and I discuss this issue later.

Second, a strategy aimed at building relations between community disability sport and schools may provide opportunities for school staff to draw on, and learn, from the expertise of those working in disability sport. Once again, this kind of strategy would require careful implementation and in particular consideration given to the role physical education teachers should play in facilitating community disability sport opportunities for young disabled people. In this study, apart from Mr. Jones's involvement in Boccia (5.4.1), the focus group students did not discuss any other efforts that (physical education) teachers made to promote disability sport outside the curriculum. Indeed, the achievements of the focus group students who did participate in disability sport went largely unrecognized within the two schools in this study. A question relevant to these schools, and indeed others, is do teachers see supporting disability sport opportunities as outside their core responsibilities? If this is not the case, why should this be any different than supporting non-disabled students into community sport, a practice supported by teachers long before the development and introduction of the PESSCL strategy? In this context, the support of partnership work with community disability sport should be seen as a mutual relationship rather than school staff perceiving it as a replacement for their responsibility to facilitate disability sport opportunities.

Finally, is there, in fact, no place for disability sport within the physical education curriculum. This is not to suggest that for those schools that presently do not offer such opportunities that they are 'doing it right'. Rather the absence of disability sport, along with rethinking the position of other sports, should be seen as a more radical attempt to develop a physical education curriculum that works towards rearticulating notions of ability in order that the normalised physical education habitus can be disrupted. Indeed, the work of Kirk and Tinning (1994) and Oliver and Lalik (2001) perhaps provides some guidance in relation to this issue and signals a move towards teaching through a critical analysis of the body and supporting young people to become critical consumers of corporal information. By working in this way, articulations of ability can be recast and understood in ways that extend beyond narrowly defined measures of performance and normative conceptions of what is it to

have a sporting body. For example, in this study it is clear that, at times, the focus group students have very sophisticated understandings of their peers' and teachers' reactions and views. I would argue, in part, that it is this kind of ability that should be recognized and promoted through physical education. Indeed, working towards a critical pedagogy not only requires the reconceptualisation of the qualities valued in physical education but also a radical rethink of the activities and practices that could best support this work.

6.6.3 Implications for the physical education profession and physical education teachers

I suggest in the previous section that a number of possible strategies could be implemented in order to enhance the physical education experiences of (disabled) students. These strategies require, to differing degrees, an element of change and are therefore likely to have broader implications for the physical education profession and physical education teachers. Indeed, these can be considered in relation to a number of interrelated issues concerning what is taught in physical education, teacher-student relations and continuing professional development (CPD). As with any kind of change, it should be recognized that in order to implement innovations successfully schools must benefit from a positive collegial and collaborative culture and this would seem to be an essential ingredient required for any teacher or school forwarding change in relation to enhancing experiences of (disabled) students (IYS, 2000). Moreover, it is also worth noting that the strategies proposed would not merely affect disabled students but are likely to contribute to all students experiences of physical education.

Whether teachers adopt a strategy that embeds disability sport within the curriculum, seek to drive forward a programme underpinned by a critical pedagogy, or indeed initiate a combination of these approaches, it is likely that the subject matter offered to students within physical education will need to change. In this context, the nature of activities offered within physical education are likely to extend beyond those traditionally associated with existing physical education provision. Coupled with any kind of subject matter change is a need to also rearticulate teacher-student relations.

This would seem to be important on a number of levels including within physical education lessons where less directed teaching styles and those promoting student responsibility may foster greater understandings and cooperation between different students and their teachers (Siedentop 1994 and 1998). Beyond the physical education class there would also seem to be some advantage to be gained by physical education staff taking an interest and beginning to understand the broader school experiences of students. From this perspective, the physical education teacher may come to understand students away from a performative discourse of physical education. By gaining a more rounded view of students', teachers could then employ these understandings to forge closer relations within a physical education context.

With any change comes a need to re-educate current school staff, through CPD, in order that they can refine or work towards changing their practice. Similar developments would also be required in relation to initial teacher education. As I indicated earlier (2.2.2), a number of CPD opportunities related to including disabled students in physical education have been available to teachers for some time. However, even after accessing these programs many teachers still feel insufficiently trained or experienced to include disabled students in physical education or school sport. Indeed, teachers who have received CPD in this area remain skeptical about its relevance and usefulness (Fitzgerald *et. al*, 2004). Armour and Yelling (2002) suggest CPD needs to be more responsive to the needs of teachers, actively involve teachers and remain context specific. This would seem to be the kind of CPD that may positively enable teachers to work towards refining and developing their practice in relation to working more inclusively with students.

The extent to which CPD can, on its own, remedy the current inadequacies of physical education and sufficiently equip teachers to work positively with students must be considered with some caution. Indeed, the ability of some teachers to change may be restricted by their physical education habitus which could continue to position disability sport and disabled students at the margins within physical education. This issue and the challenges that it brings are deeply embedded through the socialisation

of physical education teachers that seems to perpetuate a normative physical education habitus (Templin and Schempp, 1989; Armour and Jones, 1998). Therefore, this issue raises questions not only about how we offer CPD to teachers but also the extent to which teachers will actually embrace changes in their practice. More fundamentally, this also raises a question about what kind of students we recruit to undertake initial teacher education in physical education.

6.6.4 Future directions in research

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the body of research reviewed in this study provides some valuable insights into the physical education and sporting experiences of young disabled people. However, there also remains much that we have yet to learn in order to extend our knowledge and understandings in this area. In concluding this chapter, I discuss a number of possible directions future research could take and also highlight other pertinent issues relevant to researchers. First, there are some specific aspects of disabled young people's physical education and experiences that we still know very little about. Either set within a focused study, or broader exploration of inclusion, it would be useful to gain understandings of students' experiences and understandings of physical education and sport over a sustained period of time. Such studies would add to the data generated from this study and also shed new light on important stages in students' lives, such as transition from primary to secondary school and into a college or university context. Second, given the increasing number of disabled students who are educated in mainstream schools, there may be a tendency for researchers to want to locate their work within this context. However, there also continues to be a need to explore the experiences of disabled students and staff from special schools. Indeed, as the support needs required by these students to participate in physical education and sport may be significant, this also raises additional questions, such as the extent to which physical education remains a relevant curriculum area for these students, and the nature of the continuity between school and community providers. Within this context, I would suggest there is also a real need to consider the views and perspectives of young people experiencing different disabilities, including those experiencing severe learning and multiple

disabilities. In order to effectively engage with these young people, it may be that as researchers we need to question, or indeed rethink, our approaches to data generation. Interestingly, although some writers have advocated adopting an emanicipatory research approach (Stone and Priestley, 1996; Oliver, 1997; DePauw, 2000), these calls seem to have been largely ignored by researchers in physical education. It is particularly ironic that researchers exploring and critiquing issues of inclusion within physical education have yet to consider how their own research practice can become more inclusive. Finally, Aitchison (2003) recently called for researchers to move beyond the discursive boundaries of their field and engage with wider discourses. In preparing this study, I have attempted to straddle the discursive boundaries of sports pedagogy, sociology, special education, education, disability studies and adapted physical activity. This is a challenge that all researchers interested in and committed to issues focusing on disability and physical education must meet. Without this, any new understandings developed will not be shared or understood between this diverse research community.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I have revisited my research questions and, by drawing on the data analysis chapters, explored the key themes that have emerged from this study. In particular, I have discussed the construction of embodied identities at school and through physical education and other places of sporting consumption. Taken together, these findings have revealed a number of substantive issues, including the role that schools and physical education play in reproducing social inequalities, disability as a fluid and contradictory construct and the notion of complex sporting identities. In this chapter, I have also reflected upon the research findings and their wider implications in relation to research with young disabled people, the practice of physical education and the position of disability sport within physical education. Finally, I have highlighted future research directions and considered the possibilities for further study.

As I indicated at the beginning of this thesis, my initial immersion into disability studies literature helped me to begin to see research in a different light and ask critical

questions about 'why' and 'how' we all do research. This study has gone some way to aiding my understanding of 'why' we engage in research; that is, to tell the stories about people, their lives, their experiences and the ways in which physical education and sport touches them. 'How' we do research is also important, and in telling stories we need to ensure that young people are actively engaged with, rather than seen as an insignificant part of, the research process. Within a physical education context, the stories of young disabled people have been largely ignored. I present this thesis as an ongoing commitment to centralise the voices of young disabled people. In doing this, I hope to alert physical education and sports researchers to the unacceptable omissions currently evident in our field of study. I recognise that this study focuses on a small number of young people and centralises disability as the 'lens' (DePauw, 1997 and 2000) through which to understand the young people in this study. However, throughout this study I have also referred to other issues, including gender and socio-economic status. I recognise the limitations of centralising issues of disability and have already engaged in a study exploring the intersections between gender and girls experiencing learning disabilities (Stride and Fitzgerald, 2006). In addition, I am currently undertaking a study focusing on issues relating to disability and ethnicity. This thesis, and my other research, demonstrates not only the complexities of identity formation but also the fluid position that disability has within this process.

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