

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### Learning to teach physical education in primary schools the influence of dispositions and external structures on practice

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**LEARNING TO TEACH PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE INFLUENCE OF DISPOSITIONS  
AND EXTERNAL STRUCTURES ON PRACTICE**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD**

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## Abstract

This research explores the process of becoming a teacher of primary physical education (PE) within an English University based Initial Teacher Training context. Despite the introduction of a National Physical Education and school sport subject strategy in 2003, academics and professionals in the UK and elsewhere have continued to suggest that primary PE is highly problematic, echoing the views of others expressed consistently over four decades. There have been regular calls for a significant increase in the time allocated to the subject within the structure of primary ITT and some have suggested that primary PE is best taught by 'specialists' as many class teachers feel most comfortable delegating this task to others. However, although some researchers have suggested that trainee primary teachers are more or less disposed towards the teaching of PE, little is known regarding the dual role of dispositional and structural factors, or the way in which they combine to result in particular primary PE practices.

Data were collected over a three year period (2004-2007). The research was conducted within a university provider of primary ITT in the South of England and focused on trainees following a three year undergraduate degree route to Qualified Teacher Status. In Stage 1, an initial quantitative scale was administered to a large cohort of trainee primary teachers at the outset of their course. This was followed by a series of semi-structured interviews with a smaller sample of trainees. Qualitative data generated through semi structured interviews were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis as an organisational framework, creating descriptive coding and the presentation of organisational themes. This analytic process led to the development of a model to represent the relationship between structures, disposition and practice in primary PEITT. The outer dial of this model represents a typology of trainees in primary PEITT, which is the outcome of combined influences of structures and disposition.

Four recommendations for practice are made, including the need to develop the structures of primary PE ITT with differentiated learning opportunities and to provide more effectively mentored practice in school settings. Whilst those trainees with a very negative disposition towards PE may be best advised to avoid teaching the subject altogether, the greatest potential for improving primary PE lies in the development of those trainees with an initially ambivalent attitude to the subject. This majority of trainees in the middle ground of the proposed typology may hold the key for long term improvements in the subject should ITT providers be able to respond to the identified learning needs. The findings of this research are particularly pertinent in light of current government plans to increase school based responsibilities within ITT.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

afPE	Association for Physical Education
AOTT	Adults Other Than Teachers
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BAALPE	British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CATE	Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
CCPR	Central Council for Physical Recreation
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCFS	Department for Children, Family and Schools
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GTCE	General Teaching Council for England
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NC	National Curriculum

NCPE	National Curriculum Physical Education
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PE	Physical Education
PEAUK	Physical Education Association of United Kingdom
PEITT	Physical Education Initial Teacher Training
PESSCL	Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links
PESSYP	Physical Education, School Sport and Young People
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PNS	Primary National Strategy
PPA	Planning Preparation and Assessment
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UCET	University Council for the Education of Teachers
YST	Youth Sport Trust

## CONTENTS

Abstract.....	p. 2
Glossary of terms.....	p. 3
Table of contents.....	p. 5
Acknowledgements.....	p. 10

### **CHAPTER 1            INTRODUCTION**

Introduction to the research.....	p.11
The research context.....	p.15
Research themes.....	p.23
Aims of the research.....	p.25
Research questions.....	p.26
Research design.....	p.27
Overview of content.....	p.30

### **CHAPTER 2            EDUCATION POLICY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Introduction.....	p.32
Before New Labour.....	p.34
The 1988 Education Reform Act.....	p.37
The National Curriculum.....	p.39
PE and the curriculum.....	p.42
PE and School Sport strategies.....	p.43
Recurring concerns.....	p.47
The conflation of PE and sport.....	p.51
Gender and the PE curriculum.....	p.54
Remodelling the primary workforce.....	p.56
The reform of Initial Teacher Training.....	p.63
Social policy and future curriculum developments.....	p.75
The resultant context and implications for trainees.....	p.77
Summary.....	p.80

### **CHAPTER 3           TEACHER DEVELOPMENT, IDENTITY AND LEARNING**

Introduction.....	p.82
Beginning teachers.....	p.84
Teacher development.....	p.85
Teacher identity.....	p.89
Locating physical within notions of self.....	p.91
Teacher identity change.....	p.94
The impact of ITT.....	p.99
Prior experiences .....	p.104
Teacher knowledge .....	p.107
Knowledge construction and today’s policy context .....	p.110
The influence of others.....	p.113
Summary.....	p.119

### **CHAPTER 4           METHODOLOGY**

Introduction.....	p.121
Individuals and social structures.....	p.122
Disposition, structure and practice in social theory.....	p.125
Theory of practice.....	p.127
Application to research design.....	p.132
A flexible research design.....	p.135
Selecting the case(s).....	p.136
Incorporating biographical approaches.....	p.142
Validity and reliability.....	p.143
Ethical issues.....	p.149
Data collection.....	p.152
Selection of participants and their context.....	p.152
Physical self-perception and perceived importance profiles.....	p.153
Semi structured interviews.....	p.157
Interview schedules.....	p.158
Planning the interviews.....	p.160
Group interviews.....	p.161
Transcription of interviews.....	p.162
Documents and field notes.....	p.163
Data analysis.....	p.165
Developing a typology.....	p.168
Summary.....	p.170

## **CHAPTER 5            TRAINEE PRIMARY TEACHER DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Introduction.....	p.171
Dispositions towards PE and sport.....	p.172
Gender differences.....	p.175
Articulating the physical self .....	p.177
Sport: competence and perceived importance.....	p.179
Influences on dispositions.....	p.182
Experiences in school PE and sport.....	p.183
Wider life experiences.....	p.186
The influence of others.....	p.188
Disposition and trainee primary teacher practice during ITT.....	p.189
Trainees' general progress.....	p.192
Disposition and identity.....	p.196
Summary.....	p.198

## **CHAPTER 6            STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES ON TRAINEE TEACHER EXPERIENCES IN PRIMARY PEITT**

Introduction.....	p.201
University-based PE.....	p.202
Compulsory PE lectures.....	p.202
The conflation of PE and sport in ITT.....	p.206
Elective 'specialist' lectures.....	p.207
The link between university and school-based PE.....	p.209
PE in placement schools.....	p.213
The status of PE.....	p.217
Locally varying expectations and practice.....	p.221
The influence of the class teacher and other professionals.....	p.225
Subject specific mentoring.....	p.227
Summary.....	p.228

## **CHAPTER 7            STRUCTURES, DISPOSITION AND PRACTICE IN PRIMARPEITT**

Introduction.....	p.231
The dynamic relationship between structures, disposition and practice.....	p.233
Case Studies	
Kay: a confirmed avoider.....	p.236
James: an affirmed specialist.....	p.241
Leanne: a committed class teacher.....	p.247
Becky: an ambivalent class teacher.....	p.252
Sarah: an ambivalent or committed class teacher.....	p.256
Developing new understanding.....	p.260
The impact of policy.....	p.265
The impact of other people.....	p.269
The potential for change.....	p.270
Summary.....	p.273

## **CHAPTER 8            RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Introduction.....	p.275
Key findings.....	p.277
Recommendations for practice.....	p.281
Provide greater opportunity for reflection and differentiated learning.....	p.281
Review expectations regarding the progress of trainees .....	p.283
Strengthen the relationship between university and school based elements of primary PEITT .....	p.290
Further develop understanding regarding the nature and content of primary PE .....	p.293
Limitations and scope of this research.....	p.295
Future research.....	p.300
Personal learning and development through the study .....	p.303
Summary.....	p.304

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>p.307</b>
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## LIST OF TABLES

4.1	Overview of the research process .....	p.141
5.1	Descriptive data from PSPP.....	p.173
5.2	Gender sub-group mean scores.....	p.174
5.3	Gender differences within the sub-domains of physical self-perception.....	p.175

## LIST OF FIGURES

4.1	Example question from PSPP.....	p.155
7.1	A model of structures, disposition and practice in primary PEITT .....	p.234

## APPENDICES (SEPARATE VOLUME)

Appendix 1	National Curriculum PE.....	p.3
Appendix 2	Professional Standards for Qualifying to Teach.....	p.5
Appendix 3	Requirements for ITT providers.....	p.11
Appendix 4	Outline Structure of BA Primary Education degree at case study institution .....	p.14
Appendix 5	Physical Self Perception Profile.....	p.17
Appendix 6	Perceived Importance Profile.....	p.22
Appendix 7	Sample data collection and analysis.....	p.24
Appendix 8	Research participant consent form.....	p.55
Appendix 9	Overview of sample size at each research.....	p.56
Appendix 10	Summary of participants in research stages 1b to 3b.....	p.57
Appendix 11	Master list of themes and subthemes.....	p.58
Appendix 12	Respondent validation questionnaire sample response.....	p.59
Appendix 13	Course provider's Year 1 PE subject knowledge audit.....	p.63
Appendix 14	Year 1 compulsory module assessment overview.....	p.65

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction to the research**

The education system in England has been subjected to a stream of policy change and development over the past thirty years. Within this landscape, primary school physical education (PE) has been highlighted consistently as an area of concern, with the adequate preparation and development of primary teachers as teachers of PE providing a recurring dilemma. Whether viewed as central or problematic to the ‘generalist’ class teacher role, or as a subject best taught by visiting ‘specialists’, a high quality of primary teacher education in PE has proved elusive to policy makers and teacher educators alike.

Such concerns were exemplified in 2007 when the Chief Executive of the Association for Physical Education (afPE), Professor Margaret Talbot, claimed that the quantity and quality of primary PE Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in the United Kingdom (UK) was a ‘national disgrace’ (Talbot, 2007). Professor Talbot’s claim was made during a phase of significant government investment into school PE and sport through the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy (Department for Education and Skills [DfES]/ Department of Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], 2003), yet the statement reinforced long held views amongst professionals and researchers that the development of primary teachers as teachers of PE, and the subject of PE itself, is problematic. Primary PE is ‘said to be often absent in practice, under-researched and therefore under-theorised’ (Hunter, 2006), yet professionals and researchers alike have been quick to present primary PE as a problem. The concerns raised

over the past four decades have related to a perceived low status of the subject in schools, paucity of facilities, inappropriate content, fragmented delivery of the curriculum and low levels of teacher expertise (Kirk, Colquhoun & Gore 1988; Tinning & Hawkins, 1988; Graham, 1991; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Hardman & Marshall, 2001; DeCorby, Halas, Dixon, Wintrup & Janzen, . 2005; Morgan & Bourke, 2005, Griggs, 2007).

For the purposes of this research, primary PE relates to that which is taught to children aged between 4 and 11 as part as the primary school curriculum; in England, this relates to children attending English schools in successive year groups from the Reception Class (children aged 4/5) to Year 6 (children aged 10/11). PE has been a Foundation subject of the National Curriculum (NC) since its inception in 1989, bringing what some argue to be a distinctive medium for learning to both Key Stage 1 (children aged 5-7) and Key Stage 2 (children aged 7-11). 'Physical development' is also included within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidelines pertinent to children in Reception Class (children aged 4-5), which presents an opportunity for the development of fine and gross motor skills. Whilst the aims and goals of the EYFS and NC are not necessarily interdependent, many Reception classes will include a weekly PE lesson in their timetable in addition to providing children with opportunities for physical play. In addition, those teachers who train to work in the EYFS are also prepared through university based ITT for teaching in Key Stage 1 (all university based providers are required to support development of knowledge across two consecutive Key Stages) and will therefore be expected to develop an understanding and some experience of NC Physical Education (NCPE) through the ITT process.

Central to this research are the questions of *who* teaches PE in the primary school (and the knowledge, beliefs and values they bring) and *what* constitutes the primary PE curriculum (and what therefore teachers need to know in order to teach it). These issues have become a repeated concern for physical educationalists in the United Kingdom and across the world, with writers most recently agreeing that teacher attitudes, subject knowledge, competence and confidence are major issues to be addressed (Sloan, 2010; Petrie, 2010; Morgan & Bourke, 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Kasale & Mokgwathi, 2010). It has been suggested that:

Too often physical education teachers in primary or elementary schools are untrained for the subject and some conduct physical education lessons as supervised play. PE is taught by the classroom teacher who usually has had little or no training in physical education (International Council for Sport Sciences and Physical Education, 2000, p. 119).

My own interest in primary Physical Education Initial Teacher Training (PEITT) has stemmed from personal experiences as a professional sportsman, secondary school PE teacher, sports coach, teacher educator and parent of primary aged children. Throughout my own career, I have maintained a personal commitment to the value of PE in schools and have been aware that others – including trainee teachers, teacher educators and colleagues – do not share the same viewpoint. As a teacher educator I have worked closely with trainee primary school teachers and teachers in schools and have become increasingly conscious that the process of becoming a teacher of primary PE is highly complex, regularly presenting a range of problems and challenges for many trainee and practising primary teachers. I began to question why this may be the case.

Whilst working with successive cohorts of trainee primary teachers, I suspected that personal dispositions towards PE are deep rooted and that trainee teachers' perceptions, values and

attitudes towards the subject have a complex range of causal factors. For example, in my own primary PE lectures, trainees have described positive and negative experiences in PE and sport as pupils in school, within families and as adults which appear to impact on individual approaches to the subject during ITT. Furthermore, whilst observing trainee teachers during school visits in ITT, I have seen a range of approaches to PE teaching during school placements, both by the trainees themselves and by supervising class teachers. Some appear to place a high priority on the subject whilst others seem somewhat reticent and in some cases very negative towards the subject. Furthermore, I have been aware that the contact time afforded to PE within the courses I teach is relatively limited and that the apparently wide ranging learning needs of my own trainee teachers are possibly not being met. These concerns suggested to me that the primary ITT may not be adequately preparing all new professionals to teach PE effectively in schools. At the heart of this research into primary PEITT, therefore, is a desire to better understand trainee primary teachers' dispositions towards PE, the relationship between these subjectivities and the structural conditions of the ITT experience and ensuing practice; I ultimately wish to better prepare trainee teachers to be effective teachers of primary PE. By developing a more comprehensive understanding, I hoped to be able to provide more appropriate opportunities for my own students to develop as teachers of primary PE and to make recommendations to ITT providers that will result in a more prepared and better equipped primary school workforce for the future.

### **The research context**

My own concerns regarding primary PEITT described here are not unique. The development of primary school teachers as teachers of PE has been a focus of concern amongst professional

bodies and researchers for some time. Concerns raised in the UK have included the lack of time afforded to PE during ITT and the levels of confidence and subject knowledge amongst teachers to effectively teach each activity within NCPE (DfES, 1999, see appendix 1). In 2005, the professional subject associations for PE in the UK claimed that primary PE is delivered by teachers who ‘still go into schools without adequate Initial Teacher Training to teach physical education’ (British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in PE [Baalpe], Central Council for Physical recreation [CCPR], Physical Education Association of United Kingdom [PEAUK], PE ITT Network, 2005, p. 5). The primary PE literature suggests that primary PEITT in the UK can amount to just nine hours of taught contact time (within a one-year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course) and five hours for those involved with School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) (Caldecott, Warburton, & Waring, 2006a, 2006b). Research also highlights weaknesses of ITT in relation to trainee primary teachers’ needs (Carney & Armstrong, 1996; Rolfe & Chedzoy, 1997; Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Armour & Duncombe, 2004), although relatively little has been written about what exactly these needs may be, or how to cater for these during the time-constrained primary ITT process, particularly in the context of ITT in the UK.

In addition to the lack of time available for PE during ITT, research has highlighted a perceived lack of subject knowledge and low levels of confidence to teach the primary PE curriculum (PEAUK, 1984; Williams, 1985; Carney & Armstrong, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Clay, 1999; Warburton, 2001). Such concerns have not simply arisen since the introduction of the NC through the Education Reform Act (Department for Education [DfE], 1998). As long ago as 1969, Rains suggested that there was a lack of a common policy for the preparation of

primary teachers in PE; over thirty years ago, Saunders (1975) argued that some primary teachers were personally disinterested in PE, holding a negative attitude towards the subject. Such views have since been supported by a series of studies in the UK and in other countries (discussed in detail in chapter 2) with the literature consistently suggesting that primary ITT under-prepares trainees to teach PE, that some trainee primary teachers are negatively predisposed towards the subject and that ITT does little to break down such dispositions. PE is perceived as one of the most challenging subjects in the curriculum for primary teachers to deliver (Katene & Edmondson, 2004; Chappell, 2006) and it has been reported that a third of all primary schools are currently using external sports providers and coaches (i.e. not qualified primary teachers) to cover PE lessons (Ward, 2005). In short, despite the long held and pressing criticisms of primary PEITT, serious concerns remain and few solutions to the problem have been implemented.

This investigation took place following, during and before significant phases of educational policy development in England, affecting practices in schools, within ITT provision and in PE more specifically. For example, the National PESSCL strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2003) saw government investment of over one billion pounds in PE and school sport between 2003 and 2006; a 'Children's Plan' was launched by the Department for Children, Family and Schools (DCSF, 2007) with an intent to build on interdisciplinary ways of working, whereby education, health and social service professionals contribute to the development of children and young people through a commitment to the five aims of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (DfES, 2003). With 'being healthy' the first of these five aims, there appears to have been renewed government interest and concern in the health, physical activity levels and body

weight of children and young people at the time of the investigation being carried out. The time frame of this research also included significant changes to the working practices of teachers through the implementation of a national agreement designed to raise teaching standards and tackle workload issues (Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), ATL, DfES, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, PAT, SHA, TGWU, UNISON, WAG, 2003). This led to new conditions of service for teachers and a set of structured changes to the way that teaching and learning was to be managed in schools. Central to these changes was the introduction of ring-fenced planning, preparation and assessment time (known colloquially as 'PPA time'), providing a time allocation for every teacher to be out of the classroom. This has enabled headteachers to plan staffing in a more creative and flexible fashion and in some schools this has led to the increased use of adults other than teachers (AOTTs) to teach and support learning in PE.

As a result of such changes to working practices, anecdotal concerns have been heard amongst teacher educators regarding the resulting experiences of trainees in school. Whilst supervising trainees in school, I have observed first-hand the difficulties that some trainees encountered in gaining on-going and 'hands on' experience in teaching and observing PE. This has appeared to be particularly problematic for those trainee teachers with least confidence to teach PE; it has seemed entirely possible for such trainees to be placed in a school where the class teacher does not teach PE as this time was used by the teacher (and consequently the trainee) for PPA activities. I was also aware that some teacher development literature has suggested a disconnect between theory and practice (Segall, 2010) and that there is potential for 'wash-

out' (Zeichner & Tabachnik 1981; Etheridge, 1989; Lawson, 1989; Blankenship, Tjeerdsma & Coleman, 2009) when university based learning is not applied quickly in school contexts.

The relationship between trainee teachers and others within the professional community also appears to have a bearing on experiences during ITT. Sparkes, Templin and Schempp (1993) argue that beginning teachers' emerging identities can be undermined by the presence of ideological differences between the teachers and their communities. In the case of the trainee teacher, ideologies of the community could include those pertaining to the training institution, the school placement context (staff, pupils, senior managers, mentors) tutors, peers, government-driven agendas and aims of the NC. Set against the trainees' personal perceptions, dispositions, values and beliefs, such ideologies could present a problematic context for the trainee and provide a range of potentially conflicting influences on practice. With school-based mentoring becoming increasingly significant to the ITT process following changes to legislation governing the amount of time spent in school during ITT (see chapter 2), the influence of the class teacher or mentor in school is of particular interest to the aims of this research.

ITT provision in England has been a context of significant change over the past twenty years. Campbell, McNamara, Furlong, Howson and Lewis (2007) describe this ever changing context as 'turbulent', characterised by periodic revision of government policies pertaining to ITT. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA, established in 1994) and its successor organisation, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA, established under the Education Act of 2005) became the organisation charged with raising standards in schools by attracting

able and committed recruits into teaching. The TTA/TDA has a remit of improving the quality of teacher training and induction and the mechanisms introduced to achieve this include a framework for training which centrally imposed standards for assessment of trainee teachers (see appendix 2) and a requisite model of partnership with which ITT providers must comply (see appendix 3). Schools have played an increasingly important role as training establishments in their own right; in addition to undergraduate and postgraduate courses a range of employment based routes has also emerged, including SCITT programmes and the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP). In all routes towards becoming a qualified teacher, schools and school based staff have a recognised role in supporting trainee teachers and the nature of the relationship between school based staff and trainee teachers is highly relevant to the issues under investigation in this research.

Since work on this thesis began it is apparent that, despite significant investment in PE and school sport through the PESSCL strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2003), primary PE continues to be highlighted as an area of concern. The PE professional body in England (afPE) declared, through its 2008 manifesto, that there are ‘systemic weaknesses in the system supporting physical education’ (p.2). Central to these concerns is the training of primary school teachers to teach PE, with afPE estimating that more than 40% of newly qualified primary teachers begin their careers with only 6 hours or less preparation to teach PE. The afPE manifesto suggested that this is:

the most serious systemic weakness in the system, which means that neither young teachers nor the children they teach receive the quality of provision which they all deserve,

and that:

initial teacher training and education for physical education must be reviewed, to ensure that all primary trainees understand the importance of physical learning and physical literacy in children's development (afPE, 2008, p. 2)

AfPE went on to seek adequate preparation for all primary trainees for PE, including commitment from the agencies responsible for teacher workforce development to ensure compliance to minimum specified standards. Although such claims have been heard before, never before have they been made following such significant government investment in the subject. Despite high levels of spend and the creation of a school sport infrastructure, an effective means of training and developing primary teachers to teach PE has proved somewhat elusive. AfPE's comments, like many of those before them, suggested structural changes to improve the 'systemic weaknesses' in the shape of greater subject content within ITT. The language used is centred on compliance, standardisation and a conceptualisation of PE knowledge in relation to coverage of the NCPE..

Whilst primary PE has continued to be highlighted as an area of concern, wider policy changes before, during and after the time frame of data collection have created a range of contextual factors which are highly pertinent to this thesis. A seemingly constant wave of education policy change brought about by successive governments has continued to revise provision within university providers of ITT and schools. Whether the focus at any particular time has been on raising standards in schools, standardising teachers' work, amending the relative roles of schools and universities in the teacher education process, considering broad aspects of children's wellbeing or on developing the curriculum, claims that primary PE is a neglected and poorly taught area of the curriculum persist. In 2011 it is very apparent that changes to education policy and practice are once again high on the agenda of the Coalition Government

in England; a succession of announcements and discussion documents impacting on the work of teachers and those charged with their training and professional development has emerged since the election of the government in May 2010. These proposals include specific elements of importance to this thesis. In particular, a further heightened role for schools as providers of ITT is suggested, in addition to a proposed review of the content and purposes of the NC. A series of recent reviews and policy announcements has included *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper (DfE, 2010) which:

outlines the steps necessary to enact such whole-system reform in England. It encompasses both profound structural change and rigorous attention to standards. It includes a plan for attracting and training even better teachers. It outlines a direction of travel on the curriculum and qualifications which allows us to learn from, and outpace, the world's best (DfE, 2010).

Following closely, a new review of the NC in England was launched in January 2011, ignoring the findings of two earlier reviews conducted under the aegis of the previous New Labour administration (The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2009); The Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, Armstrong, Flutter, Hargreaves, Harrison, Harlen, Hartley-Brewer, Kershner, Macbeath, Mayall, Northen, Pugh, Richards & Utting, 2009)). The current review of the NC for England was launched by the Secretary of State for Education to:

replace the current substandard curriculum with one based on the best school systems in the world and provide a world-class resource for teachers and children (DfE, 2011a).

The intention is for a new NC to be taught in schools from September 2013, significantly for this research including new Programmes of Study for English, mathematics, science, and PE. Within the language of such statements it appears that PE is now being considered as part of the core learning experience in schools, although there is a lack of clarity within government information currently regarding what the content of programmes of study will actually be. A

PE-specific response to the government's NC review has been made by the professional community (afPE, 2011), which underlines once more the need for the development and extension of ITT, particularly at primary level.

Beyond curriculum content, the government is also focused on changing the ways in which teachers are recruited and trained. In June 2011, the DfE published a further document, 'an improvement strategy for discussion', titled *Training our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers*. The stated purpose of this document was to:

set out how we will make teaching an even higher status profession that attracts even more of the best graduates. It explains how we will encourage schools to work together with universities to provide the training that is best for their trainees. Finally it describes how we will make this happen while achieving best value for money (DfE, 2011b, p.2).

The document introduces ideas through which the interface between university providers of ITT and schools are to be altered with a view to making it easier for schools to lead teacher training (DfE, 2011b, p.15), working in alliances with other schools and universities. It is argued that the school placement is one of the most important parts of any ITT route, and that the benefit trainees derive is directly related to the quality of the experience in this context; the importance of observing outstanding teaching, with opportunities for practice to be modelled is highlighted. This is of great significance to the discussion, conclusions and recommendations in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis which centres on the range of trainee primary teacher experiences in PE during ITT.

### **Research themes**

Set against a backdrop of on-going policy change and repeated concerns over the standards of primary PE, the teacher education literature has suggested that socialisation into the teaching profession is affected by teachers' perceptions, values and beliefs (e.g. O'Bryant, O'Sullivan & Raudensky, 2000; Bullough, 2010; Day & Lee, 2011; Thomson, Turner & Nietfield, 2011) and that becoming a teacher is a highly emotional experience (e.g. Malderez, Hobson, Tracey & Kerr, 2007; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009; Bloomfield, 2010; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch & Barber, 2010; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011). It has also been argued that effective student teachers have higher self-esteem, feel more positive about themselves and are free from self-doubt (Poulou, 2007; Hagger & Malmberg, 2010; Hong, 2010) whilst in general terms people are motivated to action in areas of their lives in which they are likely to experience feelings of competence and esteem (Biddle, 1997). In such a way, one would expect trainee primary teachers with positive prior experiences in sport and PE to be positively disposed towards the teaching of PE and for these teachers to show greater commitment to teaching the subject in schools. Although this explanation of teaching behaviour is helpful if not unsurprising, it does not suggest any potential for dispositions and likely teaching behaviours to change as a result of experiences during the ITT process. If anything, this suggests that only those with pre-existing and enduring positive dispositions towards PE will become effective teachers of PE in school, negating any potential for those with more ambivalence to the subject to develop practice.

This viewpoint suggests that there is limited potential for negatively disposed trainee primary teachers (in relation to PE) to become enthusiastic or knowledgeable teachers of PE. In order

to provide recommendations for the improvement of primary PEITT, this viewpoint needs interrogating closely, with a foregrounding of the relationship between individual, within-trainee factors and structural elements of the ITT process. Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) suggest a more complex and developing relationship between teachers' sense of wellbeing and their effectiveness in the classroom, whilst Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) argue that social and workplace participation works in tandem with 'personal construction' during teacher learning. This research explores such views to examine the impact of events and experiences during ITT, considering the view that the development of trainee primary teachers' attitudes, knowledge and motivation to teach PE arises from contact with schools, other trainees, children, and literature (Williams & Soares, 2002). The research takes into account the view that teachers' beliefs are not only individual and personal, but also have a socio-historical dimension (Poulson, 2001; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). The literature pertaining to ITT provides a number of key concepts meriting further exploration in relation to the concerns raised within primary PE; several themes within the critical literature are pertinent to this thesis and form a framework for the literature review which is presented in the subsequent two chapters. These themes are:

- i. The changing political and curricula context of ITT and primary education and resultant structural influences on practice;
- ii. Teacher development, teacher identity and knowledge as influences on practice.

Each theme has implications for the teaching of PE in primary schools and for primary PEITT, and these implications are reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

### **Aims of the research**

This research aimed to investigate these themes in detail in relation to PE within an English Primary ITT context, in doing so identifying factors that influence trainee primary teachers' PE teaching practices. The research aimed to identify the range of dispositions in relation to PE evident amongst a cohort of trainee primary teachers and investigate if and how these combine with ITT experiences to result in particular practices. The research tracked trainee primary teachers throughout a three year undergraduate ITT course and sought to identify the extent to which ITT constrains or enables trainee primary teachers' development as teachers of PE. By developing a better understanding of trainee primary teachers' experiences during the ITT process, it was hoped that recommendations for the development of primary PEITT pedagogy (and ultimately enhancing the quality of teaching and learning of primary PE in schools) would be possible.

As the research was based on a desire to generate a better understanding of how trainee primary school teachers relate to and interact with the process of primary PEITT, the thesis is an examination of the interplay between individuals (in this case the trainee teachers, tutors, peers and colleagues in school) and structures (in this case the primary PEITT process amongst the wider social milieu). Such enquiry has been a 'quintessential focus of sociological endeavour' (Willmott, 1999, p.1), coming about, according to Parker (2000, p.4), from 'an intense demand for social theory in late 1960s Britain'. The work of Anthony Giddens (1979), Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Margaret Archer (1988) has been particularly useful in designing the research with a focus on the interplay between agency and structure; their theories, particularly those of 'structuration' (Giddens, 1979), and 'habitus', 'field' and 'doxa'

(Bourdieu, 1977), have provided a useful lens through which to investigate the structure-disposition-practice schema and are discussed in detail in chapter 4. The research therefore sought to expand on existing knowledge, develop a richer and more clearly contextualised understanding of the primary PEITT process in England and foster an improved understanding of trainee primary teachers and their socialisation into the teaching profession. By conducting a detailed analysis of the complex range of phenomena at large in an effort to improve understanding of trainee primary teachers' development as teachers of PE it was hoped that the thesis would be of significant value to those charged with providing and developing ITT.

### **Research questions**

As a consequence of my own experiences in primary PEITT and a critical review of literature and policy pertaining to primary PEITT, three research questions were formulated. The questions relate to individual, within-trainee factors and structural features of primary ITT, in addition to the combination of each to impact on trainee primary teachers' experiences in PEITT. The research questions are:

1. What are the dispositions of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE and sport and how are these dispositions animated by the properties and processes of ITT?
2. Given the context of primary ITT, what possibilities of action are evident to trainee primary teachers during PEITT?
3. How does primary ITT currently impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE and how can provision be developed to better support trainee primary teachers in this regard?

## **Research design**

The research sought to investigate trainees' experiences over the time of an ITT course and to capture trainee teacher accounts within the context of the ITT experience. The research adopted an interpretive approach and at its core was a desire to generate an understanding of 'human meaning in social life' (Erickson, 1986, p.119). This approach views the social processes of the world as 'emerging' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and complex (Kuhn, 2008) and focuses on the interests and purposes of people, their behaviour and a construction of the world from the participants' perspectives (Sparkes, 1992). My own role in the generating of meaning was also a key consideration in this approach; from the outset, research design concurred with Ball's (1990) view that 'data are a product of the skills and imagination of the researcher and of the interface between the researcher and the researched' (p.169).

In much the same way that Morrison (2008) argues that schools 'shape and adapt to macro- and micro-societal change, organising themselves, responding to and shaping their communities and society' (p.22), this research viewed the process of ITT as responsive to shifts in curriculum and policy, interacting with individuals to generate collaborative understandings. Like Cassidy and Tinning, (2004), this research considered teacher socialisation as a dynamic process, orientated around the interplay between individuals, societal influences and the institutions into which they are socialised. Within this approach, trainee primary teachers have been viewed as both recipients and creators of values within a two way, shifting and fluid process, informed by a range of contextual and individualised experiences. For example, trainee teachers are able to interpret formal requirements of their course within the unique context of each school placement, in negotiation with their tutors and

school based mentor. It was anticipated from the outset that such negotiation may result in different experiences for each trainee, despite the presence of standard, nationally prescribed requirements of ITT, although little evidence in primary PEITT in England existed to illuminate such a view. At the heart of the research, therefore, has been the problem of structure and agency; are trainee primary teachers free to act as they please, or are they shaped and governed by the structures of ITT and schools? Social theory has provided a set of lenses through which the phenomena under investigation have been viewed and concepts of structure, agency, practice and disposition are at the centre of the research, providing recurring reference points throughout the thesis.

Data collection was undertaken from September 2004 to June 2007, between which times the participants followed a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) undergraduate programme in Primary Education leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), studying at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the Southeast of England. The three year structure provided an opportunity to collect data over the full cycle of the ITT course, to develop a detailed understanding of the structures and processes at large, and to study individual experiences over a sustained time period. The staged approach to the research outlined below enabled investigation of ‘ways in which culture is moulded, changed and created by individuals through time’ (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.185) and recognition of the importance of pre-existing personal dispositions *and* trainees’ experiences throughout the ITT experience. The research was undertaken in four stages: Stage 1 research investigated dispositions of trainee primary teachers towards PE and sport, identifying patterns and trends amongst a large group of initial respondents at the outset of the ITT course. At this stage, eighty three participants completed a written physical self-

perception profile and 'perceived importance of sport' scale. Twenty four trainees subsequently took part in semi structured group interviews and fifteen of these were also interviewed individually. Stage 1 research also included the collection and review of contextual data in the form of course handbooks, assessment outlines and subject audits. A researcher diary was maintained from the outset of the study and field notes were collected to inform subsequent analysis and interpretation of data.

In Stage 2a, fourteen of the trainees were interviewed again at the start of their second year of studying, with a view to further exploring themes that emerged from Stage 1 data. This series of interviews centred on the construction of biographical data to develop 'an understanding of respondents and their actions by examining their life (or part of their life) story' (Birley & Moreland 1998, p. 37). The interviews in Stage 2 also focused upon trainee teacher experiences during ITT, both within university and school placements. Six trainees continued in the investigation at Stage 2b, with further interviews taking place towards the end of the Year 2 course. In Stage 3a, eight of the trainees were interviewed once more at the start of their final year of ITT, with a particular focus placed on testing out emerging findings and identifying key features of the ITT experience. Stage 3b interviews, which took place towards the end of that academic year (seven participants) enabled a confirmation and summary of findings, sought respondent validation and further comment and concluded the trainees' individual contribution to the study. This sample size enabled an in depth focus on individual case studies. In Stage 4, the emerging findings were presented (in writing, by email) to all 83 of the Stage 1a respondents to request feedback and comment. Twenty six written responses were received. As a consequence of respondent feedback, the findings were refined and

presented one year later to a cohort of final stage trainees at a different institution. The feedback received (120 responses) was considered when finalising the results, particularly in shaping the typology of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE. This was considered to be particularly important in order to confirm the accuracy and authenticity of the findings.

Each interview transcript produced was analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to produce a list of relevant themes, initially checked against each transcript and accompanying field notes and used to inform the analysis of each subsequent case. This process was repeated for each transcript across each stage of research. This on-going checking, clustering and identification of themes produced an eventual master list for the group of respondents, based on thick, descriptive data. The data were used to identify individual trainees who presented themselves as rich cases, 'rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars' (Patton 1990, p.54). These individual cases were the subject of Stage 3 interviews and formed the basis of the typology of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE which is presented in chapter 7.

### **Overview of content**

This thesis follows a conventional format with the starting point being a review of literature that examines the underpinning themes for research. In chapter 2, the education and ITT policy and curricula changes which have been implemented in the last decade (in some cases during the time frame of this research) are explored, relating recent policy and curriculum shifts to the work of beginning primary teachers. Chapter 3 focuses on the processes through which teacher identity is thought to be linked to both the process of becoming a teacher and

the context in which this takes place. This serves to contextualise the thesis with the overriding desire to understand and interpret at a practical level. Each of these chapters concludes by reviewing the implications of these themes for primary PE and ITT. This is followed by chapter 4, methodology, which presents a critical discussion of the philosophical position, research design and methods. Chapter 5 is the first results-based chapter, focused on trainee dispositions towards PE. Chapter 6 presents results pertaining to the second research question, focusing on the structural influences on trainee practice and chapter 7 introduces and develops discussion relating to a typology of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE. Finally, chapter 8 is the conclusion of the thesis, containing several recommendations for practice and concepts for further investigation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **EDUCATION POLICY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of pertinent education policy developments in England and discusses the implications of these for trainee primary teachers and PE. In the context of this research, the policy backcloth is highly relevant as successive Government interventions have sought to alter the education system during and since the last decade of the 20th Century (Burn, Hagger & Mutton, 2000), constituting part of ‘a dramatic transformation across the public sector’ (Mahony & Hextall, 2000, p.5). Successive Governments have intervened actively in all aspects of school life (Day, 2004) and the structure of ITT has itself become a site for political debate and struggle (Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting & Whitty, 2000). Such government intervention has followed debate regarding the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools, a perceived need for an increased focus on subject teaching and the need for standards to be raised. Changes to policy have directly impacted on the day to day experiences of the trainee teachers in this investigation and those around them working as teachers and teacher educators in university and in school. The impact of policy changes on the professional lives of teachers has been discussed widely in the education literature; this chapter provides an overview of these changes and the impact experienced within the profession, linking the implications of the ever-evolving policy context to the PEITT-specific research aims and questions.

It has been suggested that ‘for many teachers, the last 20 years have been years of survival, rather than development’ during a time when ‘hardly a year has passed without some reform being mooted, negotiated or imposed in the name of raising standards’ (Day, 2000, p. 101). Such a statement underlines the constantly shifting context within which teachers work today and within which trainee teachers strive to become qualified members of the profession. The restructuring of education has been seen by some as a radical process (Woods, Jeffrey, Troman, & Boyle, 1997; Gunter 2007; Chapman & Gunter, 2009) centred on a desire to ‘standardise’ the teaching profession (Burgess, 2000). Others suggest that changes to the working conditions of teachers have negatively impacted on teacher identity (e.g. Troman, 2008). This view is relevant to this thesis which considers the relationship between trainee primary teachers, their practice and structural factors within primary PEITT.

This chapter highlights the importance of specific developments over a thirty year period, focusing largely on the raft of initiatives which followed the election of the New Labour government in 1997 and which have a direct consequence on the experiences of trainee primary teachers in the timeframe of this research. However, earlier political interventions in education are also discussed by way of providing a historical backcloth, ensuring that the impact of changes (such as the implementation of the NC) is reflected in the thesis. The policy context is important for this research because: i). policies have directly shaped the university and school-based aspects of the primary ITT experience, impacting directly on the experiences of trainees during the time phase of this research; ii). it is likely that the trainees will be aware of some changes to the teaching profession brought about by policy implementation as these may have been discussed amongst trainee teachers, their school-based mentors, peers and

teacher educators; iii). the increased importance afforded to school based elements of ITT within current and emerging policy creates greater opportunity for social interaction between trainee teachers and colleagues who have taught through a succession of changes and have stories to relate. In short, this research has been conducted in full cognisance of the contextual factors that may impact on the lived experience of trainees during primary PE ITT, at a local level in university and schools, and within wider society.

### **Before ‘New Labour’**

One of the first actions of any new government in the past twenty years has been to publish a White paper on education as a means of restructuring. Whilst ‘Education, education, education’ became a clarion call and a central part of a vision for the future as ‘New Labour’ claimed victory in the 1997 General election (Demaine, 2002), the preceding eighteen years of Conservative government were equally characterised by the development of education policy. The literature provides ample critique of the role of the ‘Blair years’ in developing and implementing English education policy, yet it is clear that the Conservative policies of the late 1970s and 1980s were equally concerned with the ‘re-professionalisation’ (McCulloch, 2001; Sachs, 2003a; Hipkins, Reid & Bull, 2010) or as some suggest a ‘de-professionalisation’ (Beck, 2008; Vignoles, 2010; Hyland, 2011) of teachers. Consequently, teacher education (and those operating within it) has been ‘under attack’ from politicians for some time (McCulloch, 1994) as successive governments have acted on a belief that:

teachers, and the liberal establishment that supported them, were hostile to market principles and to more traditional forms of teaching (Furlong, 2001. p. 122).

This view, which appears to have first developed in the late 1970s, differs markedly from an earlier government stance which endorsed what are widely thought of as 'child-centred approaches' to teaching and learning. The Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) provided a 'protective cocoon' (Giddens, 1991, p.3) for teachers who believed in centring teaching on individual learning needs rather than being governed by a prescribed, subject-led curriculum. Teaching in primary schools was characterised by autonomy in which teachers were able to make informed decisions about learning and teaching based on the needs of individual children (McCulloch, 1997). This approach is also thought to have fostered a satisfactory alignment of primary teacher identity with the requisite social identity, as practices were articulated and rationalised alongside a commitment to 'holism' and 'vocationalism' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). Such approaches have been at odds with subsequent government education policy implemented from the 1980s onwards which has repeatedly attempted to transform the way in which teachers work (Smith, 2007) through, for example, the introduction of a NC and professional standards for teachers.

Much educational reform has been underpinned by a fundamental shift in thinking about its purposes, linked to broader political policy making. Education has moved from a position within a social policy framework to one of economic policy, conceived as the key to developing a skilled workforce and a knowledge based economy (Poulson, 2001). Primary school teachers and their earlier child-centred practices, which included integrated, enquiry-based curricula, were blamed for poor pupil performance and behaviour (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1992) and governments looked towards subject-based curricula, an emphasis on teacher pedagogy, greater degree of formality and an increased

emphasis on accountability. Such views were summarised in the so-called ‘three wise men report’ (DfES, 1992b) which suggested that there was a clear need for greater emphasis on subject teaching by specialist and ‘semi specialist’ teachers and that topic work had served to ‘fragment learning’.

Before the election of Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government in 1979, Jim Callaghan’s (the then Labour Prime Minister) stance on education paved the way for successive governments to utilise education policy as a strategic political tool. At this time, the teaching workforce was not centrally governed and the prevailing 1944 Education Act contained no explicit curriculum requirements (except for compulsory Religious Education). 146 independent Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were responsible for the management of schools and the practices in some became the focus of intense media interest. The events at one specific school, William Tyndale Junior School, Islington, North London, attracted significant focus. This school was variously described as pioneering with a (left-wing) workforce committed to providing working-class children with a broad educational experience; or as a failing school in which ‘trendy’ ideology took over from good teaching and blighted the educational opportunities for working-class children. As Demaine (2002) argues, the important political issues raised by the William Tyndale affair were those of ‘standards’, ‘accountability’ and ‘control of education’ and it is these broad themes that can be seen to run throughout the aims of successive education policy developments from 1988 to the present day. Interestingly, similar concerns were prevalent in most other advanced economies, suggesting that the William Tyndale affair was simply a media intensified spotlight upon on-going government interest in controlling education in the developed world. Sachs (2003)

suggests that the events at William Tynedale School led to the outrage of ordinary people, itself carrying weight in how politicians and bureaucrats responded to public anxiety about education. Newspaper reports further developed the use of emotive language to help fuel a sense of crisis. Shortly after becoming Prime Minister, Callaghan used the 1976 Ruskin speech to air ‘legitimate public concern’ and to raise alarm regarding the levels of responsibility and autonomy exercised by teachers within LEAs. Initiating ‘the great debate on education’ (Callaghan, 1976), Callaghan paved the way for the Education Reform Act of 1988, encouraging the consolidation of central government control at the expense of LEAs and the teaching profession. Callaghan, representative of ‘Old Labour’, appears therefore to have set off a chain of policy making that was embraced enthusiastically by both Conservatives and ‘New Labour’ alike. This chapter provides an overview of key policy changes following Callaghan’s speech, and discusses the potential impact on the key themes of this research.

### **The 1988 Education Reform Act**

The 1988 Education Reform Act was a key catalyst for a cultural revolution in schools (Rutherford 2003), marking the onset of an era of energetic and large-scale reform that continues to pervade all facets of education in England today (Barker, 2008). The Act, enforced by Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government following the Callaghan-initiated debate, granted the government over four hundred new powers in education, most critically taking control from local authorities and teachers through the introduction of the NC (DfE, 1989). The Act was based on a parallel process of centralisation and devolution (Bridges & McLaughlin, 1994) through which schools were afforded control over budgets, staffing and resources but were simultaneously bound by a centrally prescribed curriculum and new testing

arrangements. Simon (1991) described a period of shock as the education world woke up to the full implications of the Act, which was closely aligned to a fast developing global orthodoxy of market competition and deregulation of labour markets (Wilkinson, 2000). The then Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, underlined the alignment of education policy to economic development by stating (at the 1991 Conservative Party Conference) that he would:

not tolerate a moment longer the smug complacency of too many educationists, which has left our national educational performance limping along behind that of our industrial competitors (Baker, quoted in Simon 1991, p. 540).

Barker (2008, p. 673) explains how the new ‘command and control system’, constituted by a NC, tests and examinations, and an inspection regime, created a template with which schools were asked to comply. The focus had shifted from an emphasis on teaching and learning processes to one of measurable outcomes. As a consequence, schools became markedly different from those characterised by the child centred approach in the 1960s and 1970s. No longer, at least as specified by prevailing legislation, were teachers explicitly encouraged to educate ‘the whole child’ or to become teachers as a consequence of a vocational calling. The Act ensured that the work of teachers was now concerned with results, performance in league tables and accountability. The standardised approach was enforced by regular inspections (The Office for Standards in Education [Ofsted] was established in 1992) and teachers became increasingly compliant with respect to the new set of rules and regulations (Jeffrey & Woods 1998; Fitz, Lee & Eke, 2000).

Although the trainee teachers who are the focus of this research will not necessarily be aware of the detailed historical context and development of policies which govern their nascent

practice, it is important to recognise any potential for tension between the expectations placed on them and their own identities or rationales for becoming primary school teachers. There is a further potential for tension where teacher educators or school-based mentors themselves are philosophically at odds with the orthodoxy required within today's schools and inadvertently create a training context that may be clouded with mixed messages. The status and nature of PE within this context and within the primary school curriculum is therefore a key consideration for any investigation concerned with improving the preparation of teachers and subject teaching more broadly.

### **The National Curriculum**

The NC for pupils aged 5-16 was first introduced in 1989 as a direct outcome of the 1988 Education Reform Act. The curriculum specified (and continues to do so) the range of subjects that must be taught, and aims to ensure parity in standards of education in all state schools. The NC specifies the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should achieve in each subject area within each Key Stage and sets targets to support measurement of progress and attainment. Despite a stated desire for the curriculum to be 'broad and balanced' (DES, 1988) there has been repeated and on-going criticism (O'Hear & White, 1991; 1993; White, 2004; Hall & Ozerk, 2008; Berry, 2009; Wyse & Torrance, 2009; Oates, 2011) of what is seen as a narrow curriculum, centred on subjects without a clearly articulated justification. At the time of the development of the initial NC, Lawton (1987) argued that:

virtually all the enlightened views on curriculum planning are now agreed that subjects should be regarded as important only if they help reach other objectives. All this is ignored in the government's consultation document: no justification is put forward for the selection of the foundation subjects; no arguments put forward to give priority to the core subjects; no attempts made to relate subjects to wider objectives.

The curriculum affords greater importance to some subjects (English, maths and science - the 'Core subjects') over others (the 'Foundation subjects', which include PE), creating 'territories of priority' in which children's learning in the core curriculum is tested and published and therefore perceived as more valuable (Boyle & Bragg, 2006). The heightened status of some subjects over others has been reinforced further through subsequent changes to the curriculum and the introduction of detailed subject strategies in English (the National Literacy Strategy [NLS]) and mathematics (the National Numeracy Strategy [NNS]) in 1997 and 1998 respectively. It has been argued that practising schoolteachers believe that these policy directives have resulted in a narrowed curriculum and that children are 'being rigidly drilled in the basics' (Bousted, cited in Smithers, 2004). The subject-based NC has led to a perceived superiority of subject-based knowledge, a de-valuing of practical knowledge and a negative impact on approaches to teaching and learning, such as a reduction in group learning, previously favoured in primary education.

The more recently published Cambridge Primary Review's (Alexander, Armstrong, Flutter, Hargreaves, Harrison, Harlen, Hartley-Brewer, Kershner, Macbeath, Mayall, Northen, Pugh, Richards & Utting, 2009) enquiry into the condition and future of primary education in England has described what was expected to be a broad, balanced and rich curriculum as 'overcrowded and unmanageable' (p.3). The Review argued that as teachers endeavoured to attain high standards in 'the basics' there was little time for thinking, reflecting, problem-solving or exploration and the time for subjects such as Art, Music, Drama, History and Geography was often diminished. The review suggested that 'overload' is caused by important subjects competing for space with one another and also competing with what some consider

less important subjects. Of note are the Review's findings concerning the lack of space for reflective and interactive classroom pedagogy in the context of a curriculum that was deemed too broad (Cambridge Primary Review, 2009a). Similarly, the Rose Review (2009) advocated an 'opening up of curriculum programmes to embrace a richer, more spacious curriculum' (Duncan, 2010, p. 341); with the election of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010, the findings of both reports, together with new curriculum proposals were ignored. At the time of writing, there is considerable uncertainty about the content and direction of future educational policy and NC.

The still-prevailing NC (DfEE, 1999) was published following extensive consultation by the newly formed Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), who, in 1997, asked all schools to respond to two open ended questions: i) what do you and your staff consider the main aims of the curriculum to be? and ii) what are the priorities at your key stage? The results of this consultation indicated that: many primary schools wished to afford high importance to developing social, moral, spiritual and cultural values (80% of responses in KS1, 76% of KS2); there was relatively strong support for a continued emphasis on English and maths (57% KS1, 53% KS2), but almost as much support for a 'broad and balanced curriculum' (53% KS1, 56% KS2). Strikingly, there was relatively limited support for individual subjects (11% KS1, 12% KS2) (QCA, 1998). Despite this response, the updated NC retained the priority afforded to core subjects, leading some to criticise what was seen as a missed opportunity for educational innovation (Alexander, 1997).

## **PE and the curriculum**

The teaching of primary PE within the National Curriculum (NC) context has long been a cause for concern (Davies, 1999; Evans, Penney & Davies, 1996; Gilbert, 1998; Harrison, 1998, Oxley, 1998; Revell, 2000; Shaughnessy & Price, 1995; Wright, 2002). Some concerns relate to the low status of PE in schools compared to the focus given to other subjects (Speednet, 2000; Warburton, 2001), whilst others relate to the nature and content of the NCPE itself. Whilst it does not necessarily follow that a pre NC approach to primary education lends itself to quality teaching of PE (concerns over the teaching of PE in primary schools had been raised long before the advent of the NC), it is clear that PE, along with other Foundation subjects, has suffered from being afforded relatively low status both in the NC and in light of core subject strategies, Ofsted inspection frameworks and wider managerial approaches in today's schools.

The perceived marginalised status of PE in primary schools (Pollatschek, 1979; Downey, 1979; 1982; Warburton, 1989; Williams, 1989a and 1989b; Jess, 1992; Laws, 1996) has been linked to the relative lack of curriculum time afforded to PE in contrast to other subjects, most notably as a consequence of the National Literacy (DfEE, 1997) and Numeracy (DfEE, 1999) strategies introduced in England. Although only two components of the raft of education policy implementation since the 1988 Act, Fullan (2000) suggests that these strategies represented the most ambitious large-scale strategy of educational reform implemented since the 1960s. The government was intent on raising standards in schools and a priority focus on reading, writing and mathematics (and testing regimes in these subjects) was made

immediately explicit by the Secretary of State for Education in the 1997 White Paper entitled *Excellence in Schools*:

the first task of the education service is to ensure that every child is taught to read, write and add up (DfEE, 1997, p. 9).

Through building on the aims of the NC and in keeping with the desire to gain control over the teaching profession, the subject strategies imposed detailed and prescriptive requirements, while national testing, targets and performance were further emphasised. Despite literature which provides little evidence to support the use of mass templates and frameworks (Wyse, 2003), the strategies included targets and ‘frameworks for teaching’ which contained recommendations for teaching objectives, time and class management and particular approaches for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The strategies did not in themselves set a new curriculum for the subjects in primary schools, although the use of the frameworks for teaching was strongly encouraged (and supported via professional development provision) by LEAs. In the context created by the strategies and associated mass testing regimes, it is thought that headteachers:

found themselves in an anxiety-inducing environment, especially if school results were below average. Schools that did not match prevailing expectations could be placed in a ‘category’ (e.g. special measures); could be ‘named and shamed’ with unthinkable, personal consequences for those held to be responsible (Chitty & Dunford, 1999).

### **PE and School Sport strategies**

Against this backcloth it is perhaps unsurprising that PE has occupied a somewhat ambiguous space in the primary curriculum, afforded low priority in comparison with the officially required, measured and ‘held-to-account’ expectations that apply to maths and English. Yet

PE in all English schools has been at the centre of unprecedented government investment since 2003; through the PESSCL (DfES/DCMS, 2003) and PESSYP (DCFS, 2008) strategies, PE has enjoyed previously unheralded investment. The strategies aimed to get more young people taking part in high quality PE and sport, responding to one of the New Labour Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets:

The overall objective of the joint DCSF and DCMS Public Service Agreement target, is to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year-olds. The aim is to increase the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 85 per cent by 2008 (DCFS/DCMS, 2003).

To deliver this, the Government created a network of 450 School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) across England. SSPs were 'families' of schools which typically comprised a Specialist Sport College linked to a set of secondary schools, each of which had a further group of primary and special schools clustered around it. The Partnership Development Manager (PDM) was at the core of the strategy and took responsibility for managing the partnership; in every secondary school there was a School Sport Co-ordinator (SSCo), with a remit to support colleagues in the delivery of PE and sport, and to increase opportunities for children to take part in sport, both in their own school and in partner primary schools. Every primary or special school also deployed a Primary Link Teacher (PLT) or Special School Link Teacher (SSLT), who took responsibility for leading the strategy at their particular school. In addition, a national network of 225 Competition Managers was established to create greater opportunities for a wider range of young people to take part in competitive sport.

The original PESSCL strategy had the expressed aim of ensuring that all children receive at least two hours of high quality PE in curriculum time (DfES/DCMS, 2003) and included

provision for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for practising teachers in primary and secondary schools. Since the introduction of the strategies, there have been reported signs that schools are allocating more time and resources to PE (Ofsted, 2005; 2009), and that the greatest improvements in PE provision have been seen in the primary years (DfE/TNS-BMRB, 2010). The method through which impact of the strategies has been measured has relied largely on self-reporting of data by schools regarding the amount of curriculum time pupils spend in 'high quality' PE. The notion of high quality has been described as PE which produces:

young people with the skills, understanding, desire and commitment to continue to improve and achieve in a range of PE, sport and health-enhancing physical activities in line with their abilities (DCFS/DCMS, 2003, p.5).

The DfES commissioned an independent research company, TNS-BMRB, to conduct annual surveys of progress towards the PSA. The surveys utilised SSP networks to facilitate postal, and subsequently online, surveys. Whilst the surveys aimed to capture a wide range of data concerning curricular and extracurricular sport, the first two questions (of twelve) were most relevant to the focus of this study on the teaching of curriculum PE in primary schools. These questions asked: 1. what is the total curriculum time in minutes that ALL pupils in each year group spend taking part in PE in a typical week? and 2. what is the total number of pupils in each year group who participate in at least three hours of high quality PE and out of hours school sport in a typical week? (DfE/TNS-BMRB, 2010). Across successive school sport surveys conducted between 2003/4 and 2009/10, annual increases in the proportion of pupils participating in at least two hours of curriculum PE have been reported. These increases have been the most marked in years 1 to 6 (ibid). The development of PE within the context of School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) has also been seen as positive. Ofsted (2006) pointed

towards good levels of communication between primary subject leaders, PDMs, SSCos and PLTs as a means through which primary school priorities were being managed effectively.

The same Ofsted survey, based on visits to 15 primary schools within 12 SSPs, stated that:

The quality of leadership and management was good or better in all the primary schools visited. The sport partnership programme had enabled subject leaders to influence their colleagues teaching and improve provision (Ofsted, 2006, p. 3).

The level of confidence in the SSP programmes' impact on PE in primary schools had increased further by 2011, with Ofsted stating that:

The 12 partnerships visited are effecting beneficial changes in PE and sport for learners and their communities. In line with findings in the most recent Ofsted PE report, this is most notable in primary schools, but increasingly so in secondary schools (Ofsted, 2011, p. 5).

Despite such developments, particularly in the improved time afforded to the teaching of PE in primary schools, more recent policy changes have resulted in the dismantling of SSPs. In a press release, this new direction was outlined as 'decentralising power, incentivising competition, trusting teachers' (DfE, 2010b). Moving away from the PSA and enabling schools to plan their own provision – either within or outwith SSPs – is a significant shift in policy. The DfE went on to state that:

Previously, PE and Sports strategy was driven by top-down targets, undermined by excessive bureaucracy, limiting the freedom of individual schools on how they used their funding, especially on sports and PE and lacked a proper emphasis on competitive team sports. We have abolished the targets and the box-ticking that went with it. Instead we will ask schools to list the sports they offer and the fixtures they have arranged on their website so parents and the local community can support children and young people.

A heightened emphasis on competitive school sport has seen the introduction of funding for School Games Coordinators and teacher release posts, although the funding is not ring fenced for this activity and headteachers are free to decide how this money is best spent. Whilst some secondary schools have chosen to retain a specialism in sport, others have not, and the extent

to which primary teachers and schools are currently being supported to develop as teachers of PE is unclear. It is interesting to note here that the stated government intention of removing 'top down targets' and 'trusting teachers' to make their own choices may serve to reduce the emphasis on curriculum PE within the PESSCL and PESSYP models. The free professional development opportunities that were offered to primary teachers within PESSCL and PESSYP are currently no longer available in the same way and schools appear able to set their own local priorities. It remains to be seen whether the removal of the two hour PSA will result in a reduction in quantity or quality of PE or serve to undermine the status of PE in primary schools in the future.

Consideration of the impact of government strategies is relevant to this thesis as the trainee primary teachers within the investigation were following an ITT course (2004-2007) at a time when the PESSCL strategy was newly in operation. Furthermore, the continual development of policy in the future may impact on the trainees' experiences in school as newly qualified teachers and beyond. It is apparent, however, that as policies, strategies and curricula have emerged and developed over time, concerns regarding primary PE have not disappeared.

### **Recurring concerns**

Whilst a heightened focus on English and maths has been evident within the primary school curriculum, PE cannot be identified with a lack of government investment or interest over the past decade. The reported increase in the proportion of primary aged pupils experiencing regular and high quality PE suggests that some of the problems identified in previous decades have been successfully tackled. The data provided by Ofsted suggests that the amount of high

quality PE taught in primary schools has increased year on year, bettering secondary school PE lessons which see a marked drop off in participation rates as pupils get older. It should be noted, however, that the Ofsted data represents a relatively small sample of primary schools and that no studies have attempted to map the findings of these surveys to the experiences of those training to teach in primary schools. Claims that primary school PE is delivered by teachers who ‘go into schools without adequate ITT to teach PE’ (Baalpe, CCPR, PEAUK, PE ITT Network, 2005, p. 5) remain. Similarly, the long held view of primary PE being in a state of neglect did not disappear (Griggs, 2007b) as a consequence of the strategies. Importantly, the CPD strand of the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies has been described as having variable impact:

By the time they leave primary school, many pupils do not reach the standards in PE of which they are capable. PD has not sufficiently raised the awareness of all school leaders of the important need to ensure pupils’ learning is progressive. ‘Peaks’ and ‘troughs’ in learning often occur, caused by the fluctuating depth of PE knowledge and understanding of class teachers as pupils move from year to year (Todd, 2010, p. 5).

This statement points once more to the importance of the role, knowledge and understanding of teachers and school leaders; where such teachers are mentors and role models for practice during primary ITT, this raises questions regarding the quality of trainees’ experiences in schools.

The concerns of Todd (2010) noted above mirror those raised earlier by others regarding the preparedness of teachers to deliver the wide ranging NCPE programmes of study, with low levels of subject knowledge and confidence apparently evident amongst teachers (PEA, 1987; Carney & Guthrie, 1999; Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a and b). Whilst issues of teacher development and knowledge will be discussed further in chapter 3, the nature and content of the PE

curriculum merits further exploration. The teaching of primary PE has, since 1991, centred on conformity to a NC, with a prescribed set of activity areas specified at each Key Stage. In Key Stages 1 and 2, these areas are games activities, gymnastic activities, dance activities, outdoor and adventurous activities, swimming activities and athletic activities (appendix 1). This has been seen as a compartmentalised and fragmented curriculum and an approach which results in teaching the activities in short, discrete units, presenting disconnected and non-differentiated experiences (Casbon, 2006; Jess, Haydn-Davies & Pickup, 2007; Jess, 2012). The activity areas have also been viewed as ‘watered down’ versions of the same experiences detailed within the secondary school curriculum, which themselves have been construed as mini versions of adult sport.

Concerns regarding the PE curriculum have centred on this prescription of a traditional, activity based approach which, combined with poor teacher knowledge and confidence is often reduced to a curriculum of games, gymnastics and dance. A focus on the acquisition and performance of skills is said to predominate, often in conjunction with a limited range of teaching methods (Capel & Blair, 2007), more akin to a sports coaching context. Some writers also argue that the teaching of PE in secondary schools has seen little change over time (Laws & Aldridge, 1995; Evans, Davies, & Penney, 1997; Penney & Harris, 1998; Curtner-Smith, 1999), despite the subject specialist status (and therefore individual subject focus within ITT) of those who teach it. This is relevant within the prior experiences of trainee primary teachers as pupils; some of the trainee primary teachers at the centre of this investigation have embarked on ITT directly from secondary school and, for many, experiences in secondary school PE will be a key touchstone for memories relating to the subject. The teaching of

NCPE in secondary schools has been characterised by the perpetuation of what Penney and Evans (2005, p. 21) call 'taken-for-granted routines' and it is equally plausible that practice in primary PE is characterised by a similar set of routines, although the nature of these may differ owing to the contrasting development of the teachers and the requirements placed on them in both school and primary ITT.

Personal competence and subject knowledge across the six activity areas of the prevailing NCPE (DfEE, 1999) provides a particular challenge to primary teachers (Ofsted, 2009) who may be more comfortable working in a classroom context, yet it would be wrong to assume that criticisms of primary PE have only arisen since the introduction of the NC. As long ago as 1969, it was suggested that there was a lack of a common policy for the preparation of primary teachers in PE (Rains, 1969), whilst over thirty years ago, Saunders (1975) suggested that primary teachers were personally disinterested in physical activity, holding a negative attitude towards the subject - a view that has since been supported by a series of studies in the UK and other countries (Portman 1996; Xiang, Lowy & McBride., 2002). Despite the introduction of a NC and wider developments in school and ITT policy, the PE literature consistently returns to 'within teacher' issues (such as competence, life experiences, confidence and disposition) in an attempt to explain perceived problems within the teaching of the subject in primary schools (DeCorby *et al.*, 2005; Morgan & Bourke 2005, 2008). In relation to the teaching of NCPE in primary schools in England, Ofsted (2004) suggest that:

Occasionally, teachers who lack confidence in their subject knowledge rely too heavily on a prepared scheme of work and cannot respond to the diverse needs that arise in their everyday lessons as the pupils respond to the challenges set. Consequently there is insufficient opportunity for some pupils to practise and reinforce skills, while others need to be extended further by trying out new skills or applying techniques in different situations. In some lessons, differentiation is usually achieved by the pace of the work or by outcome. More attention could be given to the analysis of tasks which are set, so that they can be adapted or extended to match pupils' needs and skills.

This statement serves to reinforce the view that some primary teachers lack subject knowledge in relation to PE, that this impacts on confidence to teach but also underlines the 'official' view that children's learning in PE is characterised by skill development, analysis and technique. This raises questions regarding the content and approach within NCPE as well as the ability of primary teachers to be effective teachers of PE. The issues of confidence and knowledge are explored further in chapter 3 as they relate to teacher development, identity and knowledge, whilst the discussion regarding the nature and content of NCPE is explored further in this chapter.

### **The conflation of PE and sport**

It is possible that the current activity-based format and structure of NCPE leads to an interpretation of PE and sport as being one and the same, leading to a perception that the effective teaching of six activity areas is not possible for many primary teachers, based on the realms of personal experience, confidence and competence within each. This appears to be compounded by the lack of time afforded to PE within primary ITT, providing little opportunity for trainees to learn enough about each of the six NCPE activity areas. The conflation of PE and sport has been a recurring focus within the PE literature, with researchers suggesting that the relationship between PE and sport should be reconsidered (Kirk & Gorely,

2000; Knox, 1995; Tinning, 1995; Waring & Warburton, 2000). Sport, it is argued, favours team and competitive games and leads to the development of an elite, rather than being an inclusive educational process (Capel, 2000; Houlihan, 2000; Mountakis, 2002; Penney, 1998, 2000; Penney & Chandler, 2000). PE is part of the educational process and, as such, is focused on individual development of the learner and not the activity *per se* (Capel, 2000; Lee, 1986; Tinning, 1995). Various attempts to elucidate such distinctions have been made in curriculum documentation and by professional associations. DES guidelines issued alongside the first NC explained that:

In physical education the emphasis is on learning in a mainly physical context. The purpose of the learning is to develop specific knowledge, skills and understanding and to promote physical development and competence. The learning promotes participation in sport,

whilst:

Sport is the term applied to a range of physical activities where emphasis is on participation and competition. Different sporting activities can and do contribute to learning (DES/WO, 1992, p. H1).

Whilst this description distinguishes the two terms, the details of the activity centred curriculum may actually serve to reinforce a view that PE and sport are the same. Subsequent efforts have been made to clarify the unique contribution made by PE to children's learning:

This unique, dual approach to learning distinguishes Physical Education from other means of introduction into physical activity, as does its serious focus on learning as an enjoyable, socially engaged and physically involved process (afPE, 2005).

Such statements have not been met with wholesale curriculum change. The efforts of afPE in the UK in particular, to advocate for the importance of the subject in primary schools and to lobby politicians have had limited impact during a time dominated by a wider focus on school sport through the PESSCL. Despite a focus on providing two hours of curriculum PE, other

strands of the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies during the time frame of this research have foregrounded sport ahead of PE. This has seen the development of Specialist Sport Colleges and School Sport Partnerships in strategies led by the Youth Sport Trust (YST). The perception of PE *as sport*, centred on discrete activity areas appears to be the taken for granted focus for the subject within existing curricula:

The form and focus that we refer to has become established to the point that it has attained the status of being ‘the obvious’ and for many people (most notably, members of the public and politicians, but surely also many within the profession itself), the only possible structure and orientation for the subject (Penney & Chandler, 2000).

Although some schools may now be providing greater time allocation to PE in the curriculum as a consequence of the PESSCL strategy (Ofsted, 2006; 2009), concerns remain regarding the quality of delivery and the nature of the PE curriculum itself. It has been suggested that the primary PE curriculum needs to become more inclusive, relevant and connected to lifelong development (Jess *et al.*, 2007; Her Majesty’s Inspectorate [HMI], 2001; Casbon, 2006) and that a move away from teaching discrete activity areas is necessary. Penney and Chandler (2000) suggest a focus on thematic learning, using movement as the context rather than the outcome, a focus not on ‘learning to move’ but on ‘moving to learn’ (Crum, 1993, p. 345). A move away from an activity-based curriculum may also help to reduce concerns amongst primary teachers themselves and provide an opportunity to focus on developmentally appropriate movement, something which may also sit with a view that:

beginning teachers need to undergo sustained study of the theoretical perspectives on child development, on human learning, on the environmental and other obstacles to human flourishing, on the conditions which maximise learning, and on the manifold ways in which learning is facilitated and managed (Kirk & Broadhead, 2007, p.12).

It can be argued in this way that teachers of primary PE need knowledge and understanding that relates specifically to children's movement development and how learning in the physical context is best framed to promote learning in all developmental domains – a focus for professional learning that is in sharp contrast to the need to be able to teach six different activity areas proficiently. Current professional activity within the PE community, at least relating to curriculum PE in Key Stage 1, appears to be addressing some of these concerns through the development of curriculum proposals centred on child development and fundamental movement skills (Keay, 2011).

### **Gender and the PE curriculum**

Further critique of the curriculum has highlighted the 'male-based' nature of PE (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005), suggesting that the sport/activity structure is centred on performance, power or strength (Connell, 1995; Satina, Solmon, Cothran, Loftus. & Stockin-Davidson, 1998). As equality of opportunity has been encouraged in western society, some have also argued that girls have been perceived as a problem in PE, lacking skills and strength (Wright, 1999; McKenzie, Marshall, Sallis & Conway, 2000; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, 2006) when compared to boys. It is suggested that the educational environment reproduces notions of femininity and masculinity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Wellard, 2009; Flintoff, 2011) and that physicality within the context of sport or physical activity has traditionally been closely associated with masculinity (Hargreaves, 2000; Hall, 1996). It has also been suggested that PEITT courses can construct unequal learning opportunities for trainees on the basis of gender (Dewar, 1987; Flintoff, 1994; Brown & Rich, 2002; Wright 2002), although this has not been specifically explored within the *primary* ITT context. The literature suggests that teaching PE is directly

linked with sporting ability, and in secondary schools at least, physical educators are seen as proficient in sport (Carrington & Leaman, 1986; Green & Scraton, 1998; Brown, 2005). Webb and Macdonald (2007) summarise the work of Skelton (1993), Bloot & Browne (1996), Krane (2001), Rich (2004) and Brown (2005) to describe the stereotypical view of the male PE teacher as ‘macho’, proud and competitive, whilst the female PE teacher stereotype:

promotes vigour and athleticism but is one in which the female has potentially placed herself outside the traditional notions of femininity (p.494).

School PE presents a range of problems to some female pupils, most notably the curriculum, clothing, co-education learning, personal experiences of embarrassment, and broader social discourses around gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Satina *et al.*, 1998; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Benn, 2000; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Williams & Bedward, 2001; Garrett, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2011). These researchers argue that PE is linked to specific areas of concern for young women such as developing bodies, physical appearance, health, sexuality, freedom, independence and control and that:

secondary school PE is an integral part of the status passage to adulthood, during which the recognition of the body as physical, social, and sexual is central (Pugsley, Coffey & Delamont., 1996, p. 133).

Such concerns would appear to be highly relevant to this investigation. Given that the majority of the primary teaching workforce in England is female, the sport/activity based PE curriculum could present a range of problems to many teachers and trainees. Personal experiences in PE are thought to be important within PE teacher development (see chapter 3) and this, combined with low levels of perceived competence across six activity areas could lead to low levels of confidence to teach amongst trainees and teachers alike. Little is currently known, however, about the relative experiences of male and female trainees within the primary PEITT context or the impact of training experiences on working practices in schools.

### **Remodelling the primary workforce**

Following the introduction, implementation and development of the NC, the 1998 Green Paper (*Teachers: meeting the challenge of change*, DfEE, 1998) was the next in a long line of efforts to challenge the nature and working practices of the teaching profession (Furlong, 2005, p.121). The Green Paper began a level of previously unseen government intervention in education (Mahony & Hextall, 2000) as raising educational standards became a key priority of the New Labour administration. Education policy shifted from an alignment with social issues and concern of equality to one with economic relevance:

Education...is seen not only as key to developing equality of opportunity but also to enabling the nation to prepare for the emergence of the new economy and its increased demands for skills and human capital (DfEE, 2001, paras 1.1-4).

The Government's actions, spelled out as intentions in the Green paper were construed by some as a further attack on a 'child-centred philosophy of teaching' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) which the primary teaching profession and those involved in the education of primary teachers previously held dear. Furlong (2008) points to the broader context, suggesting the Government's change agenda was driven by a desire to align a new vision for teacher professionalism with its own reform agenda. The Green Paper was also conceived as addressing perceived problems relating to the supply, retention and quality of new teachers, the attractiveness of teaching as a profession, the nature of professional knowledge amongst teachers and how/where teachers gained this. The focus of policy development now therefore shifted from school curricula and subject delivery to the training and development of the workforce, placing traditional, university based teacher education firmly in the firing line of policy makers. Beck (2008, p.138) argues that this new discourse, centred on standards 'has

the sinister capacity to marginalize and even silence competing ideas precisely by not entering into debate but instead tacitly presuming their irrelevance’.

The Green Paper was conceived to modernise the teaching profession, to produce a ‘world class education system’ (DfEE, 2001, p. 6) and has been held up as the key document for the New Labour Government’s focus on developing the teaching profession. Writing in the Green Paper’s foreword, the new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, set out key proposals, pointing to what he saw as the most fundamental reform of the teaching profession since the advent of state education (Rutherford, 2003):

The Green Paper sets out the Government’s proposals to improve the teaching profession. It addresses the critical issues of training, recruitment, leadership and support for teachers in the classroom and beyond. It also describes our proposals for pay and performance. We must reward good teaching better, recognising its vital role in raising standards (p 4).

The Green Paper provided a sharp and critical focus on the working practices of teachers at the time, stating that:

The time has long gone when isolated, unaccountable professionals made curriculum and pedagogical decisions alone without reference to the outside world (para. 13),

and that:

after decades of drift, decisive action is required to raise teaching to the front rank of professions. Only by modernisation can we equip our nation for the new century. I hope you will join us in meeting this challenge (Tony Blair, DfEE, 1998a, Foreword).

Blair’s words and the stated intentions of the Green Paper seem to ignore the evolution of education policy that had preceded the existence of New Labour. The centralisation of the curriculum, introduction of inspection regimes and development of testing in core subjects cannot be construed as strategies for allowing the teaching profession to ‘drift’. However, the stated intentions appear clearly designed as a rationale for further policy development, for

even sharper focus on core subject teaching and for increasing the accountability of teachers and headteachers.

A chief concern of the Green Paper was workforce development, through which school leadership, pay and rewards structures, staff appraisals, staff training and development, the use of AOTTs and technology to support learning were afforded heightened importance. A performance management model was introduced to schools with the intention of transforming management, focusing on teacher career progression (from achieving QTS, to induction, through 'threshold' and award of Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) status) and improving teacher remuneration. Mahony, Menter & Hextall (2004, p.137) explain how this system:

renders workers (teachers in our case) as units of labour to be distributed and managed, their characteristics being deemed largely irrelevant, providing that they comply with certain specifications and meet particular working criteria. This renders the structural characteristics of groups of teachers, such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, 'disability' and class, marginal.

This performance management system is also said to ignore the messy 'people' business of teaching and to focus solely on outcomes that are publicly available for judgement and evaluation, such as attainment of pupils in national tests (Mahony, Menter & Hextall, 2003). An increased emphasis on teacher accountability through testing has left teachers wondering about an education system that no longer appears to value 'education for its own sake' (Webb & Vulliamy, 2006). This increasingly managerialist educational environment has led to the widespread intensification of teachers' work, together with increased prescription of curriculum and pedagogy, resulting in what some perceive as a threat to the autonomy and professionalism of teachers. These concerns have been voiced across the world, where similar trends have been noted in North America, Australia and mainland Europe (Smyth, Dow,

Hattam, Reid & Shacklock, 2000; Apple, 2004; Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004). In relation to primary school teaching, such developments have resulted in a constraining contradiction between new managerialism and a child-centred philosophy (Willmott, 2000).

Ball (2001, p.211) suggests that this new mode of regulation seen across public sector services in England 'bites deeply...into the practice of state professionals, reforming and re-forming meaning and identity'. Reformation may surface as uncertainty and the emergence of a new kind of teaching professional, where personal identity is blended with the changing meanings of work. This may be more relevant to experienced and practising teachers rather than those embarking on new careers through training experiences in 2004. However, the backcloth of 'performativity', increasingly prevalent in ITT through the introduction of standards (discussed below) may contribute to the formation of beginning teacher identity and see such a blending of personal identity and professional meaning result in particular practices. It is thought by some that the outcome (i.e. the practices of teachers) may become an 'enacted fantasy' (Butler, 1990) and not one of improved performance. As such, it is argued that the teaching self can become alienated in response to the 'madness' of the requirements of performativity (Ball, 2001) and may lead to the teacher experiencing 'personal meaningfulness' (Giddens, 1991). In this way, it is possible for the expectations and aspirations of a trainee teacher to be worn away as compliance and survival become the daily objectives. As Ball suggests:

this tension, this structural 'schizophrenia' and the potential for inauthenticity and meaningfulness is increasingly an everyday experience for us all. The activities of the technical intelligentsia drive performativity into the day to day practices of teachers and into the social relations between the teachers (2001, p. 214).

By attempting to act in such a way that ensures compliance with centrally imposed standards, trainee teachers may, then, engage in a form of representation, fabrication, judgement or comparison. In doing so, a vocational commitment to service may replace professional judgement and an element of cynical compliance may appear. Through an adherence to conformity in light of meeting the QTS standards, trainee teachers may engage in what Ball (ibid.) terms 'an indexing, a tabularising of the self,' generating new ways of working and behaving. This context is highly relevant to primary PEITT and raises questions regarding the extent to which the ITT structures and processes (including policies and initiatives) have a bearing on trainee teacher development.

The workforce remodelling agenda has been seen as part of a wider agenda for improving the efficiency, effectiveness and performance of public sector services (Ozga, 1995, 2002) and an attempt to address concerns regarding pay and conditions amongst the teaching workforce (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2001). The latter concerns were addressed through a national agreement (in England) which was implemented in three annual phases from September 2003 to September 2005. Teachers were provided with more flexible time by removing administrative tasks from their conditions of service (for example, photocopying, creating wall displays and collecting lunch monies) and instigating a guaranteed 10% of non-teaching time per week to plan, prepare and assess children's work (known as 'PPA time'). The work no longer covered by teachers was redistributed to administrators and, more controversially, teaching assistants could be asked to help cover classes (Hammersley-Fletcher & Adnett, 2009).

The remodelling of the primary teaching workforce has enabled head teachers to manage their staff more flexibly, allowing PE to be delivered by people other than the class teacher where deemed relevant. Faced with a scenario in which assessment and planning in literacy and numeracy are the key drivers for personal, professional and school success, it is perhaps inevitable that some teachers will decide that teaching PE is not particularly a high priority. Coupled with a lack of (or negative) personal experiences, low levels of confidence or subject knowledge, it is unsurprising that some teachers consider that PE is best taught by specialist others (Morgan & Bourke, 2004, 2008), and that some headteachers agree. Whilst a focus on teaching and testing maths and English has dominated the curriculum, headteachers have been presented with an opportunity to enable the least confident teachers to avoid teaching the subject. The use of PPA time to employ visiting 'specialists' appears to have grown in recent years, although little is known about the actual extent to which this practice is evident, the impact of this on the quality of teaching and learning, or the effect of this on experiences of trainee primary teachers in the school setting. Ofsted (2004) state that:

In the best schools, teachers work closely with coaches, volunteers and other visiting teachers to ensure consistency in their approach and to make sure that learning is achieved. In too many schools, however, where adults other than teachers are contributing to provision, too little is known about the impact of this provision on learning (p.10)

The number of AOTTs working in primary PE has increased dramatically (Lavin, Swindlehurst & Foster, 2008), partly as a consequence of the PESSCL two hour per week target, but largely as an outcome of workforce remodelling. In 2004, the first year of this investigation, it was estimated that 138,000 individuals delivering 'sports sessions' within primary schools were not qualified teachers (Sports Coach UK, 2004). Whereas many AOTTs have traditionally been employed to contribute to extracurricular provision, there appears to be

an escalating trend towards the employment of coaches to deliver PE lessons (Blair & Capel 2008a, 2008b; Griggs, 2010). The assumption here is that such curriculum input takes place during class teachers' PPA time, potentially removing the class teacher from a requirement to teach PE and replacing this member of staff with a non-qualified teacher. Although guidance has been issued by professional associations in this regard, there is a dearth of research regarding this phenomenon, particularly in respect to the impact on children's learning and the quality of experiences in PE. Furthermore, little is known regarding the impact of this both during ITT and on the experiences of trainee teachers.

As Hunter (2006) suggests, the question of *who* teaches primary PE has a bearing on content and 'pedagogical possibilities' (p. 587), impacting directly on children's daily experiences. It is conceivable that the issues surrounding subject status discussed here are partly related to teacher attitudes, values and beliefs whereby a confident and knowledgeable teacher would be less likely to prioritise other subjects over PE, allow for marginalisation to take place (Blackburn, 2001) or abdicate responsibility for PE to a non-qualified teacher. However, the constraining nature of the reforms highlighted here, particularly those centred on testing, accountability and curriculum, appear hard to resist, even where the same government is simultaneously encouraging (but not testing in the same way or specifying daily requirements as in maths and English) the teaching of PE.

As the level of preparedness of primary class teachers to teach PE has been questioned, some (Saunders, 1975; Severs, 1995; Revell, 2000; Blackburn, 2001) have looked at the notion of specialist PE teachers for primary schools as a viable solution. However, this has not been

examined in a way which asks *who* such specialists would be and what training they would receive, let alone how schools and their curriculum would be managed or funded to enable such a development. Given the concerns raised earlier regarding the nature of the curriculum and stereotypical views of PE teachers, primary PE subject specialism should be addressed with great care. Over twenty years ago, Alexander (1992) considered broad possibilities for the primary profession and suggested that practitioners held a:

sense that the generalist model of primary school staffing has reached its limits: the alternatives are neither clear nor proven. Certainly it would be a grave mistake to replace one monolithic model by another (p. 205).

Such concerns have been further highlighted through a reforming of ITT itself which, combined with the policy developments discussed here, have served to impact on trainee primary teacher experiences in PE.

### **The reform of Initial Teacher Training**

The policy developments detailed earlier have emanated from a government desire to develop a 'new professionalism' in education (Furlong, 2005, p. 120) and are seen as part of a long term shift from teaching as a profession characterised by autonomy to one that is managed, streamlined and networked. Increased government control over the teaching profession has, however been borne out not only in schools through curricula and strategy development. ITT has also become a significant area of government intervention, moving from 'being a relative backwater in terms of educational policy, to a position of key strategic significance' (Furlong, 2001, p.121). In attempting to directly influence the education system, successive governments have placed ITT under increasing central control and attached escalating

importance to the development of practical teaching skills at the expense of educational theory (Burnett, 2006).

The modern development of government policy in relation to ITT can be traced to a 1983 White Paper, *Teaching Quality* (DES, 1983) which described how teacher training courses would be opened up to the 'realities' of teaching in schools. Those in higher education, with a focus on theory and critique, were associated with more traditional forms of professionalism, prioritising individual knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Hoyle & John, 1995). To gain control of the teaching workforce, the government developed a more practically based form of professional preparation, with an emphasis on training rather than education. Universities were originally involved in the training and professional development of teachers for a variety of reasons; a role dating back to the creation of university centred training departments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The rationale for such involvement had been based on the perceived importance of the intellectual development of teachers, an acknowledgement that the improvement of teaching should be based on research and an assumption that education was concerned with developing critical capacities (Pring, 1999). This rationale has been increasingly criticised by those who see teaching as a practical profession, best learned in the real world contexts of schools. There has been a wider challenge to the central role and power of universities as places where knowledge is gained. Pring (1999) suggested that the value of Higher Education in teacher education could no longer be taken for granted as new possibilities and partnerships between alternative sources of learning had been encouraged.

The reform of ITT began with the establishment of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) through Circular 3/84 (DES, 1984). CATE had the responsibility for overseeing Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in England and Wales on behalf of the Secretary for State for Education. CATE began to exert control over teacher training by establishing a requirement for teacher educators to undertake ‘recent and relevant’ teaching experience in schools, by formally setting the length of teacher training courses and the number of weeks trainees must spend in schools, for the first time marking the Secretary for State’s right to intervene in the content and structure of ITT. Further increased central control of ITT was announced in Circular 24/89 (DES, 1989), establishing committees to oversee all teacher training courses and to ensure that specified criteria were addressed satisfactorily. This circular defined topics that were to be addressed within an emerging national curriculum for ITT which were expressed as ‘outputs’, listed as things student teachers had to know and be able to do. The beginning of a NC for ITT was evident in ITT programmes which had to conform to ‘main subject’ study requirements, the time students spent on practical teaching and amounts of time allocated to the core subjects in the pupils’ NC.

Subsequently, circulars 9/92 (DfE, 1992) and 14/93 (DfE, 1993) involved schools even more in the training experience and gave schools the ‘right’ to be equal partners in ITT. The circulars formally required the use of competences in designing, teaching and assessing ITT programmes in England and Wales. Schools could now receive funds to deliver their own SCITT programmes and, from 1993, Ofsted was responsible for the inspection of schools, as well as of teacher training, thus enabling checks to be made on conformity with the new competences. Trainee teachers would traditionally have followed a three-or four-year

undergraduate course (BA or Bachelor of Education (BEd)) which focused on subject knowledge and pedagogy, with opportunities to 'practise' their teaching in school, under supervision from a university-based tutor. Increasingly, a larger proportion of trainee teachers would now follow what was traditionally the secondary model, taking a first degree in a related subject area followed by a one-year PGCE.

A compulsory partnership of provision between universities and schools was introduced via a government circular (DFE, 1993), leading to a view of partnership as the 'new orthodoxy' (Wilson, 2005 p. 359). Wragg (1991) and Pollard, Broadfoot, Croll, Osborn & Abbott (1994) argue that these reforms indicated at least a partial endorsement of, and return to, the nineteenth-century 'apprenticeship' model of teacher training as trainee teachers spent considerable amounts of time learning in schools and not in university education departments.

The national drive towards school-based teacher training gave schools responsibility for:

the training of students to teach, to assess pupils and to manage classes, and for supervising students and assessing their competence (DfE, 1992, p. 4).

This required a much greater involvement of schools in the ITT process, working in partnerships with each other and with universities to deliver training (Price & Willett, 2006). It also brought new roles for teachers in supporting and mentoring trainee teachers, and for university tutors in supporting school-based staff as they embarked on mentoring roles. As Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1999,2001) note, the assumption inherent in these government directives was that the best place to train as a teacher was in school, and that the best people to do the training are teachers. Whilst Hobson (2003) suggests that the policy shift away from an emphasis on university-based theory towards competence based training in schools was what student teachers (and their predecessors) had always wanted (a view also supported by Asher

& Mallet, 1999; Foster, 1999; Hobson, 2003; Younger, Brindley, Pedder & Hagger, 2004), others feel that the distinction between academic, university-based qualifications and professional accreditation had the potential to drive a wedge between the dual aspects of becoming a teacher (Hogbin & Jarmany, 1998). It is also argued that such a shift towards central governance and partnership has led to teachers being viewed as technicians involved in the delivery of a nationally stipulated curriculum which takes little account of the development of individual children's understanding and learning (Blenkin & Kelly, 1997). Government intervention has, suggests Furlong (2005), led to a narrowing of teacher education and an approach that is predominantly functional, based on a 'technical rationalist' approach (Schon, 1983) with common frameworks and fixed objectives at its core.

The creation of the TTA in 1994 was designed to further advance the Government's aim of improving the quality of teacher training whilst reducing the influence and autonomy of higher education tutors. Assuming most of CATE's duties, the TTA took charge of the supply and recruitment of teachers, the funding of teacher education in England (not Wales) and the accreditation of courses. This separated university funding for teacher training from that of other higher education provision and required universities and other colleges to bid for TTA funding alongside school based training providers. The TTA also linked funding to quality, whilst concomitantly increasing the level of control over the structure and content of ITT courses.

The 1992 and 1993 circulars contained a list of competences that all trainee teachers were required to address. They were intended to lead to breadth and balance within training courses

through encouraging an interplay between practice and ‘reflection’ (Schon, 1987) which was deemed central to effective performance and which was encouraged within many HE institutions’ models of teacher education (Burgess, 2000). This focus changed, however, when the TTA began a re-conceptualisation of the competences to ‘standards’ as required in Circular 10/97 (DfEE, 1997) and later further developed in Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998). The importance of these standards in ensuring that the government (via the TTA) controlled entry to the teaching profession was made clear:

Successful completion of a course or programme of initial teacher training, including employment based provision, must require the trainee to achieve all these standards. All courses must involve the assessment of all trainees to make sure they meet all the standards specified (DfEE, 1997, p. 7, emphasis in original).

Some (e.g. Burgess, 2000) have seen a shift in language being used to describe teacher education (now ‘training’) at this time as significant, a reflection of the government view of education’s place within the market economy. Teacher education became teacher training; students became trainees; the curriculum was expressed as a set of standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (appendix 2), subject knowledge became content; training institutions were increasingly referred to as providers. Such changed terms created distance between educational programmes in universities which had previously encouraged an approach to teacher education based upon reflective practice and the prescribed routes which were now based on training and the assessment of standards. Whilst not agreeing with the use of ‘training’ in place of ‘education’, I have chosen to reflect the use of language in prevailing policy frameworks throughout this thesis, referring to the terms in present use.

The Government's efforts to gain control over ITT were also manifest within a NC for ITT (set out in Circular 10/97 (DfEE, 1997) and subsequently in Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998) which was welcomed by those who saw the complexity of new partnership training arrangements as problematic (Reid, Constable & Griffiths, 1994). The ITT curriculum included separate guidelines for primary and secondary provision, variations according to the age phase being taught, inclusion of specialist subject knowledge in the upper primary age phase and specific guidance relating to provision in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Whilst this documentation was complex and multifaceted, it was also required to be read in conjunction with newly introduced subject specific guidance provided by the National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies (DfEE, 1997 and 1999). Burgess (2000) points to the sheer volume of guidance notes received by providers of primary ITT at this time, saying that 'death by paper was to become a reality for some providers' (p. 410). Concerns of this nature, together with worries about breadth and balance of the curriculum were also raised by university providers of ITT (University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) ITE committee, January 2000). It was felt that there was an undue weighting towards NC core subjects (English, Maths and Science) and a lack of coverage of Foundation Subjects. As a consequence of these concerns, the original NC for ITT was abandoned by the DfES in 2002, to be replaced by a list of teaching standards through which trainee teachers demonstrate a range of competences in order to achieve QTS.

The Standards, set out in *Qualifying to teach: professional standards and requirements for initial teacher training* (DfES, 2002) formed the legal requirements for all ITT programmes, whether based in universities or in schools. The 2002 version of standards set out in

Qualifying to Teach (see appendix 2) are those to which the trainee teachers at the centre of this investigation are aligned (the data collection took place between 2004 and 2007). The achievement of the standards represents the minimum legal requirement of a trainee's demonstrable knowledge and understanding in order to become a qualified teacher. The standards are grouped in three areas, namely 'professional values and practice', 'knowledge and understanding' and 'teaching'. Of clear relevance to this investigation are those standards which place PE within the wider context of general teacher attributes. For example, it should be noted that teachers must:

have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are trained to teach...For Key Stage 1 and/or 2, they know and understand the curriculum for each of the National Curriculum core subjects, and the frameworks, methods and expectations set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have sufficient understanding of a range of work across the following subjects:

- history or geography
- physical education
- ICT
- art and design or design and technology
- performing arts, and
- religious education

to be able to teach them in the age range for which they are trained, with advice from an experienced colleague where necessary (Standard 2.1a and 2.1b, DfES, 2002, *my italics*).

The need to demonstrate 'sufficient' knowledge and understanding in PE (and other, non-core subjects) is evident within the standards, yet is less significant than the requirements relating to core subjects and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This prioritising of subjects is further emphasised within the final sentence of this standard which creates scope for trainees to qualify as teachers without a level of knowledge and understanding in PE that would enable efficient autonomous teaching of the subject. This is reinforced further in standard 3.3.2 which states that:

those qualifying to teach pupils in Key Stage 1 and/or 2 teach the core subjects (English, including the National Literacy Strategy, mathematics through the National Numeracy Strategy, and science) competently and independently. They also teach, for either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2, a range of work across the following subjects:

- history or geography
- physical education
- ICT
- art and design or design and technology, and
- performing arts independently, with advice from an experienced colleague where appropriate (Standard 3.3.2, DfES, 2002).

It should be noted that since this investigation was carried out, further revisions to the standards and expectations on ITT providers have been debated and implemented. A revised set of standards (TDA, 2007) is currently in place which responded to proposals from the TDA to streamline guidance and to link standards expected of newly qualified teachers to those expected of teachers progressing through ‘core’, ‘post threshold’, ‘excellent teacher’ and ‘AST’ status. Most recently, the ‘Importance of Teaching’ White Paper (DfE, 2010) has paved the way for further developments in ITT, not least the proposal for schools (and not universities) to become providers of ITT. The Paper proposes an increase in school based ITT, greater accountability for teachers in relation to pupils’ learning outcomes and the introduction of a new national curriculum. If implemented, it is almost certain that further revisions to standards will be made, both for those in the initial stages of training and for more experienced teachers progressing through their careers.

The nature and impact of the standards for QTS have been criticised. Edwards (2002) suggests that meeting the standards does not necessarily ensure that trainee teachers can work as professional decision makers able to respond effectively to pupils as learners. McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn (2003) highlight the tension between the performance-oriented

management of teachers and their role as pastoral carers of pupils, whilst Wilson (2005) suggests that a crowded and sometimes contradictory policy agenda creates competing demands on trainee teachers as they arrive for school experiences in their partnership schools. The 'standards context' of ITT has also raised a number of implications for primary PE. It has been claimed that the quantity and quality of some primary PE ITT in England is a 'national disgrace' (Talbot, 2007) with contact time during primary PE ITT amounting to just nine hours (within a one-year PGCE) course and five hours for those involved with SCITTs (Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b) at some training institutions. Whilst it is necessary to look at the overall process rather than simply time allocation for the subject, it would appear that (although this may not detract from trainees' ability to demonstrate standards have been met) this would not allow trainee teachers the necessary breadth of experience and learning to become confident and knowledgeable teachers of PE.

In January 2005, the 'declaration from the National Summit on Physical Education' endorsed the CCPR's challenge to the government to:

ensure that trainee teachers for primary schools receive adequate preparation in PE during their ITT for them to become confident, competent and committed to teach the PE National Curriculum (Baalpe, CCPR, PEAUK, PE ITT Network, 2005: 5).

Interestingly, the time that is sought to achieve this is specified as thirty hours, half the time allocation demanded by professional bodies two decades previously (PEA, 1987; CCPR/National Association of Headteachers [NAHT], 1992). The rationale behind this time request, or an explanation as to why this is now less than previously claimed was lacking. In whatever way the allotted time for preparation in PE is used during ITT, it is difficult to cater for a diverse range of training needs for all trainees within a time constrained model which

commonly includes only one compulsory taught course in PE. As Morgan and Bourke (2004, 2005) suggest, substantial issues in both university courses and primary schools are the 'crowded curriculum' and that generalist class teachers may lack confidence or knowledge in many other subject areas too.

Some primary trainees already receive more PE during ITT than others training through different routes or with different providers. For example, undergraduate trainees may be able to revisit and consider PE in university and in school on more occasions than colleagues who train during a one year PGCE course. School based trainees may be able to access more PE in the school context than those studying in university-led programmes. Some providers of ITT choose, through local course design, to include greater focus on foundation subjects than others and may also include additional primary PE study, either in the form of elective modules or in selected specialist study throughout the course. Contact time within PEITT courses is therefore not the only important factor and any attempt to improve practice should attempt to account for the wider picture, including reference to school based experiences, assessment opportunities and reflection in addition to contact time in lectures. The amount of time where trainees work with an academic tutor or school based mentor in PE during ITT therefore varies, although little has been done to map the breadth of provision in any detail or understand whether time allocation makes any difference to quality of provision or ensuing practice. Little is known about approaches to teaching PE during ITT across the UK in this respect, and significant questions remain unanswered regarding pedagogical methods within university faculties, or supervisory or mentoring strategies evident during school placements.

It has been suggested that university-based courses do not provide sufficient opportunities for trainees to investigate and analyse their personal biographies, values, beliefs or embodied practices, thought to be a particularly important exercise where prior experiences provide primary trainees with negative perceptions of the subject (highlighted by Howarth, 1987; Allison, Pissanos & Sakola, 1990; Garrett & Wrench, 2007). The importance of reflection within teacher professional development is discussed in chapter 3 and it is thought that reflection on and in PE specific practice is lacking as a consequence of the paucity of time afforded to the subject. It has also been suggested that the marginalised status with low levels of curriculum time for PE seen in primary schools has been mirrored within ITT programmes (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a; 2006b; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011); in essence, the enhanced status of some subjects (such as Maths and English) has seen markedly increased allocation of teaching time throughout the ITT process and inflated the importance on trainees' teaching of these subjects during assessed school-based practices. The school-based context of ITT is also pertinent when considering the extent to which the development of primary trainees as teachers of PE is a specific focus within mentoring structures and systems. School based experiences constitute what many researchers agree to be a crucial element of the primary ITT process, yet surprisingly little is known about subject specific mentoring in this context. Most researchers view the relationship between mentors and trainee teachers as complex (Edwards & Collison, 1996; Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999) not least placing additional administrative and planning burdens on the teacher-mentor. Malderez *et al.* (2007) suggest that there is a considerable amount of variation in mentors' understanding of their role and a need for more effective development opportunities.

Whilst primary PEITT has been criticised, concerns have also been raised about the quality and approach to CPD in primary PE (Armour & Yelling, 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Mawer & Head-Rapson, 1987; HMI, 2001, CCPR/NAHT, 1992; Harris *et al.*, 2011). As a consequence, there is a growing realisation that significant steps are required if qualified teachers' management and pedagogy skills are to be developed to make a consistent impact on children's learning in PE. Armour and Duncombe (2004) provide accounts of in-service primary teachers' needs for CPD in PE, highlighting the paucity of ITT in terms of quality and quantity. This too has a detrimental and perpetuating effect on trainee teachers' experiences during school based elements of ITT where trainees work alongside class teachers and mentors who may themselves be lacking in confidence or experience in PE.

### **Social policy and future curriculum developments**

Although this chapter has focused on government-led policies that have impacted directly on the experiences of teachers and those training to be teachers, it is possible that other recent initiatives and social policies have reinvigorated a holistic view of education. This further complicates the context within which trainee primary teachers train, in that mixed messages are presented regarding the relative importance of subject knowledge versus child development, or the role of the teacher in improving attainment in maths and English versus planning creative and enjoyable lessons. For example, the Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) agenda, and Children's Plan (DCFS, 2007), appear more developmentally concerned than prevailing curriculum frameworks and show concern for the individual learner, for activity and discovery and for curriculum integration (Surgue, 1998). In 2004, a review of the primary national curriculum was launched, with discussion centring on a return, at least in part, to a

more holistic view of teaching and learning with an emphasis on cross curricular approaches. Since the election of a coalition government in 2010, a new review of the national curriculum has been launched. This, importantly for this thesis, suggests a heightened place of importance for PE as a 'core aspect of learning', although what this will actually look like remains uncertain at the time of writing.

Such policies add to the range of contextual factors at play within teacher socialisation and provide additional reference points for each trainee teacher and her/his school based mentors during ITT. Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007) point to the ascendancy of creativity within national education policy, evidenced by QCA documents (QCA, 2005) and the Primary National Strategy (PNS) (DfES, 2003b) which called for a rich, varied and exciting curriculum. The government generated document *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003b) aimed to increase creativity in teaching to enhance motivation and commitment of teachers and pupils alike. The school inspection framework has also been re-vamped (Ofsted, 2007) to include a focus on school self-evaluation, and the importance of national testing at Key Stage 1 has also been reduced. Wider social policy has seen a focus on social change through the empowerment of local communities; for example, Sure Start (DfES, 2002) attempts to guarantee effective pre-school education in disadvantaged areas. The role of school teachers and other professionals (social workers and healthcare practitioners) have also become more closely aligned.

### **The resultant context and implications for trainees**

Government strategies for ITT have centred on two themes - the defining of centrally imposed standards for QTS and an insistence on a wider range of training provision. The traditional providers of ITT, the universities, had previously been synonymous with the development of individual knowledge and professional responsibility, at odds with the Government's apparent desire for central control and decision making (Hoyle & John, 1995). When examined in relation to teacher identity, it has been suggested that the restructuring of ITT to a partnership model centred on schools was preceded by a period of consistency and stability (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) and that the changes have led to a loss of elementary trust and challenges to teacher identity. This is highly relevant to this study and raises numerous issues regarding risk of dissonance between university courses and experiences in school. The relationship between university and school placements is not simply an interface between theory and practice, but a possible site of tension and struggle between identity and official expectations. The relative experiences and beliefs of trainee teachers, mentors and class teachers are foregrounded and differences in personal experiences, values and beliefs across the group of colleagues and trainees are highlighted. It is this context, further clouded by changing and emerging policies, that provides considerable scope for investigating the process of becoming a teacher of primary PE. In addition, such changes have seen new and expanded demands placed on practising teachers within the ITT process, to include the role of teachers as mentors. As a consequence of these developments, there has been an increase in the number of professionals working in support of trainee teachers, leading to what is seen by some as a problem of 'quality control', with a reported wide variance in levels and quality of support received by trainees in school settings (e.g. McIntyre, 1997). These concerns have expressed in relation to

all ITT, yet it appears that there is significant potential for quality control in primary PE to be problematic. There has been a reported difficulty in ensuring that all teacher mentors receive sufficient training and that the training of teachers in schools is perceived by some to be a largely routine, additional burden (Furlong, 2000; Williams & Soares, 2000). In some cases, trainees themselves are treated primarily as useful additional resources in the classroom. Mentors with trainee teachers in their classrooms are considered to have increased opportunity to undertake other work in school, and are regularly absent from the classroom (Brooks, Barker & Swatton, 1997). McIntyre (1997) observes that some trainee teachers may be inadvertently neglected in school settings and that it is difficult to ensure high levels of student support throughout the whole ITT cycle (Burn, Hagger & Mutton, 2003), despite formal expectations that training providers do so (ITT requirements, see appendix 3).

Rushton (2001), however, recognises the importance of school based experiences in developing appropriate technical, social and cultural knowledge; there is considerable potential for poorly mentored practice to have a constraining effect on the development of the trainee teacher. This would seem to be particularly the case where the trainee also lacks confidence and/or subject knowledge. Wood (2000) suggests that the emphasis on school-based practice at the expense of university based teacher education may lead to an impoverished mode of training, linked by some to 'performativity' (Lyotard, 1984; Ball, 2001; Avis, 2005). Within this conceptualisation it is perceived as possible for trainee teachers to be judged as satisfactory against the QTS standards, without a high level of understanding of the teaching and learning process. Ball (2001) suggests that performativity is:

A technology, a culture and mode of regulation, or even a system of terror...that employs judgements, comparisons, and displays means of control, attrition and change. The performances of – individual subjects or organisations - serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of quality, or moments of promotion or inspection. They stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement (p. 210).

Performativity is therefore seen as a discourse of power, centred on accountability and competition (Lyotard, 1984), a discourse which Ball (2001) argues has an impact on how new social identities are created. In this way, it has been argued that shifts in central policy towards increased government control go beyond the introduction of frameworks, templates and guidelines and cut to the heart of emerging teacher identity and development. The process of becoming a teacher has therefore be seen as empowering and productive, or destructive, particularly by those who suggest that central policy has resulted in a struggle over the ‘soul of the profession’ (Hanlon, 1998). Performativity, as conceptualized by Ball, not only concerns the introduction of standards for teachers wishing to gain QTS, it is about a wider approach to the management of the professions. The introduction of centrally dictated standards, performance targets, a school inspection regime and routine requirements for record keeping on a day to day basis in school can be viewed within a wider framework of performance management. It is thought that such requirements of performativity may result in previous levels of commitment, judgement and authenticity being sacrificed for impression and performance, although the impact of such changes on individual trainee teachers in school placement is less well understood (Ball, 1999).

## **Summary**

This chapter has highlighted the ever changing government led context within which primary schools and those training to become primary school teachers are situated. The historical context demonstrates the constantly shifting requirements with which providers of ITT, schools and trainees alike have been faced and which place conditions on the lived experiences of all those involved in primary teacher development. The impact seen in schools, curricula, the teaching workforce, and in universities over a twenty year period has been considerable, and a period of stability appears unlikely. The control of the teaching profession has been a key focus for successive governments. Central to the evident changes has been the broadening of routes to becoming a qualified teacher alongside the evolution of a defined set of professional standards. During recent years, some subjects, through the evolution of a NC and the development of subject strategies, have been afforded heightened importance within schools and ITT. Such contextual and policy changes are thought to influence the socialisation of teachers, although the precise way in which such contextual factors interact with individual trainee beliefs and values in relation to PE is not known. Whilst government policies and strategies have appeared and disappeared over time, a number of writers and researchers have continued to point to the need for improvements in the subject at this level. This would suggest that the structures imposed on schools, teachers and ITT providers by the government cannot alone account for the range of PE practice seen. Despite this, few studies have been conducted which shed light on all phenomena at large, or which provide practical, considered and fully contextualised solutions. This chapter has provided a contextual backcloth for the investigation and provided insights to aid research design and the formulation of research

questions. In particular, research questions 2 and 3 have been set in relation to this contextual review:

- Given the context of primary ITT, what ‘possibilities of action’ are evident to trainee primary teachers during PEITT?
- How does primary ITT currently impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE and how can provision be developed to better support trainee primary teachers in this regard?

The following chapter explores theoretical approaches to teacher development, identity and learning, placing primary PE within this wider field of critical literature. It is hoped that by doing so, possible solutions to the issues raised so far can be identified and the research designed to take full account of what is known to date. Whilst this chapter has focused on policies and frameworks, attention now shifts to the individual trainee factors which may also impact on emerging practice, and which are directly relevant to the first research question:

- What are the dispositions of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE and how are these dispositions animated by the properties and processes of ITT?

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT, IDENTITY AND LEARNING**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 2 discussed the socio historical and policy contexts within which the trainee primary teachers in this study are striving to become qualified teachers. This chapter examines theories of teacher development and explores the relationship between these theories, individual trainees and this prevailing context. The literature pertaining to primary PE suggests that primary trainees are underprepared, lacking in confidence to teach PE and that they are characterised by negative dispositions towards the subject. This chapter links such claims to issues of teacher identity and professional learning and explores this in relation to the policy context discussed earlier. The methodological approach subsequently outlined in chapter 4, together with the research aims and questions introduced at the beginning of this thesis have necessitated such an exploration in consideration of what is currently understood in relation to the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE.

The processes which comprise the dynamic between trainee teachers, universities, primary schools, communities of staff and government policies are central themes in the literature relating to the development of teacher identity. In particular, the relationship between trainee teachers' dispositions and externally created conceptions of knowledge and learning (as presented in government policy and curricula, by university tutors and colleagues and peers in school) is a central theme for discussion. Different conceptualisations of 'knowledge' and 'learning' are relevant to the research aims and an understanding of the ways in which these

are framed in schools, universities, by centrally governed policies and by individual teachers is necessary to better understand the factors at work in relation to primary PE. Teacher development theorists agree that the process of becoming a teacher is complex and that the dynamic relationship between individual trainees and the ITT structure is a key influencing factor on practice. During ITT, individuals are faced with learning a multifaceted craft in demanding circumstances (Burn, Hagger & Mutton, 2003). Learning how to teach is:

a complex and dynamic process which involves exploration, choice, decisions, creative thinking...the major elements in this process - evaluation, research and experimentation – are not value added features of teacher quality; they constitute the very basis of competence in teaching (Hextall, Lawn, Menter, Sidgwick & Walker, 1991, p.82)

and a:

deeply complex liminal stage of passage in which student teachers...story the complex dynamic student/university/school/government in a way that describes them neither as one thing nor the other, and yet both at the same time (McNamara, Roberts, Basit & Brown, 2002, p. 864).

Beyond an agreement regarding the complexity of the phenomena at large, teacher development has been conceptualised in a number of ways. For example, Hargreaves (1993) and Sabar (2004) focus on professional socialisation and identity building; Zeichner and Gore (1990) and Lacey (1995) concentrate on the process of learning to teach; Eraut (1994) examines the development of teachers' professional knowledge. In addition, the ITT process itself has been conceptualised as a set of stages through which trainee teachers progress (Fuller & Brown, 1975); as a 'rite of passage' (White, 1989); as a context clouded with mixed messages and inconsistent goals (Eisenhart & Behm, 1991) and as a phase of personal growth (Head, 1992). Both the nature and process of acquisition of teacher knowledge is critical to the debate around 'what works' in ITT and in teaching and learning in primary schools in general. The exploration of teacher development through a review of critical literature has assisted both

the development of research questions and research design. The problems within primary PE are discussed in light of this review, providing further support for the formulation of research questions, particularly Question 1. This chapter begins by exploring theoretical approaches to teacher development and the implications of such for primary PEITT.

### **Beginning teachers**

Research regarding beginning teachers indicates a primary concern over classroom management issues, the prevalence of teacher-centred approaches, and a preoccupation with surviving the trainee teaching experience (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Hollingsworth, 1989; Lidstone & Hollingsworth, 1992; Tomlinson, Tomchin, Callahan, Adams, Pizzat-Tinnin, Cunningham, Moore, Lutz, Roberson, Eiss, Landrum, Hunsaker & Imbeau, 1994). Beginning teachers are thought by some not to be able to fully respond to the pupils' wide range of learning needs (Tomlinson *et al.*, 1994), in part due to teachers' concerns regarding their own role within the teaching process. Beginning teachers, it has been argued, proceed carefully, possessing only a limited understanding of the issues with which they are about to engage, having to think hard about the various features of the classroom situation and how best to act in it (Pollard & Tann, 1994). If this is true in classroom subjects, the context of teaching PE may provide an even greater array of challenges where the use of large spaces (indoors and outdoors), the need for effective management strategies and use of a range of equipment may be even more daunting than teaching classroom based subjects.

It has also been suggested that there is a tendency for beginning teachers to seek security by choosing to conform to the norms and existing culture of the school (Menter, 1989), whether

or not these norms match existing predispositions, attitudes or personal beliefs. This 'strategic compliance' (Lacey, 1977) sees a new teacher surrendering unconditionally to the structural, procedural and cultural demands imposed upon them with an ensuing depersonalisation of teaching and removal of a sense of individualism (Sparkes, 1994). This phenomenon may lead from compliance to disaffection, as a result of circumstances denying newly qualified teachers the opportunity to incorporate personal values within professional practice (Butt, Townsend, & Raymond, 1990). Where a trainee or newly qualified teacher is enthusiastic and committed to teaching PE and is placed or works in a school context where PE has low status, compliance with the status quo may result in disaffection. However, where a trainee or Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) feels ambivalent or worried about teaching PE, working within such a school context may provide a sense of security; if the teaching of PE does not appear to be important, the teaching of PE and ensuing negative emotions may be easily avoided. As chapter 2 discussed, today's overarching primary school curricula and policy context suggests a relatively low status afforded to PE, borne out by comparison to the heightened status afforded to English and maths teaching. Such hypothetical situations need testing in the field, however, as very few studies have investigated the relationship between individual trainee teachers and the context in which they are learning to teach primary PE in any significant depth.

### **Teacher development**

Different models of teacher development have been acknowledged for some time, influenced by government policies pertaining to ITT and schools and teacher educator beliefs and values. Government policy has foregrounded certain views, yet Zeichner's (1983, p. 8) desire for future debate in teacher education to:

be concerned with the question of which educational, moral and political commitments ought to guide our work in the field rather than with the practice of merely dwelling on which procedures and organizational arrangements will most effectively help us realize tacit and often unexamined ends.

has not been entirely realised, despite high levels of government interest in teacher development in England since this statement was made. Instead, successive policies have foregrounded particular views, serving to shape the profession through what has been seen as managerial measures (see chapter 2). Policy makers in England appear to have favoured an approach to teacher development which emphasises the need for teachers to perform and be measured against pre-determined qualities ('standards') and to be academically able; a stated desire for the prevailing DfE is:

to raise the bar for entry to initial training: attracting more of the highest achieving graduates and having higher expectations of the academic and interpersonal skills (DfE, 2011b).

Alternative paradigms of teacher development have been evident for some time, including, for example, Zeichner's (1983) typology which includes both behaviourist and personalistic processes. In relation to this investigation, it is pertinent to examine models of teacher development most relevant to the trainees in the study. The three year undergraduate route to QTS appears to be modelled, at least in part, on a view that beginning teachers progress through a series of stages of development. For example, curriculum subjects are revisited in each academic year, with escalating complexity of academic standards running alongside escalating school based demands. The trainees are expected to demonstrate competence against the professional standards in each of the three years, and professional and academic demands increase year on year (see course outline provided in appendix 4).

This approach shares characteristics with Fuller and Brown's (1975) staged model of student-teacher development where student-teachers' concerns shift from a pre-occupation with the self to a consideration of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Three stages of development are suggested, namely survival concerns, teaching situation concerns, and pupil concerns; it is in this last stage that novice teachers focus on 'concerns about recognizing the social and emotional needs of pupils' (Fuller & Brown, 1975, p. 37) as well as meeting individual instructional needs and demonstrating fairness to pupils. This model of teacher development suggests that novice teachers do not typically attend to pupil differences until the final stage, with their personal concerns moving outwards from 'self' to 'situation' and 'task' and then to 'concerns about the pupils' (Conway & Clark, 2003). This model has influenced subsequent studies in this area and was expanded by Furlong and Maynard (1995) who used it as a basis for making recommendations concerning the effective mentoring of trainee teachers at the time of the national policy shift towards an increase in school-based experiences in ITT. Such approaches to mapping expectations of trainees' experiences in school within ITT specify an escalating experience across successive placements in which the trainee gradually begins to assume greater responsibility in the role of the teacher. In PE specific terms, this may include observing practice (watching and taking notes whilst a class teacher teaches), sharing practice (working in partnership with the class teacher, taking responsibility for certain elements of the lesson) and ultimately taking full charge of the lesson. Such an approach, and the original stages conceived by Fuller and Brown, however, represent teacher development in an over simplistic manner. Trainee teachers may in fact consider all issues (such as self, teaching tasks, survival, pupils' learning) simultaneously (Sitter & Lainer, 1982; Guillame & Rudney, 1993; Pendry, 1997) and trainee teachers at each stage of ITT may engage in more

(or less) sophisticated thinking. In a study examining the development of beginning teachers, Burn, Hagger and Mutton (2003) suggested that there is a:

prominence of the student-teachers' concerns for pupils progress or achievement...although there was clearly some development in the student-teacher priorities...this does not mean that they were unconcerned about pupils' learning from the start (p. 316)

and that:

the attempt to reduce the process of learning to teach to a discrete set of stages obscures not only the complexity of that process, but also the enormous variations between individuals in terms of their starting points and the ways in which their thinking develops (ibid., p. 329).

Fuller and Brown's stages of teacher development therefore appear to take little account of within-trainee differences and neglect the importance of identity within the process of becoming a teacher. Whilst some trainee teachers may be seen to progress through a set of recognisable stages of development, the interplay between personal dispositions, pace of professional learning and degree of teacher development is therefore thought to be a highly individualised phenomenon. This is relevant in relation to primary PEITT where it would seem highly unlikely that each primary trainee will progress through a standard and linear set of stages in a uniform fashion, or enter ITT or induction year with homogenous characteristics. It is thought that trainees embarking on the ITT process will be influenced by a range of individual life experiences and will present a range of learning needs (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; Garret & Wrench, 2007). Consequently, some primary trainees may be more enthusiastic towards PE from the outset, whilst others may have heightened concerns about teaching the subject.

It is surprising, therefore, that concerns raised relating to primary PEITT have centred on a general need to improve practice without wholesale reference to variation in individual

learning needs of primary trainees. The claim by the UK's PE professional subject associations that primary ITT should guarantee a minimum of 30 hours of PE specific training (BAALPE, CCPR, PEAUK, PEITT Network, 2005) masks individual training needs and ignores the importance of school based components of ITT. Whilst 30 hours of dedicated contact time may well enable coverage of subject content, this view takes little account of prior learning, differences in existing trainee levels of confidence or understanding and the potential for learning to take place away from the university lecture context. The following section of this chapter reviews the importance of teacher identity within teacher development and discusses how consideration of teacher identity can support the perceived need for more sophisticated approaches to primary PEITT.

### **Teacher identity**

An understanding of teacher identity is important to those wishing to develop an improved understanding of practice, particularly where structural and personal factors may be perceived to be in dynamic tension (Archer, 1996, 2000). Any social activity (in this case teaching) is thought to be dependent on the successful amalgamation of 'self-identity' and 'social identity' (Shilling, 1993) and there is potential for dissonance when an identity is working within a particular social position that is significantly at odds with the individual's feelings, perceptions and beliefs (McDonald & Kirk, 1996). Day *et al.* (2006) suggest that there are unavoidable interrelationships between professional and personal identities, because overwhelming evidence shows that teaching demands significant personal investment. Day (2004) also argues that commitment to and a passion for teaching is affected by the development of a positive identity with subject, relationships and roles in order to maintain teacher self-esteem.

The concepts of 'identity' and 'self' have been previously related to teacher socialisation (Lacey, 1977; Nias, 1989; Zeichner & Gore, 1990), thought to be crucial in the formation of positive relationships and the generation of a collaborative culture within a school. Whilst a teacher's behaviour may on one hand serve to maintain a consistency of self (Rogers, 1951), it also helps to define the cultural norm of a school. In this way, it is argued that teachers may act in ways which underline and preserve their own identity and sense of self but also in ways which are deemed acceptable within the culture of the school. Teachers are said to invest 'self' in their work, resulting in a merging of personal and professional identity, and in teaching behaviours which are a reinforcement of self-esteem, fulfilment or vulnerability (Nias, 1996). The development of teacher identity is also thought to be an affective process, dependent upon power and agency (Zembylas, 2003), which leads to the possibility of multiple and changing selves. This is particularly relevant to the traditional role of the primary school teacher who is faced with teaching responsibilities in all curriculum subjects and for the pastoral care of all children in the class. In the primary school context, Woods and Jeffrey (2002) highlight the impact of 'marketisation' of learning policy-making on experienced teachers who had previously enjoyed autonomy in their work, characterised by child-centred approaches. Nias (1989) had earlier described primary teachers in England in the 1980s as characterised by individualism and belief in one's own autonomy and the investment of personal resources. The 'teacherly-self' (Kirk & Wall, 2010) may have increasingly come into conflict with official requirements of practice set out through the 'assigned identity' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002, p. 96) prescribed in subsequent policy and tension may have led to stress, disaffection and unrest. This has been documented in relation to qualified and practising teachers, although the relationship of policy changes to trainee teacher identity, or the relationship between such

experienced teachers and trainees in the school-based mentoring context within a specific subject have not been fully explored. The notion of complying with the status quo of practice in a school setting despite conflicting personal viewpoints and beliefs is a common theme across the literature regarding beginning teachers and one which may be central to issues at play in primary PEITT. Trainee teacher identity and its relationship with the ITT and wider school policy context may provide explanations for observed teaching behaviours and working practices.

### **Locating ‘physical’ within notions of self**

For this investigation, centred on ITT within PE, it is important to consider how the physical domain, with issues relating to the body, movement, health, physical activity and sport, contributes to identity development. This is also pertinent owing to the view that some primary teachers lack the confidence to deliver the activity areas specified within the prevailing NCPE (see chapter 2). ‘Physical self’ and its various definitions have a much-debated history in the humanities, social sciences and psychology (Hattie, 1992; Byrne, 1996), and it is necessary here to consider the meanings of a range of associated terminology. ‘Self-concept’ has been defined as an individual’s cognitive evaluation about themselves, including thoughts, beliefs and attitudes about the social world, and interactions in which they are involved (Hattie, 1992). This has been researched widely, with the work of James (1892,1961), Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934, 1941, 1982) initiating many of today’s accepted notions of self. Self-concept is said to be an important mediating factor that has influence on various behavioural, psychological, and health outcomes (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976; Harter, 1990; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 1996;; Fox, 2000; Guillon,

Crocq, & Bailey, 2003) and its perceived importance has led to a plethora of research pertaining to its development, structure, and the constituent parts. The *physical self-concept* is relevant within a multidimensional approach, which emphasises various components of the self (Marsh, Craven, & Martin, 2006), a view adopted somewhat earlier by Carl Rogers (1951) who took a phenomenological stance in psychotherapy to explain behaviour as an attempt to maintain consistency of self-concept.

Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) developed a structure of self which included a general self-concept as an overarching feature, beneath which subdivisions of academic and non-academic categories were linked. Each subdivision was further divided into sub categories, with academic self-concept divided into subject areas and non-academic self-concept divided into social, emotional, and physical self-concepts. Further subdivisions are seen within physical self-concept, specifically physical ability and physical appearance. This adoption of a structured model provided a framework for others to follow when designing measures of self-concept. Shavelson *et al's* definition of self-concept combined a multitude of self-descriptions and mirrored Rogers' (1951) views in relation to the importance of social interaction with others, and experiences with and interpretations of the environment. This model also suggested the potential usefulness of self-concept in explaining and predicting behaviour. Such a multidimensional hierarchy model provides a broad framework for exploring the structure of self-concept, with a global dimension overarching physical, social, academic and other facets.

Marsh (1990) contends that researchers should measure self-concept at a specific level appropriate to their research question and physical self-concept scales have been developed in relation to a structural model of self-concept, most notably the Physical Self-Perception Profile (Fox & Corbin, 1989), the Physical Self-Concept Scales (Richards, 1987) and the Physical Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh, Richards, Johnson, Roche & Tremayne, 1994). In Fox's (1990) model of physical self-perception, a global 'self-esteem' overarches a general 'physical self-worth,' which is then subdivided further into four specific domains - sports competence, attractive body, physical strength and physical condition. Interestingly, this model also includes a filter mechanism in-between each vertical division, enabling an individual to attach more or less 'perceived importance' to a specific element of the construct. In essence, an individual may have low general physical self-worth and experience deterioration in self-esteem through negative physical experiences only if high levels of importance are attached to physical self-worth. The converse is also true in that it is possible, for example, to attach low importance to having an attractive body and to maintain a high level of general self-worth despite low self-perception in this domain. Fox's model does not consider, though, the risk of dissonance when an individual's perceived importance is at odds with the importance attached to a specific sub-domain by the society or culture in which the individual lives and works. Fox does describe, however, the relationship between antecedents (including ability, parental influence, body type, social norms and experience in sport and PE), self-esteem (structure and content), and physical activity involvement (type, pattern and frequency), arguing that these factors all contribute to an individual's physical self-perception. This relationship between previous life experiences and current levels of self-perception are central to this investigation. The notion of pre-ITT experiences impacting upon trainee

teachers' attitudes and perceptions has been the focus of earlier research within the PE ITT context, although little regard has been paid to the possibility of a shifting, dynamic self (Markus & Wurf, 1987) within the ITT context. This possibility for teacher identity change is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

### **Teacher identity change**

Teacher development literature has focused on changes taking place in trainees' beliefs, concerns, self-images and identities (Bryan, 2003; Mullholland & Wallace, 2003; Drake, Spillane & Hufferd-Ackle, 2001) through the process of socialisation that takes place at the beginning of a teaching career (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Lacey, 1977; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Burn, Hagger & Mutton, 2000; Oosterheert & Vermunt, 2001). These studies have emphasised the richness and complexity of the phenomenon, through which:

the shift from student to teacher is marked by the growing recognition of the new institutional role and by the complex interaction between different, and sometimes conflicting perspectives, beliefs and practices (Flores, 2001, p. 135).

The construction of such perceptions and beliefs is said to arise from contact with schools, fellow trainees, children, and literature (Williams & Soares, 2002) and such beliefs are not only individual and personal, they have a socio-historical dimension (Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell & Wray, 2001). Teachers' personal beliefs and values influence decision making and problem-solving on a day-to-day basis (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Zimpher & Howey, 1987; Tickle, 1994; Eraut, 1995; Hoyle & John, 1995; Garrett & Wrench, 2007) and studies relating to the experiences of newly qualified teachers have identified the 'self' as a crucial factor in both personal and professional development (MacLure, 1993; Dadds, 1996; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Sugrue, 1997; Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999). It is also thought that

decisions and behaviours demonstrated by individuals are strongly influenced by the dominant meanings of those behaviours in society (Lake, 2001). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992, p. 90) for example, emphasised the interrelationship between personal, educational and social reference points which they consider an ‘important catalyst for teacher development’. According to Bleach (1999), newcomers to the profession display a tendency ‘to accept things as they are’, unless they are encouraged to adopt new perspectives. Identities are not fixed but are constantly re-defined and refined in a process of *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Identity, it is suggested, is incomplete and dynamic, unstable and non-linear and an individual confirms or problematises who she/he is/becomes:

To become is not to progress or regress along a series...becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead to, “appearing”, “being”, “equalling”, or “producing” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 238-239).

Identity is ‘constantly contested under transforming shifts’ (Zembylas, 2003, p. 221) where people are vulnerable social objects who are produced and are being ‘reproduced by the social culture within which they live and work’ (Britzman, 1993, p.28). Teacher identity is therefore open to change and the ‘conditions of possibility’ (Foucault, 1979) of whom and what a teacher might be or become are set by social, cultural and institutional discourses (Zembylas, 2003). This raises significant questions regarding the possibilities of primary teacher identity formation and the role that schools, policies and the ITT process itself can play in this ongoing process. A key focus of this research is to determine whether it is feasible for all trainee primary teachers to become effective teachers of PE and whether identity and/or contextual factors frame the extent to which this is possible. The successful development of a teaching identity during the early stages of a teaching career can be problematic, particularly where ideological differences exist between the beginning teacher and the school community

(Sparkes, Templin, & Schempp, 1993; White & Moss, 2003; Alsup, 2005; Chong & Low, 2009; Hong, 2010). In relation to ITT it has been suggested that supporting the development of a congruent and confident sense of self as teacher should be a priority within ITT (Ashby, Hobson, Tracey, Malderez, Tomlinson, Roper, Chambers, & Healy, 2008; Iredale, Bailey, Orr & Wormald, 2011), particularly within the role of the school-based mentor (Edwards, 1998; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

The development of a teaching identity does not, however, take place in isolation from other aspects of professional learning. Tang (2004, p.186) suggests that three simultaneous concepts are at work during ITT, namely the ‘framing process’, development of the ‘teaching self’ and ‘knowledge construction’, and that each can be drawn together to ‘illuminate understanding of professional learning’. Framing equates to the interaction between practitioners and practice situations as they develop the ‘artistry of professional practice’ (Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Griggs & Thomas, 2009; Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010). The trainee primary teacher, faced with a multitude of tasks in the practice context will prioritise behaviours and routines according to formal expectations, personal motivations and the influence of colleagues in school. It seems possible that the framing of primary PE during school based experiences could result in a high priority where trainees are expected to teach and to be observed doing so, or a low priority where accepted local practice places little importance on teaching the subject or doing so to a particularly high or consistent standard. The way in which PE is framed during primary ITT is relevant to the research questions and therefore a dimension for enquiry which will foster a greater understanding of trainee teacher development and the features of ITT which impact on this.

Professional learning is said to take place in three arenas, namely pre training experiences, the teacher education programme in university, and the school based training context (Kagan, 1992, Bullough, 1997, Fairbanks & Meritt 1998, Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Tang, 2002). Within each arena of professional learning, the concept of reflection is thought to be key (Schon, 1983, 1987; Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010), whether 'reflection-in-action' or 'reflection-on-action', that is whether during or subsequent to a teaching episode. Eraut (1995) sees reflection as a process in which the teacher identifies a problem, reads the situation, makes a decision concerning action and then proceeds. However, the prime objective of the school experience for trainee teachers may be more based on the daily practicalities of teaching rather than those of critical analysis and reflection (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). Simply getting through a demanding and multifarious day may be a trainee teacher's key objective. It is generally accepted, however, that the ITT process should encourage trainee teachers to be reflective, to consider the approaches that they take in class, and to explore personal biographies and beliefs in order to develop as teachers.

Teacher identity is therefore thought to be entwined with professional practice (Nias, 1989; Mockler, 2011). It has been suggested that the successive educational reforms detailed in chapter 2 have challenged personal and professional identities of teachers (MacLure, 1993; Woods *et al.*, 1997; Halpin, Moore, Edwards, George & Jones, 2000; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), leading to altered practices. As discussed, teachers respond to changing circumstances and contexts with multiple and fragmented identities (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne, 2002; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Day, 2011) and the resulting process is seen as a

continual cycle of 'becoming', which can result in tensions and dissonances across the career cycle (Britzman, 2003; Chong, Low & Goh, 2011). The teaching self is an increasingly complex project of daily living (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), dependent upon both the individuals involved and the contexts in which they live. This may be particularly relevant to trainee teacher identity in relation to the teaching of PE whereby tensions can be created by changes to national policy, pressures relating to the priority of other subjects, as well as the influence of school based professionals with whom trainees interact.

Personal and contextual variables are considered to be key influencing factors within the teacher socialisation process (Lacey, 1977; Jordell, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008; Schepens, Aelterman & Vlerick, 2009; Guoa, Kaderavek, Piasta, Justice & McGinty, 2011). Trainee teachers bring a range of pre-conceived ideas and concepts, many of which are unexamined and unarticulated, to ITT (Desforges, 1995; Richardson, 1997; Bullough & Gitlin, 1995; Roberts, 2009; Mansfield & Volet, 2010). These have been formed through what Lortie (1975) calls an 'apprenticeship of observation' constituted by experiences in schools as pupils. This 'apprenticeship' is said to work as a constraining influence on learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; Bullough & Gitlin, 1995; Curtner-Smith, Hastie & Kinchin, 2008; Rusznyak, 2009), and/or is a rich resource for exploration during ITT (Woods & Sikes, 1987; Sikes & Troyna, 1991; Collay, 1998; Brown & McNamara, 2011). Biographies and subjectivities blend with developing practice to create what has been termed an 'invisible apprenticeship' (Locke, 1979). This influences a trainee teacher's response to the ITT process and perceptions of teaching in general.

### **The impact of ITT**

The role of identity within teacher development is therefore central to the research aims and questions posed in this thesis. The relationship between teacher agency and the structures of education is said to provide space within which teachers mobilize a ‘complex of occasional identities in response to shifting contexts’ (Stronach *et al.*, 2002, p. 117). The plurality of roles (Sachs, 2003a) expected of primary teachers within a policy and practice context which is continually shifting and which has increasingly centred on performance and standards has resulted in a number of tensions and dilemmas (Day, 2000). These tensions may include dissonance where personal and professional selves are at odds with the requirements of the role (Pearce & Morrison, 2011) and some have highlighted deep, painful and profound conflicts felt during the process of becoming a teacher (Bullough, 2005).

The extent to which ITT impacts on the development of teacher identity is a core aspect of the experience of being a trainee teacher (Malderez *et al.*, 2007) and ITT programmes should support trainees to find the ‘teacher within’, necessitating that trainees ‘be prepared for and remain open to the possibilities of personal change’ (*ibid*, p. 239). The extent to which trainee primary teachers are ready to become teachers of PE is unclear, although the PE literature suggests that many are predisposed against this from the outset, and that ITT does little to encourage positive change in this regard. Some trainees, such as those with positive prior experiences in PE and physical activity, may become committed or effective teachers of PE through ‘actualising an already identified potential’ whilst, others may require a greater ‘transformation of self’ for this to happen (*ibid*, p. 230). Given the issues regarding primary teachers and PE, the potential for transformation of trainees with low levels of confidence in

PE to become enthusiastic, knowledgeable and confident teachers of the subject is a significant concern of this investigation and for the practical application of findings to improve practice.

The potential for change in teacher identity during PEITT is, however, a contested area. Some believe that personal values and beliefs in relation to PE are highly resistant to change (Rolfe, 2001) whilst others feel that trainee teachers can develop personal pedagogies through the influence of university-based courses (Nettle, 1998). Such views suggest that ITT *can* provide opportunities for trainee teachers to form a positive teaching identity (Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Danielewicz, 2001; Johnson, 2003; Day, Kington, Gu, Sammons & Stobart, 2005; Marble, 1997; Rust, 1999), an outcome that seems relevant to those trainee teachers who may not have a pre-existing positive disposition towards PE. Little, however, is known regarding the subject specific potential for such change during the primary ITT process. It is conceivable too that a general 'positive teaching identity' does not include any reference to the teaching of PE, where the subject may be deemed to be relatively unimportant or where this coincides with a trainee's low level of confidence or prior experience.

There is agreement that the ITT process should seek to expose, analyse and reconstruct prior positions, discourses and beliefs in order to promote professional growth in new teachers (Kagan, 1992). Such positions, discourses and beliefs influence the development of professional practice amongst trainee teachers (Knowles, 1992) and, together with prior conceptions and expectations about ITT itself, impact on teachers' subsequent development (Hollingsworth, 1989; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Primary ITT is currently

assumed to have limited impact on primary teachers' socialisation into the subject of PE, largely owing to a lack of time devoted to the subject, yet it would appear that certain factors within ITT have the potential to reinforce attitudes amongst those trainees who begin with a positive disposition as well as change the beliefs of those who do not. Changing beliefs in ITT is thought to necessitate the presentation of alternative concepts of the subject. Such alternative experiences should include practical, participatory experiences during university-based lectures and the observation and supported teaching of PE lessons in schools by trainees (Clarke & Hubball, 2001; Faucette, Nugent, Sallis & McKenzie, 2002; Xiang *et al.*, 2002). The exploration of personal biographies and use of critical analysis of practice are also said to be features of ITT with the potential for supporting a transformation in negative dispositions (Schempp & Graber, 1992; Capel, 2005). Reflection on personal experiences and the implication of this on practice appears to be important, given that trainee teachers are thought to bring a range of subjectivities, borne out of prior and personal experiences (Garret & Wrench, 2007) to the primary PEITT context.

Curtner-Smith (1998) identifies the features of ITT most likely to influence the philosophies of pre-service primary teachers. These are a shared technical culture amongst the university lecturing faculty, innovative tendencies, practices based on teacher effectiveness research and the encouragement of reflective practice. Curtner-Smith concurs with Lacey's much earlier (1977) contention that, in the absence of such features, workplace factors were prone to lead to a 'strategic compliance' within the status quo of practice. The increasing focus on school based ITT programmes would seem, however, to reduce the possibilities of applying Curtner-Smith's conditions within the English ITT context. Bramald, Hardman, Leat and McManus

(1994) confirm the importance of trainee teachers having opportunities to critically examine their own beliefs and practice, without which they are thought likely to adopt practices they remember experiencing themselves at school. This is particularly worrying if it results in some primary teachers perpetuating poor practice, or in an avoidance of teaching the subject altogether.

The extent to which primary ITT *does* play a transformatory role in support of trainees with negative dispositions towards PE in England today is unclear. It is assumed that such attitudes and beliefs in relation to PE are very difficult to alter and that ITT to date has had relatively little impact on trainee teachers in this regard (Evans, 1992; Placek, Dodds, Doolittle, Portman, Ratliffe & Pinkman, 1995; Evans, Penney & Davies, 1996; 1996; Green, 1998; Curtner-Smith, 1999). Some believe that personal values and beliefs about teaching are highly resistant to any real change and may even become elaborated during ITT (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). However, Nettle (1998) suggests that stability and change in the beliefs of trainee teachers is possible during ITT whilst Bramald, Hardman and Leat (1995) argue that the experience of university-based courses could have a major impact on shaping trainees' attitudes and developing practice. Broader studies relating to ITT (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Weinstein, 1990) suggest that prior beliefs of trainee teachers need to be modified in order for professional development to take place whilst key features of programmes must include direct experience with children and the presence of good teaching role models. This latter point is particularly significant in England where the school-based model of training discussed in chapter 2 is set to expand, with the role of class teacher as mentor being increasingly significant in influencing trainee teacher development (Bennett &

Carre', 1993; Dunne & Dunne, 1993; Guillaume & Rudney, 1993; Whitehead & Menter, 1996).

Such viewpoints suggest that trainee teachers should be asked to reflect on their own biographies as part of the ITT process, either through the use of life history methods, self-study, or narrative and biographical inquiry (Goodson, 1992; Whitehead, 2000; Gudmundsdottir, 2001). The importance of reflective practice is widely supported by literature concerning the 'teaching self' (Carter & Doyle, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Gudmundsdottir, 2001; Whitehead, 1989, 1999), suggesting that:

the extent to which student teachers are reflexively oriented toward development of self as teacher depends on person-context relationships, that is, the culture of teaching within which prospective teachers learn to teach (Clark & Conway, 2003, p. 478).

It is therefore valid to explore trainee teachers' personal meaning making in the context of biography and amidst the milieu of school practice, in an attempt to understand trainee primary teachers' experiences of learning to teach primary PE. Teacher educators should 'not be too hasty in attempting to shorten or abort trainee teachers' period of inward focus' (Kagan, 1992, p.155), and ITT programmes should 'attempt to guide novices through biographical histories' (ibid. p.163). In such approaches, the emphasis is on reflective practice, the onus on trainee teachers considering how their own life histories influence the manner in which they engage with pupils (Delpit, 1995; Florio-Ruane & deTar, 2001). Whilst such individual reflection, consideration of personal biography and potential reconstruction of beliefs can take place through informal experiences, a significant concern is whether the limited time afforded to PE within most primary ITT courses *can* provide sufficient

opportunities for trainee teachers to do so in relation to PE. It is possible that a failure to do this could have negative consequences on the teaching of PE in primary schools.

### **Prior experiences**

Trainee teachers' perceptions of practice are likely to be influenced by personal experiences (Goodman, 1986; Calderhead, 1988; Nettle, 1998), thought by some to be the major influence on trainee teacher development during ITT (Brumbaugh, 1987). Personal experiences in PE are also thought to be an important determinant of attitudes to physical activity across the lifespan (Macfadyen, 1999; Sallis, McKenzie, Kolody, Lewis, Marshall & Rosengard, 1999) and where this has been negative, teacher educators must provide trainees with viable and alternative positive conceptions (Pajares, 1992; Rovegno, 1993; Placek *et al.*, 1995; Kinchin, MacPhail & Ni Chroinin, 2011) of PE. Biographies blend with developing practice to create what has been termed an 'invisible apprenticeship' (Locke, 1979) and the primary ITT process largely plays a role in confirming (rather than modifying) teachers' already well developed values and beliefs (Doolittle, Dodds & Placek, 1993; Solmon & Ashy, 1995). A key issue here is whether or not such values and beliefs are positive at the point of entry to the ITT process and the extent to which such dispositions are open to change during ITT. Although it has been acknowledged that such change is difficult to facilitate (Sparkes, 1987), if any change is to be made, then the ITT process would seem to be a good place to focus initial efforts (Capel & Blair, 2007). Researchers have agreed that personal school experiences in PE provide prospective teachers with a wide range of information about the subject, which potentially affect attitudes, beliefs, and practises (Lawson, 1983; Belka, Lawson & Cross-Lipnickey, 1991; Doolittle *et al.*, 1993; Placek *et al.*, 1995; Keating, Silverman & Kulinna,

2002). It is thought that a teacher's approach to the teaching of PE is traceable to beliefs and attitudes formed through personal experiences as a pupil and in adult life whilst playing sport (Schempp & Graber, 1992). A variety of theorists have described the socialisation of teachers as a life-long process which begins at school as pupils and continues into professional practice as teachers. The role of ITT within this is just one component of the teacher socialisation process, but one that forms a bridge between prior experiences and developing professional practice. Lawson (1983) describes the lifelong teacher socialisation process as 'occupational socialization,' a framework including all aspects of a person's life that are responsible for perceptions and actions as teachers. He suggests that three shaping factors - 'acculturation' (beginning at birth and including childhood experiences and the influence of significant people), 'professional socialisation' (including the process of teacher education and acquisition of values and beliefs) and 'organisational socialisation' (referring to the influence of entering the workplace) - are at work.

The notion that people are socialised into choosing a specific profession has previously been an area of interest in research on secondary school PE specialists (Lawson, 1983, 1986; Dewar & Lawson, 1984; Locke, 1984; Placek & Dodds, 1988), suggesting that PE teachers choose this career as a consequence of positive personal experiences in the subject and in sport and physical activity more broadly. In the primary context, however, it would seem less likely that trainees are attracted to the profession solely through their experiences in PE which may include a very wide range of positive and negative incidents. The limited studies examining personal school experiences of primary trainees suggest that most have poor memories of PE, more often than not combining to suggest a range of negative outcomes (Howarth, 1987;

Allison *et al.*, 1990; Portman, 1996; Clayton, 1999; Morgan & Hansen, 2007; Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Elliot, Atencio, Campbell, & Jess, 2011). It is argued that teachers who hold more positive attitudes towards PE are more likely to deliver frequent and varied programmes, although without a successful first teaching post following ITT, the phenomenon of ‘wash-out’ (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981) is a threat. If this pre-existing positive belief is not supported by immediate and positive experiences in school then the encouraging starting point and commitment to the subject could be lost. The extent to which primary ITT plays a role in this potential ‘wash out’ is currently unclear.

Studies relating to primary PEITT to date have largely focused on what trainee teachers lack in relation to PE (such as confidence, positive prior experiences, time devoted to PE during ITT and subject knowledge) rather than how the ITT process can support the development of primary teachers in PE utilising characteristics and experiences that all trainees bring to the training context. In an Australian study, Moore, Webb, & Dickson (1997) outline concerns regarding the effectiveness of primary PE teacher training identifying an inadequacy of university courses in developing confidence amongst trainee teachers. Others have indicated dissatisfaction amongst practising primary school teachers regarding PE experiences during ITT (Evans, 1990; Hickey, 1992; Thompson, 1996). A succession of studies relating to subject-specific training for primary teachers has repeatedly confirmed that many teachers enter the profession lacking the subject knowledge and confidence to effectively deliver the PE curriculum (Physical Education Association, 1984; Williams, 1985; Walkley, 1992; Carney & Armstrong, 1996; Moore, Webb & Dickson, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Clay, 1999; Warburton, 2001). Carney and Chedzoy (1998) discuss primary trainee teacher confidence to

teach NCPE, and suggest a positive correlation between personal ability in an activity area and estimated teaching competence. They agree with Brumbaugh's (1987) assertion that prior experiences are a major influence on what trainees gain from ITT courses. Katene, Faulkner & Reeves (2000) explore the relationship between personal commitments to exercise and sport participation and attitudes to teaching PE amongst final year undergraduate primary trainee teachers and their findings suggest that more physically active trainees are more likely to demonstrate a positive attitude towards the teaching of PE.

Such studies appear to concur with literature concerning identity whereby individuals are thought to behave in ways which maintain a consistency of self (Rogers, 1951). In line with these findings, others (Faucette & Hillidge, 1989; Morgan & Bourke, 2004) argue that the majority of primary teachers prefer to teach subjects other than PE and that the notion of the subject being taught by a specialist 'other' is seen by teachers as desirable. Trainee primary teachers are therefore thought to bring a wide range of subjectivities, borne out of prior and personal experiences of the PE context (Garret & Wrench, 2007) suggesting that a 'one size fits all' approach to ITT may not be the most effective method of supporting teacher development. The extent to which this is reflected within the design and implementation of ITT is currently unknown, an issue of significance to those charged with supporting primary teacher development.

### **Teacher knowledge**

It is therefore pertinent to give consideration to what is meant by 'teacher knowledge', particularly in the context of primary ITT. A review of literature suggests that there is a

multitude of definitions of this concept, the nature of its construction and its link to practice in schools. Different theorists categorise teacher knowledge in different ways, although most include three types of knowledge in their classifications. The first category includes 'context free knowledge' (Hoyle & John, 1995; Tickle, 2000). Although this type of knowledge can relate to both subjects and learners (Turner-Bissett, 1999), it has generally been produced through positivist research. The second broad category represents personal (Eraut, 1994) and personalised knowledge (Hoyle and John, 1995), practical knowledge (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002) and knowledge of self and educational contexts (Turner-Bissett, 1999). Day (1999) links this knowledge to ITT standards and a trainee teacher's ability to meet requirements for QTS. The third commonly used category sees externally constructed, context free knowledge combining with personalised and experiential knowledge to create professional knowledge (Hiebert *et al.*, 2002) or what Shulman and others (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Cochran, King, & DeRuiter, 1993; van Driel, Verloop, & De Vos, 1998) term pedagogical content knowledge. The concept of pedagogical content knowledge seeks to combine the previously separately conceived domains of pedagogy and subject knowledge. Shulman (1987) claimed that an emphasis on teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy were being treated as mutually exclusive domains in research concerned with these domains, leading to teacher education programmes in which either subject matter or pedagogy dominated. In pedagogical content knowledge, teachers develop an understanding of how particular aspects of subject matter can be organized, adapted, and represented for teaching, representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others (Shulman, 1986p. 9). This view of knowledge is highly relevant in the context of this research regarding primary PE and ITT; the nature and content of the NC,

trainee teachers' and teachers' perceptions of what PE actually is and levels of understanding of how best to teach the subject are all aspects which may impact on teacher development in the subject. Some studies have shown that the way in which teachers present knowledge to pupils in the classroom context is more important than teachers' own subject knowledge (Askew, Brown, Rhodes, Wiliam & Johnson, 1997). In PE, where it is thought that primary teachers lack subject knowledge to teach the prescribed NCPE, Shulman's conceptualisation of knowledge is highly relevant.

Hoyle and John (1995) also suggest a fourth category of knowledge which is constructed politically, economically and socially and which relates to how schools and teachers are inspected and reported upon. The government-led introduction of standards for teacher competence and a national curriculum in schools seemingly favours such a 'paradigmatic' view of knowledge (Bruner, 1986, 1990), in which knowledge is seen as finite and certain. Such a 'technical rationalist' view of knowledge (Schon, 1983) suggests that trainee teachers can be provided with proven methods or ways of working which they subsequently apply in practice. This does not accept a link between professional knowledge and each teacher's personal and contextualised world through which knowledge is internally identified (Hoyle & John, 1995) and appears to ignore the literature which highlights the important relationship between identity, knowledge and professional development. Despite recent policy developments, relatively little is known about how teachers themselves actually learn. As Poulson (2001, p.52) suggests:

Instead of highlighting, and attempting to remedy, apparent deficits in primary teachers' subject knowledge, the educational research agenda of the twenty first century would do well to include investigation of teachers' learning ... There is still much to be learned about the knowledge which successful primary school teachers do possess; about the conditions and circumstances in which teachers' knowledge has been generated and developed throughout their careers; about the relationship between knowledge, values and classroom practice; and about the ways in which teachers can be encouraged to articulate and develop their knowledge and, in the process, making connections between the individual/personal and wider social and cultural dimensions of teaching.

### **Knowledge construction and today's policy context**

The complex and dynamic qualities of teacher identity development discussed here suggest that trainee teachers are actively involved in constructing their own knowledge, drawing upon personal narratives and experiences to build their own values and practices. The extent to which each trainee is active in this construction of knowledge is also thought to be governed by trainees' relationships with institutional structures and subjects. As Woods (1984) explains, 'self-coordinates', 'subject coordinates' and 'institutional coordinates' are mediators of the development of teachers' knowledge. Trainee teachers actively reconstruct knowledge from a range of sources (Borger & Tillema, 1996) including their own work, others' practice, digestion of information from university tutors, reading of literature, and talking to peers and pupils (Duquette & Cook, 1999; Oosterheert & Vermunt, 2001); in essence, a variety of factors interact in different ways at different times to impact on each trainee teacher's unique development. This is a 'co-constructivist' view of knowledge creation (Hedges, 2000; Katz, 2000) whereby trainee teachers are active agents in developing knowledge through interaction within their professional and personal environments. This view is popular amongst teacher educators who assert that trainees make meaning from their own contexts and experiences through critical reflection *on* and *in* practice (Schon, 1983, 1987; Olson, 1995). The 'reflective

practitioner' model of teacher development was commonly applied in university-based teacher training programmes from the mid-1990s (Furlong *et al.*, 2000) where trainee teachers were afforded the time and in-course requirements to reflect on practice, to explore personal life histories and to critique educational policies. The extent to which trainee teachers are encouraged to reflect in this way has since been thought to have diminished as school-based experiences have taken on an increased importance (and time allocation) as a consequence of government reform. Some teacher educators have recently reported shifts in the practices of trainee teachers away from reflection towards a heightened focus on meeting the centrally imposed standards (Lunn & Bishop, 2003).

Constructivist notions of knowledge and learning have also been at the heart of child-centred approaches to teaching and learning in the primary school characterised by autonomy and flexibility based on the needs of individual children (McCulloch, 1997). As discussed in chapter 2, such working practices of primary school teachers were endorsed by government policy, with the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) providing a 'protective cocoon' (Giddens, 1991, p.3) for teachers who believed in centring teaching on individual learning needs rather than being led by a prescribed, subject-led curriculum. Giddens (1991) explains that this approach ensured that teachers' self and social identities were satisfactorily aligned through the government's endorsement of primary teachers' commitment to 'holism' and 'vocationalism' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). Such approaches have been said to be at odds with subsequent government policy implemented from 1990 onwards which has repeatedly attempted to transform the way in which teachers work (Nixon, Martin, McKeown & Ranson., 1997; Exworthy & Halford, 1999; Menter & Muschamp, 1999;

Mahony & Hextall, 2000; Sachs, 2001; Smith, 2007). In ITT, the new model became centred on a detailed prescription of teacher knowledge and professional standards which are thought by some researchers to restrict imaginative, inspirational and intuitive teaching (Lunn & Bishop, 2003).

The changes made to the structures of ITT and to working practices in schools have implications for trainee teachers, particularly during school-based elements of their course. Where trainee teachers were previously socialised into a child-centred, holistic model of primary education, they are now required to aspire to compliance with the standards for QTS and the delivery of subjects within government-led strategy frameworks. It is also possible, however, that more recent Government initiatives such as the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003a) have reinvigorated a holistic view of primary education. Such policies appear more developmentally concerned than prevailing curriculum frameworks and show interest for the individual learner, for activity and discovery and for curriculum integration (Surgue, 1998). The emergence of such policies and the reaction to such by teachers and teacher educators during the time frame of this research add to the complex range of contextual influences at play within trainee teacher development and provide additional reference points for each trainee during the ITT experience.

The development of teachers' subject knowledge has been promoted by the government as a means through which educational practice can be improved. Reforms have ensured that the 'acquisition and development of specific subject knowledge is at the centre of ITT' (Poulson, 2001, p. 40). As a consequence of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (DfEE, 1997

and DfEE, 1999) and subject focus of the NC for Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfES, 1999), an increased emphasis has been placed on developing what teachers know in the belief that this will improve teaching. Bennett (1993) and Brown, Collins & Duguid (1998) explain that such a 'deficit model' of teacher development has an inherent assumption that teachers can only teach what they know, even though quantifying effective primary teachers' knowledge is highly problematic (Askew *et al.*, 1997). This is particularly worrying where the literature suggests that many primary teachers lack confidence (borne out of perceived low levels of subject knowledge) in PE. The prevailing national curriculum for PE, based on activity areas may be, at least for some trainees, a conceptualisation of PE knowledge that is perceived as unattainable.

### **The influence of others**

Despite a Government-encouraged uniformity of approach, trainee primary teachers will interact and work alongside a number of professionals during ITT who may model alternative approaches to practice. Teachers are thought to interpret policy in different ways, according to their own concerns, beliefs and practices (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Helsby & McCulloch, 1997); they work as 'creative mediators' (Osborne, Croll, Broadfoot, Pollard, McNess & Triggs, 1997, p. 53) to view and interpret policy and experiences from a personal perspective. Individual teachers are thought to assess policy in relation to their own beliefs and experiences and present a personalised version of official policy in their day to day practices (Burnett, 2006). Trainee teachers' interactions with practising teachers in the school placement context provide relevant opportunities for the observation of real world practice, to observe how others have developed teaching strategies and to learn what approaches are deemed to be effective.

Trainee teachers in primary schools have a range of influences and mediators that go beyond compliance with centrally imposed frameworks and policies; it has been suggested that relationships with pupils, fellow trainees, colleagues in placement schools, family members and peers play a central role in the experiences of ITT trainees (Lortie, 1975; McNally, Cope, Inglis & Stronach, 1997; Oberski, Ford, Higgins & Fisher, 1999; Williams & Soares, 2002; Malderez *et al.*, 2007). Despite the Government focus on subject knowledge discussed in chapter 2, trainee teachers are still thought most likely to base their practice on observations of the supervising teacher, resource book ideas and recollections from their own school days (Calderhead, 1988; Maynard, 1997). Whilst there is potential for trainee teachers to view the prescribed curriculum as an end in itself (Twiselton, 2000), trainee teachers are also thought to retain a sense of altruism and a desire to work in the best interests of the child (Hayes, 2001; Thornton, Bricheno & Reid, 2002).

Some theorists conceptualise teaching identity as being produced through a lived experience within ‘communities of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), whereby the acquisition of competence within the teaching community and interaction with other community members leads to identity formation. In the case of trainee teachers, this induction into a community of practice may result in certain behaviours which align the individual with that group. There is also the possibility that newcomers may not ‘fit in’ with the established norm of the community (Colley, James, Tedder & Diment, 2003; Bathmaker & Avis, 2005) and therefore be excluded. Freeman (1999, p. 140) suggests, however, that although new teachers belong to a community of practice, they also belong to different ‘communities of explanation’, through which their practices can be interpreted and explained in different ways.

It is also possible for individuals to experience tension if they are members of different and distinctive communities of practice, or where particular communities of practice are more significant for identity development at any specific moment in time. This tension results in an on-going ‘reconciliation’ process, which may be the most significant challenge for learners moving from one community to another (Smith, 2007), such as the move from university based ITT components to school practice situations. As Britzman (2003, p. 19) points out, ‘a great deal of the story of learning to teach concerns learning what not to become’. This relationship between teacher identity, the professional context and the influence of other people is of significant interest to this research.

The context in which trainees learn to teach is thought therefore to affect teaching outcomes, or at least trainee teachers’ perceived confidence and competence to teach. This active engagement is presupposed by a positive ‘teaching self’ (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1991), seen to be a judgement on ‘fit-to-situation conception of self as teacher’ at a given moment in time (Tang, 2004). During school based experiences in ITT, trainee teachers work towards a:

satisfactory level of security and belonging, respect and self-esteem, and a sense of personal competence (Bullough *et al.*, 1991, p.77).

Such a framing process takes place during university-based ITT programmes and during school based experiences, which are further defined as the *action* context (Eraut, 1994), the *socio-professional* context (McNally *et al.*, 1997), and the *supervisory* context (Slick, 1998), within which the university supervisor or school mentor’s role in professional learning is significant.

The ITT context (particularly the experiences provided in school-based settings) is thought to play a key role in framing and reframing personal conceptions and in the construction of new professional identities (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Some ITT programmes, however, appear not to break down prior conceptions of what it is to be a teacher (Zeichner & Gore, 1990) and, where this is matched with unsatisfactory school-based experiences, the trainee teacher will potentially learn very little. School based experience is at the heart of trainee teachers' professional development (Ben-Peretz, 1995), yet concerns have been frequently raised about the quality of trainees' experiences in school settings (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Clark, 2002; LaBoskey & Richert, 2002). Central to these concerns has been the belief that trainee teachers' experiences in school may expose them to types of knowledge that run counter to the discourse in university and/or Government policy. Although theory and practice are closely intertwined, a trainee teacher can be subjected to both 'theories in use' and 'espoused theories' (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Trainee teachers' practical experiences in school are therefore likely to be shaped by the multiple discourses they encounter and this has implications for the way knowledge is conceived (Burnett, 2006).

School based experiences during ITT provide a unique opportunity for the development and consolidation of a significant variety of knowledge and skills. Individual trainees actively engage with teaching and practice situations, providing clear opportunities for reflection. Consideration may be given to the general organisational principles of the teaching and learning process (and the procedures that sustain effective teaching), to the culture, principles and values that guide the school institution and the teachers in their different roles, assignments and responsibilities (Schulman, 1986; McNally *et al.*, 1997). Within this context,

the role of mentor is important, guiding, supporting, advising and engaging through a discourse with the trainee teacher. However, as most mentors have been identified as effective practitioners and good role models, until they can make their practice and the rationale underpinning that practice accessible, they are unlikely to succeed as mentors (Corrigan & Peace, 1996, p. 25). The extent to which the development of primary trainees as teachers of PE is a specific focus within mentoring during school practice is currently unknown. School based experiences constitute what many researchers agree to be a crucial element of the ITT process, yet surprisingly little is known about subject specific mentoring in this context.

Most researchers view the relationship between mentors and trainee teachers as complex (Edwards & Collison, 1996; Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999), not least placing additional administrative and planning burdens on the teacher-mentor. Maderez *et al.* (2007) suggest that there is generally a considerable amount of variation in mentors' understanding of their role and a need for more effective development opportunities, and the development of supportive relationships with mentors in school is thought to impact on trainees' experiences and levels of enjoyment (McNally, Cope, Inglis & Stronach, 1994; McNally *et al.*, 1997; Spear, Gould & Lee, . 1999). In relation to primary PE, Ashy and Humphries (2000) highlight the positive influence of field-based experiences during ITT for trainee class teachers although Xiang *et al.* (2002) argue that experiences during school practice can have a detrimental impact on trainees' motivation to teach PE. The importance of school based experiences and the relationship between trainee and class teacher/mentor in this context is therefore of interest to this investigation, particularly as a detailed understanding of how these contextual and social

factors impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE is currently unclear.

The model of partnership between schools and training institutions may also present trainee teachers with:

Situating learning contexts which are not only diverse but also have potentially disparate if not overtly conflicting discourses and agenda' (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p. 301).

Trainee teachers could, it is argued, experience a lack of consistency in messages and styles of teaching between school-based experiences and university-based lectures. Situated learning experiences are highly important means through which trainees develop practical teaching knowledge and confidence, although where a lack of practical teaching experience in school is apparent, little may be done to modify preconceptions and existing beliefs (Hennessy, Rolfe & Chedzoy, 2001). This is particularly worrying where trainees do not see or support the teaching of PE during school based experiences because of alternative staffing arrangements (such as a specialist coach visiting the school during class teacher's PPA time) or low curriculum priority being given to the subject. It is important, therefore, that the significance of school-based experiences during the ITT process, a realm of ITT that has significantly expanded through the increased emphasis on partnerships between schools and HEIs (Price & Willett, 2006), is not overlooked. The teacher development literature suggests the need for taught sessions to be followed up by high quality practical learning episodes in school settings within which trainees receive support and guidance by a trained and supported professional mentor.

## Summary

This chapter has identified key aspects of the critical literature relevant to teacher development, highlighting the complex, highly individualised factors and relationships at play. The themes of teacher identity and professional learning are prominent within the literature and there is considerable scope for testing general theories in relation to primary PEITT and for building on existing knowledge through empirical investigation. At the heart of this investigation is the interplay between individual trainee teacher identities, the potential for these to change or to be strengthened during ITT and the resultant practices and behaviours seen within today's educational context. This brings to the fore the relationship between individual trainees and the structure of ITT, suggesting that a dual influence of personal characteristics (identity, confidence, 'self') and structures (standards, school curricula, other people) is at work. In such a way, the literature suggests that personal experiences, dispositions and identities combine with the social context to create a range of contrasting practices and professional development and learning needs. It is, however, plausible that the lack of time afforded to PE during ITT restricts the opportunity for identities and dispositions to be identified, challenged and reconstructed; several studies suggest that positive teacher development is only possible where such conditions are enabled. As Bourdieu (1977) suggests, opportunities for change are possible when individuals experience new ways of perceiving the world. Today's ITT context, within which PE appears to be afforded a relatively low priority, provides a number of challenges for developing primary teachers as teachers of PE, particularly when the literature suggests that many primary teachers lack personal confidence in the subject. Despite this, surprisingly little is known about the detailed processes at work or how improvements can be made. In particular, there appears to be a lack

of understanding concerning the development of knowledge to teach primary PE and precisely how this is currently supported or constrained by the various aspects of primary ITT. There are also significant gaps in understanding the school-based context of primary PEITT and how others within the field impact on trainee teacher development in this subject. This is particularly worrying where it is felt that the teachers themselves, who may also be school based mentors of trainees, also lack confidence in PE.

In chapter 2, the education policy and curricula context was discussed in relation to primary PE and ITT. When considering this contextual backcloth alongside individual factors discussed in this chapter such as identity and dispositions, it appears that any desire to improve the outcomes of primary PEITT should pay heed to both contextual and individual factors. There would be little point, for example, in changing policy or curriculum without consideration of individual training and development needs. It is this desire to attend to issues of structure *and* agency that has supported research design and provided the philosophical position and research framework described in the subsequent chapter; this provides a discussion of dispositions, structures and practice and definitions of the terms in relation to contextual and individual factors.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, teacher development is a complex process and within this, primary PEITT has been identified as a particular and persistent problem. Despite the repeated criticisms, detailed investigation of the processes taking place within the English primary ITT context is relatively scarce. Of those studies which have attempted to address the issues, some suggest a potentially positive impact of ITT whilst others propose that pre-set trainee dispositions, borne out of prior experiences, are highly resistant to change. It remains unclear whether current routes to primary QTS in England have a particular bearing on primary teacher development in PE or what, if any, changes to ITT should or could be made.

The methodological approaches adopted within primary PEITT research to date have served to limit the scope of understanding. Studies have largely focused on trainees' perceived negative dispositions towards PE *or* the structural limitations of a time-constrained primary ITT. The resulting perception is that the majority of primary teachers lack confidence, knowledge and understanding to teach PE and that primary ITT, with a concomitant lack of time afforded to PE, cannot satisfactorily redress this. I suggest, however, that the literature has largely ignored the relationship between individual trainees and the primary ITT context in which they are becoming teachers; little is known regarding the parallel impact of individual and structural factors or the on-going nature of this relationship with ensuing practice throughout ITT and beyond. This chapter describes the methodological decisions taken in designing the study and

the methods for data collection and analysis used throughout the investigation. The chapter begins by considering the methodological implications of seeking to examine the relationship between individuals and social structures.

### **Individuals and social structures**

The relationship between individuals and social structures has been a ‘quintessential focus of sociological endeavour’ for some time (Wilmott, 1999, p.1). Whilst some education researchers have taken a primarily structuralist stance and focused exclusively on structures and institutions, others suggest that individual teachers’ subjectivities can have a direct bearing on teacher learning and development. The studies highlighted in chapters 2 and 3 point towards the paucity of time allocation in primary PEITT, suggesting a constraining impact on primary teacher development in PE, an approach which foregrounds the importance of the ITT structure ahead of individual trainees’ identity. Such a prioritising of external structures, however, has the potential to diminish the role of trainee teachers to one of compliance, suggesting a deterministic view of human nature through which ‘choice’ is dictated by external conditions. This ignores the potential for individuals to ‘do otherwise’ by drawing upon sets of ‘rules and resources’ available through social interaction (Giddens, 1979, p. 63).

Whilst some studies point to the importance of prior experiences and personal dispositions, there is scarce attention paid to the effect of these in tandem with the impact of the framework evident within ITT. As Shilling (1992) explains, much educational research has focused on large-scale structural processes whilst small-scale research addresses individual interaction

while failing to recognise or conceptualise social structures. This ‘has hampered theoretical progress in the sociology of education’ (Shilling, 1992, p. 77) and I suggest that this has been the case regarding primary PEITT where methodological decisions have been taken from competing philosophical viewpoints. The design of this research has therefore been cognisant that adopting a particular philosophical position has implications for the explanation of findings (Pring, 2000); foregrounding either individuals or structures over the other would not necessarily provide any new understanding of the phenomena at large within primary PEITT. Careful consideration of my own ‘disciplinary matrix of assumptions’ (Kuhn, 1970, p. 182), my ‘world view’ (Patton, 1978, p. 203) and social positioning within the field of primary PEITT has therefore been part of research design from the outset and impacted on the formulation of research questions and the approaches used to answer them (Devis-Devis, 2006). Throughout, I have reflected on my own positioning within the field of primary PEITT (for example as a subject leader in PEITT at a university in England) and on the impact that this may have on my ‘disciplinary matrix of assumptions’.

In many classifications of research paradigms, positivist and interpretive research are positioned at opposite ends of a continuum, leading to what has been termed a ‘paradigm war’ (Gage, 1989) where differences in philosophical approaches have been the centre of significant debate. This ‘pointless methodological schism’ (Gorard, 2002) has resulted in an unproductive debate regarding the merits of qualitative or quantitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003; Datta, 1994) and a false dualism between positivist and constructivist researchers (Badley, 2003). In designing this research, my intention has not been to attempt to solve the metaphysical, epistemological or methodological differences between qualitative and

quantitative purists, but to address the research questions in hand (Hoshmand, 2003). The research has not been concerned with the pursuit of universally applicable laws, but has sought:

to construct descriptive analyses to emphasise deep, interpretive understandings of social phenomena (Smith, 1983, p. 22).

The approach taken seeks to generate an understanding of ‘human meaning in social life’ (Erickson, 1986, p.119) and focuses on the interests and purposes of trainee primary teachers, their behaviours and a construction of the world from their perspectives (Sparkes, 1992). The trainee primary teachers in the study have been perceived as part of a two way process, being both recipients and potential creators of values within a shifting and fluid relationship which is informed by a multitude of wide ranging and individualised experiences. This position also acknowledges that, whilst trainee primary teachers may bring a wide range of prior experiences and dispositions to the ITT context, their behaviours and practices may also be influenced by a wide range of structural factors. The approach therefore does not disregard the importance of social structure and due regard is given to the notion that trainee teachers are influenced by, and in turn are (to greater or lesser extents) influencers of their particular training contexts. As Hughes and Sharrock (1997, p. 165) argue,

social structures pre-exist individual actions and are a precondition for them. They are, at the same time, the products of those actions.

In the context of this investigation, the social structures of ITT (for example, curriculum, the teaching standards, lecture content) pre-exist and place conditions on any actions that individual trainees may take during the course. The same structures are also the consequence of earlier actions and interactions of and between previous trainees, teacher educators, school teachers and school pupils.

### **Disposition, structure and practice in social theory**

The work of Anthony Giddens (1973; 1976; 1979; 1984; 1990), Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1985; 1990; 1992 (with Wacquant); 2000), and Mary Archer (1982; 1995; 1996; 2000; 2003; 2004; 2007), and critique of their theories has provided a series of lenses through which the social phenomena within primary PEITT have been viewed. Despite key differences amongst this group of theorists, common ground is evident in that they all seek to:

avoid objectivism and subjectivism in social theory. All try to show how subject and object are related as equally essential elements of the structuration process (Parker, 2000, p. 103).

Structuration theory (Giddens, 1973) links structure and agency in a *duality* and explores the relationship between the constraints placed on individuals by the structure of society and the choices and decisions individuals make. Structuration theory regards social systems as having structural properties, but not as being structures in their own right (Giddens, 1979, p. 66). Structures do not exist apart from individuals, but are sets of rules and resources drawn upon by agents and reproduced through social interaction (Giddens, 1979, p. 63). In Giddens' conceptualisation:

agency and structure are symbiotic, two facets of a single phenomenon, and such 'duality of structure' is not external to individuals and groups but internal to their lifeworld (Morrison, 2005, p.312 ).

In this sense, the relationship between individual trainees and social structures (for the purposes of this investigation, these include government policy, frameworks for teaching in schools, NCPE, ITT, professional standards and the regulatory framework) is characterised by mutual interdependence (Giddens, 1976). This may not necessarily lead to tension or conflict although the structural elements can be viewed as either constraining or enabling. Within Giddens' theory, the moment of action can also be the moment of social reproduction as, in

such actions, we reproduce ‘the conditions that make these activities possible’ (Giddens, 1984, p. 2). As Layder (1994, p. 133) suggests:

as ciphers of structural demands, people are condemned to repeat and reinforce the very conditions that restrict their freedom in the first place.

Through actions, individuals create and reproduce structural conditions, comprising knowledge, resources, rules, institutional and societal practices. In Giddens’ (1979) terms, duality entails a relationship between structure and agency that is a two-way, mutually dependent process (Giddens, 1979, p. 69); the structural properties of social systems are both ‘medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise’ (p. 25):

all human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also conditioned and constrained by the very world of their creation (Giddens, 1981, p. 54).

Neither the actions of the individual or the power of the structure offer sufficient explanation for social phenomena; social structures are, at least to some degree, constituted by the subjective powers of the agency of human actors whilst the powers of agency are constituted in some way by objective social structures.

Giddens (1984) suggests that individuals possess an innate ability to act in ways that fulfil needs, to provide ontological security, arguing that individual differences can impact on practice within overriding structures. This view has been criticised for presenting a ‘flat’ view of social reality (Archer, 2000; Mouzelis, 1995), ignoring the influence of others and power relationships within social hierarchies. Whilst the notion of a mutual interdependence between structure and agency holds much appeal for this investigation, there is insufficient explanation of the rules that govern action (Thompson, 1989), specifically within primary PEITT. Giddens has also been criticised for not adequately addressing how agents and structures actually

combine, when this takes place and in what particular sequences (McLennan, 1984) suggesting that different kinds of relationship between structure and agents occur in specific, in-situ contexts. The analytical value possessed by concepts of agency and structure are said to disappear through the conflation that is Giddens' concept of duality (Archer, 1995, 2000).

### **Theory of practice**

Bourdieu (1977) conceptualised the structure-agency association differently, by affording heightened importance to concepts of power and social position to explain how the relationship comes about. Bourdieu's social theory has been used within a growing body of PE and ITT research, particularly using specific concepts to explore structural conditions and individual 'action strategies' (Koca, Henderson, Hulya Asci & Bulgu, 2009). For example, Smith (2001) examined gendered practices in PEITT; Evans (2004) and Wright and Burrows (2006) explored young people's subjectivities within the social field, whilst the construction of gender through specific sporting practice has been studied by Light and Kirk (2000), Gorley, Holroyd and Kirk (2003) and Garrett (2004). Bourdieu's theory of practice seeks to explain phenomena through a structure-disposition-practice schema, an explanatory account describing how social structures give rise to characteristic dispositions that enable the competent performance of social practices (Nash, 2003). The structure-disposition-practice schema is a model to be used whenever appropriate to construct a full explanation of social events and processes (ibid.)

As Wacquant (2006, p.6) explains, Bourdieu forged an 'original conceptual arsenal anchored by the notions of habitus, capital, field, and doxa' to explain the relationship between

structures and agents. These terms are summarised below and provide reference points for clarification of the approaches taken in this research. In Bourdieu's terms, practice is placed within contexts of power structures whereby agents respond in ways that match dispositions and the *habitus* of their particular social group. Bourdieu defines habitus as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions that emerges out of a relation to wider objective structures of the social world' (1977, p, 72). Habitus is characterized as a 'conductor-less orchestration' that provides coherence and consistency to an individual's practices (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 59), said to result in the generation of:

practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule (Thompson, 1991, p.12).

Habitus, like Giddens' duality of structure, is 'both a medium and outcome of social practice' (Wainwright, Williams & Turner, 2006, p. 537) since it functions as a bridge between social contexts and individual experiences and actions (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu suggests that while habitus is constantly reproduced at an individual level, common experience of the social world will tend to produce a collective habitus so that people sharing the same social conditions will have similar experiences, embodied dispositions, and schemes of perception. Bourdieu's concept of habitus implies also that systems of dispositions are malleable, as they mark into the individual the ever changing influence of the social milieu, within limits set by prior experiences (Wacquant, 2006). Therefore, while the habitus is subjectively inhabited, it is not wholly individualised as it exists as a:

system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception and action common to all members of the same group or class (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86).

Individuals have subjective habitus because of their unique biographical histories, yet they also represent the roots of a collective social class history (Wainwright *et al.*, 2006). Habitus is

a system of motivating structures, produced by the conditions of a particular social environment, in turn which are re-produced through the influence and development of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72; 1990, p.53). In this way, therefore, the issues apparent within primary PE and ITT could be explained as being produced by social conditions which provide some scope for individuality, but which, in an overall sense, result in particular actions by the group in focus (in this instance primary school teachers). According to Throop and Murphy (2002, p. 187):

Bourdieu concedes that it is impossible for every member of the same group or class to have had the exact same experiences in an identical ordering, he feels that the homogeneity of habitus can still be ensured since each member of the same class is more likely than any member of a different class to have been confronted with the situations that are most characteristic for members of that specific class.

Bourdieu, however, accounts for variations between individuals as being due to their membership in certain classes and to their specific position within such classes. He explains that:

each individual system of dispositions may be seen as a structural variant of all the other group or class habitus, expressing difference between trajectories and positions inside and outside of class (1977, p.86).

Individual differences in habitus are therefore seen as an expression of the unique position an individual occupies in a particular class-defined social trajectory (Bourdieu, 1990, p.60), influenced by *capital* within a particular *field*. Bourdieu (1986) suggested that *capital* is a resource in a given social arena that enables an individual to gain benefit arising out of participation within it. Capital, he argues:

can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money...; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital...; as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions into economic capital... (1986, p. 47).

Thus, economic capital can be understood as material and financial assets, cultural capital equates to skills and titles, and social capital pertains to those resources acquired by virtue of membership within a particular group (Wacquant, 2006). Cultural and social capital are most relevant to this investigation. As Bourdieu suggests, cultural capital can exist ‘in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (1986, p. 47) whilst social capital relates individuals to membership of a group, providing backing through a collectively-owned capital (p. 51). The position of any individual, group, or institution, in social space may be described by the volume and composition of the capital they capture, which can also vary through time, and in relation to the particular social space (or field) they are within. In this way:

Just as habitus informs practice from within, a field structures action and representation from without: it offers the individual a gamut of possible stances and moves that she can adopt, each with its associated profits, costs, and subsequent potentialities (ibid., p. 8).

Bourdieu (1977) deploys a further term, *doxa*, to denote the processes through which socially and culturally constituted ways of perceiving, evaluating and behaving become accepted as ‘unquestioned, self-evident and taken for granted’ (p. 164). Doxa is predicated on the extent of ‘fit’ between objective structures and the internalization of those structures in habitus (1977, p.166). The term represents individual beliefs as:

a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization [with which] the natural and social world appears as self evident (1977, p. 156).

It is the successful ‘internal’ replication of structure that leads individuals to mistake objective structures as ‘natural’, as they remain ignorant of the ever-present dialectical reconstitution of internal and objective structures (Throop & Murphy, 2002, p.189). Doxa results from the relationship between habitus and the structure to which it is attuned (Bourdieu, 1990, p.68)

and is only made explicit through the interrelation of divergent, novel, or competing discourses and practices.

Whilst the mutual interdependence of structure and agency suggested by Giddens and developed further through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and doxa have informed my philosophical position, and provided scope for interesting debate, the adoption of these within the investigative framework has proved problematic. As Archer (1995) argues, structural conditions and the actions allowed within the limits of these conditions are separate entities, and should be investigated as such. Like Bhaskar (1979), Archer sees the relationship between structure and agency as a central component of ontological realism, recognising 'the temporal dimension through which structure and agency shape one another' (Archer, 1995, p. 92).

Archer conceptualises society as:

both an ever present pre-condition and the continually reproduced, post-dated, outcome of human agency' (Archer, 1995, p. 150).

There is a temporal emphasis in this approach whereby:

structure precedes action, which in turn leads to ...structural outcome...which in turn provides the pre conditions for action and so on' (Stones, 2005, p. 53).

For Archer, it is this temporal dimension through and in which structure and agency shape one another that is imperative. Archer (2000) also argues that social theory typically downplays how agents use their own personal powers to conceive and pursue courses of action within social and cultural contexts. She argues that a realist approach to social theory:

begins by presenting an account of this sense of self, which is prior to, and primitive to, our sociality (Archer, 2000, p. 7).

Archer (2007, p. 3) also suggests that individuals engage in an inner conversation or 'reflexive deliberation', which explains why individuals act in particular ways (and not others) in certain

contexts. In Archer's terms, situations faced by individuals are shaped by cultural and structural properties, giving rise to possibilities of action or constraint; these in turn are impacted upon by individual's own configuration of concerns, leading to courses of action which are produced through the reflexive deliberations of agents who subjectively determine their actions in relation to their objective circumstances (Archer, 2003, p. 135).

In the context of this research, such a possible progression of events is highly relevant as the trainee teachers in the study are embarking on a three year training process, itself preceded by a period of acculturation (Lawson, 1983) and influenced by the working practices of others. The policies, curricula and frameworks of ITT exist before the trainees embark on the ITT course, but also work to govern trainee teachers' possibilities of action during the ITT process. The particular historical context of this research brings wider factors to bear on the process of becoming a teacher of primary PE; changes to policies, curricula and wider subject initiatives before, during and after the timeframe of the data collection may provide greater or reduced constraint on trainees' possibilities of action compared to those who trained or will be training at different moments in time.

### **Application to research design**

The review of social theory has provided a touchstone for the development of the research framework. In designing this research, a key methodological question has been whether 'within trainee' factors (such as dispositions) can be separated from structural factors (for example the curriculum, schools or QTS standards) for the purposes of data collection and analysis. Whilst Giddens' (1979) notion of duality is helpful in explaining the bridge between

objectivity and subjectivity, the conflation of the two creates tensions in research design. Bourdieu's (1977) view of habitus and doxa may help to better explain practices in context, yet this also has the potential to reduce the actions of trainee teachers' to automatic, lacking thought or individual reflection and ignoring the potential for action that matches dispositions and beliefs. I have therefore considered Archer's conceptualisations, adopting a realist stance in a similar way to what Stones (2005) termed as a 'strong structuration' framework. This bridges the gap between Giddens' (1979) and Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualisations of structuration theory and its application at a substantive level. The research has adopted a stance which sees the external regulatory framework of primary ITT (which includes the wider educational context) as autonomous from trainee teachers. Put simply, at the outset of the ITT course, external structures pre-exist trainee interaction. The professional standards for QTS and working practices in school are constituted, reproduced and/or changed independently of the new trainee teacher. Trainee teachers have no choice but to comply with certain expectations such as attending courses and striving towards achieving the standards – not doing so would be to fail in the quest to become a qualified teacher. Such external factors can therefore be seen as 'independent causal influences' (Stones, 2005, p. 111) where the structure has complete autonomy from the agents whom they affect. It is also conceivable, however, that trainee teachers may have the capacity to resist other external influences. This, however, would only be theoretically possible if the trainee felt empowered to resist expected behaviour and, where such a sense of power is absent, these external structures can be termed 'irresistible causal forces' (Stones, 2005, p. 112). In the case of primary PE, it is conceivable that those trainees who lack confidence and subject knowledge in PE may be unable to alter an inevitable course of action where the conditions within ITT and school do not support

development in the subject. It is equally conceivable that those who are highly confident might favour some interpretations of expectations, of the national curriculum and of requirements in school above others.

In the context of this research, internal factors are conceived as relating to the dispositions of individual trainees which include a sense of normative expectations within ITT (as exemplified in the professional standards, course requirements, and expectations within school-based practice). This is also concerned with context specific knowledge evident in the university, school and peer group to which the trainee teachers relate. Linked to this is the notion of power-relation whereby different roles (for example, the role of first year trainee teacher, that of school-based mentor) are oriented towards certain patterns of practice, perhaps stipulated in official course documents and frameworks. The trainees' dispositions towards PE and sport *and* their knowledge of the structures of ITT are both therefore seen as a crucial bridge between structure and practice, working to connect the two concepts through processes of reflection, categorisation, ordering and reaction. It has, therefore, been necessary to formulate a research strategy that adequately addresses both structural and dispositional factors and enables representation of the processes through which the trainee teachers reflect on and seek to explain their practices. The following section of this chapter describes the specific methods utilised in this regard, centred on answering the research questions, which themselves were formulated as a result of the above deliberations:

1. What are the dispositions of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE and sport and how are these dispositions animated by the properties and processes of ITT?
2. Given the context of primary ITT, what possibilities of action are evident to trainee primary teachers during PEITT?
3. How does primary ITT currently impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE and how can provision be developed to better support trainee primary teachers in this regard?

### **A flexible research design**

In order to develop an improved understanding of the social world of primary ITT, first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation was necessary (Sparkes, 1992) together with an approach which allowed the subject to unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of the investigation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 6). The considerations detailed above led me to favour predominantly qualitative approaches; a reliance on quantitative methods risked neglecting ‘the social and cultural construction of the variables which quantitative research seeks to correlate’ (Silverman, 2000, p.5) and there was also a perceived danger of ignoring relevant phenomena about the trainee teachers’ everyday lives. This was thought to be a particular risk when wishing to consider trainee teachers’ reflections and categorisations of practice. A flexible research design was therefore adopted. Silverman (2000, p. 11) suggests that ‘the whole qualitative/quantitative dichotomy is open to question’, and agreeing with this, I endeavoured to ensure that methodological decisions reflected the specific nature of the investigation rather than a mere ideological commitment to one paradigm or another (Hammersley, 1992). Pring (2000) suggests that the perceived dichotomy between qualitative

and quantitative approaches is unhelpful and accepted that qualitative and quantitative methods can be applied within any research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative approaches themselves are often deemed to be flexible, in that research design evolves as an investigation proceeds (Robson, 2000, p. 5). As Anastas and MacDonald (1994) suggest, the word flexible is more appropriate than 'qualitative' for this research, permitting use of methods which generate numeric data. A flexible research design maintained the qualitative interest in interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), whilst being supported by a quantitative strand of the investigation which highlighted dispositional differences to be explored subsequently 'in a more interpretive mode' (Pring, 2000, p. 5). An initial quantitative scale was used in Stage 1 to 'buttress and clarify' (Robson, 2002, p. 37) the account derived from subsequent qualitative methods, providing initial systematic, standardised, and easily presented data (Patton, 1990). The use of a quantitative scale was also an effective means to access a large number of potential participants at the outset of their ITT course. The nature of this scale, and the subsequent qualitative methods deployed are discussed below following considerations of case study and life story research, each of which formed aspects of the investigation.

### **Selecting the case(s)**

It has been imperative that the methods have enabled the investigation of the overarching structural context and supported an on-going focus on trainee primary teachers' dispositions and beliefs in relation to PE, and their perceptions of external structures. The research examined, in depth, the experiences of a relatively small number of individual trainee teachers

within one undergraduate ITT course and consequently drew on conceptions of case study research to inform design. Case study research has been classified in various ways, largely dependent on the desired research outcome. For example, Yin (1984) identifies three types of case study research (exploratory, descriptive and explanatory) whilst Stake (1994, 1995) identifies a further three categories: a) intrinsic (undertaken to understand the particular case in question); b) instrumental (examining a particular case in order to gain insight into an issue or theory); c) collective (groups of individual studies that are undertaken to gain a fuller picture). The approach taken in this research was both collective and descriptive; the aim was to generate a fuller picture by carrying out more than one case study whilst the individual cases were centred on narrative accounts. By taking this approach, the aim was to describe each case of interest and to produce ‘explanations which are generalizable in some way or which have a wider resonance’ (Mason, 1996, p. 6). Whilst the context of the research was one particular University-based ITT course, the unit of analysis was at the level of each individual trainee teacher. The use of case study research raises questions about sampling. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 202):

Many qualitative researchers employ...purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where... the processes being studied are most likely to occur.

Primary PEITT currently takes place in a number of HEIs and other providers (e.g. SCITTs). Owing to the planned depth of enquiry and logistical considerations (for example, time required to travel, costs and so on), only one HEI was selected as the context for the research. That said, the research could be repeated in other institutions and within other ITT contexts in the future. Consideration was also given to which of the routes to QTS should form the context of the investigation. Given that my own professional concerns were initially related to

the undergraduate university-based context within which I worked, and that such a course provided an opportunity to investigate experiences in school and university over a three year period, a university-based undergraduate ITT course was selected. The selection of the particular HEI was also based on practical considerations, such as pre-existing effective channels of communication with staff members (to aid with setting up the study and access to the trainees). The university at which I was employed as a PE lecturer was also discounted as a potential case in the interests of managing subjectivity and participant confidentiality.

Following selection of the contextual case, a key challenge became the identification of individual trainee teacher participants. As discussed above, a flexible research design was adopted, enabling initial use of a quantitative scale, which provided a means through which a large number of potential case study trainees could be recruited at the outset of the investigation. In Stage 1a of the research, the Physical Self Perception Profile (PSPP, see appendix 5) and the accompanying Perceived Importance Profile (PIP, see appendix 6) was administered to a large voluntary sample (n=83), accessed at the end of a whole cohort lecture during the first week of a BA Primary Education degree course (September 2004). The quantitative data yielded from this facilitated thinking about the parameters of the population (Silverman, 2000), suggested themes to explore through subsequent qualitative methods and supported the development of an emerging 'typology' of cases (Stake, 1994). Although it was acknowledged that the results from the PSPP and PIP scales should be treated with caution, findings highlighted a wide range of issues pertaining to trainee teacher physical self-perceptions and dispositions, raising significant questions for further investigation. Some individual trainees who had completed the PSPP were subsequently recruited to take part in

the first stage of semi-structured interviews. This entailed probing and investigating trainee teachers' views in relation to physical self-perception and began to explore internal dispositional structures in depth. The list of voluntary respondents was cross referenced to PSPP and PIP scores (to enable interview schedules to reflect the patterns demonstrated within profile data) and 24 were recruited for group interviews. These 24 were deemed as representative of the initial participants as demonstrated by a breadth of 'scores' within each category of the PSPP and PIP. Following Stage 1a research, initial data analysis suggested a range of 'types' of trainee primary teacher and subsequent inquiry was designed to identify similarity and difference of features across the trainees. Analysis of the data therefore centred on the identification of patterns, trends and themes. In Stage 2, the focus was on a smaller number of 'information rich' cases. This was meaningful theoretically because it built on characteristics which helped to develop and test emerging explanations (Mason, 1996). A smaller number of trainees, from within the initial sample, maintained participation in the study on a voluntary basis and analytical insights derived from the quantitative scale were continually used across subsequent stages to make decisions and interpretations regarding qualitative data (Ball, 1993). This sample of trainees was further reduced through natural wastage (trainees chose not to continue to attend for all stages of interview or did not continue within the course) and continued purposeful sampling (as the research evolved and findings emerged, an ever sharpening focus was placed on a decreasing number of information rich cases). Six trainee teachers became the key focus for inquiry during Stage 2b, with eight and then seven taking part in Stages 3a and 3b. This slight broadening was deliberate in an attempt to clarify understanding; at this stage, a key focus was in confirming categories within the

typology of trainees in relation to PE and a return to earlier participants was necessary to check my understanding and accuracy of analysis.

In the final stages of the research (4a and b), the sample was broadened again to test the theories and to seek feedback from a larger entity of trainee primary teachers at the end of their undergraduate course. This was achieved by presenting emerging findings to the whole year group cohort at the end of the three year degree within the case study institution. The emerging findings and conceptual models were also presented to a group of final stage trainee teachers at another university provider of undergraduate ITT one year later as a means through which feedback and suggestions could be gleaned from a broader group of trainee primary teachers. The feedback gained in the form of written and verbal comments enabled the results and analysis to be developed to strengthen possible claims of generalisability. The flexibility in the approach to sampling fits with Alasuutari's (1995) analogy of an hour-glass, in which the sample size is narrowed and then broadened at subsequent stages. Each stage of the research process is summarised in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Overview of the research process

Stage of research	Year of BA Primary course	Term/date	Method	Number of respondents	Focus of inquiry
1a	1	Autumn 2004	Physical Self Perception Profile and Perceived Importance of Sport Profile	83	Physical self perceptions and dispositions towards PE/sport
1b	1	Autumn 2004	Semi-structured group interviews x 2	24	Physical self perceptions and dispositions towards PE; life experiences
1c	1	Spring 2005	Individual semi structured interviews 1	15	Individual experiences, understanding of expectations, experiences 'on course'
2a	2	Autumn 2005	Individual semi structured interviews 2	14	Individual experiences, understanding of expectations and working practices in Year 1 school based experiences
2b	2	Spring 2006	Individual semi structured interviews 3	6	Individual practices and experiences during Y2 school experiences; revisiting of dispositions towards PE and sport; impact of elective studies for some
3a	3	Autumn 2006	Individual semi structured interviews 4	8	Review emerging findings with participants and check understanding of individual and structural factors
3b	3	Spring/ Summer 2007	Individual semi structured interviews 5	7	Identify relevant practices and phenomena within Y3 school experience; Review emerging findings with selected participants. Seek feedback re typology categories; tease out differences between types
4a	3	Summer 2007	Respondent validation - original cohort	26 (of original 83)	Seek feedback re findings, particularly typology
4b	-	Summer 2008	Validation of findings – different cohort of beginning teachers/ different ITT context	120	Seek feedback re findings, particularly typology

### **Incorporating biographical approaches**

As discussed in chapter 3, personal experiences in school PE and sport as a pupil are thought to be relevant frames of reference for trainee teachers who import life history data into their accounts of classroom events (Goodson, 1983). It was therefore important for an element of biographical methods to be included in the data collection and analysis process so that experiences preceding and out-with the immediate context of ITT could be considered as part of the process of becoming a primary school teacher of PE. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest that:

There are likely to be many influences, experiences and relationships within any teacher's life which have led to their developing a particular philosophy of education and taking on a specific professional identity which informs their work. Then there are the various contexts and conditions within which teachers have to work which have an effect upon what they do and how they do it (pp. 22-23).

Relevant approaches to biographical research include highly detailed studies of an individual life built up over a number of years (Plummer, 1983) or a combination of methods in which life stories provide a further perspective on a topic. Described broadly as biographical research, appropriate methods include biography, autobiography, story, discourse, narrative writing, personal history, oral history, case history, life history, personal experience and case study. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) list several other approaches to what they call narrative enquiry, including the use of annals and chronicles, photographs, memory boxes, interviews, journals, letters, conversations and documents. In light of this, it was deemed important for this research to present the possibility of discussing personal experience across the life cycle, and afford this relevance as an influencing factor in the development of knowledge and dispositions and hence on ensuing practice. Therefore, the design of interview schedules supported probing in this regard and provided the participants with the opportunity to reflect

and comment upon experiences retrospectively. The intention was to present this as interpreted and edited life history data (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989) rather than as a first-person life history. Although this latter approach would undoubtedly provide a valuable and in-depth account of the processes at large, research design favoured the integration of life story approaches into a broader study. In designing interview schedules, a list of prompts was created to ensure that participants were steered towards biographical recollections and to stimulate probing regarding historical events (see example interview schedules, appendix 7). This was particularly the case with respect to the origins of dispositions and knowledge of school PE curricula based on personal experiences. The interest in developing a level of biographical understanding through interviewing the respondents also had ethical implications (discussed below) and encouraged the adoption of techniques to foster a supportive and informal relationship with each informant.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Questions of validity and reliability have been central to research design, completed in full awareness of criticisms of qualitative research in this regard. Whilst concurring with Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2003) assertion that it is 'unwise to think that threats to validity and reliability can ever be erased completely' (p. 105), the aim has been to reduce such threats through careful design. In short, validity is explained in terms of what constitutes a credible claim to truth (Silverman, 2000) and as such is highly important; if this research was to be thought invalid then it would be worthless to the community of practice. In qualitative research, validity is often couched in terms of:

honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003, p.105).

In this regard, the intention was to produce an honest, deep and rich account of the phenomena at large. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) discuss these issues in terms of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. Internal validity reflects the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomena in question; external validity reflects the degree to which findings can be generalised to other similar settings; reliability reflects the extent to which findings can be replicated, or reproduced, by another enquirer; objectivity reflects the extent to which findings are free from bias. Validity in qualitative research is generally seen differently to validity in positivist research where goals may be controllability, predictability, the derivation of laws and universal rules. Some qualitative researchers have suggested that 'understanding', 'fidelity' and 'authenticity' are more appropriate terms to use in qualitative contexts (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Mishler, 1990; Maxwell, 1992; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). Despite such claims, it remains that in-depth inquiry does not automatically secure a sufficient level of validity and reliability (Silverman, 2001; Hammersley, 1992). Qualitative research has been criticised for a tendency to ignore less clear or contradictory data. This problem referred to by some as 'anecdotalism through limited quantification' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 638) stems from a tendency to use data in relation to conclusions or explanations and to provide selective evidence to support a particular contention.

Attempts to make qualitative research more valid typically include triangulation and / or respondent validation. The former represents the use of two or more methods of data collection to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour (Cohen,

Manion & Morrison, 2003, p. 112) and stems from a view that reliance on one method may lead to a biased analysis and interpretation. In this research, where the emphasis was on individual experiences, triangulation was used to glean fresh insights into the phenomena under investigation, rather than to 'settle' validity questions. More pertinently, respondent validation was utilised by presenting emerging results to participants in order to refine findings (Reason & Rowan, 1981). Advocates of this approach suggest that this increases validity and objectivity through a process of checking and confirmation of findings. This does, however, assume that the participants themselves are expert commentators on their actions (Fielding & Fielding, 1986) and, although regular responses from participants and others were sought to help confirm findings, such feedback could not necessarily be construed as direct validation of findings. Instead, in order to improve the validity of the research, Silverman's (2000, p. 177-178) 'five interrelated ways of thinking critically about qualitative data analysis' were adopted as a broad framework for research design and analysis. This stems from a standpoint of attempting to refute initial assumptions about the data in order to achieve objectivity (what Silverman, p. 178, terms the 'refutability principle'). By taking such an approach, the aim was to secure both internal and external validity in this research through the adoption of rigorous and transparent approaches. This was achieved through the investigation of numerous cases over the timescale of the study in order to test out emerging findings and compare results. Whilst this approach did not look outside the specific institutional case until the final stage of the investigation, by commencing analysis of the data whilst new cases were being developed the results were subjected to a constant checking and comparison process. This involved the on-going development and cross referencing of data to parts of the dataset generated through different methods. This is 'comprehensive data treatment' (Mehan, 1979;

ten Have, 1998) whereby anecdotalism is avoided by repeated inspection and analysis of data ‘until generalisation is able to apply to every single gobbet of relevant data you have collected’ (Silverman, 2000, p. 180). Allied to this, cases that did not conform to emerging findings were sought out and addressed. This deviant-case analysis ensured that the ‘provisional analytic scheme was constantly confronted by negative or discrepant cases’ (Mehan, 1979, p. 21) until all the data within the analysis framework had been satisfactorily captured. Silverman’s final recommendation for ensuring validity is to utilise appropriate numeric data which could ‘offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data lost in intensive, qualitative research’ (Silverman, 2000, p. 185). By using the PSPP and PIP in Stage 1 research, I was able to incorporate the use of descriptive statistics to generate a sense of the data as a whole and to use this as a checkpoint for cross referencing throughout subsequent stages.

Reliability is seen as a ‘synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents’ and ‘is concerned with precision and accuracy’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003, p. 117). As Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest:

qualitative researchers can no longer beg the issue of reliability. While the forte of field research will always lie in its capability to sort out the validity of propositions, its results will (reasonably) go ignored minus attention to reliability. For reliability to be calculated, it is incumbent on the scientific investigator to document his or her procedure (p. 72).

Rather than apply the ‘canons of reliability used in quantitative research, which may be unworkable in qualitative forms of inquiry’ (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.332) reliability has been addressed in this study by aiming to produce comprehensive data which is an accurate representation of what actually occurs in the field (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.48). In

qualitative research, reliability generally refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Hammersley, 1992, p. 67). Other researchers were not enlisted to work in this investigation; instead, the full dataset was revisited on each occasion when a new case was introduced. The constant revision of the data and resultant updating of findings provided confidence that at the end of the research process, accuracy and reliability had been achieved.

Reliability is a problematic concept in naturalistic studies where the uniqueness and individuality of the context and the actors within the context are regarded as a key feature. It is also a particular challenge whilst using interviews as a research method; it has been suggested that there may be as many different interpretations of qualitative data produced through this method as there are researchers (Kvale, 1996, p. 181). A key part of analysing data derived in interviews is the categorisation and coding of statements made by participants and it is desirable for this process to be a reliable one; the results of the categorisation should not be influenced by the individual carrying out the categorisation. As Kvale (1996) argues:

A strict requirement of intersubjective reliability in all forms of interview analysis may, however, lead to a tyranny by the lowest possible denominator: that an interpretation is only reliable when it can be followed by everyone, a criterion that could lead to a trivialisation of the interpretations...this may again involve a consensualist conception of truth: that an observation or an interpretation is only considered valid if it can be repeated by everyone, irrespective of the quality of the observation and the argumentation (p. 181).

There is also potential for disregarding the expertise and knowledge that the researcher may bring to the analysis process. This has led to a consideration of my own role in the research process throughout the study. As Kvale (*ibid.*, p. 181) goes on to say:

The question may involve an externalization of the interpretation of the meaning to fixed rules and criteria, rather than going beyond method and drawing upon the craftsmanship of the researcher, on his or her knowledge and interpretive skills.

Concurring with Smith (1988), this research design accepted that methods for data collection could not be viewed as interpretation-free. From the outset, the study design concurred with Ball's view that 'data are a product of the skills and imagination of the researcher and of the interface between the researcher and the researched' (1990, p.169). The participants were viewed as partners in knowledge development and an 'egalitarian' researcher-researched relationship was fostered (Devis-Devis, 2006, p. 41). It was also acknowledged that my own life experiences would have a degree of influence on how data were interpreted and, although wishing to report credible findings, it was accepted that being entirely objective would not be possible. My own positioning as an active professional in PEITTT was acknowledged throughout the research process, with this in mind.

Field notes were used throughout each stage of the investigation (samples included in appendix 7, alongside annotated interview transcripts) in which reflections were noted regarding possible researcher influence on the interpretive process in keeping with a reflexive approach (Mays & Pope, 2000). Notes were checked against transcriptions of interviews, helping to interrogate any initial assumptions and informing the development of subsequent interview schedules. Throughout the study, field notes were used to support the confirmation or rejection of initial impressions and to support an objective stance. The wider potential for reciprocity between me and the researched which enables corroboration of data and provides participants with insights that could lead to the changing of their own practices and circumstances was also acknowledged. The participants themselves helped to frame questions

and interpret data which may have had some impact on the practices of trainee teachers themselves. This is what Friere (1973) called 'conscientization', through which participants become energised and better placed to change practice.

The findings are presented as relevant to the particular relations of the participants taking part directly in the study. A commitment was maintained, however, to ensuring internal generalisability; in other words, through appropriate sampling and research design, it was possible to generalise findings so that trainee teachers studying at the same institution at the same time could recognise as valid the accounts being presented in the findings. By presenting research findings in this way, it was also an intention to provide scope for future research to consider trainee primary teachers in different contexts at different times in order to validate the claims being made more broadly.

### **Ethical Issues**

An ethics application was completed and submitted to the School of Education Ethics Committee in 2004. Upon receiving feedback, the case study institution was selected and compliance with ethics procedures within that institution sought and confirmed following attendance at a local Ethics Board. This Board raised specific concerns regarding the nature of interview questions, in particular seeking assurance that deeply personal information relating to the sexuality of trainees would not be sought. Full ethical approval was granted by each institution in advance of the research commencing. The research was planned and conducted in full compliance with ethical guidelines provided by my academic institution (Roehampton University, 2004), the case study institution within which the research took place (anonymous institution, 2000) and with reference to national guidelines (British Education Research

Association (BERA), 2004; British Sociological Association, 2002). As encouraged by BERA, the research was planned and conducted with an ethical respect for people, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom. Of particular relevance are BERA's guidelines for the researcher's responsibilities to participants and to the research community. In this research, broad ethical responsibility included respecting all participants and non-participants within the research context. This included all trainee teachers who voluntarily took part in each stage of the investigation, other trainees who did not form part of the sample, academics and tutors working with the trainee teachers and professionals working with trainees in school contexts. Every care was taken to:

operate within an ethic of respect for any persons involved directly or indirectly in the research they are undertaking, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, political beliefs and lifestyle or any other significant difference between such persons and the researcher themselves or other participants in the research (BERA, 2004, p.6).

Of particular importance was my responsibility to the participants, in which a balanced research relationship was sought to encourage disclosure, trust and awareness of potential ethical issues (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000). I acknowledged a responsibility to:

ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. (Researchers) should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy, while recognising the difficulty of balancing potentially conflicting interests (British Sociological Association, 2002, p.2).

I also attempted to anticipate possible outcomes of interviews to guard against potential harm to the trainees. This was thought possible when exploring personal dispositions and experiences which may have triggered painful memories. Although I acknowledged that some trainees could benefit through the interviews being a form of catharsis and a time in which reflection and self-awareness could be developed (Hutchinson, Wilson & Wilson, 1994), I

ensured that my moral obligation would be upheld at all times through awareness of the need to place concern for the individual ahead of any need to collect exciting data. Such ethical dilemmas arising from interviews are difficult to predict, although I made every possible attempt to prepare myself for eventualities of this kind, thinking through a variety of scenarios in advance. I also acknowledged the need for a continuous renegotiation of consent (Kvale, 1996) at each new data collection episode.

At the outset of the study, a detailed explanation of the research was provided, which included an account of the need for the research to take place and how and where the research would be reported. This explanation was given verbally, in person, to a whole cohort of first year trainee primary teachers at the outset of their course and at every subsequent data collection occasion. The distinction between academic course requirements and voluntary participation in the research was highlighted, ensuring that the trainees understood that involvement in the research would have no bearing on academic or professional progression. Written voluntary informed consent was received from each participant before the start of the research process (appendix 8) and assurances were provided to each participant regarding the right to withdraw, to levels of confidentiality and data protection. All data was kept securely throughout the duration of the investigation and emerging findings and draft reports shared with respondents at appropriate times.

## **Data Collection**

### **Selection of participants and their context**

Participants were initially recruited as a voluntary, purposive sample. The trainee teachers were embarking on a three-year (2004-2007) BA undergraduate programme in Primary Education leading to QTS, studying at a Higher Education provider of ITT in the Southeast of the United Kingdom. Access to the cohort was negotiated with course staff before the start of the first semester (Autumn 2004), and consent requested from participants at the end of a whole-cohort lecture in the first week of the course (appendix 8). I explained the study verbally to the Year 1 cohort in person. Trainee teachers were not placed under pressure to participate, and it was made clear that withdrawal from the study or the withholding of specific information was possible at any time. Anonymity was guaranteed, with pseudonyms used throughout the study and in presentation of data.

The initial 83 respondents were aged between 18 and 47, including only 6 males, reflecting the gender imbalance typical of the primary teaching profession in the United Kingdom (Capita Teachers' Pensions, 2004). A degree of natural wastage from the original sample (trainees leaving the course, not volunteering for on-going involvement) was anticipated. From the original sample of 83 participants, 24 volunteered to continue in group interviews and 15 then participated in individual interviews during the first stage of the investigation (see appendix 9). The number of participants taking part in years two and three decreased, partly due to a natural wastage where trainee teachers decided not to carry on, or in some cases left the course. This reduction in numbers was also planned for, in that a smaller number of participants were identified for further investigation as they were representative of the

emerging findings. The reduction in the number of participants involved was from fifteen to fourteen and then six in Year 2 and 3. The small group of trainees interviewed in Stage 2b were developed as 'in depth' case studies in Stages 3a and 3b, whilst two trainees were returned to the sample to enable detailed consideration and testing of emerging findings. The interviews enabled the generation of 'thick', descriptive data (Geertz, 1973), the analysis of which enabled emerging findings to be continually developed and refined.

### **Physical Self Perception and Perceived Importance Profiles**

The PSPP and PIP scales were used at the start of the investigation for two key purposes. Firstly, the scales enabled me to meet with and introduce the research to a relatively large number of potential participants. The scales were completed by the trainee teachers during this first meeting, enabling immediate capture of data relevant to the research questions in a relatively unobtrusive fashion. Secondly, the data gleaned from completion of the scales was intended to support the larger and on-going qualitative elements of the investigation. Although I acknowledged from the outset that conclusions resulting from analysis of the quantitative data were to be treated with caution as a result of the overall sample size and the uneven number of males and females within the sample, the emerging patterns and trends indicated by the quantitative analysis were used to support the development of the interview schedules and lines of enquiry. Thus, the quantitative results were intended not to be viewed in isolation and only tentative findings were drawn from Stage 1a research. A separate quantitative study would be necessary in the future in order to test findings with a substantially larger sample size, particularly including more male trainee primary teachers.

Following a successful small scale pre-test of Fox's (1990) PSPP within my own HEI, this scale was used for the full study. The small scale pilot study was used to familiarise myself with the profiles, to rehearse verbal explanations and ethical statements and to test my view that these were appropriate tools to use in Stage 1 of the investigation. The instruments are thought to be theoretically grounded, psychometrically well-developed and measures of multiple facets of the physical self (Byrne, 1996). The PSPP was also chosen because of its original derivation from research on a student population (Biddle & Mutrie, 2001) and the relevance of the four sub-domains of the scale to the research questions, particularly in relation to research question 1 which seeks to identify trainee dispositions towards PE and sport. The focus on physical self-perception within the PSPP was also deemed to match closely to accounts of identity given in chapter 3 of this thesis in which teacher identity is thought to be closely linked to teacher development. The PSPP is a thirty-item self-report instrument, containing questions relevant to 'sports competence,' 'body attractiveness,' 'perceived strength' and 'physical condition' plus a global perception of 'Physical Self-Worth' (PSW). An example of the style and structure of a question (from within the sport competence sub-domain) and the possible range of response is given in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Example question from PSPP

Really	Sort	of			Sort	of	Really	True
True	for	True	for		True	for	for	Me
Me		Me			Me			
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Some people feel that they	BUT	Others feel that they are	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
			are not very good when it		really good at just about			
			comes to playing sports		every sport			

(Fox, 1990)

A range of measures of ‘physical self’, including Marsh *et al*’s (1994) Physical Self Description Questionnaire (PSDQ), Franzoi and Shields’ (1984) Body Esteem Scale (BES) and Richard’s (1987) Physical Self-Concept Scale were reviewed and discounted for reasons including specificity for particular populations (e.g. adolescents in the case of PSDQ) and the focus of questions (e.g. omitting sports competence in the case of BES). Furthermore, as Byrne (1996) contests, despite being originally designed for use with students, the PSPP has also shown evidence of reliability and validity with older adults (for example as applied by Sonstroem, Harlow & Josephs, 1994), suggesting suitability for use with both traditional entrants to Higher Education and mature participants. The participants in this research include those entering teacher training immediately after A- Level study, as a career change in mid-life and after child-rearing career breaks (see summary of participants, appendix 10).

The data derived through completion of the PSPP is a numeric representation of respondent self-perception relevant to each of the sub-domains described above. The figures for each

category were reviewed and grouped. Respondents within highest (maximum is twenty four for each sub-domain) and lowest (minimum is six) possible scores for each sub domain were identified. A nominal description of ‘negative self-perception’ (accounted for with scores between 6 and 12) and ‘positive self-description’ (accounted for with scores between 13 and 24) was used to group trainee teachers with similar profiles. This enabled me to identify cases across the full spectrum of results together with ‘deviant cases’ to ensure that examples for further investigation were sought to challenge original suppositions (Silverman, 2001). Attention was paid to specific sub-domains and emergent themes, similarities, patterns and questions noted. Descriptive statistical analysis highlighted the percentage of scores present in each sub domain, along with calculation of mean, mode and standard deviation. In addition, the percentage of respondents within nominally positive and negative self-perception ranges was noted. Finally, gender sub group mean scores were produced and analysed through the use of appropriate non-parametric statistical tools.

The themes, similarities, patterns and trends identified through the PSPP were subsequently used to plan semi-structured interview schedules. Initial interviews conducted in Stage 1 focused on dispositions, and questions were framed in relation to the quantitative data derived from the scale. Such questions enabled validation of the statistical analysis, but also served to stimulate trainees’ reflection regarding the issues being investigated. The numerical values were a point of cross-referencing and referral throughout the analysis of interview transcripts and were used to check meaning, researcher understanding of participants’ viewpoints, and to monitor the characteristics of the reducing size of sample as the research progressed. On completion of the PSPP, respondents were also asked to complete the accompanying

Perceived Importance Profile (PIP, see appendix 6). This was intended to provide a further source of descriptive data to illuminate patterns and trends. In particular, it was hoped that the PIP would provide information to identify trainee teachers for whom a negative self-perception could potentially be negated by a low perceived importance, those for whom a high perceived importance could create a discrepancy in behaviour if a low self-perception score was achieved, and those who attach a high level of significance to a sub-domain and rate themselves highly in that same category. The PIP contains eight questions, two in each of the four sub-domains in the Fox (1989) hierarchical model. The eight extra questions were not expected to take a great deal of time and are phrased in the same fashion as the statements in the PSSP, aiding ease and speed of response.

The quantitative data derived from the PSPP and PIP facilitated thinking about the parameters of the population, suggested themes to explore through subsequent methods and supported the development of an emerging typology of cases. Analytical insights derived from the scale were used to make decisions about subsequent data. The PSPP and PIP results were a point of referral throughout the interpretive analysis of interview transcripts and were used to check meaning, researcher understanding of participants' viewpoints, and to monitor the characteristics of the voluntary sample as the study progressed.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview was deemed an appropriate choice of method for this study as it enabled the participants to project their own ways of understanding the world and eliminate potential for restriction that would have resulted from tightly prescribed, pre-determined

questions. The use of semi-structured interviews complied with Lincoln and Guba's (1985, pp. 268-270) purposes for use of this method as a way of investigating constructions of events, discussing feelings and motivations, revisiting past experiences, attempting to make projections about future working practices and to verify, amend and extend the data. Silverman (1993, pp. 92-93) also points to the usefulness of interviews as a means through which to 'access beliefs about facts' (this relates to trainee teachers' specific knowledge of ITT and PE) and to 'identify feelings and motives' (related to dispositions). As Chapman and Smith (2002, p.125) suggest:

the use of semi structured interviews enables the researcher and participants to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of participants' responses and the investigator is able to probe interesting and important areas which arise.

The use of interviews in this research followed Kvale's (1996, p. 83) recommended 'seven stages' which provide a logical and relevant framework whilst also allowing decision making based on the methodological options available and knowledge of the topic. In the course of the investigation, the researcher was faced with a range of decisions, both within and outside the interview contexts.

### **Interview Schedules**

Outline schedules were prepared in advance of each interview. These were not intended to be prescriptive or limiting 'in the sense of overriding the expressed interests of the participant' (Bickerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p.8) and were sufficiently open ended to enable questions and prompts to be re ordered and to take account of digressions and expansions during the course of the interview when new avenues for exploration became apparent. This is akin to Patton's (1990, p. 206) 'interview guide approach' where topics and issues to be covered are

specified in advance, in outline form. As the researcher-participant relationship developed over time, the interviews also increasingly adopted a more 'informal conversational' approach (ibid) where previous interviews, emerging findings and specific data for each individual case supported the emergence of questions from the immediate context. The thematic focus of the interviews changed over time, shifting from an initial focus on dispositions and beliefs towards a broader but more participant-specific focus on ITT related specific factors. As the study progressed, and individual cases became more developed, the interviews also provided an opportunity for checking understanding and to seek confirmation that each case was being depicted accurately in the eyes of the respondent.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the researcher and the participants to engage in a dialogue to 'obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale, 1996, p.30). A schedule was designed for each interview (see appendix 7 for samples), in the form of a 'shopping list' of topics, maintaining flexibility with regard to sequencing of probes, wording and time allocated to specific questions (Robson, 2002, p.278). The schedules enabled the focus on the relevant field of enquiry to be maintained without losing the opportunity to deviate and follow through responses that may not have been previously anticipated. The schedules were made up of open-ended items which provided frames of reference for the participants' answers without restraining possibilities (Kerlinger, 1970). Initial questions were generally indirect, seeking broad responses to a topic that the researcher introduced. However, these were often followed up with more direct questions to clarify a response and to seek further views in line with the research questions.

### **Planning the interviews**

Concurring with Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2003, p. 279) who assert that the ‘interviewer must be at pains to conduct the interview carefully and sensitively,’ the interview process necessitated careful planning and reflection regarding my own skills and approaches as an interviewer. A clear priority was the need to establish an appropriate and conducive atmosphere that would encourage the participants to talk freely. Careful consideration was afforded to the location of the interviews, the lay out and seating arrangements of the rooms used, and the way in which I presented myself in the interviews. My aim was to put respondents at ease, to reduce ‘stage fright’ and quickly encourage positive engagement of the participant. All interviews therefore took place at the trainee teachers’ university, in classrooms where they attended lectures and on days when the trainees were scheduled to be at university (for example, before or after lectures). These measures served to inconvenience participants as little as possible and to encourage on-going participation in the investigation. I presented myself informally in the interviews, consciously deciding to ‘dress down’; rather than being perceived as a lecturer from another university, the aim was for the participants to think of me as a research student. Whilst my own role as a lecturer at another institution was not hidden, this potential barrier was also tackled through provision of assurances regarding anonymity at the start of each interview. Seating was arranged so that the interview did not appear or feel like a formal job interview (chairs were arranged along adjacent sides of a desk for example, rather than directly face to face) and steps were taken to ensure that interruptions from the outside would not occur (door signage and communication with staff in adjacent rooms). Opening questions were used to put the participants at ease. These tended to be easier and non-controversial ‘what’ questions whilst those posed later in the interviews probed at a

deeper level. For example, in a Stage 2 interview early questions included: ‘what did you do in your PE lecture yesterday’, eliciting a descriptive response; a more probing later question asked: ‘tell me how you felt during the PE lecture’, and such questions were only introduced when the interview and researcher-respondent relationship were deemed to be progressing positively. In addition to the issue of sequencing questions, I monitored my own role during the course of each interview. This reflection was supported by note making during the interview where observations that would not necessarily be apparent when listening to recordings or reading transcriptions were recorded. Such observations included pauses marked by a participant’s defensive body language, or the need for me to consciously seek further responses by using verbal or non-verbal communication. Whilst unable to capture every detail and nuanced behaviour that makes up the interviewer-participant dynamic, the aim was to build up an accurate picture and to begin to analyse the data as it was being collected.

### **Group interviews**

In Stage 1 of the research, group interviews were conducted. Group interviews were utilised to encourage the trainee teachers to volunteer for the study with their peers and to facilitate the development of discussion. It was also decided that this would be the most appropriate way in which to begin the interview investigation given that the trainee teachers were in their very first term at university; the assumption was that trainees would be more likely to become involved in the study at this stage if they felt that they were part of a larger group. This choice was not straightforward. Such a group setting can also restrict opportunities for all to give their opinions, particularly where personal issues (as may be the case when discussing physical self-perception) were raised. Watts and Ebutt (1987) suggest that ‘the dynamic of a group denies

access to this sort of data'. In the group interviews, I adopted a role as moderator or facilitator in which the aim was to 'generate interest in and discussion about a particular topic' (Sim, 1998, p. 347). A key intention at this stage, however, was on establishing an appropriate and viable group of participants, on introducing them to the concepts of the research and to begin to develop a positive relationship with them. The themes that emerged from the two group interviews, allied with the quantitative data collected through the PSPP and PIP, were valuable, suggesting lines of enquiry to be pursued in subsequent stages of the research.

### **Transcription of interviews**

Each interview was recorded using a digital recorder and subsequently downloaded to a memory drive and listened to using computer software. This enabled quick and accurate movement backwards and forwards within each digital record of the interview. The digital recordings were used to create transcripts, providing a full written account of everything that was said during the interview. As transcribing was considered an integral aspect of the analysis framework, I completed the transcription personally, making use of the opportunity to become fully immersed in the data. Transcription has been conceptualised by some as a 'behind-the-scenes aspect of data management' (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005, p. 1273) and a 'chore' (Agar, 1996, p. 153), although I have recognised the importance of transcription to the process of qualitative inquiry (Poland, 2002). The transcription process was considered to be an important part of data analysis in this research; whilst listening to the recordings and transcribing the dialogue, researcher reflections, thoughts and concepts came to light which were recorded in my note book, added as annotations to the transcript and utilised during data analysis. A reliance on the recording alone can filter out important contextual factors and

neglect the visual and non-verbal aspects of the interview (Mishler, 1986; Morrison, 1993). Data analysis was therefore supplemented with reference to field notes during both the transcription and analysis processes.

### **Documents and field notes**

Documentary artefacts relating to the case study institution, to the BA Primary Education course, PE generalist and specialist module options and to school placement requirements were collected at the outset and throughout the three year study. This data consisted of documents written for purposes other than this research project. The collection of this data was 'unobtrusive' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 199), in that others' working practices were not disturbed and respondents were not present at the point of data collection. The data was also in permanent form, and could be subjected to re-analysis which allowed cross checking. The collection of such data also supported the aim for analysis to be 'a pervasive activity throughout the life' of the research project (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.11). A key task in reviewing the documentation was to locate PE within the wider ITT and educational framework, to understand the expectations of trainees within the subject and how these related to broader requirements of compliance, school-based experiences and formal assessments. This was relevant given the policy backcloth detailed in chapter 2 and the concerns raised regarding the relatively low status of PE within primary schools and primary ITT.

The documentation, and my enhanced understanding of the context derived from it, was used as a source for cross referencing, particularly when primary data collection focused on trainee teachers' perceptions of the expectations placed upon them during the course. The

documentation was also utilised as a reference that enabled me to become more familiar with the investigative context and to aid the development of interview schedules. For example, the formal expectations placed on trainee teachers in school during each stage of the course were used as prompts in semi structured interviews. In this way, documentation aided analysis of dispositions and structures throughout the investigation, particularly highlighting the trainee teachers' developing knowledge of the regulatory framework of ITT. Course documentation enabled me to better understand the structure of PE modules and of the course in general, aiding formulation and timing of interview questions. For example, semi structured interviews that took place during a university-based phase of ITT in Year 1 were able to include questions about experiences during taught lectures in PE. Interviews taking place following Year 2 school experience were able to focus on opportunities to gain practical teaching experience and levels of mentoring support experienced. In each example, I was aware of the aims of the course and the formal expectations placed on the trainees and those supporting the trainees in school. A notebook was kept throughout the duration of the investigation for the recording of field notes both in situ and away from the investigative context. Reference to such documents was made within the notebook and used to support data analysis, as a reminder of what occurred in the field and as a point of cross referencing. The notes also included comments about hunches and questions that were raised in my mind at the time of data collection in addition to simple descriptions of the research process, my feelings as researcher and general observations. Notes were dated and coded to ensure that cross referencing to interview transcripts and specific cases and other data was possible. Sample entries from the field notes are also included in appendix 7. Interview recordings were reviewed simultaneously with the field notes and cross referenced to course documentation

where relevant to ensure that a full immersion in the data was achieved and that all available data were utilised.

### **Data Analysis**

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, philosophical and methodological decisions led to a flexible research design, centred on, but not solely reliant on, the use of qualitative methods. Data collection methods which centred on the use of the PSPP and PIP and semi structured interviews produced data requiring specific approaches to analysis. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as an organisational framework for analysing data. IPA has largely been used in qualitative psychology, yet has gained in popularity across a range of disciplines (see for example, Mann & Abraham, 2006; Clare, 2003; Smith, 1994). IPA is committed to respondents as ‘cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical beings’ (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 52) and is concerned with the ‘subjective conscious experiences of individuals’ (Eatough, Smith & Shaw, 2008, p.1771). IPA enables exploration of participants’ thoughts and interpretations, as well as their ‘raw’ experiences (Reynolds & Prior, 2003) and accepts cultural and situational influences on accounts (Caelli, 2000). This was deemed particularly relevant given the desire to take full account of both structural and individual factors.

The ideographic emphasis of IPA was considered to complement the aims of this investigation; the use of IPA has typically been for research with small sample sizes, usually in the range of between one and thirty (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA is concerned with investigating ‘the subjects’ perspectives of their world . . . to grasp the qualitative diversity of

their experiences and to explicate their essential meanings' (Kvale, 1996, p. 53). IPA also acknowledges that such investigation brings into play the researcher's own view of the world (Willig, 2001), necessitating an awareness of possible 'researcher' influence on the process of interpretation in keeping with a reflexive approach (Mays & Pope, 2000). The analytical process is described as a dual process in which 'the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world' (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 51). IPA is a published sequence of analysis, the 'mechanics' of which are similar to that found in many forms of qualitative research. Rather than being prescriptive, IPA offers a flexible set of guidelines that can be adapted by individual researchers in light of their research aims (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The central technique of IPA lies in descriptive coding of data which leads to the presentation of organisational themes.

Adopting IPA as a framework for analysis enabled me to become fully immersed in the data. Each transcript was read through several times and then notes made on the transcript in the left hand margin. The notes highlighted any aspect of the dialogue which appeared significant to the research questions. Each re-reading of the transcript resulted in me becoming more 'wrapped up in the data, becoming more responsive to what is being said' (Eatough, Smith & Shaw, 2008, p. 1773). The right hand margin of each transcript was then used to note specific themes and concepts which related a participant's responses to wider theory and contextual factors. Each reading of an interview transcript took place in tandem with a re-listening to the recording and simultaneous reference to field notes made at the time of the interview. Course documentation was also analysed using this framework, with the location and status of PE

within course (and school-based) requirements and standard documentation identified and linked to the emerging themes. As Eatough, Smith and Shaw (2008, p. 1773) suggest, the early stages of analysis was ‘thorough and painstaking’, the same process completed for each successive interview transcript produced across the three years of study. As each successive transcript was analysed in this way, themes were developed, extended and organised and participants asked for their opinion (during subsequent interviews) as to whether the emerging themes were an accurate representation of their experiences. The analysis process was thus iterative and themes were constantly revisited, clarified and refined. Examples from across the three stages are included in appendix 7, together with the master list of themes confirmed at the end of the analysis process (appendix 11). The data samples included in the appendix are presented in word format, reproduced from printed hard copies which were originally written on in hand, highlighted with coloured pens and cut into pieces for the purposes of grouping the themes during the course of the analysis process.

Connections between preliminary themes were established and themes were clustered under broad headings; following Smith’s (2004) suggestion, I ‘imagined a magnet with some of the themes pulling others in and helping to make sense of them’ (p. 71). In the final stage of analysis, completed once all interview transcripts had been reviewed, a list was produced to show the clustering of themes. This final list of themes (appendix 11) is:

the outcome of an iterative process in which he or she (the researcher) has moved back and forth between the various analytic stages ensuring that the integrity of what the participant said has been preserved as much as possible’ (Eatough, Smith & Shaw, 2008, p. 1774).

The themes produced in this way were then included within the subsequent discussion of results and the development of a model to represent the phenomena at large.

### **Developing a typology**

The methods described above yielded a range of data from which key themes were identified in response to the research questions. However, as a stated aim of the research is to make suggestions of value to those charged with trainee primary teachers' development and socialisation into the profession, I decided that a diagrammatic representation of findings should also be developed. The development of typologies, classifications and taxonomies, however, has a number of limitations, generally summarised as being too constraining or prescriptive (Jay & Johnson, 2002). Typologies may have the potential for ignoring the dynamic nature of identity, the potential for oversimplifying complex phenomena and mask difficulties in applying common rules to a diverse range of individuals. However, I felt that a range of positive outcomes could be gained from the development of such a representation, although the need to illustrate the phenomena as dynamic and fluid was also accepted. A typology that relates to trainee primary teachers' learning needs was perceived to have practical value to trainee primary teachers themselves (to aid reflection), to teacher educators (to promote understanding of learning needs and identify issues pertinent to course design) and school-based mentors (to promote understanding of professional learning needs and to highlight practical implications relevant to school settings). The development of such a classification was also used within the final stage of analysis in which the respondents were presented with a draft typology (appendix 12) and asked to provide feedback on the model, supporting validation of findings. It is also suggested that the development of a typology offers scope for extending research in the future, for testing the model in different training

contexts, within different subjects and as a teaching and learning tool to aid within-course reflection.

The use of typologies has been prevalent in empirical social sciences for some time, yet the systematic and transparent construction of such classifications is rarely explicated or systemised (Kluge, 2000). Although typologies have been constructed to explain complex social realities in educational settings (Moos 1978; Brekelmans, Levy & Rodriguez., 1993; Tunstall & Gipps, 1996; Hess, 1999; Rickards, den Brok & Fisher, 2005) there appears to be little common ground in the approaches taken to derive the respective typologies. The development of a typology in this investigation was a direct consequence of the comprehensive data treatment that took place using IPA and descriptive analysis of quantitative data. In order to develop the typology systematically, Kluge's (2000) model of empirically grounded typology construction was adopted. Relevant analysing dimensions were produced through the IPA process described above. All potential combinations of such dimensions were considered in relation to each trainee within the interview sample and the number of potential types, based on the combinations of attributes most prevalent was identified. The trainee teachers were divided into groups in relation to the data collated under the emerging themes; participants were allotted to each emerging category or 'type' as they shared a number of attributes (*cf.* Bailey 1994) and were also defined strongly by clear differences within the range of attributes. The discussion of results provided in chapters 5, 6 and 7 utilises the typology as a central theme from which implications for practice are drawn; this classification of trainee teachers is illustrated as an outcome of the structure-disposition-

practice schema discussed earlier in this chapter which is represented diagrammatically as a set of dials. The typology is a constituent component of this model.

### **Summary**

This chapter has demonstrated how the philosophical positioning of the research, together with the literature review and formulation of research questions has impacted upon research design and the specific methods utilised for data collection and analysis. The research has been designed in full awareness of wider epistemological and methodological discussion; however, rather than attempt to solve such philosophical debate, my intention has been to create a research framework through which full consideration of all phenomena which impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE can be enabled. The review of social theories has pointed to the need to consider both structural and individual factors and, in designing a research framework that achieves this it is hoped that new, deeper levels of understanding can be developed.

The research questions therefore focus on the relationship between individual trainee factors and the wider context within ITT and education. The use of a flexible research design, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods was intended to enable the development of a full account of trainee teachers' experiences and emerging practices within PEITT. The results, discussed in detail in the following three chapters, provide a full, reliable and authentic account of the phenomena at large and suggest significant implications for trainees, those

working in their support, and policy makers. Chapter 5 presents the results in relation to the first research question, focused on trainee teacher dispositions towards PE and sport.

## CHAPTER 5

### TRAINEE PRIMARY TEACHER DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS PE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses the results of data collection and analysis in relation to the first research question:

What are the dispositions of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE and how are these dispositions animated by the properties and processes of ITT?

The key themes for discussion in this chapter have been identified from the statistical analysis of quantitative data (the PSPP and PIP) and IPA of qualitative data derived from semi structured interviews. This research question led me to view the issues under investigation from the perspective of the individual trainee teacher; personal dispositions are described in relation to properties and processes within ITT, using specific examples to illustrate the interplay between structures, disposition and practice.

The trainee primary teachers who participated in this study demonstrated a wide range of dispositions towards PE. The findings contrast with those earlier studies (discussed in chapter 3) which suggested that *most* primary teachers enter the profession with low levels of confidence to teach the subject (Saunders, 1975; Carney and Chedzoy, 1998; Katene *et al.*, 2000; Portman (1996) and Xiang *et al.*, 2002). The results support the views of Morgan and Bourke (2005) and Garret and Wrench (2007) who suggest that a wide range of life experiences, dispositions and social influences combine to produce an equally wide range of ITT needs amongst the cohort of trainee primary teachers. Although it is evident that some

trainees hold negative attitudes towards PE, this study identifies a wide ranging, complex and highly individualised set of dispositions. As described in more detail later in this chapter, a high proportion of trainee teachers in the sample exhibited a negative physical self-perception; some trainees perceived themselves as possessing low levels of competence in sport whilst some did not perceive sport to be particularly important. Whilst a small number of trainees were very positively disposed towards PE and sport, others appeared more ambivalent. The ‘sum of the parts’ making up such views is unique to each individual, yet although generalisation across the sample has the potential to detract from a full understanding of the phenomena at large, patterns and trends are useful when considering the implications of the findings for practice. This chapter will discuss trainee primary teacher dispositions towards PE and sport and the determinants of these viewpoints, and explore the ways in which these dispositions are animated throughout the ITT process.

### **Dispositions towards PE and sport**

Data collected through the PSPP and PIP provided insights into trainee teachers’ dispositions towards PE and sport at the outset of the investigation. The trainees achieved a wide range of scores across all four sub-domains of the PSPP (namely, ‘sport’, ‘body’, ‘strength’, and ‘condition’) and in ‘general physical self-worth’ (PSW). Descriptive statistical analysis identified patterns and trends that were shared by participants, although the trainee primary teachers in the group did not exhibit one universally shared set of physical self perceptions; participants achieved a wide range of scores in all aspects of the profiles. Overall, physical self worth (PSW) scores ranged from the lowest possible (a score of 6, where three participants indicated the lowest possible rating of 1 for each of six statements) through to a highest rating

of 21 (by two participants). No trainees indicated the maximum possible rating (24) for PSW. Forty-eight respondents (57.8% of the sample) scored in the range of 6 to 12. This range was viewed at a descriptive level to indicate a ‘negative’ view of PSW, as scores in this range were achieved by agreeing with negatively framed statements offered within the questions, providing a numeric response of either 1 or 2. When compared across values in all sub-domains (table 5.1), mean group score was lowest in the PSW category, although the ‘body’ category had the lowest mode value and highest proportion of trainees scoring within ‘negative’ values. This suggested that, at a general level, the group of trainee primary teachers held somewhat negative self perceptions of their physical characteristics. Such data were treated with caution as mean and mode scores clearly obscure the full range of scores achieved; for the purposes of this study, it was imperative that both ‘extreme’ and ‘average’ cases were investigated further.

Table 5.1 Descriptive data from PSPP

Sub-Domain	Mean	Mode	SD	Percentage in -ve range (6-12)	Percentage in +ve range (13-24)
PSW	12.6	12	5.5	57.8%	42.2%
SPORT	14.5	11	5.3	55.4%	44.6%
BODY	13.5	10	4.8	62.6%	37.4%
STRENGTH	13.1	12	3.3	50.6%	49.4%
CONDITION	13.1	12	4.2	53.0%	47.0%

The ‘sport’ sub-domain showed the highest group mean score, yet the mode value (11) was still within the ‘negative’ range, with over 55% of responses grouped in the range of 6-12. Whilst this data is descriptive and self-reported (and therefore with an accepted risk for respondents to self-score along central or negative values), it does suggest a view of physical

self perception amongst the participants that was generally more negative than positive. It was also noted that the results within the ‘sport’ sub-domain in particular, and in all sub-domains in general, appears to have been skewed by the small number (6) of male participants in the overall group. Table 5.2 shows gender sub group mean scores across all sub-domains and for general physical self-worth. Sub group scores for male and females are seen to be distinctly different.

Table 5.2 Gender sub-group mean scores

	PSW	SPORT	BODY	STRENGTH	CONDITION
Group mean (n=83)	12.6	14.5	13.5	13.1	13.1
Male only mean (n=6)	17.8	20.1	17.3	15.7	19.0
Female only mean (n=77)	12.1	12.3	11.0	12.9	12.7

Mean values for males in each category were all in excess of 15, with the ‘sport’ sub-domain indicating the highest of the sub-group means. The male sub-group means are all within the ‘positive’ range of scores and are in excess of female sub-group means. The widest discrepancy occurs between males and females in the body satisfaction sub-domain where the female only sub-group achieved its lowest rating. The highest mean for the female sub-group was within the strength sub domain, whilst this sub-domain was the lowest scoring in the male groups. The small number of males in this group had a markedly more positive self-reported physical self-perception than most females who made up the majority (92%) of the sample. Further statistical analysis indicated highly significant gender differences in sport, condition, body, sports importance and PSW scores (see table 5.3). There was a significant gender

difference in strength and non significant differences in condition importance, body importance and strength importance.

Table 5.3 Gender differences within the sub-domains of physical self-perception

SPORT	t (80) = 4.62, p < 0.001 (2-tailed). This indicates a highly significant gender difference, males > females
CONDITION	Mann-Whitney U (1) = 44.5, p = 0.001 (2-tailed). This indicates a highly significant gender difference, males > females
BODY	t (80) = 4.06, p < 0.001 (2-tailed). This indicates a highly significant gender difference, males > females
STRENGTH	t (80) = 2.00, p = 0.048 (2-tailed). This indicates a significant gender difference, males > females
PHYSICAL SELF WORTH	t (80) = 3.67, p < 0.001 (2-tailed). This indicates a highly significant gender difference, males > females
SPORT IMPORTANCE	t (77) = 2.97, p = 0.004 (2-tailed). This indicates a highly significant gender difference, males > females
CONDITION IMPORTANCE	Mann-Whitney U (1) = 160.0; p = 0.253 (2-tailed). This indicates a non-significant gender difference, males > females
BODY IMPORTANCE	t (77) = -0.28, p = 0.778 (2-tailed). This indicates a non-significant gender difference, males > females
STRENGTH IMPORTANCE	t (77) = 0.42, p = 0.676 (2-tailed). This indicates a non-significant gender difference, males > females

### Gender differences

Investigation relating to the causal factors of such self perceptions was relevant to both male and female respondents. If, for example, male trainee primary teachers had a higher level of PSW than their female counterparts, together with a higher sports competence score and perceived importance of sport, then it would be pertinent to understand why this may be the case, particularly if this has a relationship with disposition towards PE and sport and ensuing teaching behaviours. For some of the female trainees within the sample, negative experiences within school sport and PE are seen to result in specific dispositions and give further rise to

concerns raised in chapter 2 regarding the ‘male-based’ nature of the current NCPE (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). This is highly relevant in light of the gender balance of the primary school workforce and the low number of males entering primary ITT nationally at the time of this study; only 12% of teachers are male and in 3 out of 10 schools there are no male teachers (General Teaching Council for England [GTCE], 2009).

Although the sample size is relatively small, the significant differences between genders suggest that male and female trainees arrive at the outset of the primary ITT process with contrasting physical self perceptions. Where the outcomes of such dispositions manifest themselves within working practices, there is a significant potential for dissonance between trainee teacher dispositions and the expectations placed on them through the structures of ITT and of primary schools in general. For those trainees with a low physical self-perception, a wish for ‘specialist others’ to teach PE appears a common theme, given heightened significance within the landscape of the remodelled workforce outlined in chapter 2 which has created opportunities for visiting ‘specialists’ to relieve class teachers of their responsibilities in PE in schools.

A number of gender differences appeared to emerge from the outset of the investigation; however, the relatively small number of males within the sample prevents a number of broader claims being made. Interview data suggest that it was equally possible for female participants to demonstrate high values of physical self perception and for male participants to demonstrate low levels, although male respondents appeared more confident when discussing physical self

perception during interviews. My field notes written during year 1 (February 2005) included the following entry:

A noticeable difference between the men and women. The men seemed to want to discuss sport and their prowess, whereas the women were much more circumspect. Although some of the men came across as being very confident, I wonder whether this is entirely the case. Future interviews to interrogate this further (Researcher field notes, February 2005).

### **Articulating the physical self**

The extent to which trainees appeared at ease when talking about physical self perception and sports competence varied considerably across the group. Those who had studied PE and/or sport at school examination level (GCSE and Advanced Level PE) appeared most confident in this regard. Such trainee teachers seemed able to reflect on their own participation levels most easily compared to others in the group who had not studied PE as part of their school examination curriculum. In general, participants shared memories of life experiences candidly and it seemed that the experiences most closely associated with the formation of physical self-perceptions were easily surfaced in interviews – even where the memories were distant, upsetting and emotionally charged for the trainees concerned. Participants were able to articulate a view of their physical selves, in many cases offering what seemed to be an honest and frank appraisal. Sarah (Stage 1b) explained that she:

Never liked the way I look... I'm too tall, so don't wear heels...I judge myself against other people.

This self-awareness appeared to be in the forefront of Sarah's mind as she provided specific examples of negative comments that family members had made about her appearance throughout her life. This participant typified concerns regarding body weight amongst

participants. Julia (Stage 1c) provided a similarly emotional recollection of a specific incident that she attributed to on-going issues concerning bodily self-perception:

I was teased horribly when I was fourteen on a bus by some boys who started calling me ‘Michelin woman’...I ended up nearly anorexic and was hospitalized at 16 so I did have quite an issue with food. But now I have an issue that I can’t go without food because I get the shakes. I am constantly trying to find ways to stop (eating too much).

In contrast, other respondents showed apparent satisfaction with their physical selves. James (Stage 1b) explained that:

I’m tall, quite big... I’m quite comfortable with who I am so it’s never really been something I’ve bothered with - body image.

Adam (Stage 1c) summarised a self perception of physical competence by saying:

I think I am more of a Springbok. I’m kind of quite slight but can run and do most things...I’m quite happy, I’m quite comfortable. Strong enough and kind of fit enough to do general things.

Participants articulated a perceived link between physical self perception and participation in practical activities, such as taking part in sport or teaching PE in school. For two interviewees, a negative view of self appeared not to impact on a willingness to take part in physical activity and sport. Jo (Stage 1b) described herself as ‘overweight and short - but not bothered about it’ whilst Sarah (with an apparently deep-rooted unhappiness with body image, see above) said that ‘it doesn’t matter what you look like when you play sport and I feel comfortable in those situations’. James (Stage 2a) articulated a link between liking PE and sport and a motivation to choose further PE study in year 2 of the ITT course by saying that:

my gut reaction was to go with things you like. If you like something, you’re going to have an affinity with it, you’re going to do well...I think you’ve got to do something you like.

**Sport: competence and perceived importance**

The PSPP data implied that some trainee teachers viewed themselves more favourably than others in sports ability (sport competence sub domain scores) and other physical sub domains. Of particular relevance to this study was self-perception of 'sports competence' which, in tandem with the trainee teachers' perceived importance of sport (measured through the PIP), was seen to influence trainee teachers' attitudes towards PE. In general terms, trainees with high physical self perception and a high importance attached to sport were positively disposed towards sport and, by association, PE. Adam typified the view of trainees in this group by saying that he was 'sporty and always had been' (Stage 1c). Other trainee teachers were dismissive of any potential to improve their competence (particularly with regard to sports competence); Becky typified the views of trainees of this type by saying that PE and sport was 'just not them' Stage 1b).

The results gleaned from question 1 of the PSPP provided a snapshot of where trainees saw themselves in relation to 'sports competence'. Overall, 73% of trainees responded negatively to this question (i.e. a score of 6-12 deemed to be in a negative range of response). At the same time, PIP scores indicated a positive correlation between the perceived importance of sport and domain-specific self-perception (i.e. the sports competence sub-domain). In general terms, higher sport competence scores correlated with high levels of importance attached to sport. Results demonstrated, however, that for a small number of trainees (2 out of the 13 participants in Stage 2), incongruence existed between sport specific self-perception and the perceived importance of sport. Such trainees were characterised by high levels of perceived importance of sport and low self-perception in relation to sport competence. Such trainee

teachers appeared to understand the importance of sport and physical activity for children yet suggested that this was not something that they should or could be teaching. For example, Kay (Stage 3b) stated:

I can see why it's good for children to be active and for them to enjoy sport, but I just don't feel comfortable teaching it...the older kids know more about sport than me anyway and I worry about the organisation and stuff. I know it's wrong for me not to want to give children the opportunity, but I am much happier in the classroom.

The trainee teachers who articulated the greatest levels of confidence in and enthusiasm for PE during interviews were those who originally self-reported positive PSW and sport competence together with high perceived importance of sport. Such trainee teachers embarked on their ITT course with an unquestioned commitment to teaching PE in school and were ready and willing to take the role as teachers of PE at an early stage of school based experience. For example, in his year 1 school experience placement, Adam was pleased to be allowed to 'teach all the PE the class had', although this was not a formal expectation or requirement of the placement. Adam had not considered whether this was entirely appropriate or whether or not he should expect a degree of mentoring whilst working in the school based context. Of particular interest was the way in which such trainee teachers coped with the demanding task of teaching PE to a full class during year 1 school experience. The coping mechanism described was a reliance on previous experiences of coaching in a sports context or on personal, recent experiences of taking part in sport as participants. For example, Nicola (Stage 1c) said that:

I chose to do some netball with them, some drills and skills and a small game. They loved it; don't think they had done PE like that before.

Nicola, herself a netball player, selected (and was permitted to do so) an activity that she had personal experience of, and confidence within. This was the first point of reference for this

trainee who, without guidance from class teacher or mentor, did not immediately turn to the children's records of prior learning, lecture notes from university based sessions or curriculum frameworks. Nicola described her own view of the class teacher as appearing 'relieved' to delegate responsibility for PE delivery to an enthusiastic trainee during the placement. It appears in such examples that the class teacher views the trainee as a 'specialist other', based on an informal judgement of the level of confidence and personal experience described by the trainee. In this way, a positive disposition towards PE and sport was seen to 'prime' such trainees towards particular behaviours, including enthusiastic adoption of the role of PE teacher at an initial stage of professional development. These trainee teachers had also earmarked, at a similarly early stage of ITT, the election of further PE study in years two and three of the ITT course, further demonstrating the 'priming' effect of a positive disposition towards the subject.

No trainees in the sample held a high physical self perception in the sport sub-domain alongside a low perceived importance of sport. The inference here is that those trainees who rated themselves highly in sports performance were most likely to perceive sport as being very important. The trainees who were positively disposed towards PE and sport (i.e. with very high sport competence and PIP rating) were a minority in this group of trainee teachers. The number of trainees with a very high SPORT self-perception (PSPP SPORT score, 20-24) and high perceived importance of SPORT (PIP=6-8) was very low (4.82%). This group was made up of those trainee teachers who were confident in their own physical abilities and for whom sport was important. Further statistical analysis demonstrated a positive correlation between sport self perception and perceived importance of sport. 'Pearson's  $r$ ' indicated a highly

significant positive correlation between SPORT self-perception and SPORT IMPORTANCE (Pearson's  $r(79) = 0.610$ ;  $p < 0.001$  (2-tailed). Unsurprisingly, this confirmed that the trainee primary teachers in this cohort were more likely to attach a high importance to sport if they also perceived themselves to be competent sportspeople. This concurs with the views of self theorists (Harter, 1985, 1986; Neeman & Harter, 1986; Marsh, 1986; Marsh & Sonstroem, 1995) who explored the roles of perceptions of competence and subjective importance across a variety of domains including sport.

### **Influences on dispositions**

The influences on trainee teachers' dispositions were seen to be individualised, complex and wide ranging. The results confirmed the importance of trainees' prior experiences in PE (*c.f.* Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Belka *et al.*, 1991; Doolittle *et al.*, 1993; Placek *et al.*, 1995; Keating *et al.*, 2002), although this was seen as only one influencing factor. Wider life experiences, trainee experiences during ITT and the influence of other people have also been highlighted as significant influences on emerging teaching behaviours during ITT, working in tandem with prior experiences to mediate practice. The trainee teachers experienced a wide range of events during their lives leading up to the start of the ITT course. Such experiences encompassed the education and training experienced before beginning the ITT course, prior experiences in PE and sport, notable family events and incidents and interactions with other people. For example, not all trainees had followed 'traditional' pathways from GCSE to Advanced Level study as entry to the university course. Of the 24 trainees who took part in qualitative research stages, only 9 had followed this route from A Level study to undergraduate ITT. The others were older and had taken breaks following study, or had left school at 16 (and subsequently

followed an ‘access to teaching’ course in a Further Education College). Experiences in school and broader life experiences were varied amongst the participants, yet seemingly played equally important roles in determining dispositions, attitudes and emerging working practices. Life experiences were discussed during Stage 1 and 2 interviews and, in relation to the research questions, specific experiences were seen to be influential. Such life experiences included those which happened many years before (for example enjoying sport at school, or being bullied because of body weight) as well as those which were on-going (for example being a parent, or experiencing poor health).

### *Experiences in school PE and sport*

The wide range of life experiences is exemplified amongst individual interviewees who described a range of experiences in PE and sport. This relates in part to the national context in which they were schooled as well as the particular sector of schooling. James, for example, attended an international school in Singapore and was exposed to an Australian-influenced curriculum, with ‘sport high on the agenda’ (Stage 1c). Leanne went to school in Ireland and participated in traditional Irish Dance activities throughout secondary school; Peter attended a private boarding school and attributed his perceived self competence in sport to an exposure to regular, daily, compulsory sport. In such cases, experience of PE and sport as a school pupil played a large part in determining disposition towards the subject. Each of these participants had a relatively high self perception of sports competence and perceived importance attached to sport, although Peter expressed concern regarding teaching gymnastics and dance, areas of the primary PE curriculum of which he had no prior experience. All participants were able to describe memories of school PE and sport. Where a positive memory of school PE surfaced,

this was usually linked to team participation, success, and praise from teachers or feelings of competence. This included description of the benefits gained through taking on leadership roles in sport, such as being a team captain. The trainees seemed unsure about any distinction between PE and sport and all mainly recalled games activities when recounting experiences. Leanne, the ‘Irish dancer’, was the only respondent to recall dance without prompting by the researcher; even then, her account was in reference to an extracurricular club. Adam’s experiences of sport started at an early age, having played and received coaching in a number of sports. He remembered that his primary PE coordinator was the school football coach and recollections were entirely based on extracurricular activities. Adam felt that he had ‘been lucky’ to have had such positive experiences in his own time as a pupil and stated that ‘if you know how to do it you can teach it quite comfortably’ (Stage 2a interview). Adam was seemingly motivated towards teaching PE or at least a sport-based conception of the subject that he understood as PE, and expressed an early desire (during Year 1 of his course) to select further PE for study in Years 2 and 3 of the course. He also expressed a wish to become a primary school PE coordinator in the future.

Ellie played for her secondary school netball and football teams and was ‘sports captain’. She cited a positive memory of primary school sports days where there was ‘a full staff involvement’. She also described how her role as sports captain at secondary school was demanding, that the PE staff ‘asked a lot of her’ and that ‘she was very aware of her role as a leader’. Ellie had studied PE to GCSE level and was ‘looking forward to doing PE at University and to have a go teaching it’ (Stage 1c interview). Leanne was another respondent who provided positive recollections of school sport, proudly sharing her memories:

When I was at school I was good at sport and I enjoyed it. They'd say here comes Leanne, she's a brilliant runner - oh, makes you feel good when you're a kid. I got into the teams for most things, only because of my height I was refused a place in the netball team. But then I managed, I got into the team and I was captain in the end (Stage 2a).

Conversely, other trainee teachers had few distinctive memories of PE or sport at school and, where fleeting memories were surfaced, they were often characterised by negative events. For example, Ria (Stage 2b) remembered hitting a friend with a tennis racket and being hit by a hockey stick, saying that 'I know you want me to remember what fun we had in school PE, but that's about it, all I seem to remember are the things that hurt'. Sarah (2a) noted that 'we didn't have that much sports going in my day at school' whilst Jo felt that she is:

Lacking in confidence as I was never taught the basic skills, was never part of school teams. I was always the one picked last and things...sport was just something that I wasn't good at. Because it's competitive, and when I went to secondary school, that seemed to be all it was about (Stage 2a interview).

In some cases, recollections were tinged with a level of disappointment. For example, Jo said that she enjoyed specific activities and recalled feeling confident when throwing the javelin. She expressed disappointment that this was something that she could only ever do for 'two weeks of the year, and even then it was never taught properly' (Stage 1c interview). Jo typifies those trainee teachers who felt that school PE and sport had little personal relevance. Prior experiences in PE and sport were therefore seen as significant influencing factors on trainee teacher disposition towards such activities. This appears particularly to be the case for trainees who exhibited either strongly positive or negative dispositions and for whom memories of the sporting experience in school reinforced the notion that PE and sport are the same. Trainees who received frequent praise or indirect reward by being team members and captains were positively predisposed towards PE and sport whereas those with negative memories appeared to be negatively predisposed.

### *Wider life experiences*

Trainee teachers explained how wider life experiences were life-changing events which resulted in specific actions later in life. For example, Julia interrupted academic study to have a baby and returned to full time education to embark on the BA Primary Education course. Having a disabled father and older siblings, ‘who were never around because they were always playing football’, also appears to be a significant factor in the development of Julia’s negative view of physical self and perceptions of PE and sport, although as a mother, she also expresses a belief in the importance of health and physical activity for children:

I have a 7 year old boy and know how important physical activity is for him. I try to encourage him to be active and play football with his friends...it’s about health and also letting off steam... they need to do it (Stage 1c interview).

In this case, although Julia seemingly lacks confidence regarding sport, there appeared to be a willingness to contemplate becoming a teacher of PE owing to a viewpoint as a mother of a primary school aged child. In this case, the wider life experience of being a parent suggests that she had motivation in the early stages of ITT to apply herself to learn to teach PE and overcome any negative perceptions she may have.

Wider life experiences also impacted on Sarah’s physical self perception. Sarah left school at the age of 15 without any qualifications, only later in life embarking on a university degree following completion of an ‘access to teaching course’ at a Further Education College. Sarah had previously worked as a plumber and lorry driver and amongst this life experience had discovered that ‘her father wasn’t who she thought he was’. Such a life event led to a ‘process of self discovery’ in which Sarah became acutely aware of her own body image (a parent ‘subjected her to constant sniping about her weight’) and in which she developed a resolve to deal with any challenges thrown her way. In such a way, notions of physical self perception

were seen to be entwined with life experiences, relationships with other people and a deep rooted, emotionally charged, personal history. Although not directly relevant to PE and sport, Sarah's own feelings and attitudes towards her physical self meant that she 'would feel a bit self conscious jumping about in front of other people' (for example during PE lectures), although this concern was not seen as a limiting factor when teaching children in a primary school:

I don't see it as a problem with kids, especially primary aged kids...I'll just get on with it and have fun, it doesn't matter if you make a fool of yourself...that's what the job's all about (Stage 1c interview).

Sarah, like Julia, was a trainee with potential to move from being predisposed against the teaching of PE (in this case because of a negative body image) to being more positive about her own role as a teacher of primary PE (because of her willingness to face challenges and greater security when working with children rather than adults). The physical health of family members was also a factor which encouraged trainee teachers to remain open minded about the value of PE despite a negative predisposition towards the subject. Mary commented on the impact of 'seeing my mother (who was severely overweight) suffer kidney failure and die' on her own motivation to engage in physical activity, although she also describes having her own family as a 'disruption to a previously active lifestyle'. Nevertheless, she now appeared committed to the notion that physical activity was important for children and appeared determined to gain experience in teaching PE during ITT. As with Julia's experiences, this shift seemed dependent on experiences during ITT and, particularly the opportunities for development provided during school based experiences (see chapter 6).

### *The influence of others*

In all cases, trainee teacher recollections of PE and sport involved other people. The groups of people discussed included family members, friends, peers and school staff. Ellie (Stage 1c) reinforced the importance of family support, saying ‘at home, encouragement was a big thing’ whilst for Jane, having a younger sister (who was in year 6 at the time of the start of the investigation) has enabled her to become an interested sibling and role model (Stage 1c). She explained how she was brought up in an active family, enjoying cycling holidays and football days in the park. She also developed this childhood involvement into adult participation and was still keen to try new activities, joining the university trampoline club during her first year. Jane appeared positively predisposed towards PE and sport and was looking forward to applying teaching methods in the school context. Ellie similarly described the positive influence of her active parents:

Both my parents were really active and they always encouraged me. Like in primary school I was going to athletics. They were both athletes, so they always encouraged me. They did encourage me...they always dropped me off and collected me (Stage 1c interview).

A strong connection to memories of PE and sport was made when respondents referred to their PE teachers. Those at James’ middle school were ‘rugby barmy- we did very little soccer’ (Stage 1c). James recalled trying to please his PE teachers by taking part in everything, saying ‘if you do everything, the PE teachers love you, don’t they?’ Role models in school were seen to be important by respondents who named a person who had a positive impact on them. Amanda explained her own motivation to become a teacher in this regard (Stage 1b interview):

I had a really nice teacher in primary school, Year 6, she was great. I just wanted to be a bit like her really.

The influence of peers continues to be a source of motivation to be active for trainee teachers.

Rachel commented that:

a friend of mine trampolines, and watching them makes me think, oh- I could do that, so I gave it a go and loved it and carried it on (Stage 1c).

Amanda reflected on studying at an institution with a 'sports culture' which seems to permeate student life beyond the realms of taught courses. Watching student teams on Wednesday afternoons was discussed as an influencing factor. She commented:

everyone's kind of like, look at them. I want to be more like them. There is definitely a view here that sport is a good thing (Stage 2a).

This influence was one stated factor that shaped Amanda's choice to select to study further PE in the second year of ITT. Adam's peer group also continued to provide motivation for participation in sports. At the end of Year 1, Adam explained his accommodation arrangements for the following year and that he had chosen to live with his 'sports scientist friends because they shared a passion for playing sport'.

### **Disposition and trainee primary teacher practice during ITT**

The results discussed above support the earlier views of Morgan and Bourke (2005) and Garret and Wrench (2007) who suggest that a wide range of life experiences and social influences combine to produce an equally wide range of ITT needs amongst the cohort of trainees. This range of factors has been also been seen within this study to create a range of possible behavioural outcomes, a 'horizon of action' (Stones, 2005, p.101) for each trainee during the ITT process. Varying dispositional characteristics are animated by the properties and structures of ITT and particular behaviours and practices result. Personal disposition towards PE, demonstrated by physical self perception and perceived importance of sport has a

'priming effect,' positioning each trainee teacher in favour of or against the notion of becoming a teacher of primary PE. Those trainees who have confidence in PE and sport and who value sport highly are generally ready and willing to embrace professional development possibilities (such as practising the teaching of PE in school or electing further non compulsory PE modules) within the subject. The most positively predisposed trainees in this study were those who remembered PE and sport fondly and who had recent experiences in sport and physical activity as adults. Such trainees seized opportunities to teach PE during school experiences, readily volunteering to do so and electing to study further PE modules in years 2 and 3 of the course. This group of trainees, however, was relatively small; of the 24 trainees comprising the Stage 1 interview sample, only three trainees clearly fitted within this category (Adam, James and Nicola).

Those who were least confident about their own sports participation and who did not place a high value on sport appeared more likely to avoid teaching the subject. These trainees were also highly unlikely to elect to study further PE to fill any perceived knowledge gap or to increase levels of confidence and perceived competence. Such trainee teachers generally held negative memories of PE and sport, and appeared unprepared to consider the possibility of becoming a teacher of PE. Of the 24 Stage 1 trainees interviewed, five were identifiable in this way (Amy, Fran, Jo, Kay, Ria). There is also a third broad group of trainees for whom wider life experiences have resulted in an acceptance that PE is an important aspect of the primary school curriculum, despite a low personal level of perceived physical self competence. In some cases, trainees with initial ambivalence towards the subject grew in confidence as a result of university based lectures and positive experiences in school; for others, a lack of

opportunity to apply knowledge in school reinforced a pre-existing indifference towards PE and served to animate perceived low levels of confidence. Trainees within this group appeared more susceptible to a shift in disposition in relation to PE, as previously suggested in general, non PE specific terms by Burn, Hagger and Mutton, (2000) and Oosterheert and Vermunt (2001). For this group, initial indifference towards PE appears open to the possibility of change, either through further reinforcement of indifference or through positive change. This is only apparent where such possibilities of action are encouraged and provided for within the ITT process.

The results lend weight to Rogers' (1951) suggestion that behaviour serves to maintain a consistency of self and that trainee teachers invest elements of self in their work, resulting in a merging of personal and professional identity (Nias, 1996). For some trainees, a successful amalgamation of self and social identity (Shilling, 1993) has been achieved. This includes those positively disposed towards teaching PE who are afforded frequent opportunities to teach PE during school placements and who are perceived by others to be 'specialists' at an early stage. Through experiencing early (albeit informal) teaching responsibility in school, by receiving acceptance as 'specialists' from school based colleagues and peers, and through acquisition of further knowledge and experience within elective studies, this positive disposition was animated and enabled throughout the ITT process. For those who are negatively predisposed towards PE, however, successful amalgamation of self and social identity is also achievable. This is facilitated when trainees are able to avoid teaching PE during placements (through a lack of a formal expectation to do so) and further legitimised when working alongside class teachers who attach an equally low priority to PE. For such

trainees, the low priority afforded to PE is validated by the behaviours of others (such as the host class teacher) within the school context. Such trainees progressed through ITT without experiencing significant challenges to either personal disposition or professional development. Dissonance or tension did not surface as each of this identifiable group progressed satisfactorily through successive teaching placements without being faced with regular and assessed requirements to teach PE. The requirements of ITT and expected norms for achieving QTS did not create conditions for the manifestation of such tension through which the negative disposition (and accompanying low levels of confidence and experience) could be fore-grounded, challenged or broken down. For such trainees, day to day practices in school legitimised a negative view of the subject through, for example, the use of non - qualified teachers to teach PE in school, an acceptance by mentors and class teachers of the relatively low priority of PE, and lack of structured opportunities to reflect on experiences. In this way, negative dispositions were animated, reinforced, tolerated and legitimised.

### **Trainees' general progress**

Trainee teacher decisions about how to act were not always been made easily or freely. As Craib (1992, p.172) points out, decisions are 'often surrounded by internal conflicts, and it is quite conceivable that we might feel that one part of ourselves has decided something that another part is fighting'. At times during ITT the trainee teachers were faced with such conflict in relation to PE. For example, the subject temporarily became a low priority for James against the aim of 'survival' during year 2 school experience, despite a clear and long standing commitment to becoming a physical educator. Prior to embarking on year 2 school experience, Leanne commented:

I'm like a marble rolling about in a big tin: banging about in the sides and thinking well I've done that and I've done that. Where is it all going? What am I doing? What focus do I have? That's why I'm here...I'll find out whether it's the right thing for me or not (Stage 2a).

Such comments crystallised Leanne's feelings at that moment in time; she appeared to be racked with self doubt and wondering whether a commitment to becoming a qualified teacher was indeed the right path for her. These feelings were much more significant to Leanne at this moment in time than any view she may have held regarding PE. Her concerns were about life decisions: was teaching the right thing for her to be pursuing as a career? Could she actually teach? This typifies the view of the trainee teachers across the investigation; the ITT experience was characterised by a clearly defined set of expected behaviours and 'norms' imposed by the requirements of ITT and the ITT provider. The dominant goal was to become a qualified teacher, achieved by conforming to expected norms of behaviour. In this context, being able to teach PE was not a high priority for the majority of the trainee teachers or those charged with supporting their development in the school context.

The ITT experience represented the primary school curriculum through a subject approach, mirroring the NC with regards Core and Foundation subjects. As a result, the amount of time (and therefore perceived importance) afforded to PE during university based ITT, through formal written assessments and in school based requirements was relatively low, further reinforcing a view that PE was not particularly important (or at least not as important as the Core subjects). This was also reflected in the experiences of trainees who faced significant challenges during ITT. For example, when faced with being removed from school experience in Year 2, James said that:

To be honest with you, PE is the least of my worries. I just need to survive this, get into a new school and get my head down. I know I can teach PE without too much effort, and I have to focus on the paperwork side of things. There's just so much of it and to be honest with you I had a clash of personalities with the class teacher who was the complete opposite to me (Stage 2b).

Discussing the ITT experience during interviews provided a rich source of reflection and comment. Interviews took place during the time frame of the ITT experience and participants were readily able to comment on immediate past experiences and on-going events. Interviews were timed to coincide with key events of the three year course (for example following PE lectures, immediately prior to the first major school experience, immediately after the final school experience). The trainee teachers described a feeling of apprehension at the outset of the ITT course. This was coupled with a sense of being overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the task of becoming a qualified primary teacher. Trainees were quickly aware of the need to conform to expectations with regards planning, paperwork and folders:

I can't believe the amount of paperwork, it's like you are constantly being bombarded with stuff and we haven't been anywhere near a school or kids yet (Jo, Stage 1c).

I am not so good at the paperwork to be honest...I feel happy when I am on my feet actually teaching, I love it...but the planning and all the forms and guidance is a bit much (James Stage 3a).

They [the tutors] have been great at explaining what we have to do with the standards and expectations or TP this year...I just hope that I can keep up with it all when I am in school. I'm sure I'll be OK and I just keep thinking that I will be doing it for real in September – kind of exciting and a bit daunting at the same time (Ellie Stage 3a).

The pattern of early apprehension was usually followed by a view of positive, enjoyable experiences:

I found the first two weeks of the course totally overwhelming... daunting- I felt that part of me had made the wrong decision. When things settled down a bit I thought I can do this and I am now enjoying things. It's what I really want to do (Julia, Stage 1c).

The adjustment to university learning was, in some cases, difficult, with the 'amount of reading required coming as a bit of a shock' (Sarah, Stage 1c). Interestingly, one trainee who had followed an 'access to teaching course' felt 'better prepared for academic writing in comparison to A-level students' (Fran, Stage 1b). It was also evident that despite challenges and apprehension, the trainee teachers in the interview sample remained committed to the task in hand and to their vision of becoming a qualified teacher over time. School based experiences played a central role in the trainees' overarching experiences of the ITT process. Participants placed importance on doing well in this aspect of ITT, seeing school experience as the 'real bread and butter' (Ria, Stage 3b) of the course. School experience was seen as 'real world' where the application of knowledge and theories was placed into the professional context. Periods of school experience provided trainees with significant challenges through which priorities became survival and 'doing what I had to, just to pass' (Adam, Stage 2a). For such trainees at these times, PE became a lower priority, even though in some cases confidence may have been derived from being an effective practitioner in this subject. Effective teaching of the classroom priorities of English and Maths and of the maintenance of effective paper systems and records were acknowledged as the requisite route to achieving QTS:

To be honest with you, I almost didn't come back. I had a complete mare during school experience where I ended up not completing. I had a personality clash with my class teacher and I was pulled out. I ended up going back to the school I had last year where I got on really well. I didn't have any problems there, but I feel as though it's dented my confidence a bit... I just had to get on with it, but it has made me worry about whether being a teacher is what I still want to do (James, Stage 3b).

Trainee teachers' general progress in ITT was rarely straightforward, yet trainees did not readily share problems and challenges in the interviews. It was most common for trainee

teachers in year 1 and 2 to describe how they were completing modules and progressing through school experience without any problems as an initial response. Researcher field notes during interviews of year 2 trainee teachers suggest:

Perhaps it's because I am seen as connected to the academic tutors, but the students appear to be presenting a generally positive picture of their experiences. I can't believe that it is all plain sailing! Try to probe deeper in subsequent interviews! (March 2006).

Such subsequent probing attempted to get beyond the trainees' perceptions of success as 'staying on course' and 'achieving the QTS standards' and identified particular challenges around the evidence base required and volume of academic work load:

I'm not sure whether I am a really good teacher or not, but I am ticking the boxes and seem to be doing OK. We have so much work to do and things to learn in some subjects that I just don't have much spare time, but it's worth it in the end (Leanne, Stage 2b).

I am glad it's over with...don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it and the school was great. I loved being the class teacher and will miss the kids, but there was just no time for anything during block...my tutor wasn't happy with my plans at first so I ended up having to write lesson plans for quite a while which I found frustrating because my class teacher just worked from medium term plans and notes...all I need to do now is pass my assignments and I'll be a teacher (Jo, Stage 3b)

### **Disposition and identity**

The disposition of trainee primary teachers towards PE and sport is also related to an evolving teacher identity. Teacher identity literature focuses on changes taking place in beliefs, concerns, self images and identities during ITT (Bryan, 2003; Mullholland & Wallace, 2003; Drake *et al.*, 2001), yet a proportion of trainees in this study appear to retain deep rooted dispositions and beliefs which are resistant to change. For such trainees, PEITT results in either an early and full commitment to the teaching of PE within the role of primary teacher, or to the avoidance of teaching PE altogether. Trainee disposition is akin to Bourdieu's (1977)

concept of habitus, the taken for granted and unnoticed state which is drawn upon without thinking in the actions that agents engage in. One global, shared habitus for the group of trainee teachers in this study was not identified, yet a range of demonstrated dispositions was seen in relation to specific patterns and trends. The dispositions discussed in interviews, and unearthed through the initial quantitative scale, had not previously been considered by the majority of trainees themselves. This supported the notion that such dispositions are generally 'undiscussed and undisputed' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 167) and that many of the trainee teachers carried with them predispositions towards PE and sport (either positive, negative or ambivalent) that had been 'taken for granted' for some time. For trainees such as Adam, Nicola and James, a positive disposition towards sport and PE was an unquestioned part of identity; engaging with the subject and seeking opportunities to teach it appeared an obvious, unquestioned and automatic path to take. As Stones (2005, p. 88) suggests, 'we don't even notice that we are basing our actions upon it, it is that close to us'. Those trainees with positive dispositions in PE and sport assumed that PE was an aspect of the curriculum that they would engage with wholeheartedly as trainees and as teachers in the future and this position appeared unlikely to change throughout the ITT process. For trainees such as Kay, Amy and Fran, however, this unnoticed state was one of being negatively predisposed. A negative disposition towards PE and sport was an accepted component of personal identity and opportunities to engage with PE were not actively sought. For those for whom PE and sport carried such negative connotations, entrenched and unquestioned viewpoints prevailed. For such trainees, PE represents a possible site of tension; here is a NC subject that gives rise to negative memories and in some cases feelings of low physical self worth. There is a potential for trainees to experience dissonance (McDonald & Kirk, 1996) during ITT and in school based

contexts where the teaching of PE is afforded a level of priority which contrasts with personal disposition. In such instances, a gap between 'self identity' and 'social identity' (Shilling, 1993) could conceivably lead to tension, self doubt and anxiety. Whilst trainee teachers such as James and Amy were identifiable within the extremes described above, others (sixteen of the respondents, including Julia, Leanne and Sarah) occupied a less defined space (at that moment in time) where dispositions were less polarised. This included those who were initially ambivalent towards PE and sport (e.g. Julia) in addition to those who perceived sport and PE to have some degree of relevance (e.g. Leanne). Those occupying this middle ground appeared to be most open to external influences and changes in attitudes during the ITT experience and to the influence of wider factors such as being a parent or carer or having physically active friends or family. The disposition of such trainees appeared less rigid and was a reflection of each trainee's position in the social trajectory of ITT.

### **Summary**

Whilst PSPP and PIP data suggest a generally negative disposition towards PE and sport amongst the group of trainee primary teachers in this study, more detailed exploration of individual cases confirms a very wide range of disposition and numerous associated antecedents. Each trainee's disposition is linked to personal experiences, with trainees being primed 'for' or 'against' the notion of becoming a teacher of primary PE at the outset of the course. Trainee teachers' dispositions towards PE and sport (heavily influenced by prior experiences) are clearly a key influence on practice, and physical self perception (positive, negative or ambivalent) is a key influence on emerging PE teaching behaviour. This concurs with Garret and Wrench's (2007) view that trainee primary teachers bring a range of

subjectivities to the ITT context and with Locke's (1979) notion of an 'invisible apprenticeship' whereby biographies and subjectivities blend to influence trainee teacher responses to the ITT process (see chapter 3).

In all cases, those disposed towards teaching PE had positive past experiences in PE or sport themselves and recent involvement as participants. The significant gender differences seen within the group suggests that male trainees are more likely to be disposed positively towards PE than females, whose own experiences appear to confirm the problems identified in the literature of a male-based emphasis within PE and sport. Those female trainees who can be identified as being positively disposed towards PE, however, articulated positive experiences in school, encouragement from family members and on-going involvement with sport as adults. Within this cohort of trainees, however, being rigidly primed for or against the notion of teaching PE is less common than being somewhat ambivalent, to remaining open to considering the possibility of teaching PE. It is this larger group of trainees, some of whom occupied an ambivalent space at the start of the ITT course, which appears most susceptible to change during the ITT process. Whilst disposition towards PE and sport primes trainees and readies them for possible action, it is experiences during lectures, within school based practice and the formal and informal expectations of the course which shape these possibilities of action. For those trainees who demonstrate a very positive disposition towards PE and sport, there are considerable risks to their progress, particularly in school settings. The risks include lack of opportunity to teach, paucity of mentoring, perception of being a subject specialist at an early stage of development and lack of learning caused by such factors. The following chapter discusses in more detail the role of ITT in shaping the possibilities of action for these

and less positively disposed trainees. For some trainees, this interplay gives rise to the potential for dissonance between social and self identity and either enables or constrains the development of trainees as teachers of primary PE.

Trainee primary teacher disposition towards PE, and the ensuing impact on experiences and practices, has therefore been seen to be wide ranging, confirming and extending understanding by providing a deeper analysis of the range of dispositions (and their causes) that characterise this particular cohort of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE. These dispositions have been seen to result in context specific behaviours. The results suggest that ITT needs to provide differing opportunities for trainees with contrasting dispositions and life experiences in order for all trainees to develop as teachers of primary PE. The extent to which the ITT structure caters for this will be explored in detail in the following chapter, which scrutinises the role of the content and structure of ITT in this regard. The chapter explores in detail the possibilities of action available to the trainee teachers during ITT, highlighting significant contextual influences on trainees' behaviour.

## CHAPTER 6

### STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES ON TRAINEE TEACHER EXPERIENCES IN PRIMARY PEITT

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses the results of data collection and analysis in relation to the second research question:

Given the context of primary ITT, what ‘possibilities of action’ are evident to trainee primary teachers during PEITT?

The question necessitated viewing the issues under investigation from the perspective of structural elements of the ITT process. Structural elements are those features of the ITT process which are external to the trainee; they exist whether or not the trainee has particular experiences in PE and sport or not. They include the timing and content of university-based lectures, the nature of PE provision in school settings, relative priority afforded to PE in university and school curricula, and the role (and dispositions) of others within the structure of ITT. As seen in chapter 5, trainee primary teachers demonstrate a range of dispositions towards PE and sport, brought about by a wide range of life experiences. These dispositions ‘prime’ the trainees to demonstrate particular behaviours and practices, whilst various aspects of the ITT process foreground these dispositions at various times. Some trainees embrace the notion of becoming a teacher of primary PE from an early stage; others are more prone to believing strongly that the subject is best taught by others, whilst some trainees appear more susceptible to a shift in attitude during the ITT course. Whereas chapter 5 presented and discussed the results from the perspective of individual trainees, this chapter closely examines

the role of the ITT structure and the possibilities of action which are shaped by such structural influences.

## **University-based PE**

### *Compulsory PE lectures*

The university context provided all trainees with an initial exposure to PE through one compulsory taught module during Year 1 of the ITT course. All respondents reportedly enjoyed the lectures, despite some expressing initial feelings of apprehension, linked to concerns over safety and personal competence. For example, Ria (Stage 1c interview) said that ‘I didn’t enjoy it at first... I thought, oh my goodness, we’re actually going to do a PE lesson and then once I was doing it I was fine’ whilst Leanne (Stage 1c) stated that ‘I really enjoyed it. It was really fun. It was really, really nice...we were all laughing and having fun- even the ones who said they would hate it’. Sarah reiterated this view by saying:

I only heard one person out of thirty-eight complain... everyone else said it was great fun...It was absolutely brilliant... I actually found it quite fun... the bean bags and the hoops- it was really very good (Stage 1c).

For some, the experience of PE lectures in Year 1 changed their approach to the subject. Vicky (Stage 1c) ‘hadn’t given PE a second thought before the course’ but now expressed a desire to choose PE as an elective subject for year two of the course. She explained that this choice has been affected by positive experiences in lectures:

The course has changed my whole way of thinking. I’m doing subjects that I would never have done before. I’ve actually picked subjects that I would have avoided...and have gained in confidence from experiences (Vicky, Stage 1c).

This positive view and ensuing possibility of action were not shared by all trainees. For example, Adam criticised the content of PE lectures, suggesting that he (as someone who had

studied Advanced Level PE and who was a 'sports performer') was not challenged appropriately:

Some of the things we have gone over, it's been based on what you're expected to teach up to the level of. So, some of the things, I just thought, well I know this. It's just something I'm very comfortable with. I can be involved and help but I'm not really learning too much. I think for me, a lot of it has just gone over my head (Stage 1c).

Adam was a trainee who rated himself highly in the PSPP and proclaimed a confidence to teach 'almost any sport' (Stage 1c). This trainee's views highlight a necessity to consider the learning needs of all trainees, to take account of prior learning, and raise questions pertaining to the extent to which learning is differentiated within university based lectures. Issues regarding perceptions of PE and the need for reflective opportunities to challenge pre held perceptions of the subject (for example relating to appropriate curriculum content in both primary age key stages) are also highly pertinent in this regard and were surfaced in a subsequent interview with Adam:

The PE that I have seen in school so far has been pretty much all games and I have felt comfortable teaching football when I was in school this year. In fact, they let me do whatever I wanted to be honest. We did a couple of lessons of dance too, which was pretty straight forward, but I was much more at home on the field (Stage 2a).

Although Adam did not appear to value the learning experiences provided in Year 1 PE lectures, he remained true to a stated longer term ambition of becoming a PE coordinator in school and elected to study further PE in Years 2 and 3 of the ITT course. The perceived negative experience on course in Year 1 did not adversely affect personal disposition and self-confidence, or alter pre held perceptions of PE and sport being effectively the same. This suggests that the influence of PE lectures for such positively disposed trainees at this stage of teacher development is minimal and that wider life experiences have much greater influence.

The trainees acquired practical ideas for lessons and there was a growing awareness of the need for children to be healthy and that provision of movement, PE and sport opportunities was part of a broad commitment to children's health and the prevailing 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Despite this, those trainees who began ITT with negative dispositions did not appear to be any more confident or perceive themselves as sufficiently knowledgeable in this regard, even after attending lectures. Ria (Stage 3a) exemplified a concern that the precise role of the class teacher within the broad health and physical activity agenda was unclear:

We are being told all the time that children are too fat, and that they don't move enough. I realise that PE has a role to play in helping with this stuff, but I am still not sure how this works, what my role is or whatever (Ria, Stage 3a).

Similarly, Ellie (Stage 2a) demonstrated a somewhat simplistic view of the subject and lack of clarity regarding the educational potential of PE:

The lectures last year were fun and gave us lots of things to try in school, but I am not sure where it all fits in and how important it (PE) is to me as a class teacher. If it's as simple as letting all the children burn off some calories, then I can do that and the children do seem better for having had some exercise when you try to teach them after PE.

Although James remained committed to the notion of developing to become a PE coordinator in the future, he was very much aware of the constraints that a limited exposure to PE within the ITT curriculum presented; he did, however, accept the need for a personal investment in time for developing PE knowledge further:

I feel as though I can play a big role in PE in school and really see myself a coordinator in the future, but I've only really taught a small bit of the curriculum...I don't feel confident in some areas like gymnastics. I'll give it all a go and will be able to manage the class but if I need to advise other teachers and help with planning I'll need to do some research! (James, Stage 2b).

The impact of PE lectures led to a short term change in trainees' attitudes towards the subject. In such cases, trainees seemed more willing to practise the teaching of PE in school, owing to

increases in confidence and enhanced awareness of what and how to teach. For example,

Sarah (Stage 1c) said that:

I have got some good ideas now and understand why it's so important for children. I hope I get chance to teach some PE in school, although I am not sure that I will. When I did some observations in a school before starting here I didn't see much PE at all and I don't think we are expected to teach PE this year. Maybe I will give it a go.

In general terms, the compulsory, Year 1 PE lectures were perceived by the trainees as a positive experience. Although positively disposed trainees expressed a view that they were not developing sufficient subject knowledge during this course, and other trainees highlighted the relatively surface level exploration of the subject, the majority of trainees described the lectures as enjoyable, often more fun than was initially anticipated, providing opportunities for developing subject knowledge. The PE course largely served to allay fears, advocate the importance of the subject and provide a broad introduction to teaching PE, although coverage of all six NC activity areas was clearly not possible during this 20 hour course. This raises significant questions regarding teacher knowledge in the content of primary PE and the content of university based lectures in relation to the national curriculum teachers are charged with delivering. Critically, the key outcome of the compulsory PE lectures appears to be an increase in confidence amongst negatively disposed trainees and the compulsory PE course did not appear to deter trainees from teaching the subject. Through participation in this course trainees were more aware of the nature and content of PE, appropriate teaching strategies in selected activity areas, and the importance of PE within the broader landscape of encouraging healthy physical activity. The teaching of PE during school placement was now a realistic possibility of action for the majority of trainees, although the range of activities and level of support required to negotiate PE teaching practice varied considerably from trainee to trainee.

### *The conflation of PE and sport in ITT*

The conflation of PE and sport in the minds of trainee teachers has been seen to be reinforced by contextual factors. For example, the compulsory PE course studied by all trainee teachers in the sample during Year 1 required the completion of an initial ‘subject knowledge audit’ during the first lecture (see appendix 13). This necessitated the trainees completing a self rating questionnaire, using a 0 to 10 rating scale with regards ‘experience’ (0 signified no experience and 10 regular participation) and ‘performance’ (0 signified none or poor performance and 10 high level / national performance). The scale related to the six activity areas of the national curriculum for PE, although the prominence and level of detail afforded to each area was not equitable. Games activities (the first activity area listed on the audit sheet) was subdivided into categories of games (namely ‘invasion’, ‘net/racket’, ‘striking/fielding’) and each category contained specific, named formats of sports (rugby, hockey, football, basketball, netball, other; tennis, badminton, squash, other; cricket, rounders, softball, other). The other activity areas of NCPE, except athletic activities, were not subdivided into component parts (it would, for example, have been possible following a similar approach, to name different dance styles or formats of gymnastics, strokes in swimming and so on). Trainee teachers were also asked to list any ‘sports governing body awards’ such as coaching certificates that they held.

The audit, completed largely to support development of the course tutors’ understanding of trainee teacher learning needs, afforded a heightened level of importance to trainee teachers’ performance and competence levels. . Undue weighting towards games activities and adult versions of team sports was evident whereas there was little scope for the trainee primary

teachers to document an interest in children's physical development or experience of working with children in wider movement contexts. Interview data suggested that this sport and activity-based conceptualisation of PE was unquestioned by the trainee teachers; as the trainees already appeared to hold the view that PE and sport were the same, the audit and the ensuing games related focus of lectures confirmed this view. The trainees with greatest levels of perceived sport competence and highest values of perceived importance of sport were implicitly confirmed as 'able' in PE from the outset, whilst the negative self perceptions of others with a weaker sense of personal competence were similarly validated. For those with negative dispositions, this conflation appears to limit possibilities of action with regards to being open to professional development as a teacher of primary PE. At the same time, those with positive dispositions are also confirmed as likely future specialists based on experience in performance and coaching contexts. This also serves to limit the possibility of reconfigured and reconceptualised PE teaching in the primary school curriculum (for example placing an emphasis on cooperation and learning through movement experiences); those most likely to become PE coordinators from this cohort were those with most experience of performance, competition and coaching.

### *Elective 'specialist' lectures*

A minority of trainees who had chosen (and were subsequently selected by lecturing staff based largely on the completed subject audits and a subjective view of amount of experience) to study more PE during Years 2 and 3 of the course (of the 24 in the original interview sample, 5 chose to do so), further practical application was gained in taught sessions. This included taught lectures as well as practical tasks in which trainees gained experience,

practising teaching groups of children in schools and in University. The 5 'specialists' continued PE during Years 2 and 3 of the course, although others within the year group chose to study PE in Year 2 only. The 'specialist' group within the sample were those who had expressed a positive disposition towards PE and sport at the outset of the course, in addition to a small number of trainees (such as Vicky) who were initially lacking in confidence but who grew in confidence within compulsory PE lectures. This 'subject specialist' group were, through on-going engagement with PE within the university based course, afforded more time to develop knowledge and teaching skills in the subject whilst those who did not elect to study PE were not. Members of this PE group experienced a wider range of PE learning opportunities, which included local school children attending lectures (in Years 2 and 3), with whom the trainees taught under supervision and with peer support. This allowed the trainees to work collaboratively, gain confidence and subject knowledge in activity areas in which they were less confident and receive constructive feedback from specialist tutors. This learning experience was warmly received by the trainees concerned:

I worked with my group to plan a dance lesson based on a story. I didn't have a clue to start with, but we researched it together and eventually taught the dance to some local children who came in. I got a lot out of this lesson and feel more confident now that I can teach dance in the future...I've got some ideas and ways to plan and teach (Adam, Stage 3b).

It was useful to work with others and to teach without being formally assessed...like, the PE tutor was there more in support and to pass on advice. I think I learned more in that 30 minutes than I have done in the whole year of other lectures (Nicola, Stage 3a).

The best thing was doing something that I wouldn't normally do [dance] with the others who used to dance... that gave me some confidence and, yeh, I'm not a dancer but now feel as though I can get stuck in and give it a go. It was good to practice teaching without worrying about being assessed and it was actually nice to get some feedback from a PE expert (James, Stage 2b).

This experience was central to the elective trainees' progress as PE 'specialists'; such professional learning, however, only took place amongst the minority who elected further PE study with the remainder remaining reliant on knowledge accrued in one compulsory module (in Year 1) and from experiences acquired in the school context. In this way, those who were generally the most confident and positively disposed towards PE were further supported and enabled within university based PE courses, some of which had clear linkage to school practice. Those with least confidence and experience were not encouraged or supported to develop further as teachers of primary PE. The possibilities of action in PE for this group of trainees (making up the majority of respondents) were therefore severely limited within the university context.

### ***The link between university and school-based PE***

Earlier in this chapter, Sarah's developing positive view of PE following taught lectures was highlighted as an outcome of Year 1 ITT. This previously ambivalent trainee was now considering 'giving it a go' in school – a development of the possibilities of action for this trainee. Subsequent interviews, however, revealed that Sarah did not gain the opportunity to teach PE in Year 1 and missed an important chance to apply newly acquired knowledge and new-found confidence. As a result, this emerging positive disposition was not anchored within Sarah's everyday teaching practice and doubts regarding the teaching of the subject were allowed to resurface. The increased awareness of the importance of PE was also undermined by the lack of PE seen by Sarah in school, and by the discontinuation of university based PE study. Sarah's possibilities of action were initially increased as a positive result of university based lectures only to be weakened once more by the lack of connection between separate elements of ITT provision (university and school-based aspects). Although Sarah was able to

observe and teach some PE in school in years 2 and 3 of the course, this was somewhat removed from the Year 1 lecture experience and did not facilitate a particularly powerful experience through which newly enhanced confidence and subject knowledge could be built upon in the school context. The best opportunity for widening Sarah's possibilities of action was in effect a missed opportunity owing to the disconnect between university lectures and school practice.

Other trainees appeared similarly unable to apply PE knowledge during school based experiences across the three years of study. For Ria, for example, each teaching practice opportunity in PE was negated by the school delivery model in relation to PPA cover, whereby external agencies were engaged to deliver curriculum PE. In addition, there was no official, explicit requirement for trainees to be observed teaching PE in school (unless as part of a directed task, only for elective trainees in Years 2 and 3) and no specific, formal approach to mentoring in PE by school-based staff was apparent. For Ria, like Sarah, the persistent lack of opportunity to apply knowledge quickly following university based lectures was a considerable detrimental factor in her professional development as a teacher of primary PE. The lack of opportunity to quickly progress from university based learning to an applied, mentored, school based context is thus highlighted as a significant weakness in provision and an element of the ITT structure which severely limited the possibilities of action for a number of trainees. This is particularly worrying where ambivalent trainees expressed an improved attitude towards the subject following lectures, only to be allowed to fall back into an ambivalence following a lack of continued exposure to the subject, in university, in school, or both. A representative comment is provided by Kay:

Although I realise how important PE is, I haven't needed to teach it much during TP (teaching practice) and I probably won't go out of my way to teach it if I don't have to in the future. I haven't really got any confidence and the lectures in year 1 seem a long time ago now. I don't feel as though I would know where to start (Stage 3b).

Despite having attended the compulsory PE course in year 1, Kay was not able to gain practical teaching experience in PE in either year 2 or year 3. Her successive school placements were in schools where PE was taught by visiting specialists as part of structured cover and where the class teacher (and hence Kay's school-based mentor) was not involved in PE teaching. By the end of the three year ITT course, Kay, as a NQT had not gained experience in teaching PE and felt under-prepared for any future role in this subject. Kay finally expressed doubt as to whether she would ever feel able to teach PE confidently in the future and 'would always prefer PE to be taught by other people' (Stage 3b interview). In this case, the responsibility of being a young mother had reinforced the importance of physical activity for children. Whilst Kay suggested that this provided hope that she could 'get more enthusiastic about teaching PE in the future', the lack of opportunity to engage with the subject during ITT ensured that this potential for development was unfulfilled during the three year course.

Sarah was not afforded the opportunity to teach PE in her first year school based experience, but did gain experience, confidence and guidance during her second year placement. Whilst this was not particularly extensive (Sarah taught two PE lessons), she appeared to increasingly appreciate the role that PE can play in children's learning:

I really enjoyed it, soon forgot about any worries I had. The kids had a great time too – I feel as though they learnt better in the classroom after too (Stage 2b).

Although Sarah did not replicate this experience in the subsequent school placement (in year 3 her class received PE during PPA time, taught by a visiting teacher), Sarah appeared likely to want to continue her own learning in PE in the future, pointing to a need for effective induction and CPD:

I think I will try and teach it (PE) when I can in the future. It may not be my number one priority, but I want the children I teach to have a better time than me and I will seek advice and courses where I can (Stage 3b).

This determination was tested during successive school based experiences where the opportunity to teach PE was not presented, although Sarah was proud to finally share positive experiences of teaching PE at the end of her course:

I finally did it. I got my tracksuit on, got all the stuff out of the shed and took the class on the playground. It was great. After all this time thinking about it, I was a bit worried at first, you know, kids everywhere and noise, but it was great. I will definitely get the tracksuit out again and – you know what I enjoyed the most? – the fact that I was seen to be taking part with the children who loved having me there with them (Stage 3b).

Adam's enthusiastic engagement with PE during year 1 school experience was a consequence of positive disposition and life experiences, and also a seeming perception in school by teachers and mentors that his practice as a beginning teacher could legitimately be perceived as 'specialist'. Adam was willing to play to this perceived strength and his practice remained unquestioned and relatively unsupported in school. The possibilities of action for trainees like Adam include a range of opportunities to gain more teaching experience in PE and sport, although these are somewhat unstructured and remain unchallenged in the school context. As a consequence, such trainees reportedly drew heavily on personal experience in sport to support planning, particularly in the early stages of ITT, and received little subject specific mentoring in support of effective professional development.

### **PE in placement schools**

Experiences in school during the ITT process were significant influences on and barriers to the development of the trainees as teachers of primary PE. Of critical importance to such professional development was the model of practice and the priority given to PE in school. This was often exemplified by the teaching behaviours of class teachers in placement schools and was particularly notable where the class teacher appeared to be strongly disposed towards or against PE. The model of practice in PE observed by trainees varied widely in relation to teaching strategies and behaviours, frequency and duration of lessons, and activity content. Trainees highlighted particular teaching behaviours that were perceived to be indicative of class teachers' low levels of confidence and enthusiasm in PE. For example, Becky (Stage 3a) suggested that:

I don't think that the teacher especially liked PE. They'd (the children) take about 10-15 minutes to get changed and if they make too much noise she'll say 'right all sit down' and they have to wait 2 minutes until they're quiet...and then they only get like 20 minutes. She did a one year course and I don't think she got that much PE training, which is kind of how I feel because after this year I won't be doing any more PE.

whilst Jo (Stage 2a) explained that:

It is one of the ones (lessons) that is taken off, I only saw it twice in six weeks. But they had other things...it was a Catholic school and there was Ash Wednesday and they had to practice for that, and we had assembly...PE, that's one of the first things, and music and drama that goes. They didn't go outside, they didn't do anything outside.

Indicators of low priority in school, as articulated by trainees, included the teacher not getting changed, allowing children too much time to get changed (thus deliberately reducing teaching time), not spending time in planning or assessing in PE, and an apparent willingness to cancel scheduled lessons. Ria (Stage 2b) commented on the lack of planning and frequency of PE lessons:

We only did PE a couple of times and even then it wasn't great...I didn't really see a plan or know where the lesson – we did some dance – fitted in with long term planning. She seemed to become quite strict in the lesson and some children had to sit out for being naughty.

Kay (Stage 3b) provided evidence of lessons being cancelled owing to inclement weather:

The children enjoyed going outside but my class teacher wasn't keen on us doing this when the weather wasn't, you know a little bit of drizzle or something and we did something else instead of PE.

Trainees were also able to compare and comment on class teacher approaches across successive placements.

[My class teacher] actually changed into her gear, proper gear and became a PE teacher. Not like a teacher with a pair of trainers on! Because she's very sporty and she did it with the children...she was physically able, so confident. Last year, the class teacher just put trainers on. I know for a fact it wasn't as lively or enjoyed ...I think that the one who got changed was actually believing in it and doing it as PE, and I think the others were just not believing in it (Amanda, Stage 2a).

Preparation for cultural events appears to impact heavily on the priority afforded to PE time, particularly in the autumn term:

Our class was doing PE once a week, they said they should do it twice, but it was coming up to Christmas and the hall was booked and so they were only guaranteed once in the hall. The last two weeks were just Christmas displays and that and activities, so I saw four lessons and taught one (Leanne, Stage 3b).

Trainees also expressed a negative view of class teachers in the role of physical educator:

They [class teachers] don't want to do it [PE]. They're just not sporty. They're middle aged normally...that's a dreadful cliché. No, that shouldn't affect things but it does (James, Stage 3b).

James went on to show an awareness of colleagues' professional learning needs in school, indicating that he saw himself in a future role as a primary PE coordinator and being faced with the challenge of motivating others who 'don't seem to know what they're teaching and why they're teaching it'. He also explained that:

you get a lot of people avoiding it if you go into school you know. They wouldn't go into as much depth, like in planning a PE lesson they might just say, oh well use beanbags and hoops (James, Stage 2b).

According to accounts of trainees, the amount of time afforded to PE in school varied considerably and in most cases did not conform to the aims of the prevailing PESSCL strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2003) which encouraged two hours per week of high quality PE. Although PE may have been timetabled, the cancellation of lessons for weather reasons or the use of time to prepare for other school events regularly imposed on PE time. In interviews, trainees gave the impression that this owed much to the disposition of each class teacher and that there was little that they as trainees could do to ensure access to this part of the curriculum. Interviews following year 2 and 3 school experience highlighted a further phenomenon that impacted on this and on trainees' experiences in PE. From 2005, all schools were bound by the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload (referred to locally as 'remodelling the workforce') in which class teachers are guaranteed ten per cent of their working hours as non-contact time. In this attempt to create space for class teachers to plan, prepare, and assess children's work (PPA time), it appears that some schools were beginning to cover this time within curricular PE. This often appeared to be managed through the deployment of non-qualified teachers and sports coaches:

The coaches came in to school and took the children into the playground or hall for PE. I didn't see any planning for this and the class teacher seemed happy to have the time to do other jobs...and the children seemed happy and in fact looked forward to it, especially the kids who love sport (Sarah, Stage 2b).

This approach resulted in trainees experiencing very little PE in school placements. In such schools, trainees generally remained with the class teacher and took their own non-contact time during the same 'covered' lessons. This had a negative impact on the amount of PE seen and/or taught by the trainee teacher during school based components of ITT and removed

possibilities for mentoring within the subject. When asked in interview, the trainees were unable to provide detailed information regarding the qualifications of the visiting personnel and had not considered potentially negative implications where, for example, non-qualified teachers were employed to 'teach' PE. It appeared that the trainees took it at face value that the incoming coaches were specialists in PE, a view which seemingly mirrored that of the class teachers. Trainees were given the impression that the model was effective and beneficial to pupil learning, assumptions that appeared largely taken for granted.

The class teacher seemed quite happy that she wasn't teaching it (PE). The specialist was really enthusiastic and the children loved the lessons. I saw it once or twice but was also quite happy not to have to teach it (Jo, Stage 2a).

I think the lady who came in was a PE teacher before she had kids and she knew what she was doing. I think it's much better for the children to have someone who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable - I'd be quite happy to work in a school where this happens (Kay, Stage 3b).

Trainee teachers were generally not encouraged to work alongside the 'specialist' in a structured way, and felt that the expectation was to stay with the class teacher during PPA time. This appears to have been a missed opportunity with regard the development of subject knowledge and pedagogical experience in PE, assuming that the practice of visiting specialists was appropriate. Even when observations were possible, there appears to have been little trainee reflection encouraged regarding the quality of learning within PE and no subject specific mentoring as part of such learning episodes.

I managed to observe a couple of lessons that the coach did and picked up some good ideas for activities in ball skills – I wrote them down in my file and will try and find an opportunity to give them a go myself (Julia Stage 2a).

Trainees suggested that the lack of confidence and enthusiasm in PE amongst class teachers was a factor that justified the use of external 'specialists'. They felt that teachers would rather

'hand over' PE to somebody else and were happy that this was taken from their own workload:

I think that a lot of teachers don't enjoy PE so much or see it as a worthwhile subject to teach but it's something that has to be done, so get a specialist in (Jane, Stage 2a).

The use of specialists in PE satisfies the preference for some class teachers to allow others to teach PE but results in reduced opportunities for trainees to observe/teach the subject whilst also impacting on the perceived importance of the subject as part of the school-based training experience. The use of external specialists in most cases did not take into account trainee development needs and served to further restrict the possibilities for action in PE available to each trainee. This finding mirrors the concerns of Blair and Capel (2008a) and Griggs (2010) who highlighted the readiness with which primary schools appear willing to concede delivery of curriculum PE to visiting coaches. Ofsted (2005, p. 4), too, highlighted such concerns, indicating that:

an increasing number of head teachers make indiscriminate use of coaches to deliver physical education . . . threatening high quality provision in these schools.

### **Status of PE**

Of particular interest to this investigation is the apparent low priority afforded to PE in school *and* university in relation to other curriculum subjects and how this adversely shapes the interpretation of expectations. Trainee teachers quickly appreciated the importance of learning how to teach English and Maths as this dominated the ITT curriculum and school experiences in the early part of the course. The importance of core subjects is reflected within course documentation. For example:

Importance is given to the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Information Communications Technology (ICT) in each year of the programme. Courses are provided in all foundation subjects of the National Curriculum and

include cross-curricular modules that recognise the holistic nature of children's learning. Trainees begin their studies across a broad range of subjects before progressing to study two elected subjects in greater depth (Course Handbook, 2004, appendix 4).

Although trainees were required to attend a 20 hour PE course in Year 1, this was the only compulsory university based course in PE. With core subjects and professional practice courses running throughout the three year course, the sheer volume of lectures, guidance notes and assignments in other subjects far outweighed those completed in PE. Core English, Maths and Science were each allocated 92 hours of contact time in total across the three year course. The regularity of exposure to core subjects in university and in school also ensures that regular subject assessment is undertaken, both in terms of written and examined coursework and school practice. The assessment in PE (see appendix 14) by comparison was not thought to be particularly challenging or onerous by the trainees, although most appreciated the opportunity inherent within this exercise for personal reflection. The relatively small number of trainees who elected further study in PE (5 from the 24 trainees who formed the initial phase of semi structured interview participants) in years 2 and 3 of the course benefited from a significantly greater amount of contact time, including lectures and additional supervised and peer supported teaching experience. The elective courses amounted to an additional 140 hours of study, although this included lecture time, allocated time for personal study and additional experience teaching children. The year 2 and year 3 elective courses were assessed through written modes, specifically the creation of a teaching pack (used in practice) and the creation of a PE policy and assessment framework. It is pertinent to note that those trainees who elected further PE study were those who appeared most positively disposed to the teaching of PE at the outset, who recounted positive experiences of PE and sport, and who were able to

provide examples of experience within the PE subject audit completed by all trainees in Year 1 (see appendix 13).

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies also loomed large within the teaching workforce at the time of this study and dominated university course and in-school requirements. The relatively low status of PE in relation to core subjects was further reinforced by the prevailing standards for QTS which (as discussed in chapter 2) suggest that the teaching of PE is not as important as the teaching of English and Maths. The wording of the standards provides a 'get out clause' in relation to PE, in that trainees may be deemed competent in the teaching of PE 'with support from a more experienced colleague'. Examples of PE being afforded a low priority in practice were provided by most trainees; put simply, if PE was a high priority, then lessons would not be easy to postpone and rigorous planning would be an expectation. Kay's experiences best exemplify this issue, as her avoidance of teaching PE during school experience for three years, which was initially a consequence of a negative disposition, was left unchallenged by both school and university staff. Kay's development as a teacher of primary PE was afforded a low priority by the university, a succession of schools, school based staff and by Kay herself. In this example, the disposition of the trainee teacher combined with an ambivalent stance towards PE in schools and within the broad requirements of ITT to impact adversely on the possibilities of action within PE. For Kay, the ITT course severely constrained any possibility that she could become a confident and knowledgeable teacher of primary PE.

When placed in schools where PE has a relatively low priority, alongside class teachers who themselves may have been negatively disposed towards PE, the possibility for trainees to ‘do otherwise’ is severely limited. Despite the apparent importance of PE within the NC, a prevailing high profile national subject strategy, and a requirement for trainees to gain experience across the full range of NC subjects, local factors and the dispositions of others within the school setting collude to limit the possibilities of action for trainees. In this way, the practices of each trainee are an outcome of the relationship between disposition, conjuncturally specific knowledge (knowledge of PE and, more broadly, of the requirements for becoming a teacher) and a range of external factors. Trainee teachers in this study recognised the official status of PE as a NC Foundation subject, but did not uniformly observe or become involved in regular subject teaching. Like others, Jo reported the frequent postponement of PE, a practice seemingly accepted and seen as ‘normal’ despite NC and prevailing strategy.

The trainee teachers possessed and developed dispositions, knowledge and beliefs in relation to PE within the ITT context. This facilitated the trainee teachers’ level of interaction and agency, what Giddens (1979) called ‘going on’ within the context of ITT. In relation to PE, trainee teachers bring pre-existing beliefs and attitudes to the ITT context and rationalise these within the externally framed curriculum and school contexts. Where the teaching of PE in school is irregular and where PE is afforded a low priority by class teachers during school experiences, the ability of trainees to develop practice within PE is severely constrained. Trainees felt that the priority throughout practice was placed on classroom based subjects, in

particular literacy and numeracy, within which frequent observations of practice and associated mentoring activities were experienced.

I have been observed now 4 times, all in the classroom, mostly in maths and English – yeah, plus one in history where I was doing a topic. I did OK really, managed to get some good feedback you know and learnt a bit too. The link tutor pointed out some things I could do a bit better, but on the whole I was happy, I am confident in the classroom, I feel at home there and have got to know the kids really well, so control isn't a problem...they're a nice class really (Kay, Stage 3b).

No, I haven't been assessed or observed teaching PE or any foundation subjects for that matter – just maths and English...oh, I also planned a school assembly activity with my class and it was nice that the tutor saw this too (Leanne, Stage 3b).

### **Locally varying expectations and practice**

Further concerns regarding PE practice were raised by trainees who noted little linkage to other subjects through planned cross curricular learning outcomes. Trainees were generally unclear of expectations of pupils in PE, saw sparse use of teaching assistants and, in many cases, did not see evidence of plans (medium or short term) for the subject. Where plans were being used by class teachers, they were taken directly from published schemes of work.

Planning wasn't really there. I mean, I didn't see plans of what they had been working on. We just used the QCA schemes and added some bits that I had done in lectures. I had a TA in class, and she helped the children to get changed but I didn't really know how to use her properly in the lesson (Ria, Stage 3b).

It seems a bit strange that there are lots of schemes of work and guidelines for English and maths and that so much measurement of children's progress takes place in these subject– you know, SATs – but that in PE there is hardly anything. I don't think I have seen a lesson plan for PE in school this year and I am still a bit worried about having to teach it. I do know that there are some schemes out there – the Sabin scheme ? – so I guess I'll have to be proactive and get on with it (Sarah, Stage 3b).

Planning? Well I didn't see anything from the class teacher and I did some of my own when we had to stick to full planning, but to be quite honest it was quite a relief when I could just use medium term plans. I think I know what makes a good PE lesson and I've got lots of ideas in my head anyway (Adam, Stage 2a).

In Year 2, James painted a picture of the challenging environment in which he was working and the confidence he was hoping to draw from teaching PE:

Twenty-eight children, twenty two 'EAL,' six 'at risk,' three 'SEN,' just problems, massive problems. A lot of Sinhalese Christian children and Tamil Sri Lankans which creates clashes. Teaching PE is the thing I'm looking forward to most. It's one subject that I'm thinking, right, I can do that. I'm quite confident and am looking forward to it. I coach seventy kids on a Sunday and I'm not fazed by that (Stage 2b).

Confidence in his own abilities in PE led James to volunteer to teach all PE lessons during the placement, an offer readily accepted by the class teacher, despite the wider difficulties being faced by James in the placement (discussed in chapter 5). He taught four PE lessons (three within 'gymnastic activities' and one within 'games activities'), the only PE experienced by this Year 4 class during the six week placement. James felt that the lessons generally went well, although confessed to being 'a little hit and miss with regards planning'. He stated that there was no medium-term planning in place for his class for PE and that he was allowed to teach whatever he wanted to, deciding against teaching dance, the one area of activity in which he lacked confidence. This decision making process served to reinforce the perceived primacy of certain activities over others (games activities prioritised over dance activities) as a consequence of trainee teacher disposition. This practice was seemingly condoned by those professionals working with James who, presumably, were largely unaware of the issues at play in PE. The mere fact that a trainee was taking responsibility for PE lessons was deemed positive, without any further exploration or critical reflection on practice. The unstructured and unsupported exposure to the teaching of PE, although providing some practical experience in the subject, did little to positively enhance the development of teacher knowledge or understanding.

Despite apparently high levels of enthusiasm and confidence, James provided a vivid description of one problematic lesson, which was:

a bloody disaster. I got there and one of the kids had an epileptic fit in the queue...and then one of the kids split his head open in front of me. I had blood on my clothes. The children were waiting in the classroom with only the link tutor and they went ballistic. They came to the hall 15 minutes late. It was all right, it went well in the end, I handled it well and the tutor was pleased (Stage 2b).

It is interesting to note that James turned what could be construed as a negative experience into a positive one in which he drew confidence from his experiences in sport as a coach to cope with the management issues and unpredictable problems experienced. The consequences of such incidents at the start of a lesson being taught by a less confident trainee would make an interesting comparison. James' possibilities of action were strongly influenced by his positive disposition towards the subject, without which such a valuable opportunity to gain experience and to reflect on problems would not have been apparent. Whilst James actively sought out opportunities to teach PE, others displayed an ability to avoid the subject or particular activity areas within it. This was highlighted when working alongside peers in a paired placement in the first year of study:

The girl I was on TP with wasn't confident in her PE so she didn't teach it. It was all left up to me (Ellie, Stage 2a).

In this example, Ellie (who appeared more positively predisposed to the subject with above average levels of 'physical self worth' and 'importance attached to sport') gained further experience and confidence, whilst her partner (who was reportedly negatively predisposed towards the subject (although not part of the interview sample) did not.

In the first year school placement, Adam was placed in a Reception class, the first time he had experienced working with children younger than five years of age and a long way removed from his stated long-term goal of teaching in Key Stage 2. He seemingly responded to the

challenge, yet experienced difficulty in planning activities appropriate for this age phase. Adam also clearly felt that the expectation on him as a young male trainee was to take charge of the PE during his placement:

They just gave it to me. You're a man, you deal with it. No, it wasn't quite that bad, but they were keen for me to teach it [PE]. I volunteered to take a few lessons but just started off observing as I coach children aged 5-11 normally. I took quite a lot of lessons in the end... We did football. We did basketball and then we just did games and dance...a variety of things (Adam, Stage 2a).

As with the experience of Nicola described above, the assumed responsibility of teaching PE without specific guidance in the school setting did not deter Adam from teaching the subject. On the contrary, he welcomed the challenge, relying heavily on pre conceived ideas of PE and drawing on his own positive experiences and confidence in the sports context. Trainees such as James and Nicola were, however, able to avoid teaching some activity areas of PE (such as dance activities) within which they had less experience or confidence. This appeared to be enabled through the lack of structured mentoring and subject support in school. The lack of breadth of experience gained by confident trainees was, however, addressed through elective university PE courses:

The area I didn't get experience in, in the first two years was dance and to be honest with you – well, look at me, I'm not much of a dancer. I didn't know where to start before, but can now see how this links to lots of bits of the curriculum. I wouldn't say I was an expert in it but can give it a go now (James, Stage 3b).

In most cases, the extent to which trainees were supported to practice teaching PE during school experience was dependent on the model of PE delivery in school and the extent to which it was valued by other professionals in the same context. This local variation runs counter to the intention of the requirements for ITT (appendix 3) which aim to ensure that all providers:

design the content, structure and delivery of training to enable trainee teachers to demonstrate that they have met the Standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (DfES, 2002).

### **The influence of the class teacher and other professionals**

The practice of others within the school context has been shown to be a strong influence on trainees' experiences. It is possible that some class teachers and mentors in school are similarly negatively disposed towards PE and sport and so the acceptance that PE is best taught by others is endorsed. Whether this is done explicitly in conversation with the trainee teacher, or as an unintended outcome of behaviours, is difficult to ascertain through this study. The relative disposition of class teachers and mentors in relation to that of their trainee teachers and its effect on practice is an area which merits further investigation. The first-hand accounts of trainees in this sample suggest that compliance with the practices of the class teacher is a likely outcome of efforts to achieve QTS standards – particularly where the class teacher has a role to play in assessing trainee progress.

The influence of peers was also seen during teaching practice where shared placements were the norm for trainees. Leanne commented (Stage 1b) on the benefits of shared experience in school, describing how she pooled ideas with peers:

Well it was kind of a joint idea between myself and three other Irish girls in the school. So we did Irish dance lessons after school. On our last day it was St Patrick's day...I led an assembly and the rest of the girls did Irish dancing...and the kids loved it...they all wanted to come Irish dancing.

Class teachers and others were influential in supporting the development of trainee teachers' opinions in the school context. Having observed class teachers during three school placements, James expressed a negative view of them in the role as teachers of primary PE, saying that:

I shouldn't probably say this, but there is a type who just don't get involved in PE. It's often cancelled, you know something else crops up and takes priority. That isn't right (Stage 3b).

James was worried about appearing too critical during the interview, appearing flustered and concerned about what he had said.

Adam, another trainee teacher with self-proclaimed confidence in sport, showed an awareness of colleagues' needs in school, indicating that he saw himself in a future role as a primary PE subject leader and being faced with the challenge of motivating others who 'don't seem to know what they're teaching and why they're teaching it'. He also explained that:

You get a lot of people avoiding it if you go into school you know. They wouldn't go into as much depth, like in planning a PE lesson they might just say, oh well use beanbags and hoops and that'll do (Stage 2a).

Participants commented on the role of others in relation to PE lectures in university. The modelling of positive and enthusiastic attitudes by lecturers was noted by Leanne, who said that:

PE tutors are enthusiastic, have a lot of 'positivity' and enable everyone to participate at an appropriate level (Stage 2a).

Another trainee commented on a lecturer's 'really skilful performance of a gymnastic routine' (Fran, Stage 1c) that she felt was unachievable by most of the group, going on to suggest that tutors needed to be more aware of perceived practical expectations and the emphasis on performance at an individual level. This was also seen as relevant in the context of the approach to PE promoted within the taught courses and the messages inherent in course documentation. For trainee teachers with negative dispositions, such a demonstration by the tutor reinforced the perception that PE was best taught by 'specialist others' who possessed knowledge and abilities beyond the realm of the class teacher practitioner.

### **Subject specific mentoring**

Trainees made no direct reference to PE subject mentoring during interviews. Attempts were made to probe this line of enquiry and trainees were unable to cite specific examples of PE mentoring, other than unstructured observation of another's teaching. Whilst the impact of the class teacher as a positive role model was felt by some, the use of specific mentoring strategies (such as team-teaching, post-lesson discussion) which were reportedly evident in other subject areas was lacking in all cases. The relationship between trainee teacher and 'link tutor' (the member of staff, employed by the university to make formal visits to the school setting and to assess trainees' progress) appears to have been centred on a series of formal, assessed observations, with only one example of this happening in PE. This trainee, who exhibited high levels of physical self perception, sports competence and importance attached to sport commented:

I really wanted to get observed in PE; I know I am confident in it and I wanted her to see me doing what I enjoy doing. As it happened, the lesson went OK and I was pleased and I think she had to try really hard to pick me up on a few things (Nicola, Stage 3b).

Trainees felt that the emphasis and priority in school was squarely placed on core subjects and that this reduced opportunities to teach the wider curriculum. Although trainees could understand the benefits of subject specific mentoring and why this may be a good thing, the least confident trainees expressed concern about being observed by someone whilst teaching a subject that they considered as 'daunting and very different to being in the classroom' (Kay, Stage 3b). Such trainees clearly felt most comfortable in the classroom context where they had gained the majority of their teaching experience. As researcher field notes stated:

The overriding impression I am getting here is that a clear focus in school is on achieving QTS standards and teaching core subjects overrides any understanding

that developing skills in other areas such as PE can be achieved (field notes, Stage 3b interviews, May 2007).

There appears to be a lack of mentoring of any real kind in PE in school – it's almost as though the trainees experiences in PE are being left to chance (field notes, Stage 2b, February 2006).

### **Summary**

The wide range of structural factors described in this chapter resulted in an equally wide range of possible actions available to the trainee primary teachers. In many cases, the combined effect of each feature of the ITT structure was to hinder the development of the trainees as teachers of primary PE. At best, ITT afforded a small number of trainees the opportunity to apply existing and new PE knowledge in school. This was largely restricted to those trainees who elected further specialist study and for whom expectations and assessments were formally structured to include PE. Such elective experiences served to create additional exposure to PE practice in school and provided opportunities for reflection and professional development within the subject. Less positively, the structures conspired to reduce the opportunity for development in the subject for the majority of trainees. Those with least confidence and experience were enabled to avoid the teaching of PE during three years of school placement. Those with an initial ambivalence towards PE were also unable to build on early signs of positive development following taught course in PE; the model of practice seen in schools was also largely unsatisfactory, providing very few opportunities for meaningful reflection on PE practice as a component of the teacher development process. Only those trainees placed with class teachers who themselves had a positive disposition towards PE were able to acquire further knowledge and experience in the subject.

The externally determined professional standards for QTS, university and school curricula and prevailing educational policies pre-exist trainee teacher engagement with the ITT process. The ITT syllabus, requirements of trainees in school and prescribed professional standards are, however, interpreted by the trainees and others around them in various ways. The trainee teachers' behaviours, together with that of university tutors and mentors and class teachers in school, reinforce or challenge the requirements, resulting in the local and individual interpretation of expectations, in turn influenced heavily by previous experiences and dispositions of both the trainee teachers themselves and the other individuals involved. The wide range of local interpretation and practical implementation is an outcome of all agents' conduct, including that of the trainee teachers as agents in focus of this investigation and of others, including class teachers, school based mentors, university tutors and peers.

The degree of local interpretation of requirements and within practical implementation impacts markedly on the possibilities of action for trainee teachers. The practices and behaviours available to trainee teachers are also associated with individual status and role in the ITT process, in turn influenced by a range of internal and external factors. The practices and behaviours exhibited by each trainee within the context of ITT may also be based on a 'hierarchy of purposes' (Giddens, 1993) and an 'ordering of concerns' (Archer, 2000). For example, those trainees positively disposed towards PE see the subject as a high priority, central and significant within the horizon of action. For those negatively disposed, PE barely features on this horizon, remaining low in the ordering of concerns throughout the three year course. Such trainees, at the extremes of exhibited dispositional characteristics, have a largely pre-determined and enduring action horizon which is minimally affected by external factors.

For the majority of trainees who are ambivalent towards the subject, however, agency is much more susceptible to a greater range of influencing factors at work within the ITT context.

The following chapter extends this discussion by presenting a model to help understanding and to pinpoint specific, practical ways through which the teacher development process can be improved. A component of this model is a typology of trainee primary teachers in relation to PE which is an outcome of the data analysis process. Whilst chapters 5 and 6 separately explored the phenomena from individual and external structure perspectives, each element is brought together within the model so that the combined effect of both dispositions and structural factors is made explicit. The typology itself exemplifies trainees' dispositions and experiences seen within this study and suggests ways in which the possibilities of action can be developed beyond the currently limited opportunity for a few trainees who begin ITT with an already positive disposition towards the subject. The model, and consideration of training needs for different trainees across the typology, enables a range of recommendations to be made to better support the development of all trainees as teachers of primary PE during ITT and within CPD opportunities.

## CHAPTER 7

### STRUCTURES, DISPOSITION AND PRACTICE IN PRIMARY PEITT

#### Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 developed an understanding of dispositional and structural influences on trainee primary teacher experiences during PEITT; this chapter considers in detail the dual influence of structures and disposition and the relationship between each. In doing so the third research question is addressed with particular reference to structuration theory introduced in chapter 4:

How does primary ITT impact on the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of primary PE and how can provision be developed to better support trainee primary teachers in this regard?

This question necessitated viewing the trainees' lived experiences of primary PEITT from the interrelated perspectives of dispositional and structural elements to fully understand how these work in tandem to enable or constrain practice for trainee primary teacher development. By approaching the issues from this perspective, several implications for the development of primary PEITT are highlighted.

The discussion in this chapter is supported by a detailed exploration of 5 individual trainees' experiences during ITT and the relationship between structures, disposition and practice in each case. As discussed in Chapter 4 (and as detailed in appendix 9), the research was centred on a decreasing sample of respondents who were studying a three year, undergraduate, ITT course. The PSPP and PIP scales, administered to 83 trainee teachers at the outset of the investigation and the ITT course, yielded data regarding dispositions which suggested themes

for further investigation through subsequent qualitative enquiry. In particular, the patterns and trends identified within the PSPP and PIP data supported the initial identification of ‘types’ of trainee primary teacher in relation to PE. As the research progressed and the number of participants decreased, the qualitative data informed the development and refinement of this typology, taking account of the dynamic relationship between structure and disposition in individual trainees’ experiences. Twenty four trainees took part in group interviews (Stage 1b); fifteen trainees participated in the first individual semi structured interviews (Stage 1c). In Stage 2 of the research, the number of respondents reduced from fifteen to fourteen and then to six, enabling a detailed qualitative exploration of experiences. These six trainees (Becky, James, Kay, Leanne, Ria and Sarah) participated throughout each stage of the investigation; five of this group are the focus of the detailed discussion and analysis in this chapter. Four of these trainees (James, Kay, Leanne, Becky) each represent a specific type of trainee, whilst the fifth (Sarah), demonstrates the dynamic nature of the structure, disposition, practice relationship; Sarah is a trainee who straddles two of the four categories within the typology. The sixth, Ria, is not included as a case study in this chapter; data collected and analysed in relation to this trainee confirmed findings represented by the others trainees and analysis of this data here would be repetitious. During Stages 3 and 4, the sample was broadened again (to eight, twenty six and finally one hundred and twenty) to test, refine and confirm the typology and theoretical representation of the relationship between structure, disposition and practice. In Stage 4, a draft typology and theoretical representation of the relationship between disposition, structure and practice was shared with the original eighty three respondents and, a year later following further amendments, with one hundred and twenty final year trainee teachers at a different institution. Feedback received during the final stage of the investigation

supported refinement of both the typology and understanding of the relationship between structures, disposition and practice.

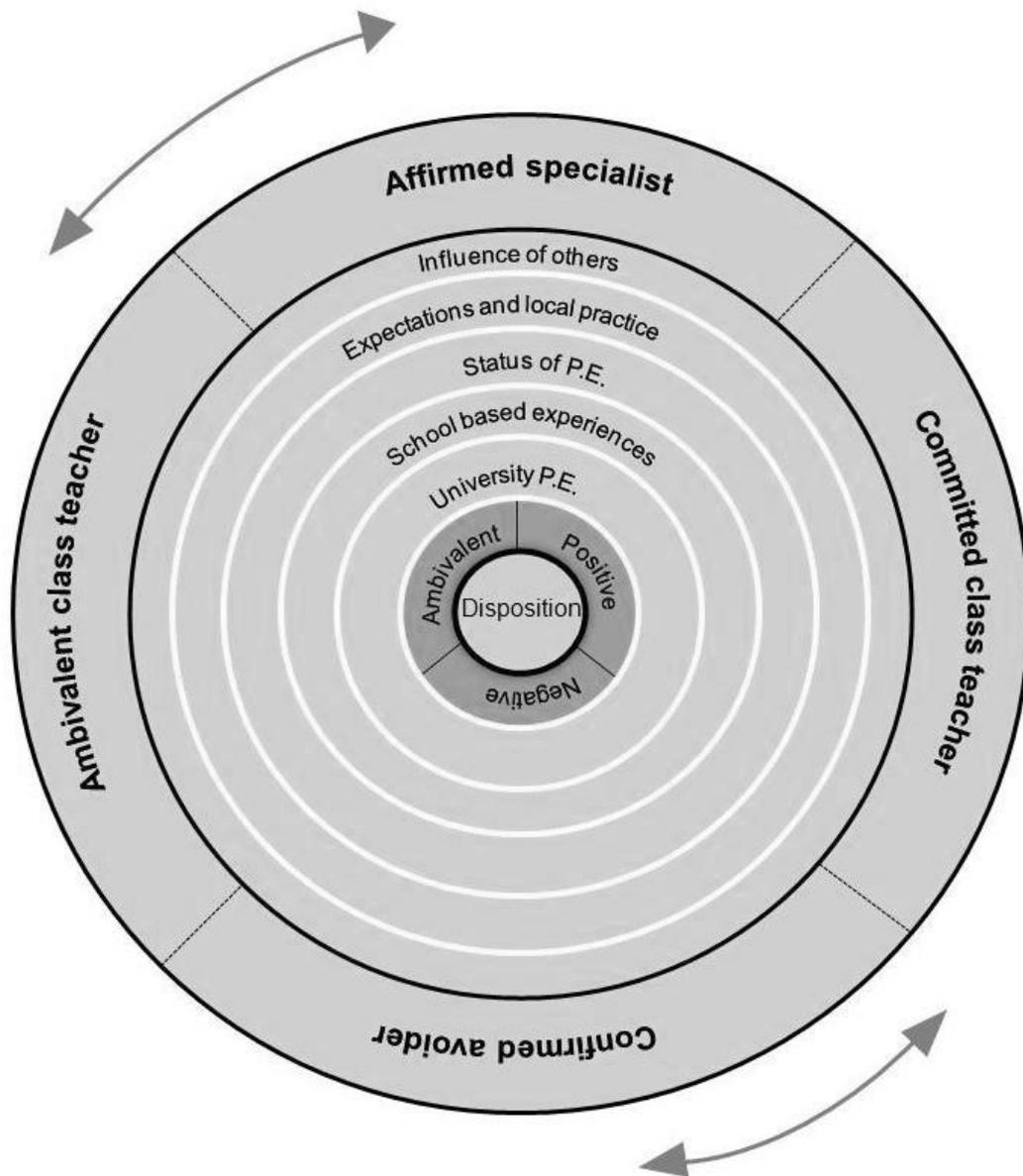
### **The dynamic relationship between structures, disposition and practice**

As discussed in chapters 5 and 6, a range of factors has been seen to influence the experiences and practice of trainee teachers in this study. For each of the five detailed cases, a highly individualised, complex and multi-layered relationship between structures, dispositions, and practice was observed. The properties of primary PEITT have been shown to be a medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise (Giddens, 1984, p. 25), neither the actions of the trainees nor the influence of the ITT structure independently offer sufficient explanation for the observed phenomena. The structures of primary PEITT, themselves the outcome of earlier actions, pre-existed and placed conditions of action on the trainees. However, the experiences of trainees in this study also demonstrated potential for individuals to 'do otherwise' by drawing on a set of particular 'rules and resources' which became available through social interaction (Giddens, 1979). There is a balance, therefore, between structures placing constraints on individual trainee actions and the potential for individual choices and decisions to be made; this relationship did not always lead to a tension or dissonance and the structures are viewed as either enabling or constraining in this regard.

The experiences of each trainee within the study have not been linear or entirely predictable, although identified patterns and trends suggest that trainees fall within generalized categories, or types. In any one trainee's case, however, the extent to which disposition or a specific element of the ITT structure becomes the key influencing factor in determining practice is

highly individualised and care should be taken to ensure that the dynamic nature of the model is acknowledged. The relationship between structures, disposition and practice is conceptualised in figure 7.1 as a series of dials, the relative position of each for individual trainees being determined by a wide range of factors.

Figure 7.1: A model of structures, disposition and practice in primary PEITT



The model shown in figure 7.1 enables a range of practice to be envisaged as an outcome of the relationship between disposition and structures, as disposition interacts with various elements of ITT, other people within ITT, and wider influences. As shown in figure 7.1, a central dial represents the range of dispositions towards PE and sport shown by the trainees, categorised as positive, negative or ambivalent. This range of dispositions, as discussed in chapter 5, is strongly linked to previous life experiences, including the trainees' own experiences of PE as school pupils. Moving outwards from the dispositional centre, five further dials represent the range of structural factors which have been identified within ITT, namely elements of the university course, school based practice, the influence of other people and the effect of prevailing policies (for example, the curriculum and subject strategies) as discussed in chapter 6. The ordering of these dials may be different in each trainee's case as particular factors assume greater or lesser degrees of importance at any particular stage. Some factors evident within a particular dial, such as an immediate exposure to the teaching of PE in school following university lectures, may foster the development of disposition in a more immediate way than others. Similarly, other dials will have very little bearing on trainee disposition where particular practices are not evident within immediate experiences.

The outer dial of the model represents the range of practices demonstrated by the trainees in the investigation. This is made up of four generalised categories, each of which is typified by specific practices and particular learning and development needs. This outer dial represents a typology of trainees in primary PEITT, the categories of which include all trainees observed within this study. The dynamic structure of this model suggests potential for changes to disposition or structural influences to result in a trainee's practice becoming more recognisable

as a different 'type'. The boundaries between the types are shown as dotted lines to represent the possibility of change and the prospect of movement between types as a consequence of particular experiences. The exact positioning of trainees within the typology is dependent upon the relative positions of dispositional and structural factors. In this way, it is possible to imagine each dial moving as a consequence of particular factors and experiences, combining to create a constraining or enabling influence on trainee teacher development in PE.

### **Case studies**

#### ***Kay: a confirmed avoider***

At the outset of the ITT course, Kay exhibited a very negative disposition towards PE and sport. This was indicated by low PSW score (6, being the lowest possible score, shared with 2 other students in the sample of 83), along with a low sport competence (6, being the lowest possible score, shared with 2 other students) and low PIP sport importance score (2, being the lowest, shared with 6 other students). Factors influencing disposition were seen to include negative personal experiences in school PE and sport and a lack of wider life experiences that were seen in other cases to impact positively on disposition. Kay's prior experiences in PE and sport concur with the notion of an influential apprenticeship as an influence on learning to teach (Curtner-Smith, Hastie & Kinchin, 2008; Rusznyak, 2009), a phenomenon which was seen to have enduring impact for Kay throughout the ITT experience. Despite this very negative starting point, Kay tolerated compulsory PE lectures in year 1 of the ITT course, confessing to being a little surprised that the experience was, at times, enjoyable:

I wasn't looking forward to it, but the tutor was quite sympathetic and we were all pretty much in the same boat... well at least the students who I worked with were all quite like me really, not sure about it... The sporty ones were doing things a bit faster, but I just took my time and actually learnt quite a lot of tips (Stage 1b).

As a consequence of this course, Kay acknowledged that PE had some importance for children and demonstrated an improved awareness of the PESSCL strategy. For Kay, the importance of PE was rationalised for its health benefits. She explained that:

I have got some ideas now that I could use in school, although I am not sure what I'll remember in the future and I am not sure whether I'll be any more confident in teaching PE in school. The tutor explained that there is a big push about PE and sport at the moment, so we'll see, but it is important, what with obesity and those concerns (Stage 1b).

In this way, Kay's disposition was seen to change slightly; within figure 7.1, the central dial can be perceived to turn so that a less negative stance is evident as a consequence of PE lectures during the university course. Although Kay's experiences in compulsory lectures were more positive than she initially anticipated, the on-going structure of the course did not allow sufficient time for negative prior experiences in PE to be the rich resource for exploration advocated by Brown and McNamara (2011). Kay completed the PE course without experiencing the full range of NC activity areas and this itself raised questions in her mind:

The lectures did give me some ideas and I think I might be able to go back to my notes if I had to teach PE...but not in all areas...to be honest though, I am still not confident and it's going to take more than this to make me into a PE teacher. It was alright, but I still feel that it just isn't me... it's not where I feel comfortable (Stage 1c).

The structure of the NCPE, based on six activity areas, was therefore seen to be problematic, raising concerns regarding the extent to which Kay felt confident and able to teach all activity areas. Linked to prior experiences, Kay perceived the subject as being akin to sport, characterised by competition, performance and physical prowess. This was further reinforced

through course documentation, such as the PE audit (appendix 13) which placed an emphasis on the activity-based structure of PE. Unsurprisingly, Kay did not elect to study further PE modules in years 2 and 3 of the course, and was not encouraged by professionals in the ITT context to do so. Although a movement of Kay's dispositional dial was originally perceived as a consequence of PE lectures, the overall impact of the university PE course and NCPE structure restricted and negated this potential for change. The dispositional dial can be perceived to slip back into a firmly negative position as a result of these experiences.

This constraining effect was also seen through the impact of school-based experiences, which served to highlight the role of current educational policy. Kay's experiences in school were largely devoid of PE related opportunities, a consequence of the remodelled workforce and various class teachers' practice. In year 1, Kay was placed in a school where external coaches taught PE lessons during PPA time. This confirmed the impact of the remodelled workforce previously noted by others (e.g. Lavin *et al.*, 2008; Griggs, 2010) who claimed that this had led to a dramatic increase in the number of adults other than teachers working in primary PE. Consequently, Kay did not practise any of the ideas she had seen during the year one PE course, or raise this as an issue of concern with her visiting tutor or school based mentor.

Looking back on this at the end of the course, Kay commented:

At the time, it just wasn't something I thought about. We had a file full of things that we had to get done and PE wasn't one of them! There was no pressure to observe or have a go at teaching all subjects, there was much more pressure for us to get to grips in the classroom, in maths and English and to manage behaviour. The tutor watched me teach and made sure my files were all up to date...but no, PE just wasn't something to focus on (Stage 3b).

In this way, Kay's negative disposition combined with school based experiences to result in a lack of practical experience in PE. In years 2 and 3 of the course, Kay was able to continue

this avoidance of teaching PE, without this raising any concerns amongst ITT staff, despite a course structure which expected her to teach full range of subjects as necessitated by the relevant QTS standards. In year 2 placement, the class teacher with whom Kay was placed appeared not to value PE, or demonstrate confidence in the subject herself:

Well, she taught it once when I was there, but other things were always in the way, play rehearsal or trips. The one lesson I saw was quite short by the time they got out onto the playground, it was just ball skills. I helped a bit, and it was a bit like what we did in college, although it wasn't very good really. I wouldn't say that this was a great lesson for the kids (Stage 3a).

In year three placement, Kay was again placed in a school where the teaching of PE by visiting specialists was the norm. Her class teacher used PPA time to mark children's work and Kay was asked to 'look after the display boards' as an additional task during this time. Kay did not voluntarily seek out opportunities to observe or to work alongside the coaches during PE lessons and was not asked to do so by the visiting tutor, despite the formal expectation within the standards to gain experience across the full range of NC subjects. Following this final placement, Kay expressed relief that the visiting coaches were teaching PE:

Yeah, they were good, always on time and organised, looked very sporty. The kids enjoyed the lessons and I was glad of the time. I don't think I can teach PE like that, and I wasn't asked to either. I think there are lots of things to get involved with as the class teacher without being great at teaching everything...I am glad that schools can now bring other people in, actually I was quite relieved (Stage 3b).

The structure of ITT, in mirroring the NC and numeracy and literacy strategies, reinforced the low subject status of PE. Impact of the National Numeracy and National Literacy strategies was evident in school experiences through the clear emphasis placed on teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Kay commented repeatedly about the importance of core subjects and the work she was doing to become a qualified teacher in these areas. Kay showed me,

during interviews, the files of plans and positive lesson evaluations documented by visiting tutors and school based mentors. Kay was clearly a trainee who felt 'on track' to becoming a qualified teacher and able to demonstrate the required competencies to progress from year to year, placement to placement and beyond the course towards a teaching career. The low status of PE in the university course and in school ensured that Kay's negative disposition and low levels of confidence in the subject did not undermine this overarching aim. Despite the instigation of a national PE subject strategy, of which Kay had some awareness, the structures of ITT served to reinforce a view that PE was best taught by other people, and that this was acceptable despite the formal expectation that trainees 'should have sufficient understanding of PE (and the other NC Foundation subjects) to be able to teach with advice from an experienced colleague where necessary' (DfES/TDA, 2002).

ITT course and school-based structures were also seen to combine with the actions of other people within the ITT context. The practice of class teachers, mentors, visiting ITT tutors and PE coaches reinforced Kay's perceptions of PE and sport. For example, Kay was placed with successive class teachers who each demonstrated a negative disposition towards PE. This manifested itself either through the avoidance of teaching PE or the ready acceptance that others would teach the subject. The visiting specialists appeared to Kay to be 'sporty' and unlike her, whereas she empathised strongly with the views and practices of the class teachers. In such a way, Kay's own disposition was related to the dispositions and practices of others which were, at the same time, impacted upon by the prevailing structures. Kay was, therefore, highly unlikely to seek out opportunities to develop as a physical educator during school experiences where these did not routinely present themselves. The structures of the ITT course

served to reinforce Kay's extremely negative disposition, yet failed to capitalise on the one evident opportunity for development seen within the relatively positive experience of year 1 PE lectures. The lack of an immediate exposure to PE practice undermined any development that had occurred during the university based course and Kay's conviction that PE was best taught by others was subsequently reinforced. The class teachers with whom Kay was placed were perceived to hold similar views, whilst the incoming specialists strengthened the view that the teaching of PE was best carried out by others. Kay's disposition and favoured practice were legitimised and deemed to be acceptable within the training context, particularly within school where the practice of others condoned Kay's stance. In this trainee's experience, an existing negative disposition was further reinforced through experiences in ITT which were the outcome of particular structures. Across the ITT course, through successive school experiences and in the absence of on-going or mentored PE, Kay's dispositional dial was firmly 'locked' into place at this moment in time. The nature of PEITT, structure of NCPE and Kay's disposition served to constrain development as a potential teacher of PE, resulting in Kay typifying those trainees classified as 'confirmed avoiders'.

***James: an affirmed specialist***

James demonstrated an extremely positive disposition towards PE and sport from the outset. PSPP and PIP scores were amongst the highest seen in the sample of 83 respondents. James' general PSW score was 21 (out of a maximum of 24), the highest PSW score shared with just one other student. James' sport sub domain score was 22 (a maximum score would have been 24), with James being one of 5 students with a score over 21. In the PIP profile, James scored the highest possible rating in sport importance (8), one of three students to do so. The causal

factors of such a positive disposition were made clear during early interviews, and included positive personal experiences of PE and sport in school, on-going experience of performing, participating and coaching in a range of sports as an adult and the positive influence of other people in friendship groups, peer groups and family. As with Kay, James' prior experiences in PE and sport played an influential role in his early socialisation into the teaching profession, although positive experiences led to a significantly different disposition to that demonstrated by Kay. James' dispositional dial was firmly 'locked' into a positive position from the outset.

James tolerated the compulsory PE lectures in the first year of the course, not finding the content or approach particularly challenging and feeling ready to progress beyond the general introduction that he felt this module provided:

It was OK, but looking back now, it was a bit of a waste of time for me and some others who were kind of ready to get stuck in to some more exciting stuff. I felt that I was helping (the lecturer) more than learning myself, but did get some chance to demonstrate things and help other people to get the hang of it. Yeah, it was alright (Stage 1c).

Although James appeared to consider this experience as adequate, the course had no lasting negative impact, instead further reinforcing James' view that he had a greater knowledge and confidence base in comparison to others. James was motivated to choose PE as an elective subject in the second and third years and was enabled, by the course tutor, who selected a cohort from those who applied, to progress to these modules, having been deemed to have completed the year 1 subject audit satisfactorily. Identifying closely with the activity based structure of NCPE and the subject audit, James was able to provide evidence of extensive experience in performing and participating in a variety of sports. In this way, elements of the ITT structure combined with prior experiences and disposition to facilitate on-going

development in the subject. As the university course progressed, James explained the effectiveness of elective lectures in PE during years 2 and 3, enjoying working alongside similarly motivated peers and feeling that he was developing his own knowledge, skills and understanding through the courses. This was particularly the case in modules where working with children became an integral part of the learning experience and where James felt able to make mistakes. This was evident in a dance based module where James' ability to reflect on practice was developed. Speaking in year 3, James suggested that:

I have never said that I think I know all there is to know...and am the first to admit that some areas aren't my strong point, but I am happy that I can learn and know where to look. I'm not afraid to give things a go, and even dance, well I feel much better about this now. The course we did was great, I learnt from (the tutor) and others and the chance to teach small groups as part of the lectures was great. I even gave dance a go last term in school, it went ok; I just needed to put more planning in and used a literacy theme as a starting point. I wouldn't have known where to start last year! (Stage 3b).

James' commitment to PE was validated through working with like minded peers and university tutors who shared a positive disposition towards the subject. The feeling of being a specialist was further engendered and James gained tacit recognition from others that he was perceived in this way. This recognition of being a specialist was continued into school-based experiences from the very first school placement in year 1. Although not formally required to gain experience in teaching PE at this early stage, James was afforded extensive and autonomous opportunity to teach PE in each school placement. The structures evident in schools were highly relevant in this regard; the remodelled workforce enabled visiting others to deliver the PE curriculum and in this context, class teachers appeared not to question the appropriateness of a trainee being afforded relative autonomy in teaching the subject. Although the formal expectations of ITT were made clear to trainees and host schools, James was able to negotiate and navigate a particular pathway through successive experiences which

afforded additional opportunities for teaching the subject. At the end of his course, James looked back and commented:

I felt as though the teachers were relieved I was there on the whole, someone who actually wanted to teach PE. They knew it was important, but I can't really remember seeing anyone teach what I would call a good lesson. Looking back, I think I also didn't really teach good lessons in year 1, but it was probably better than the kids were used to...at least it happened! (Stage 3b).

The experiences gained in practising teaching PE during school placements were highly valued by James, who reflected during interviews about his progress as a physical educator.

I always knew I would enjoy the PE, that's the best bit, where I feel at my best...and where I think the kids have the best time in my lessons. I'm not saying my other lessons aren't great, or boring, but it's just different (Stage 3b).

Although James, through a combination of dispositional and structural factors, experienced ample opportunity to practice the teaching of the subject, opportunities were largely unstructured and opportunities for reflection were not taken full advantage of. An exception to this was provided where a specific directed task, within a specialist elective course, reinforced the link between theory and school based practice. However, the need to look at a school's long term planning in PE as part of this task was a source of frustration for James:

This was...tricky...well, planning wasn't great in PE, in fact I haven't seen much planning in three years...and I had to reflect on the plans in place across a year group. I could find the PE policy and the coordinator talked to me about what each year was doing each term but there wasn't much detail, just games or dance or gym as a heading (Stage 3b).

As a result of such experiences, James viewed the status of PE in schools and within ITT as far from ideal. Although enabled to elect PE modules across the course, James commented on the relative level of expectations in other subjects:

It seems that there is so much to do in the core subjects. That's where the biggest focus is in uni and also in schools that's what all the teachers talk about. I know that there is a big push on literacy and numeracy and I understand why, but I do think it's gone a bit too far (Stage 2b).

James also suggested that, although the recently launched national strategy was in place, many of the teachers with whom he had worked were not aware or interested in it.

The school I was in this year had newsletters on the board from the local secondary school organising staff training sessions, I think part of PESSCL strategy. The coordinator was told to go by the head, but I didn't think anyone else was going...if this had been something about reading or maths, it would have been a whole staff session with everyone expected to go (Stage 3b).

School experience was therefore seen to be a context where structures and dispositions combined to impact significantly on James' experiences. The structures of the ITT course, school curricula and prevailing policies (such as impact of NNS and NLS, the remodelled workforce, the introduction of PESSCL) created a particular context within which James proceeded to seek out opportunities to teach PE. On some occasions, PE was taught by visiting coaches in the schools where James was placed. Where he worked alongside these coaches, he offered some critical reflection on the quality of lessons and used the experiences as developmental opportunities:

They weren't bad to be honest, organised with plans in place and they made sure all the kids were kept involved. I like to think I knew as much as them and we made a good team, had fun...although we did games and I didn't see any coaches doing gym or dance...that might have been useful for me as I know I have got more to learn in those areas (Stage 2b).

The experiences gained in PE during school placements were mixed, and local variations and expectations were apparent from the outset. This resulted in James experiencing PE in school more than the other respondents in this investigation. Other professionals, themselves bringing particular dispositions to the ITT context, also played significant roles in enabling James to gain experiences in PE. The university PE tutor was clearly a motivational influence, encouraging James and the cohort of specialists to be proactive in seeking out experiences in school settings. The class teachers with whom James was placed were highly influential in

enabling James to gain experience in the subject, although this did not appear to be structured or particularly well supported. James reflected on this during final stage interview:

I don't feel that I have been mentored in PE as such, there just wasn't much time to talk to anyone about PE in school other than back at college in lectures...the class teachers let me get on with it and they seemed happy not to have to teach it themselves (Stage 3b).

Chapter 5 discussed a moment of crisis in James' progression towards achieving standards during year 2 placement and the demoralising impact of what was described by James as a clash of personality. During this time, when he was removed from school placement and re-located to a different school, the influence of the class teacher was negative. The extent to which this clash was the outcome of dissonance between James' views of teaching and those of the class teacher is difficult to determine, although James himself provided a view that this was at the heart of the matter:

We just didn't get on from the start and I don't think she was being fair, she just didn't like me. I'm not entirely sure what it was, perhaps being a man, being a bit different to the other students and struggling with some things she didn't have sympathy with...yeah it was hard and I really struggled (Stage 2b).

At this particular moment in his ITT experience, James gave a sense of reluctantly accepting the comparative low status of PE and the relative unimportance of teaching this subject well. Although this was not equated with a movement of his dispositional dial to a more ambivalent stance, a temporary focus on other aspects of ITT was necessitated. James learned that being an effective teacher of PE would not necessarily enable him to successfully navigate the course without being successful in the classroom based subjects.

Throughout James' school based experiences, there was a lack of quality assurance to ensure a consistency of experience, confirming McIntyre's (1997) concerns in this regard.

Opportunities to teach PE were unregulated and based on the combined influence of James' own disposition with locally negotiated expectations. The actions of other people were influential as enabling agents, although opportunities for support through mentoring were not apparent. Thus, although James' disposition towards PE and sport was not undermined, the structures of ITT were seen to constrain the optimum development of James as a teacher of PE. James remained, from the start of the investigation to the end, firmly committed to the teaching of PE in school and demonstrated resilience in this regard. Disposition influenced choice, in turn impacting on the structures he experienced by enabling access to course structures from which others were excluded. Within the typology, James typifies those trainees classified as 'affirmed specialists'.

***Leanne: a committed class teacher***

Although not amongst the highest scores in PSPP and PIP, Leanne was positively disposed towards PE and sport, with above average scores achieved within PSPP and PIP. Leanne's general PSW score was 16 (out of a maximum of 24). The sport sub domain score was 15 (a maximum score would have been 24). In the PIP profile, Leanne scored 6 in sport importance (highest possible score is 8), Leanne described positive experiences in PE and sport as a child, citing positive influences of other people, including parents and teachers, and maintained some active involvement in physical activity as an adult. This was not described as performance or competitive sport; Leanne described herself as being active and healthy and enjoying sport and going to the gym. Although Leanne described, in year 1 of the course and throughout, a general commitment to PE, she was also quick to point out a lack of extensive subject knowledge or experience in teaching or coaching sport. The structure of the ITT course and

NCPE gave Leanne some cause for concern in this regard, as she highlighted a lack of personal experience in a wide range of activities. Leanne was also quick to point out peers who appeared to be ‘very sporty and competitive’ (Stage 1b). Her view of self as a teacher of PE was much more understated than that demonstrated by affirmed specialists, although the impression of quiet confidence was given. During interviews, Leanne was not quick to claim specialist knowledge, but reiterated a commitment to the subject and a rationale for its teaching based on health benefits, social development of children and the importance of learning in different contexts. Leanne’s early expressed view of teaching the subject was that ‘it is important for the children to see their teacher enjoying being active’ (Stage 1b).

Leanne elected to study some additional PE as part of her on-going experiences in the course, and was selected by course tutors to do so. As with James, Leanne’s positive disposition enabled access to a particular course structure, providing an additional opportunity for subject knowledge development in Year 2. Leanne decided not to continue in PE during Year 3, preferring coverage of a range of elective subjects across the second and third years. Second year lectures supported higher levels of confidence and subject knowledge and an improved awareness of contemporary issues in PE. For example, Leanne was able to reflect on the recently introduced PESSCL strategy and suggested that the ‘aim for every child to have two hours a week of PE was worth trying for’ (Stage 3a). In this way, the course structure reinforced Leanne’s already held view regarding the importance of PE, whilst also enabling a further increase in confidence and development of curriculum knowledge.

During school placements, Leanne had a range of experiences. In year 1 she found this disappointing, with reported regular cancellation of PE lessons and a low status afforded to the subject as a consequence of prevailing structures. Leanne commented that this was frustrating, but that she understood why this particular class teacher placed a low priority on the subject:

I don't think she has been a teacher long, well she wasn't particularly confident, but also there was a lot of pressure in maths and English. The head wanted to see all plans in these subjects... I only saw one PE lesson and this was a bit of a rush once the children had changed. She always tended to find something more important to do, or a reason not to teach it because of weather or poor behaviour (Stage 2a).

The lack of exposure to PE in year 1 did not have the same negative impact as in the experiences of Kay. For Leanne, although optimum development in the subject was not enabled, the lack of PE experience in year 1 placement did not result in a negative move of her dispositional dial. Leanne enjoyed gaining some experience of teaching PE during year 2 school placements, with evident increasing confidence resulting from experiences in the elective course and the impact of a positive class teacher role model. The structure of the course and local interpretation of policy combined effectively at this time, enabling Leanne to work alongside a class teacher who reportedly shared a belief that PE was important. The teacher modelled practice that appeared accessible to Leanne and in keeping with her own rationale for the subject.

She was great, showed me what was possible. I think she used to play sport, but that wasn't the point, she kept telling the children about the importance of enjoying being active... you could tell that she thought it was important. It was never cancelled and I actually saw some plans for PE which I never saw last year. I know some other teachers in the school didn't like it as much (my friend in a different class didn't have the same opportunities), although sport also seemed to be something the school was trying to do well. Assemblies always mentioned sport, after school clubs and things (Stage 2b).

This particular school experience had a significant impact on Leanne's developing practice in PE and this, combined with the year 2 PE experiences in University, reinforced Leanne's sense of commitment to PE and her belief in the importance of teaching the subject. In year 3 school placement, this commitment was tested during an experience where Leanne 'felt under pressure to follow the expected schemes of work' (Stage 3b) and to allow coaches to come in and teach PE. Leanne commented that she did ask to observe and work alongside the coaches at one time, but that this became difficult in the face of wider pressures:

Because I needed the time to stay on top of my planning and assessment at this stage. I think I had 4 lever arch files on the go full of plans and tracking sheets and this seemed to keep my tutor happy. I know I should have tried to keep my PE going, but this just wasn't encouraged and I had to do what I had to do (Stage 3b).

Leanne admitted to conforming to this local expectation when her own priority was to complete the final experience and progress towards QTS. A student who appeared highly motivated and well organised (Leanne arrived at each interview with an updated teaching file and notes from lectures to show me), Leanne understood the expectations of each stage of ITT and how best the standards could be achieved. Although clearly committed to teaching PE in the long term, Leanne accepted local variations in practice as something to be navigated, to survive or to tolerate. She was unlikely, therefore, to be proactive in seeking out additional experiences in teaching the subject or to be acknowledged by others as a specialist in the way that James experienced. It seemed unlikely that others would initially see Leanne as a specialist, although over the course Leanne herself began to accept that a role as a subject leader in PE may be something to aspire to in the future:

I know I have lots to learn, but I think we're all in the same boat and at least I think PE is important and want to give it a go. I also think that being a subject leader in a core subject isn't something I can do yet; these roles normally go to experienced teachers, so it would be nice to get some experience in the next few years in a subject like PE (Stage 3a).

With a generally positive disposition, Leanne participated in PE lectures with some levels of confidence and prior experience. The most significant experience for Leanne was in school during year 2 of the course where she was paired with a class teacher who placed a high importance on the value of PE. This was also timed to dovetail well with the elective course experiences in Year 2 of the university course and Leanne was enabled and encouraged to put her developing knowledge and understanding into practice. This pairing with a teacher who valued PE appeared to happen by chance, and gave Leanne the opportunity, time and space for reflective deliberation during the practice. In the subsequent school placement, however, the school-based view that PE was best taught by others and that complying with this approach was the most effective way of achieving the desired outcome of passing the placement influenced practice. However, despite this final school experience, Leanne remained committed to teaching PE in the future and was:

looking forward to getting into school , having my own class and getting on with it. All this training and all the essays, that's why I've done it and I can't wait. I think I'll be one of those teachers who likes to give everything a go, and PE is an important part of this for me. I've definitely got more confidence in PE now than at the start of the course and know how to plan, even in those bits that I don't feel I know as much about (Stage 3b).

Leanne's stance as a committed class teacher is therefore the outcome of the combined effects of disposition and structures, although development in the subject has not been entirely predictable or linear. The course structure did not result in a standard or uniform experience; crucially, the most positive influence came in the shape of a committed class teacher who was able to model effective practice, reinforcing the additional learning and development accrued

in the optional elective year 2 course. Within the typology, Leanne typifies those trainees classified as ‘committed class teachers’.

***Becky: an ambivalent class teacher***

Although not achieving the lowest scores in either PSPP or PIP, Becky was negatively disposed towards PE and sport, with below average scores seen in both profiles. General PSW score was 10 (out of a maximum of 24), sport sub domain score was 12 (a maximum score would have been 24), and PIP score was 5 (maximum possible 8). This suggested that, despite a generally low physical self perception, Becky thought that sport had some degree of importance. This generally ambivalent disposition towards PE and sport was described in interviews across the investigation. For example, in year 1, Becky commented:

I just have never been particularly good, although I can see that it’s important and why some people really enjoy it. My own experience in PE at school wasn’t great – in fact for lots of my friends it wasn’t great either – but I suppose in primary school it’s a bit different and the children tend to enjoy it. My brothers were really sporty and I guess it just wasn’t my thing... I was more into drama and music (Stage 1c).

Becky’s experiences during the course demonstrate the potential for positive development in PE when certain influencing factors combine in particular ways. For example, Becky enjoyed the compulsory PE module in year one of the course, gaining in confidence and developing a greater understanding of the PE curriculum. In particular, she commented that:

I understand a lot better now what the aims of the curriculum are. This was explained really well and I can see the point, it’s not just about the skills for playing sport, but there’s so much more learning that can take place. It was very different to what I expected and different to the PE I had when I was at school (Stage 1b).

Despite this positive view of PE lectures, Becky appeared to have been afforded limited opportunity to analyse her own experiences and dispositions within discussions and lecture time, which were focused on practical ideas for teaching curriculum activity areas. Becky suggested, however, that she was more willing to consider herself as a teacher of PE as a result of the lecture experience, although specific doubts remained:

I can happily talk now about why PE is important, but there's a big difference between knowing this and being able to put lessons together for 30 children in all the different parts of the curriculum. I just haven't got any experiences to fall back on and as good as the lectures were, they covered the basics. I guess I could give some PE a go now, but it won't feel right or easy. We'll see what happens in school (Stage 2b).

From a somewhat ambivalent starting point, Becky's dispositional dial shifted as a consequence of Year 1 University based PE, although the extent to which this dial moved, or remained in this more positive position, was subsequently limited. The course structure, reflecting the content of the prevailing NCPE, raised questions in Becky's mind regarding curriculum coverage and confidence across the range of activities. The positive experience in year 1 was not strong enough to counteract the initial ambivalence demonstrated. As a consequence, Becky's sole university-based reference point for the subject remained the introductory course in year 1; Becky did not choose to study further modules in years 2 and 3 of the course. During interviews with Becky, a sense of a missed opportunity for development was palpable; a more positive disposition towards PE was becoming evident yet the potential for this to be reinforced through on-going experiences on the course was not met.

This potential for positive development was not consistently reinforced in the school setting. During year 1 placement, the opportunity to observe and practice teaching PE was severely limited by the class teacher's own practice and local school policy; according to Becky, PE

lessons were frequently cancelled because of poor weather and swimming took place once a week, a lesson conducted by a visiting, externally provided, swimming teacher. Although Becky was asked to accompany the class on two occasions to supervise changing time, she was unable to describe lesson content or the approach to learning and teaching deployed by the teacher:

I helped the kids get changed, I didn't like it, but some need lots of help. When the children were in the water I stayed on the side and tried to encourage them, but the teacher was quite dominant and I took a back seat. I'm not the best swimmer, but I just tried to help by passing floats and so on. They didn't have too long in the water, but I could see that some were struggling more than others (Stage 2a).

At a time when Becky was suggesting a potential for her disposition towards PE and sport to become more positive, as a consequence of the year 1 PE lectures, the lack of school based experience can be conceived as allowing a 'slipping back' of the dispositional dial to the earlier position of ambivalence. However, a further repositioning of this to a more positive location can be envisaged as a result of Becky's school based experiences in year 2. During this school based practice, Becky was placed with a class teacher who reportedly taught PE regularly, who changed for PE and who planned for the lessons. Becky described this experience as valuable, clearly appreciating the opportunity to work alongside such an enthusiastic teacher:

Well, this was the first time I had seen PE taught well by the class teacher. It was never cancelled and she always got changed herself and demonstrated all the things the children were asked to do. I don't think that she was a sportswoman, she just enjoyed it, I asked her about PE and she said it was important and she found it to be a great way to work with the children in a different environment. She was quite experienced and I learned quite a lot, although when it was my turn to be class teacher I know I didn't do PE justice in her eyes. I gave it a go, though and taught two lessons in the hall (Stage 2b).

This experience, through which Becky once again considered the possibility of becoming more confident and competent in teaching PE, was not reinforced in her final school placement. As experienced by other trainees, PE was taught by visiting specialists during PPA time as a consequence of the remodelled workforce. Additionally, preparation for tests dominated planning and classroom related activity, with Becky's efforts directed by the class teacher into maths and English for the year 6 class. During this period, PE lessons were frequently cancelled, although the children 'were allowed more breaks in the playground to let off steam' than was usually the case. In this way, the structural properties of schools, policies and the curriculum were seen to diminish the status of PE, in turn impacting on PE practice within the ITT experience. With an underlying ambivalence towards the subject, Becky did not challenge this status quo during placement and was content to comply with locally accepted norms in order to successfully progress towards QTS.

Becky experienced, therefore, a variety of mixed messages regarding the importance of PE in the primary curriculum. The university based course served to improve her understanding and encouraged Becky to place a higher importance on teaching the subject. School based practices were, however, variable, despite the recent introduction of the PESSCL strategy. Individual attitudes and beliefs of class teachers, together with the approaches taken by schools regarding PPA time and curriculum emphasis directly constrained the opportunity for Becky to develop practice in PE. An originally ambivalent trainee, Becky maintained this non-committal stance, stating at the end of the investigation:

I have had a really mixed experience in PE. I'm not going to pretend that it's now really important to me, because it's not...but I can see why children like it and why it's important. I admit that I am not going to be the first to volunteer to teach it and do think that there are some really good coaches in schools nowadays...but I can give it a go and will do if I am asked to by my new headteacher in September. I suppose I wouldn't want children in my class to have a negative view of sport and I will try my best if needed (Stage 3b).

Becky has been seen, therefore, to exhibit ambivalence throughout the ITT course. This ambivalence is not as firmly entrenched as the extremely positive or extremely negative dispositions shown by James and Kay respectively, and has been challenged and positively influenced by specific experiences within the course. Experiences in school settings variously undermined or supported Becky's development in the subject, at times reinforcing the positive learning that took place in the university course, at others emphasising PE's low status. In Becky's case, the dials of figure 7.1 can be conceived as working against each other, limiting the potential for permanent movement in disposition, and constraining opportunities for the development of the trainee's practice. Where positive movement was achieved, a slippage of the dial to the ambivalent starting point was allowed through inconsistent and variable experiences. Within the typology, Becky typifies those trainees classified as 'ambivalent class teachers'.

***Sarah: an ambivalent or committed class teacher***

Sarah embarked on ITT with a PSW score of 7 (maximum possible score of 24, and group mean 12.6), although the PIP score was relatively high (5 out of a maximum possible 8). Sarah's self perception in the sport sub domain was also below average (10). Interview data from Stage 1 suggested that there were particular experiences in Sarah's life that had resulted in this low physical self worth, although these were not generally linked to sport or PE in

school by her. Discussion in Chapter 5 highlighted negative life experiences and the impact of family issues on Sarah's self perception, although this does not appear to have a direct impact on disposition towards teaching PE; Sarah demonstrated an open minded approach to the subject, suggesting that her negative physical self perceptions would not impact on her role as teacher. Sarah approached the compulsory PE lectures in an open minded fashion, describing, enthusiastically a real sense of enjoyment. She suggested that:

The PE was nothing like the PE I remember from school and has given me lots of ideas...I want to make sure the kids in my classes have fun in PE and get confidence that they can do things (Stage 1b).

Sarah also demonstrated a view that PE was important with regards the developmental needs of children, a view that had been reinforced in Year 1 lectures and through wider more current familial experiences:

I know how important it is for children to be active and PE can give them the confidence to do this, and it is important when they get older too, I've seen children in my family who are sporty and some who are not and there's a difference...if I have kids I definitely want them to be active...the tutor discussed with us the problem with obesity and its definitely something to be aware of (Stage 2b).

Although Sarah was keen to take this learning forward into her Year 1 school experience, opportunities to do so were not provided by the prevailing structures. Sarah remarked that:

The focus was on everything else, well mainly numeracy and literacy and I didn't see much PE...I wasn't asked to do any and I didn't feel like I had time to put myself out to do it. It's a shame because I enjoyed the PE at Uni...but it just wasn't important for me at this stage (Stage 1c).

In this way, the emphasis on core subjects and the requirements for trainee practice in school limited Sarah's opportunity to build on a newfound enthusiasm for the subject. Sarah did not choose to elect further PE following the Year 1 compulsory course, although had considered this carefully. Sarah suggested that her decision was based on a wish to develop knowledge

across the curriculum, and the perception that she would not have been selected by the course tutor following completion of the PE audit in year 1. This further highlights the impact of structures on this trainee's continuing development. The elective modules in PE were perceived by Sarah to be more suited to others, a view reinforced through the activity-based focus, itself mirroring the structure of the prevailing NCPE. Sarah commented:

Well, I know there were only so many places available and the sheet we had to fill in was tricky for me, I couldn't give any experience or examples in sport or in coaching kids in different activities, and I think they were looking for lots of that. I didn't go any further with PE in the end, part of me thinks I would have enjoyed it, but I did other subjects which were useful too (Stage 2a).

Although Sarah was able to gain some experience in PE during her Year 2 school placement, the two lessons she taught were irregular and relatively un-supported:

I did teach two lessons and I think they were OK, but the class teacher didn't really know much about PE and I think I was at least as good as her...that sounds horrible, but she seemed happy with what I did, which was Games and I used my notes from last year's lectures which were helpful. I got some feedback from the teacher, and she was happy with my class management and plans. I was a bit aware that it didn't really fit with anything else the children were learning but I think from what I've seen that this is pretty normal (Stage 2b).

Although not necessarily an optimum experience, the two lessons provided the only opportunity for Sarah to practice the teaching of PE across the three year ITT course. The structure of this particular school experience enabled this to take place and allowed some feedback to be received. During Sarah's final school placement in Year 3, the PE lessons were conducted by visiting PE specialists during PPA time, a further example of the impact of structure on the experiences of trainees. This was disappointing to Sarah, although she accepted that this was normal practice and did not attempt to negotiate opportunities to develop her own practice in the subject. As with other trainees discussed in this chapter, an awareness of the need to negotiate broad requirements of ITT was evident, with successful

teaching of core subjects remaining of utmost importance. There was one interesting exception to this towards the end of Sarah's final experience when she was, as required by the formal expectations of ITT, to assume the full role of class teacher. The visiting specialist was unable to attend the school on this particular day and, rather than cancel the PE lesson, Sarah took the decision to teach the lesson herself. She took a great deal of pleasure from explaining the success of this lesson and the sense of achievement she felt from 'finally teaching the subject on my own' (Stage 3b). It is interesting to consider which aspect of ITT gave rise to this sense of confidence and motivation to teach PE. It is also valid to wonder whether Sarah would have chosen to do so without the, albeit limited, experience of teaching PE during the previous year.

Sarah was seen to share characteristics and experiences with other trainees in the sample. A very negative PSW score was similar to that recorded by Kay, a confirmed avoider, yet the PIP score and on-going behaviours seen during ITT suggest a developing sense of the importance of the subject, more like that exhibited by Leanne, a committed class teacher. Sarah, at times, also expressed some ambivalence towards the subject, valuing other areas of the curriculum more highly than PE, reflecting the importance afforded to subjects in the ITT and school curricula. Any ambivalence regarding self within PE was, however, gradually overcome, with signs that she was becoming increasingly committed. Sarah is, therefore, an example of a trainee who, where conditions allow, can be supported to become a more confident and committed teacher of PE. Her experiences also highlight constraints within the current system; if conditions within ITT had been more carefully and consistently structured in respect to Sarah's specific needs, it is possible that the move towards being a committed class

teacher could have been accelerated and more firmly reinforced. It is also conceivable that experiences during her NQT year may not reinforce this positive development and that a return to a more ambivalent stance could be seen. Sarah was a trainee who does not sit neatly within either the ambivalent or committed class teacher types, but is someone with the potential to move more firmly into either category during on-going career progression.

The positioning of Becky and Sarah within the typology raises the question of whether the typology can be further refined. It seems that ambivalent trainees can tend towards either a positive or negative stance, depending on various factors at different times. In line with recommendations made in chapter 8, this potential for alternative positioning could itself be a trigger for trainee reflection. The refinement of the typology could also be an outcome of future research, also discussed in chapter 8.

### **Developing new understanding**

The typology confirms and extends understanding gleaned from previous studies and provides substantiation of issues which were previously only known through anecdotal evidence. The complex and individually nuanced nature of the process of becoming a teacher is confirmed, whilst new understanding regarding the dual influence of disposition and structures, particularly influential during school based experiences, is provided. As with earlier studies relating to primary PEITT (Physical Education Association, 1984; Williams, 1985; Brumbaugh, 1987; Walkley, 1992; Carney & Armstrong, 1996; Moore, Webb & Dickson, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Carney and Chedzoy, 1998; Clay, 1999; Warburton, 2001), the results of this investigation confirm that an element of this group of trainee primary teachers lack

confidence to teach PE, and exhibit a negative disposition underpinned by poor prior experiences in the subject as school pupils. However, the typology indicates a range of disposition and practice that is more nuanced than earlier studies have suggested. Disposition and teaching behaviours vary across the typology and suggest degrees of change or potential for change that have previously been unidentified.

As others have suggested in respect to teacher development (c.f. Hextall, *et al.*, 1991; McNamara *et al.*, 2002), this study has confirmed that primary PEITT is a complex, dynamic and non-linear process, and that the likelihood of each trainee passing through a pre-determined set of planned stages (as promoted by Fuller & Brown, 1975; Conway & Clark, 2003) is discounted in favour of an approach which highlights complexity and individual difference (c.f. Burn *et al.*, 2003). This casts doubt over the relevance of formal expectations of trainee behaviour in relation to school practice, such as an escalating and deliberately staged increase in responsibility for the whole class and curriculum. The school experience context provides an opportunity for multiplicity and locally varied practice and the different interpretations of official policy that have been experienced by trainees. Each of the case study trainees experienced practice in school which did not comply with the formal expectations and which was influenced by a range of contextual factors.

It is also important to raise further questions regarding gender, given the relative number of men and women in the primary teaching profession. In each case described in this chapter, the prior experiences of trainees in school PE and sport have been seen to influence disposition towards the subject. In all cases, recollection of experiences concerning competition and

performance were commonly recounted. It appears that, during trainees' prior experiences, PE has played a part in reinforcing notions of masculinity and femininity (c.f. Flintoff, 2011), emphasising the competitive, team sport aspects of the subject over those which could be deemed as being more creative and cooperative. The 'male-based' nature of the PE curriculum (Azzarito & Solomon, 2003) has been reinforced through the structures of ITT, particularly through the activity focus of PE lectures designed to mirror the NCPE. Of the 14 participants who took part in quantitative and qualitative stage of the research, three were identified as affirmed specialists, including just one female. Although such structural influences cannot be ignored, the impact of gender is not straightforward; the identification of males as ambivalent and committed class teachers was possible, although no males were identified as being confirmed avoider types. It is clear that gender plays a significant role in shaping experiences in PE, although individual differences in trainees' dispositions, beliefs, prior experiences and on-going interactions in the ITT context have been identified as being more significant than any one overarching structural component. Individual difference has been highlighted within the case studies, demonstrating how each type of trainee responded to their circumstances and contexts in a contrasting fashion. At the extremes of the typology, exceptionally positive and very negative dispositions towards PE and sport have been shown to be somewhat resistant to change during ITT, yet those trainees occupying the two middle categories were seen to be more susceptible to the possibility of 'becoming' a teacher of primary PE and developing within the subject. James and Kay behaved in ways which reinforced their strong dispositions in relation to the subject, whilst Leanne, Becky and Sarah responded differently, with multiple and fragmented identities (c.f. Stronach *et al.*, 2002; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Day, 2011), creating new possibilities for practice.

Opportunities for trainee development in primary PE have therefore been seen to be greatest for those trainees considered to be in the 'middle ground' of the typology. These trainees commonly exhibited a generally negative disposition towards PE and sport, yet also demonstrated a view that PE and sport held some importance in the lives of primary aged children. In some cases, this perception developed as a consequence of experiences in ITT and led to an increased likelihood of a change to teaching behaviour where this was facilitated. For these trainees, the range of possible actions in primary PE was enhanced. Such trainees with an initial ambivalence towards PE developed a heightened sense of subject importance through university lectures and occasionally wider, familial, friend or peer related experiences. Only those trainees categorised as confirmed avoiders were seen to have a low physical self perception and low importance attached to sport; for these trainees, the horizon of action was severely limited from the outset.

Whilst trainee identity, manifested through disposition towards PE and sport, has been confirmed as a key influence on teaching behaviour, the social conditions of ITT have been seen to create enabling or constraining discourses. The 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1979) within this context enabled the development of teacher identity in relation to PE for some trainees (e.g. Leanne and Sarah) more than others, although the limits of this were set by social, cultural and institutional discourses (c.f. Zembylas, 2003). Disposition towards PE and sport, whether fixed or more fluid, facilitated each trainee teacher's level of interaction and agency, what Giddens (1979) called 'going on' within the specific social context. This primed the trainees to respond to contextual factors in a number of possible ways; the typology also suggests a wide range of what Mouzelis (1991) describes as 'situational-interactional'

conduct. The full range of possible practice available to each trainee teacher was a 'horizon of action' (Stones, 2005, p. 101), within which each trainee developed a 'hierarchy of purposes' (Giddens, 1993), and an 'ordering of concerns' (Archer, 2000). The typology highlights a more complex and individually nuanced process than has been previously been suggested. The possibilities of action are in fact numerous, although structural factors within the ITT context in focus have been largely seen to limit the extent to which trainees can capitalise on this range of potential opportunities.

Although highlighting the potential for a broadening of trainees' horizons of action, this research confirms that the training needs of all trainees were not adequately addressed. The horizon of action was seen to be relatively limited for all but those trainees with a positive disposition. The relatively minor allocation of course content to PE in the university context did not allow sufficient time for all trainees to explore the subject in detail, to reflect on and in practice (Whitehead, 1989, 1999; Bramald *et al.*, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Carter & Doyle, 1996; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Gudmundsdottir, 2001), to gain practice in teaching PE or to consider alternative pedagogies, features of ITT thought to be necessary for teacher development (Curtner-Smith, 1998). However, this is not solely a problem that can be eradicated by merely providing more time for PE, as advocated by Caldecott *et al.* (2006a, 2006b) and Talbot (2007). The existing university PE course, compulsory to all year 1 students, did not offer differentiated learning for trainees who commence ITT with differing needs and any increase in time would need to be considered in parallel with how whatever time is available can be best utilised. Furthermore, those with the greatest levels of confidence and the most positive disposition were encouraged and enabled to study more PE as the ITT

course progressed. For the small group of affirmed specialist trainees, exemplified by James, the combined effect of structural and dispositional factors resulted in greater opportunities for practice and reflection. For those with greater levels of ambivalence or negative disposition, ITT provided relatively limited or ad hoc opportunities. The structures of ITT enabled and legitimised an avoidance of the subject by some trainees (e.g. Kay), and for the teaching of PE to be low in a hierarchy of purposes. Those with the greatest professional development needs in primary PE therefore were unable to access sufficient, on-going or meaningful development opportunities during the ITT course.

### **The impact of policy**

This research has also extended understanding regarding the impact of policy, and resulting structures, on trainee primary teacher behaviour in PE. This is particularly the case in relation to those policies which directly impact on the status of PE in schools, such as the NNS and NLS. Although introduced in the late 1990s, these strategies significantly contributed to the non-uniform PE experience of trainees in school settings, confirming previously expressed views of Speednet (2000), Warburton (2001) and Boyle and Bragg (2006). Trainees' experiences in school, and the expectations placed on them during practice, were dominated by the requirement to plan, teach and assess children's progress in maths and English. A daily exposure to planning and teaching these subjects was apparent, along with multiple opportunities for subject specific observation, reflection and mentored practice, providing a basis for on-going learning and development. Furthermore, trainees could see that this emphasis impacted on the work of class teachers who modelled and reinforced the subject emphasis through their own practice. The status of PE in each trainee's experience

consequently varied according to individual class teacher commitment to the subject. This was mirrored within the university based course where the status of PE was relatively low as indicated by the amount of time devoted to the subject (appendix 4), although the enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment to the subject demonstrated by the PE academic tutor was not in question. The skilful teaching of PE in lectures by the course tutor also reinforced a view amongst ambivalent and avoider trainees that PE was best taught by specialists, mirroring practice seen in schools where this was the case. This in turn was reinforced by further policy change in the form of the remodelled workforce where the creative use of PPA time enabled and encouraged the teaching of PE by visiting specialists. This severely impacted on trainees' opportunities to practice the teaching of PE in school, to work alongside experienced teachers or to be mentored in the subject.

The low status of PE undermined the formal expectation that trainees were expected to teach the full range of NC subjects. Although standards for QTS and the NC state that trainees and class teachers should ensure coverage of the full curriculum, local interpretation and nuanced implementation was a regular outcome of various agents' practice. In this way, some policy priorities were foregrounded through the actions of others within the social context of ITT. The class teacher, by cancelling or avoiding PE lessons, by not planning for PE in the same way as for other subjects, or by abdicating its teaching to others, was a particularly influential point of reference for trainees. In most cases, the class teacher reinforced existing ambivalent or negative dispositions amongst trainees and legitimised the perpetuation of PE's low status, despite the recently introduced national strategy and existent curriculum requirements. Trainee teachers did not uniformly report seeing two hours of PE per week (the stated aim of the

recently introduced prevailing PESSCL strategy), or full coverage of the NCPE activity areas, despite this being a formally expected and statutory element of provision in schools. These findings contradict the PE specific report from Ofsted (2009) which suggested an improved quantity and quality of primary PE between 2005 and 2008. The reported frequent postponement of PE lessons in school was an apparently accepted and legitimised practice, despite formal requirements to the contrary. Trainees' own behaviours in school largely complied with local, unofficial and individual interpretations of expectations.

Trainees learned how to 'go on' within this context, and were aware that the ability to teach classroom based core subjects was the key criterion by which they would be judged in their quest to become qualified teachers. As a consequence, the situational tendency resulted in trainee teachers and those working with them interpreting broader, apparently less significant requirements, with a large degree of autonomy and flexibility. This ensured that dispositions of trainee teachers and those working with them in school remained relatively unchallenged. Whilst trainees had the theoretical capacity to resist such influences, most clearly felt that they did not actually have the 'power to do so' (Lukes, 1974). There was an underlying and subliminal message through the structure of ITT and in school that other subjects were more important than PE; put simply, to become a qualified primary school teacher the teaching of classroom subjects, particularly English and maths was the primary focus. Although some trainees articulated a developing understanding of children's developmental needs and a heightened awareness of wider social policy (e.g. Every Child Matters, the Children's Plan) with an apparent potential for a shift in disposition as a consequence, any potential changes in

practice were somewhat restricted by a return to the day to day context dominated by the teaching of two core subjects.

The concept of 'strategic compliance' (Lacey, 1977), originally conceived to explain the behaviours of NQTs during their first year of teaching, was shown to occur at a very early stage of ITT. Through this process, trainees complied with existing practice in the school context, and experienced difficulty in challenging the status quo. Although trainees in each category of the typology demonstrated a growing sense of an importance for PE, they compromised, at times, any wish or professional need to gain further experience in the subject in order to successfully negotiate the wider requirements of becoming a primary teacher. Whilst ambivalent trainees demonstrated a growing understanding of the importance of PE during ITT, the challenge to identity that the teaching of PE presented to some led to the rejection of the possibility of teaching the subject in favour of self preservation and a focus on being realistic, of safeguarding the opportunity to become a qualified teacher. This was firmly reinforced within the school context where trainee teachers were:

in the midst of sets of position practices and status-sets with all their attendant commitments and obligations... already inhabited by a phenomenological frame of meaning including all kinds of general-dispositions, psychological and emotional attachments, and wants and desires, by means of which, inter alia, they apprehend and relate to those everyday practices and obligations (Stones, 2005, p. 113).

In such a way, school experiences were seen as providing key moments within the ITT course where disposition, structures and practice intersected in relation to policy, curriculum, expectations of the ITT course, and the practices of others. The school experience context was limiting for some and more enabling for others and there is an opportunity to consider how this particular aspect of ITT can be best developed to support more effective development of

primary teachers in PE. This is of particular relevance in the present day context of government proposed changes to teacher training, where an enhanced emphasis on the benefit trainees derive from school based experiences is being foregrounded (DfE, 2011). The potential for increasing trainee teachers' exposure to low quality practice in PE through such a heightened focus on school experience raises significant concerns in light of the findings of this research.

### **The impact of other people**

The impact of educational policy was manifest through the actions of other people in the ITT context. Trainees interacted with various teaching professionals who themselves had developed particular dispositions and practices in relation to PE and sport and who were key influences on day to day practice, particularly when modelling teaching behaviours during school based experiences. The class teachers' practice, as described by the trainees, appeared to be based on an interpretation of policy, linked to their own dispositions and beliefs. This concurs with earlier, non subject specific teacher development research which has shown that class teachers work as 'creative mediators' (Bowe *et al.*, 1992; Helsby & McCulloch, 1997; Osborne *et al.*, 1997; Burnett, 2006). The role of the class teachers in this process was significantly influenced by earlier subject strategies in literacy and numeracy and the recently introduced PPA policy. Although the use of visiting specialists to teach PE could be rationalised as increasing the status of PE (it is deemed important enough to merit a specialist teacher), this phenomena also undermined the subject's importance in the ITT process and confirmed Morgan and Bourke's (2004) research regarding a preference amongst primary teachers for the deployment of specialist others. Earlier research has suggested that supporting

the development of a congruent and confident sense of self as teacher should be a priority within ITT (Ashby *et al.*, 2008; Iredale *et al.*, 2011) and that this is a significant role of school-based mentors (Edwards, 1998; Hobson *et al.*, 2009). The approaches seen within the ITT context in focus demonstrate that, despite a clear need to support the development of a congruent and confident sense of self as a teacher of PE, mentoring in the subject is a particular weakness. The experiences of the trainees were deficient with regards structured mentoring opportunities whilst the everyday practice demonstrated by class teachers served to significantly limit trainee development. A lack of on-going, structured and meaningfully mentored experiences in the school setting served to reinforce previously held dispositions and attitudes and did little to support the development of subject knowledge or pedagogical understanding in PE.

### **The potential for change**

The findings of this investigation support the notion that personal values and beliefs in relation to PE are highly resistant to change during ITT (c.f. Rolfe, 2001), for certain types of trainee (namely the affirmed specialists and confirmed avoiders). For these trainees, disposition has been further entrenched as a consequence of particular experiences (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), including the lack of opportunity to reflect on prior experiences or on practice, together with a deficiency of mentored experience or exposure to PE in school. However, findings also suggest that personal pedagogies can be effectively developed through ITT courses as a consequence of a shift in personal values and beliefs derived through practical experience in schools and lectures in university, concurring with Bramald *et al.*, (1995) and Nettle (1998). In this way it is apparent that some primary trainees

have greater potential than others to develop as teachers of PE, as seen in the cases within the middle categories of the typology. As demonstrated by the case of Sarah, an initial ambivalence towards the subject can change where conditions allow. By providing a positive experience of the subject during university lectures, coupled with opportunities for reflection and meaningful mentored practice in school, a greater commitment and confidence to teach the subject can be fostered.

Whilst concerns regarding PEITT in relation to the lack of time afforded to subject study or opportunities provided in ITT for critical reflection (Morgan & Bourke, 2005; Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a) remain, the findings of this study suggest that the identification of those elements of ITT which can be more effectively developed to support the needs of all trainees would be a more relevant and useful approach, regardless of course time allocations. Opportunities do exist in this regard, yet in the experiences of respondents within this research, these have been rarely capitalised upon as a consequence of combined impact of structural and dispositional factors. The relationship between structures, disposition and practice shown within figure 7.1 as an interdependent set of dials demonstrates that primary PEITT is not a fixed or linear process, with entirely predictable outcomes or progressive stages through which trainees develop. Instead, the phenomena which combine to result in particular practices can be seen as a complex mix, resulting in the foregrounding of particular interpretations and behaviours at certain times. The dials can be manoeuvred for each type of trainee within a more carefully differentiated and personalised ITT experience. The development of a more positive outlook towards PE has been seen as a positive outcome of university-based lectures for trainees, yet this has not been followed up by effective on going tutoring or mentoring in school. The

potential for a more enduring positive dispositional shift was subsequently negated by lack of exposure to the subject throughout the remainder of the ITT course and in school, highlighting the time sensitive need to connect university and school based PE through appropriately structured and mentored practice. The school context, with an apparent regularity of cancelled and poorly planned lessons, wide variation in PE teaching approaches, use of external coaches during PPA time, and an ability of trainees and mentors to avoid exposure to PE, created a range of limiting influences.

At best, within the present structure, the more able, confident and enthusiastic trainees (affirmed specialists) were able to gain regular experience in applying their knowledge to work with children. At worst, the least confident and more ambivalent trainees are exposed to limited experiences in PE, characterised by a low priority afforded to the subject by the class teacher. PE is understood and accepted as a subject prone to being cancelled and practice seen in school is in a stark contrast to the positive and educationally relevant approach advocated by university PE ITT tutors. For the majority of trainee teachers who do not elect further PE following the compulsory course, an immediate application of ideas in a supported school placement is essential. For these trainees, however, a poor experience during school experience may mark the end of any potential they have of becoming a more confident and knowledgeable teacher of primary PE. Without purposeful and dedicated CPD in PE in the future, it is unlikely that such trainees will ever feel fully able to embrace the teaching of PE.

Of clear relevance to this investigation has been the apparent lack of opportunity for trainee teachers to gain experience in teaching PE. Participants were unable to gain extensive, regular

or on-going experience throughout the three major school experiences. For confirmed avoider trainees, this was not a personal concern; the lack of exposure to PE provided a shelter from the threat of deeply challenging experiences which could negatively impact on broader trainee teacher identity. The avoidance of teaching PE, unchecked by mentors and link tutors, cast doubt on whether the potential that some trainee teachers showed to become teachers of primary PE could in actuality ever be fulfilled. It was also possible for affirmed specialists to experience conditions within the ITT process which resulted in negative PE experiences. The chief concern for this particular group is that their practice will be unchallenged and that they will not be sufficiently encouraged to reflect on their approaches to teaching the subject in school. This has been seen to result in a perpetuation of existing practices, sometimes dominated by an adult sport-based model of delivery, in the absence of any regularly mentored consideration of alternative practices. Affirmed specialists are perceived, from a very early stage of practice, as knowing more than experienced class teachers and their practice proceeds unchecked and unquestioned. This perception needs to be challenged within ITT and school based experiences so that this relatively small proportion of trainees can also be supported to develop their practice to an optimum level.

### **Summary**

This chapter has discussed the relationship between structures, disposition and practice in primary PEITT, developing new understanding relating to how trainees' experiences are the outcome of a range of complex factors. The model of primary ITT under investigation has been shown to largely constrain trainee development in PE, although opportunities for better supporting trainees in the subject have been identified. The typology of trainees in relation to

PE has been introduced and this categorisation has demonstrated a wide range of professional development needs amongst the cohort of trainees. The four categories of trainees suggest that whilst those with the most extreme dispositions towards or against the teaching of PE will not experience dispositional challenge in the current model of primary ITT, those within the middle ground, that is the ambivalent and committed class teachers, hold the greatest potential for positive development. An appropriately differentiated, connected and structured learning experience in university and in successive school placements holds significant potential for those who wish to improve the practical outcomes of primary PEITT. The trainees in the middle ground of the typology are in the majority and any positive development in disposition, confidence and subject knowledge will potentially have significant and enduring impact amongst the primary teaching profession.

The model of structures, disposition, practice presented in this chapter also holds significant potential as a reflective, diagnostic tool and course providers may wish to utilise the model, with trainees, to identify professional development needs during ITT and beyond. During the final stage of this research, a draft model was presented to a group of final year primary ITT students who were able to identify themselves within the range of experiences. If such a self identification exercise can be included in the early stages of ITT then a more personalised and individually relevant learning experience can be plotted by both the trainees and ITT providers, and developed in university and in school settings. The following chapter builds on the discussion provided here to make concrete recommendations for the development of primary PEITT and to conclude the study in relation to research questions and broader issues at large within the English education system.

## CHAPTER 8

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter summarises the key findings of the research and suggests ways in which these could be best operationalized to make a difference to primary PEITT practice. The recommendations focus on the potential for amendment of those structures seen to be influential (namely university PE, school based experiences, status of PE, expectations and local practice, and the influence of others) in order to better support more primary trainees to become teachers of PE. This chapter also identifies the limitations and scope of the study and suggests areas for future investigation. Although the future structures of ITT and the NC are, at the time of writing, uncertain, it appears likely that there will be a sustained and increased focus afforded to school based elements of ITT, and a continued status of PE as a statutory subject of the national curriculum (DfE, 2011a). Whether or not PE is afforded an enhanced status within the primary curriculum or in ITT, it is important to consider how the range of issues identified by this research can be best addressed. With an expected increase in emphasis on school based aspects of provision, it is particularly important that providers of ITT consider how this specific component of ITT can be best developed to support the development of trainee primary teachers as teachers of PE.

Whilst this research confirms a view that trainee primary teachers are unlikely to deviate markedly from locally accepted school-based practice, trainee disposition and practice have been seen to be susceptible to change should certain conditions prevail. This is particularly the

case for those trainees identified as occupying the middle ground of the proposed typology, although practical considerations regarding the optimum development of each type of trainee are also identified. The staged approach to teacher development advocated by some (e.g. Fuller & Brown, 1975; Conway & Clark, 2003), and discussed in chapter 3, is therefore rejected in favour of a teacher education pedagogy with increased sensitivity towards individual disposition and a focus on developing meaningful and relevant experiences in PE throughout ITT. The combined effect of the wide range of trainee dispositions evident at the outset of ITT and experiences which are influenced by structural factors presents a pressing need for clearly differentiated learning experiences. The trainees within this study were each following the same prescribed ITT curriculum; whilst this did include an opportunity to elect additional PE study in years 2 and 3, no other differences were evident within course requirements.

The recommendations put forward in this chapter differ significantly from the demands made by others for greater time allocation for PE during ITT (Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b; Talbot, 2007) and from those who express the view that the development of a cadre of differently trained PE specialists is the primary solution for improving practice in schools (Severs, 1995; Revell, 2000). The recommended focus is on supporting trainees to become ‘committed class teachers’ through planned and linked experiences within university and school based training contexts. It is in the latter setting where a significantly enhanced focus is required in order for the teaching of PE to become a regular and well supported experience for trainees within ITT. The structures, disposition and practice model introduced in chapter 7 is recommended as a focus for trainee and teacher educator reflective practice. The recommendations discussed in

this chapter offer a number of potential approaches through which the dials in this model can be manipulated to positively change the practice contained within the outer dial.

### **Key findings**

The process of becoming a teacher of primary PE centres on the complex relationship between dispositions towards PE and sport and trainee experiences within particular structures during ITT. The situational-interactional conduct (Mouzelis, 1991) of trainees varies widely, governed by antecedents and dispositions, as well as specific, within-ITT factors, such as the influence of others, the status and model of practice of PE in placement schools and university PE. Trainee primary teachers draw upon dispositions to behave in specific ways in relation to PE; disposition towards PE and sport impacts significantly on practice, yet ensuing teaching behaviour in PE are also influenced by a range of structural, within-ITT factors. Of particular significance in this regard are the perceived status of PE and sport within school and primary ITT curricula, the practices of school-based colleagues, and the extent to which trainees can access opportunities for relevant and supported experiences. Whilst the dispositions of trainees, particularly those shown to be either extremely positive or negative, are largely based on prior life experiences and appear highly resistant to change, it is suggested by this research that structural factors can be shaped to impact more positively on trainee practice.

The use of social theory as a lens through which to investigate the issues has enabled the identification of a range of contrasting relationships across the cohort of trainee primary teachers, leading to the development of the typology of primary trainees, a component of the structures, disposition, practice model. This typology, with four categories of trainee primary

teacher (confirmed avoiders, affirmed specialists, committed class teachers and ambivalent class teachers), supports the development of understanding beyond that provided by previous studies which have largely focused on either structural factors (Caldecott *et al.*, 2006a; 2006b) or the dispositions of trainees (Carney & Armstrong, 1996; Rolfe & Chedzoy, 1997; Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Armour & Duncombe, 2004), particularly a focus on low levels of confidence amongst primary trainees and teachers. The structure, disposition, practice model offers potential for those charged with improving the development of primary trainees in PE, highlighting the need for effectively differentiated learning and professional development experiences. Whilst previous research from the UK and elsewhere has suggested that some trainee and practising teachers are more disposed to the teaching of PE than others, the findings of this research introduce the notion that there is potential for ITT courses to make a more positive impact on those trainees who are not initially disposed towards teaching PE. The development of committed and initially ambivalent class teachers can make a significant impact on practice, contrasting with views that PE is best taught only by those deemed to be specialists. In practical terms, the number of committed class teachers can far outweigh those deemed to be affirmed specialists, although this does not deny the need for high quality subject leaders who may be more readily identified from within this latter type. Those trainees progressing to subject leadership roles early in their careers are most likely to be identifiable from within the affirmed specialist group. Whilst endeavouring to support such trainees' progression, however, those trainees identified within different categories of the typology can also be better supported. The results suggest that the development of trainees in primary PE should not hinge on an either/or conundrum; the positive development of as many trainees as possible is encouraged.

The research has highlighted the paucity of school based experiences in PE during primary ITT and the powerful, constraining role that this plays in teacher development. Rather than confirming the need for primary PEITT to afford an increased time commitment in PE lectures, this research suggests the need for an emphasis to be placed on the reconfiguring of school based experiences and the relationship between these and university PE courses. In this way, it is not just the quantity of time available for PE 'on course' that is significant, but the quality and range of differentiated approaches being used within all available time within ITT. Teaching and learning strategies used within primary ITT need, therefore, to be reviewed in light of these findings, and training experiences re-configured to optimise the time that is available for university lectures and school based practice. The findings of this research also suggest the need for an increased focus on the development of subject specific mentors within primary schools to support the link between theory and school-based practice. Mentoring in primary PEITT has been shown to be limited in the experiences of the case study trainees and is currently a weakness. The experience of all trainees in the core NC subjects offers a marked contrast and highlights the powerful influence of other professionals within the school based training context in other subjects.

The research findings contribute to the debate centred on specialist PE teaching in primary schools (Severs, 1995; Revell, 2000). In 1992, Alexander suggested that there was a sense that 'the generalist model of primary school staffing has reached its limits' (p. 205). Whilst this research indicates that it may not be entirely appropriate to expect all trainee primary teachers to teach PE to the same level during ITT, or in early stages of a teaching career, it is simplistic to suggest that only those with the most positive dispositions toward the subject should do so.

The affirmed specialists identified in this study faced considerable challenges during the ITT process and did not necessarily appear best placed to be the sole agents for delivering PE in primary schools. In addition to the limitations identified regarding their development, this research suggests that affirmed specialist trainees are a relatively low proportion of the total number of trainees (3 out of 24 trainees who took part in qualitative interviews were identified within this type). Although the sample size was relatively small and the data collected within only one ITT context, the research suggests that the majority of trainees can be identified as being ambivalent or committed class teachers in relation to PE (16 out of 24 trainees who took part in qualitative interviews were identified within these types). A focus on developing the ITT experience for these trainees is therefore pertinent in order to affect the practice of a larger number of beginning teachers. Crucially, trainees initially categorised as ambivalent class teachers demonstrated potential to become more committed teachers of the subject and a sole reliance on the development of affirmed specialists would discount this possibility.

The recommendations detailed in this chapter arise from the discussion running throughout the thesis and include newly configured professional development opportunities which could increase the potential for more primary trainees to become confident, knowledgeable and committed teachers of PE. The recommendations focus on changes that can be largely implemented within existing ITT courses and which can be adapted and applied to the various pathways of ITT now evident within the teacher education context. Sustaining the development of primary PEITT when policy continues to evolve is an important consideration for course providers.

### **Recommendations for practice**

The recommendations for practice presented here constitute changes to the structures of primary PEITT which would enable greater sensitivity to individual difference, increased flexibility regarding the potential for change in trainee disposition, and a shift from a view that all trainees will reach the same level of preparedness to teach PE by the end of the ITT process. The recommendations are particularly relevant in light of the current government proposals regarding ITT (DfE, 2011b) through which the interface between university providers of ITT and schools are to be altered. The proposals are designed to enable more schools to lead teacher training (DfE, 2011b, p.15), working in alliances with other schools and universities. The DfE argue that school placement is one of the most important aspects of any ITT route, and that the benefit trainees derive in this context is directly related to the quality of the experience; the importance of observing outstanding teaching, with opportunities for practice to be modelled are highlighted. The findings of this research suggest that school based provision is currently a weakness within primary PEITT and specific steps should be taken for this heightened government focus on school experience to be best utilised.

#### ***Recommendation 1: Provide greater opportunity for reflection and differentiated learning***

Given the wide range of trainee dispositions towards PE and sport, it is prudent to suggest that providers of ITT consider how best to provide meaningful learning experiences for all trainees. The provision of just one compulsory module for all at the start of the ITT course, with an optional elective course for some trainees in each of the two subsequent years, does not cater for the diverse range of needs seen amongst the trainees in this investigation. Each type of trainee described in chapter 7 has contrasting prior experiences, beliefs and knowledge

in relation to PE on entry to the ITT context, and learning opportunities could be more effectively designed throughout the course with this in mind. This necessitates a less rigid course structure and expectations for trainees which are more flexible and responsive to particular professional development needs. In some cases, NQTs will be ready to quickly aspire to subject leadership roles in PE, whilst others may lack confidence to teach a whole class of children without considerable support from others. Course providers are therefore encouraged to consider providing a greater range of flexible learning opportunities from which trainees select at different times within the course, in negotiation with tutors and school based colleagues following reflection on and in practice. The need for opportunities that encourage trainee reflection on personal experiences and practice in PE and sport during primary ITT has been previously documented (Curtner-Smith, 1998), yet this has been seen to be lacking within the ITT context under investigation. The structures, disposition, practice model introduced in chapter 7 provides a new and potentially useful focus for reflection. Asking trainees to self-identify their positioning within the outer dial of this theoretical model could lead to exploration of prior experiences and consideration of how these relate to their future work as primary school teachers. In doing so, trainees can be enabled to work with course tutors and school mentors in the negotiation and shared planning of learning experiences which more fully take account of individual difference, and which are designed to manipulate the dials within the model to best effect.

Reflection can be facilitated in a variety of ways, by individuals, in groups or in whole cohort lectures. Initial reflection regarding positioning within the typology is suggested in a group context, as a non-threatening means through which generic issues can be initially identified.

Subsequently, the use of reflection to plot a course for on-going development should be centred on a more detailed, one to one discussion, through which specific needs can be identified and learning opportunities planned. The use of reflection to determine ensuing learning in such a way makes the need for differentiated experiences more explicit; in the model of ITT seen in the case study institution, individual differences have been clear, yet masked within course structures. Other than the opportunity to select additional modules in PE, little choice has been evident within learning opportunities in the subject. This has allowed individuals to navigate learning experiences without the necessary levels of support from others. Whilst this recommendation for reflection is not new, a more focused use of this reflection to plan specific, differentiated and negotiated learning experiences provides a renewed focus on this aspect of PEITT. The structures of primary PEITT should allow trainees time and support to reflect regularly, and for this to be facilitated through on-going support from professional colleagues. Whether this is provided by tutors in the university setting, or school based teaching staff, is an important consideration for course providers, and this will depend on the relative strengths that such professionals bring to the ITT context. The government-suggested changes to ITT, which would see the creation of new partnerships between training schools and universities, hold potential for new dialogue and staff development in this regard, an issue which is explored later in this chapter.

***Recommendation 2: Review expectations regarding the progress of trainees***

Given the range of individual positioning within the typology, an expectation that all trainees will become confident and committed teachers of PE within the timescale of ITT seems to be misplaced. This is particularly true for confirmed avoiders, for whom very negative

disposition has been seen to be highly resistant to change. The prevailing QTS standard regarding coverage of the NC does provide some flexibility in this regard, stating that those awarded QTS ‘should have sufficient understanding of PE (and the other NC Foundation subjects) to be able to teach with advice from an experienced colleague where necessary’ (DfES/TDA, 2002). Trainees in this study were, however, seen to progress towards, and achieve QTS, without demonstrating their abilities in teaching PE, and did not receive the requisite advice from an experienced colleague. This was caused by, and in turn further reinforced, the relatively low status of PE in practice, suggesting to trainees and school based professionals that this formal expectation, as expressed in the QTS standards, could be ignored without consequence.

Trainees’ understanding of PE was, however, formally demonstrated within the year 1 compulsory PE module (appendix 14), and assessed on a pass or fail basis. This assessment required compulsory attendance at lectures, creation of annotated notes based on lecture content, and a ‘one side of A4 reflection’ regarding on-going professional development needs. Given the experiences of trainees in this investigation, the appropriateness of this assessment method as the sole means through which trainees’ understanding and teaching competence in PE was judged is somewhat questionable. It is therefore recommended that providers of ITT consider more comprehensive means through which trainee progress in PE can be monitored and evaluated beyond completion of such a task. To do so, it is pertinent to suggest that universities and schools work proactively together to develop various means through which trainees can demonstrate understanding and teaching competence in a variety of ways.

For example, those who are affirmed specialists could be expected to gain practice in teaching PE from the earliest stages of ITT, working closely with a PE mentor to reflect on and develop practice. Over time, such trainees could be asked to shadow subject leaders and to develop understanding beyond their own delivery of the PE curriculum. This group of trainees, which, like confirmed avoiders, is a relatively small proportion of the sample, expressed a very early wish to become subject leaders. This positive disposition and enthusiasm for development in the subject was welcomed by others, particularly in the school based components of training. Through the voluntary election of further subject modules and selection by academic tutors to pursue on-going study based on audited experience, this group was enabled, by prevailing structures, in a variety of formal and less formal ways, to develop within the subject. Although a lack of structured, mentored development in PE in school was seen to limit trainees' progress, this group of trainees holds significant potential for the development of the subject in schools. With this in mind, course providers and policy makers may wish to consider an earlier identification of specialism within primary PE and ensure that the learning and development needs of this cohort of trainees are comprehensively addressed from the outset. The merits of attending a year 1 module with other trainees is questionable and time may be better spent in developing a more specific and focused range of knowledge and understanding of the primary PE curriculum. By being perceived as subject specialists from an early stage by others, these trainees have a need to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to allow effective support of others and the management of PE in primary schools from an early career stage. This necessitates comprehensive coverage of all curriculum activity areas, the development of understanding of whole school planning, school policy development, advocacy for the subject and their role in supporting others. Such an enhanced specialist focus

in ITT is required to combat the risk of such trainees being perceived by others, and themselves, as specialists in the absence of adequate support. As with confirmed avoiders, a more focused approach to negotiating training needs is recommended, with a particular requirement for school based experiences to be mentored by an experienced and confident teacher of primary PE. The issue of subject specific mentoring is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Those trainees in the middle ground of the typology have been seen to show the greatest potential for dispositional change. Whilst ITT structures can be amended to enable more effective development of affirmed specialists, and to include a more realistic expectation for confirmed avoiders, it is the development of this larger group of trainees which holds the greatest potential for the development of the subject. Those with an initial ambivalence towards the subject, as well as those with a greater level of commitment, require a differently focused range of learning and development opportunities to progress towards QTS with confidence and competence in PE. The development of confidence and subject knowledge amongst initially ambivalent trainees was seen to be enabled where university based lectures were followed quickly by positive experiences in PE in school. This was, however, seen to be somewhat happenstance and reliant on the independently managed PE practice within the placement school setting. In many cases, this did not reinforce learning accrued in the university course, although, in a small number of examples, the practice of a committed class teacher was favourably viewed by trainees. Where this happened, for example for Leanne during her second year school placement, commitment to and confidence in teaching the

subject was strengthened. The development of a stronger relationship between university and school based PE is therefore seen as a crucial step.

Confirmed avoiders present the greatest challenge for those seeking to develop all trainees as teachers of primary PE. Their dispositions have been shown to be highly resistant to change and the extent to which this group of trainees can demonstrate the expected standards by the end of an ITT process is questionable. Providers of ITT may therefore wish to consider the possibility of allowing confirmed avoider trainees to 'opt out' of training to teach PE and for this to be formally recorded through the qualification process. This does not preclude the possibility of such trainees returning to PE through professional development courses in the future, but is a candid and pragmatic step which formalises the unofficial avoidance of PE evident amongst this type of trainee. As confirmed avoiders in this study have demonstrated, there is a view amongst this group that PE is best taught by others and that they have a strong preference, borne out in practice, for concentrating on developing their teaching within a classroom environment. Instead of attempting to challenge this entrenched disposition, a more pragmatic use of time would be to support these trainees in becoming highly effective in their chosen areas and removing the teaching of PE from the possibilities of action, either temporarily or permanently.

In practical terms, this raises significant questions regarding how such decisions are made, by whom, and at what stage of the ITT process. However, taking this step would formalise something that is currently happening unofficially and would mean recognising that becoming an effective teacher of PE is not within all trainees' immediate possibilities of action. The

number of confirmed avoiders within the case study institution was found to be relatively small (5 out of the 24 trainees who took part in qualitative interviews were identified within this type) and this degree of potential opting out is suggested only for this strongly disposed group. Questions are also raised regarding the training of primary teachers in other curriculum subjects, particularly those where similar issues regarding teacher confidence prevail. The management of trainees' development in such a complex and chaotic ITT context would be highly problematic and a recommendation to narrow trainees' exposure to various aspects of the curriculum could not easily apply beyond PE. However, it can be argued that PE, taught in a range of environments outside the classroom, has a heightened level of complexity and class management demands related to issues of safety. This adds a particular level of concern regarding the current requirement that all trainees will become qualified to teach PE and strengthens the recommendation for selective opting out from the subject.

Whilst the QTS standards pertaining to trainees in this investigation offer some flexibility through advocating support from an experienced colleges where necessary, proposed new teachers' standards (DfE, 2012), due for introduction from September 2012, suggest that less flexibility will be available. The new standards:

Will apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period; and those covered by the new performance appraisal arrangements (DfE, 2012, p.1).

The new standards define a minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded QTS. In Standard 3, all teachers (including those achieving QTS) will be expected to:

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings (DfE, 2012, p.7).

Without the flexibility afforded by the 2002 standard, the extent to which 'good subject and curriculum knowledge' is attainable by all trainees in this investigation is questionable. The introduction of a new standard also raises questions regarding the process through which 'good subject knowledge' will be assessed in the light of the paucity of subject mentoring experienced by trainees in the school context and the lack of on-going subject study in the university context.

It is therefore recommended that providers of ITT consider how different levels of expectation regarding trainees' progress towards the standard are supported, monitored and assessed. The methods used should be underpinned with a heightened commitment to checking trainee progress and providing support, in different ways, where this is necessary. The structures of university and school based provision should therefore be strengthened to include means through which for all trainees' practice in PE can be more closely monitored, and supported. As discussed in recommendation 1, trainee reflection can be used as a starting point for planning development opportunities with the support of a mentor in this process.

***Recommendation 3: Strengthen the relationship between university and school based elements of primary PEITT***

To effect positive changes to the relationship between university and school based elements of primary PEITT, a much closer integration of university and school based experiences is required, whilst simultaneously acknowledging and better supporting the potential for school based professionals to contribute towards trainee development in PE. School staff, with roles as mentors for primary trainees, should be more aware of the nature and content of the university based PE curriculum and the importance of their role in modelling expected practice. Where mentors are themselves negatively disposed towards PE then a role in coordinating and organising positive experiences for trainees in PE, using the expertise of colleagues, would be appropriate. Course providers may wish to consider approaches which result in university and school-based staff working more closely together, sharing practice, ideas and roles. Examples of such activity would include university lectures being delivered in school settings, trainees gaining experience through working with small groups of children in PE, and school based staff delivering lectures in university. Whilst such approaches are conceivable within present day ITT structures, it is also possible that a new impetus for such developments could be provided through government led changes to ITT discussed in chapter

3. The Government's implementation plan for the reform of ITT states that:

The ITT strategy set out the evidence for a strong link between the quality of teacher training and high quality school-based activities based on demonstration and peer review. The strategy also argued that, as employers of newly qualified teachers, schools have a critical interest in initial teacher training, and should play a greater role in leading the recruitment, selection and training of teachers.

We put forward proposals to:

- a) make it easier for schools to lead teacher training;
- b) encourage more universities to follow the example of the integrated working of the best university-school partnerships;

c) focus ITT on the skills and knowledge that trainees will need most once they are working in the classroom as qualified teachers (DfE, 2011c, p. 11).

The government proposals suggest that an increase in school based practice in ITT will be a positive development, yet the results of this research suggest that school based experiences in primary PE are highly problematic. By creating further opportunity for trainees to be exposed to negative experiences, the development of trainees as teachers of primary PE may be further constrained. However, the development of integrated working between universities and schools in primary PE, as part of a new model of university and school partnership may provide an impetus for positive development. If new partnerships can create regular and well-supported opportunities for trainee observation, reflection and practice, then a strengthened university-school partnership may hold significant potential in this regard. The development of PE specific mentoring in the primary school context should therefore be a particular focus for ITT providers, supported through the development and delivery of professional development courses and resources, and integrated within the partnership agreements between schools and universities. Such practical steps would serve to provide a heightened and supported focus on the subject during school based experiences, and facilitate on-going trainee reflection and development. The development of mentors in primary PE can also make use of the wider workforce currently deployed within the subject area as a consequence of the 'remodelled workforce agenda' described in chapter 3. A new cohort of PE mentors need not be limited to class teachers, but could include visiting specialists, link teachers (where these have been retained by head teachers), university tutors, and coaches, in addition to class teachers. Course providers are also encouraged to consider how an appropriate matching of mentors with trainees could be facilitated; examples provided in chapter 7 have demonstrated the powerful impact of trainees being matched with similarly disposed class teachers. The development of

mentors through professional development courses also provides scope for practitioners to update their own knowledge and practice and could therefore be a vehicle through which universities and schools work in an improved partnership to develop the quality of primary PE. The flexibility of school staffing provided by the remodelled workforce agenda, together with the forthcoming new partnerships between university and schools, therefore create a context within which greater creativity can be used to ensure that professional support can be provided during school based experiences.

However, it should also be noted that the low status of PE experienced by trainees, both in schools and within the ITT curriculum, may make this proposed heightened level of subject focus somewhat difficult to achieve. Trainees have experienced first-hand the emphasis within the curriculum afforded to English and mathematics and the extent to which a variety of structures exert control over day to day teaching practice in this regard. The national strategies, QTS standards, the national curriculum and Ofsted inspection frameworks can be seen as contributory elements of a regulatory framework within which PE plays a negligible role. This mode of regulation, highlighted in chapter 2 as 'performativity', is said to favour those subjects which are perceived to contribute to increasing economic competitiveness through the development of a high-skills, knowledge-based economy and the improvement of levels of literacy and numeracy (Wood, 2004). It is pertinent, therefore, to further consider the role of PE within the primary curriculum and to advocate the case for a heightened status of PE to politicians and policy makers. Without this, it is difficult to conceive the wholesale adoption of the recommendations of this chapter.

***Recommendation 4: Further develop understanding regarding the nature and content of primary PE***

The proposed new teaching standards make reference to the need for all teachers to:

Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship (DfE, 2012, p.7).

ITT providers may therefore wish to consider how a heightened awareness of contemporary developments in PE can be best communicated to trainees and school based staff. Trainees in this investigation were regularly seen to base their own nascent practice on prior experiences, often centred on memories of negative experiences in a sports context. Such apparent conflation of PE and sport in the minds of trainees results in problems that could be mitigated by a clearer articulation and definition of the nature and importance of PE in the primary age phase. The conflation of PE and sport in the minds of trainees and within aspects of the ITT structure, such as the PE subject audit (appendix 13), has been seen to reinforce a view amongst some trainees that teaching of PE is best carried out by others. The subject audit did little to alter such perceptions. However, ambivalent class teachers have been seen to be able to understand the need for children to be physically active and to appreciate that learning outcomes in PE are not confined to sports skill development. With a clearer articulation of the relevance and nature of PE in the primary curriculum and experience of observing and sharing high quality provision in school, ambivalent trainees were, on occasions, able to gain in confidence. University based PE courses were enjoyed by trainees and included some opportunity to consider the nature, content and rationale of the subject in primary schools. However, the ideas presented in university appear to have contrasted with provision seen in schools, which largely undermined any positive development or shifts in disposition seen in university. It is relevant to note on-going efforts to re-define the nature and approach to the

teaching of primary PE in this regard, particularly those which place an emphasis on the development of a range of movement competencies which can later be applied to a variety of activities, including sport. This is a marked shift away from the activity based content of the prevailing NC and is an approach that has been seen in the work of both theorists (for example, Jess, 2012) and providers of CPD, such as the Youth Sport Trust (YST). Their ‘Start to Move: developing physical literacy’ project aims to:

transform the way PE is taught to 4–7 year olds by equipping teachers with the expertise and confidence to provide children with a movement foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity. The Start to Move approach is all about children learning the ABCs of movement (YST, 2012a).

In addition, the YST Top Sport programme supports the delivery of PE and sport in primary schools by:

1. Developing young people's physical and social skill development
2. Improving young people's wider learning skills, such as confidence and managing their emotions
3. Increasing young people's understanding of their health and well-being (YST, 2012b).

The rationales for each YST course are clearly described and provide scope through which the teaching workforce may be encouraged to develop the subject in schools. Whilst such innovations are laudable, the extent to which impact has been seen in schools or within the development of trainee teachers remains to be seen. The exploration of such curriculum innovations should not be confined to either the university or school setting, however, and ways through which schools and those who interact with trainees during ITT can engage with such developments simultaneously need to be more readily identified. As with the other recommendations made here, subject development cannot take place solely in the university or school setting, but should be informed by theoretical deliberation and practical application in each context.

### **Limitations and scope of this research**

Although the research provided a detailed analysis of a range of phenomena related to primary PEITT, a number of limitations can be identified. Whilst serving to clarify the claims being made, the limitations also provide scope for future investigations to elucidate, confirm or contradict the findings presented in this thesis. The first limitation relates to the research context because the investigation centred on one university based, undergraduate ITT course. Whilst providing an opportunity to investigate phenomena in some depth over three years, it is acknowledged that claims regarding replication of findings to alternative contexts cannot be made. Although the context was considered to be typical of a three year undergraduate BA route towards QTS, other ITT settings could provide different and equally relevant contexts for further investigation. The results of this research should therefore be tested further in relation to other primary ITT contexts, including existing and future school based ITT routes and PGCE courses. However, by seeking validation from a cohort of completing BA Primary trainees at another institution in Stage 4 of the investigation, some confidence has been achieved in relation to the relevance of the findings to other similar settings. The responding trainees were able to recognise the features of the emerging structures, disposition, practice model as accurate, and relevant to their own contexts and experiences.

Chapter 4 provided detailed commentary regarding the decision making process within research design, although it is helpful to provide a further summary of the limitations and scope of the investigation here. Working with a relatively small number of trainee teachers from one institution is an obvious limitation, although data produced throughout the three year process were plentiful and rich and enabled the development of an in depth understanding of

individual experiences. The use of a larger sample or replication of the study in other ITT contexts was not possible within the time frame of the investigation. It is acknowledged too that the gradual focus on a decreasing sample size across the stages of investigation could potentially mask phenomena impacting on individual trainees. This is particularly the case for those trainees identified as being ambivalent at the outset of the course, who then did not continue into Stages 2 and 3 of the investigation but for whom changes in practice could have resulted from the ITT experience.

The data produced and findings discussed have, however, provided an account of trainee primary teacher experiences in PE and the consequences of a combination of dispositional and structural factors. Whilst grand theoretical claims are not made, there is scope for the methodology to be replicated in different training contexts to support or amend the findings of this study and to further develop the dials model. By testing the model of the relationship between structures, disposition and practice in different settings, new layers of nuance and complexity might be added. For example, it is reasonable to predict that those trainee teachers spending greater amounts of time in school would be even more susceptible to school based influences than those who took part in this investigation. The various routes towards QTS described in chapter 3 and seemingly encouraged and celebrated by new government policy (DfE, 2011b) include school based training routes within which the role of a university is significantly diminished. Such further development of schools' responsibilities for ITT gives cause for concern in light of the research findings presented here. If such plans come to fruition there is an urgent need to build on the findings of this research to test the view that,

although school based aspects of ITT may hold the key to teacher development in primary PE, appropriate structures are required to enable this to happen.

The structures, disposition, practice model lends itself to on-going interrogation and use in further research, within similar and different ITT contexts and for different phases of teacher professional development. Whilst this can be criticised as an over simplified representation of observed phenomena, it has significant potential for use as a diagnostic and reflective planning tool within ITT and CPD courses. The use of such a tool can enable course designers and tutors to identify particular learning needs at the outset of a course and to determine appropriate learning outcomes in dialogue with trainees. Trainees themselves may also benefit from reflection regarding the model in relation to their own practice. The research has therefore satisfied the stated aim of providing a detailed analysis of the complex range of sociological and psychological phenomena at large in order to improve understanding of trainee primary teachers' perceptions, values and beliefs relating to PE and to make suggestions of value to those charged with their development and socialisation into the profession. The findings may also present solutions for the development of provision in other curriculum subjects where similar concerns have been raised by professionals and the research community.

It is of course likely that the interpretation of data has been affected by my own positioning and personal experiences as a teacher educator, university subject leader, PE teacher and professional sportsman. By conducting this research, however, I have made a personal commitment to the development of understanding in relation to PEITT, acknowledging the

views of others who have repeatedly suggested that existing practice may not provide the best possible learning context for all trainees. In doing so, every effort has been made to manage personal assumptions and beliefs in relation to others' practices and to foreground the experiences of others. Rather than a hindrance, my own dispositions have been a motivating factor in carrying out this research; without positive life experiences in PE and sport it is unlikely that a career as a teacher educator would have been chosen, yet such personal views have also been made clear from the outset. It is conceivable that some participants did not wish to admit self doubt or a lack of confidence in the interview setting if they perceived me to be an 'expert' in PE or ITT. Over time, throughout the three year data collection period, however, I became increasingly confident that the positive relationship being developed with respondents was a successful means through which the trainees were put at ease and seemingly appeared comfortable when discussing personal experiences. Furthermore, the opportunity presented to each trainee to repeatedly reflect on their own experiences appeared to be welcomed and something which conceivably became part of the trainees' wider learning experiences.

The use of a quantitative scale (the PSPP and PIP) provided challenges regarding reliability and validity. Trainees' understanding and judgement of self-competence in sport was acknowledged as being subjective; in the scale, bench mark criteria were not provided to help trainees make an accurate judgement. For example, it was unclear as to whether 'good at sport' within the PSPP equated to playing for a club team, a county squad, a national team or other. There was also the possibility that some participants did not equate sports competence to ability in other relevant physical activities (such as dance and gymnastics) which were

pertinent to this investigation within the wider context of the NC in Primary PE. Furthermore, it was conceivable for this cohort of trainees at the outset of their course to feel generally unsure about themselves and to self-score negatively as a consequence. For these reasons, in addition to the concerns regarding sample size and statistical relevance discussed in chapter 4, the PSPP and PIP data were treated with caution and used primarily as a means for developing ensuing lines of enquiry during the interviews that followed. The research design proved successful in this regard and supported the original intention of 'buttressing and clarifying an account largely derived through flexible research design' (Robson, 2002, p. 371).

Research design also avoided the skewing of data through an overbearing researcher presence by discounting methods which would have placed me in a direct observation role. Opportunities to observe trainees during lectures or in teaching PE during school placement were not taken as such methods were perceived as having the potential to alter the phenomena under investigation. As a consequence, however, the data relied entirely on trainee teacher oral accounts of reality and it is accepted that interpretation of events and experiences is highly subjective. A further aim of this research was, however, to investigate the social conditions and consequences of action through the account of the participants, rather than providing an independent, abstract analysis of structures. Further investigation can build on this stance to interrogate the experiences of others within the ITT setting and researchers may wish to utilise more direct observational methods where a researcher presence is perceived as being less problematic. Specific scope for further investigation is contained within the need to better understand the relationship between primary trainees and their school based mentor, in most instances this being the class teacher.

### **Future research**

Whilst some may still consider that primary PE ITT in the UK is a ‘national disgrace’ (Talbot, 2007), this research has identified a complex range of factors within ITT and trainee primary teachers themselves which provide a deeper understanding of the processes at large. The findings presented in this research also suggest that there is considerable scope for further investigation. Firstly, the complex range of dispositional and structural factors seen to be at work within primary ITT and represented in the model, can be interrogated to further illuminate particular aspects of the primary PEITT process. For example, the impact of gender, age and personal experiences of trainees across the typology of trainees provides a wealth of potential for deeper investigation, not least because of the increased focus on developing multiple routes to the teaching profession. Further investigation could also relate to specific aspects of the findings, such as the tendency for some initially ambivalent class teachers to err towards becoming more positive or negative than others. If, as it is suggested, it is possible to create a context within which more ambivalent trainees become committed class teachers, then considerable opportunity for the scrutiny and further refinement of the typological representation is evident.

As discussed in chapter 5, life experiences have been confirmed as determining factors in relation to disposition to PE and sport. Such life experiences include those in childhood, in previous careers, in experiences as a parent or through contact with a range of other people. This socio-historical dimension is central to the position practices evident in the research findings and to social theory in general, which highlights the significance of other people within structures. The relative role of the class teacher and school based mentors (which may

include specialist ‘non teachers’ at work in the school) invites further scrutiny, particularly in view of the suggestion that some class teachers may also appear more disposed to teaching PE than others. The typology of trainee teachers, included as the outer dial of the structures, disposition, practice model, is open to further scrutiny in this regard. For example, the types could be tested in relation to school staff, in light of the concern regarding the potentially constraining impact of school placements alongside teachers who exhibit negative dispositions. The interaction between school based staff and trainees during placement could provide a further rich source of data that would serve to further illuminate the role that school based experiences play in primary PEITT. If a more structured approach to mentoring and mentor training is developed in the future, then the impact of this on both the practices of trainees and school based staff offers considerable scope for further study.

In light of the implications and recommendations made above regarding subject specialist teachers, further investigation could also focus on curriculum subjects where similar concerns have been expressed regarding the preparation of trainee teachers. Teacher development literature has included concerns regarding other foundation subjects in the national curriculum such as art, music, geography, history and RE (e.g. Wragg, Bennet & Carre, 1989; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Catling & Martin, 2011) in addition to different concerns regarding maths and English (e.g. Bekdemir, 2010; Murphy, 2010; Blomeke, Suhl & Kaiser, 2011; McDougall, 2011). In much the same way as the concerns regarding primary PE have been raised, the issues within other subjects also appear to share structural and individual characteristics. For example, advocates for foundation subjects claim that insufficient time is afforded to subject learning in primary ITT (Council for Subject Associations, 2011) whereas maths teacher

educators suggest that many trainee primary teachers hold negative perceptions and dispositions in relation to the subject (see for example, Goulding, Rowland & Barber, 2002). The methodology adopted within this research may hold significant potential for developing understanding in these subject areas, providing an opportunity to investigate structures, disposition and practice concomitantly. However, if similar findings are evident within other subject areas, a more radical review of primary ITT and the approaches taken in subject teaching, may be required.

Finally, the suggestion that trainee teachers show a situational tendency to comply with local practices in PE, in the absence of a strong personal disposition towards the subject, can be tested on entry to the profession. The tracking of trainees into their induction year and beyond across the career cycle will help to develop further understanding of professional development needs and the trajectory of subject knowledge and teaching confidence in PE. It is acknowledged that ITT constitutes only the earliest formal stage of socialisation into the teaching profession and that the impact of induction and CPD has not been investigated in this study. Whilst the research has provided a greater understanding of the experiences of trainee primary teachers during ITT, it is not clear how such trainees develop beyond achieving QTS. Improvements to the ITT process which may ensue from implementation of any of the recommendations provided here are thought likely to have a bearing on training and development needs in early career stages, and CPD provision will merit review in light of this. The view that trainees can shift across the categories of the typology where conditions allow can be tested in this regard; where ITT has failed to impact on some trainees, on-going opportunities for development may present themselves in day to day experiences in school or

through structured professional development. If wholesale improvement to the practice in primary PE is to be affected, although ITT is significant in relation to beginning teachers, it is on-going professional development of all those within the primary school workforce which offers potential for widespread impact and for the majority of staff to become committed class teachers. Those charged with supporting the development of qualified teachers may therefore also wish to consider changes to structures in order to manipulate the position of the typological dial.

### **Personal learning and development through the study**

In addition to developing a deeper understanding of primary PEITT and trainee teachers' learning needs, this research has been the catalyst in personal development from being a PE practitioner to active researcher. At the outset of the research I was a relatively inexperienced teacher educator, attempting to make sense of observed phenomenon in order to improve my own practice within ITT. The results of the investigation have enabled me to better understand the views of other people in this context and to consider why dispositions and practices pertaining to PE may contrast with my own. In planning and carrying out the research I necessarily considered a wide range of philosophical positions and developed a better understanding of the processes through which individual practice is shaped by structures. Finally, I have learnt that the research process does not necessarily take place in a straightforward or linear fashion. I understand that the 'search for truth, or truths' is characterised by complexity and necessitates a range of challenging methodological decisions. Through designing and carrying out this research I am now better able to view real world

problems and to consider ways through which an improved understanding of phenomena can be developed and applied.

### **Summary**

This chapter has summarised the key findings of the research, which are centred on how trainee teacher dispositions and structures of ITT combine to produce a range of possible practices for the trainees in the study. The school based components of ITT play a particularly important role in providing an ‘action context’ within which dispositions and structures interact. The practices are also the result of the situational interactional context and the trainee teachers’ role within a wider professional network – the role of class teachers and mentors in school in modelling practice has been identified as a significant factor in shaping trainee teacher practices in this regard. Within this cohort of trainee primary teachers it has been possible to identify a range of dispositions and ensuing practices which could be classified according to such characteristics. All trainee teachers in this investigation appeared more or less likely to engage with PE teaching, to resist strategic compliance and to develop their own actions independently of constraining contextual factors. The interplay between structural influences on experiences during ITT and dispositions results in a wide range of potential practices by trainee teachers. These ranged from enthusiastic teaching to an entrenched and legitimised avoidance of teaching PE altogether. For many of the trainees within this investigation, primary ITT has been seen to have a constraining influence with regards to PE.

PE is generally characterised as having low priority and status within the framework of the primary ITT curriculum. This low status is, significantly, reflected in observed practices in

school whereby PE was rarely taught with regularity or on-going commitment by class teachers. The perception that PE is best taught by specialist others was also compounded by the allocation of PPA time during curricula PE, a direct consequence of the workforce remodelling agenda which impacted on teachers' working patterns during this investigation. Of greatest priority for the trainee teachers was satisfactory completion of school experience, being able to move on to the next stage and eventually become a qualified teacher. It was clear that this accession to QTS was taking place with little or no planned or structured in-school reference to PE. This investigation has highlighted a range of factors which either constrain or enable trainee primary teachers' practice in PE during the ITT process. The resulting development of teacher knowledge and behaviour has been seen to include a variety of possibilities which in turn suggest significant implications for those charged with developing teachers and the subject of PE. In its current form, it appears unlikely that the quality of PE in primary schools will be raised through a model of ITT that serves to perpetuate existing models of practice and which is characterised by a low status being afforded to the subject. For this to change for the better, the status of PE in the primary school curriculum and in ITT itself should be raised. This necessitates a significant overhaul of current ITT policy and of the national curriculum itself. However, a more significant change needs to be made to the processes within whatever time allocation can be secured; most pressingly, ITT processes in relation to primary PE should include a closer relationship between university taught lectures and school based practice centred on greater opportunities for mentored practical application in a school setting.

This chapter has also recommended a number of changes to the ITT process in order to support trainee primary teacher development in PE. Such recommendations have been made with the aim of improving practice and breaking the cycle through which poor practice has seemingly been reinforced over a considerable time period. The opportunity for such a change to practice is not as simple as arguing for the specialist teaching of primary PE or for an increase in time allocations for the subject; the greatest potential for change has been seen to lie within the practices of the majority of trainee primary teachers who can, it is argued, be enabled, through a carefully restructured and differentiated ITT experience, to become committed class teachers.

The present government focus on increasing the role of schools within ITT raises significant concerns in relation to these findings, although these could also be viewed as considerable opportunities for developing practice. Whilst the content of the primary national curriculum is under review and the role of schools as leaders of ITT ‘alliances’ is being developed, now is a key moment in the history of primary PEITT. Crucially, an increased and adequately supported focus on the development of trainee teachers in PE in school settings, running in parallel to the re-shaping of the primary PE curriculum, creates a new structure within which university and school partners can construct a process through which more trainees can become committed class teachers of PE. It is crucial that the dual influence of structure and disposition is acknowledged and embraced within this newly defined ITT experience.

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