Coming to know about the body in Human Movement Studies programs

Abstract

This paper explores how a group of undergraduate Human Movement Studies (HMS) students learnt to know about the body during their four-year academic program at an Australian university. When students begin an undergraduate program in HMS they bring with them particular constructions, ideas and beliefs about their own bodies and about the body in general. Those ideas and beliefs are often challenged, disrupted or reinforced according to discourses and practices to which students are exposed and which they experience throughout their program of study.

The courses that these students take in their in HMS degree program present to them different perspectives about health and the body. Some perspectives take the status of taken-for-granted truths and others are dismissed or ignored. Taking a Foucauldian perspective, this paper explores the dominant discourses and practices to which this group of students was exposed during their four years of academic formation, and the influences that this exposure might have upon their construction of the body and their formation as pre-service Health and Physical Education (HPE) teachers.

The participants in this study were fourteen students, eleven females and three males, aged between 18 and 26 at the time of the first interview. The data used for this paper were taken from a larger study and were analysed using a content analysis approach. Results suggest that some students may be heavily influenced by certain practices and discourses during their program of studies, and that they embody dominant discourses of health. Furthermore, a possible change of thinking may occur across their academic program, as a consequence of their engagement with a few alternative discourses presented during their academic program, disrupting some of their previous beliefs and knowledge.

Key words
Body; Human Movement Studies; Undergraduate students; Discourse; Biopower

Introduction

The experience of knowing is not a passive one. Coming to know is an enacted process and involves taking up an active role. We learn technical knowledge and theories, but 'coming to know' also involves personal experiences, especially when the 'object' of knowledge is one's body. This paper explores how a group of undergraduate Human Movement Studies (HMS) students from an Australian university came to know about their own and others' bodies through participation in their undergraduate program. Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) in Australia involves many sub-disciplines, such as motor control, exercise physiology, nutrition, sociology of sport, biomechanics, history of sport, physical activity and health, sport pedagogy, among others (Tinning, 2010), and is found under different academic programs (e.g. Human Movement Studies, Sport Studies, Kinesiology, etc.). Throughout this paper we have chosen to use the abbreviation HMS to make reference to the broader field, and HPE to refer to the cohort of undergraduate students enrolled in HMS who have chosen to be HPE teachers at graduation.

Bodies play a significant role in the process of identity formation[1] (Giddens, 1991). People learn about bodies in relation to others with whom they interact. Furthermore, an individual has multiple identities responsive to the contexts in which s/he interacts. These identities are shaped by social constructions of gender, race, class and sexuality, amongst others. In this way, the social influences of our corporality become embodied (Witz, 2000).

Literature related to the body in general (see for example Coupland & Gwyn, 2003; Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Featherstone, 2010; Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2007; Howson, 2004; Markula, 2001; Shilling, 2003, 2010; Thorpe, 2014) and the body in the field of HMS in particular (see for example Azzarito, 2009, 2010; Azzarito & Solmon, 2006, 2009; Cliff & Wright, 2010; Lee & Macdonald, 2010; Rich, 2010; Welch & Wright, 2011) has significantly increased lately. However, most of the mentioned studies were conducted with school students rather than with pre-service HPE teachers or HMS undergraduate students. Some of the work that has been done with pre-service HPE teachers and HMS undergraduate students focuses on areas such as the construction of identity positions (Sparkes, Brown, & Partington, 2010), or they are quantitative (Yager & O'Dea, 2009). This last research demonstrates that pre-service HPE teachers have an increased susceptibility to negative body image and problematic understandings of the body. Accordingly, Garrett and Wrench (2012), drawing on Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse and technologies of self, stated that "[i]n multiple ways across different institutions, including teacher education, deep-rooted ideas about beauty, health and fitness impact on how we come to understand and manage our own bodies as well as those of others" (p. 112). What little research has been done in this area (Garrett & Wrench, 2012; Wrench & Garrett 2013) suggests that there are not many studies with empirical data about how pre-service HPE teachers learn about the body and health, and this needs further investigation.

When undergraduate students start their program of studies in Human Movement Studies (HMS), they bring with them particular discursive constructions about the body that have been constructed during their lives. These discourses regarding the body have the potential to change during their years of undergraduate study. They can be shaped, evolve, be challenged or be disrupted. In this way, this paper explores the discourses and practices which are seen to inform participants' descriptions of their attitudes to the body.

Knowledge and subjectivities in HMS

Knowledge tends to be considered as unproblematic (Devís-Devís & Peiró-Velert, 1992) by students of HMS programs. Strong regulative mechanisms also exist within HMS and Health and Physical Education (HPE) contexts, condemning particular bodily representations (Macdonald, Kirk, & Braiuka, 1999). These, accompanied by a strong preference on behalf of HMS students for utilitarian and scientific knowledge, inform the ways in which these students filter and position the phenomena they encounter during their studies (Devís-Devís & Peiró-Velert, 1992; Devís-Devís & Sparkes, 1999; Macdonald, 1998). Moreover, within HMS, the dominant form of knowledge has traditionally been technocratic (Tinning, 1990). As Tinning (1990, p. 16) postulates, 'Technocratic rationality embraces science as a value-free technical process. It assumes that social problems can best be solved by the

application of scientific thought…technocratic rationality leads to "radical deafness" toward any non-approved questions'.

Research suggests that students who start their degree in HMS have typically enjoyed positive experiences within physical education, sport and physical activity throughout their lives (Armour & Jones, 1998; Evans, 1993; Macdonald et al., 1999). Indeed, Macdonald *et al*. (1999) found that young people are usually attracted to programs in physical education because they perceive them as a means to continue their positive experiences of sport and physical activity (Hutchinson, 1993; Macdonald et al., 1999).

These positive associations with sport and physical activity have the potential to inform subsequent professional identities (Dowling, 2006). A considerable volume of literature suggests that the subjectivities of HMS undergraduate students are heavily influenced by their sport and physical activity backgrounds and past experiences (Devís-Devís & Sparkes, 1999; Macdonald & Kirk, 1999; Rossi & Hopper, 2001; Sirna, Tinning, & Rossi, 2010). According to Dowling (2006) the professional identities of both HPE teachers and undergraduate students may draw more strongly upon notions of their sport-performing selves than on the ideas of 'being an educator'. Further research has shown that students who hold similar values to those of their HPE teachers are more likely to be attracted to the profession (Brown, 2005; Macdonald & Tinning, 1995; Sirna et al., 2010). Taking into consideration that one's subjectivity is an ongoing process of negotiation in social and cultural contexts, both within schools and society in general (O'Connor & Macdonald, 2002; Sirna et al., 2010), it seems that HMS undergraduate students begin this process during childhood, shaped by the influences of their families.

A Foucauldian approach to theorising discourses of the body

Foucault (1972, 1980) considers the body as the site par excellence of political and ideological control, surveillance and regulation. In modern times, the body has both been subjected and exposed to disciplinary power, and has become the site for the operation of forms of power. A Foucauldian approach to the body is characterised by a preoccupation with the institutions that govern the body and by a perspective that considers the body as both produced by, and existing within, discourse. Bodies that were before controlled by the use of direct repression are now coerced into a normative discourse (Coupland & Gwyn, 2003). Foucault also considers bodies as malleable phenomena that change according to different forms of power. Foucault's focus on the body is twofold, concerning how certain institutions govern and control the body, tracing the effects of power upon it, and how the body is constituted and exists in discourse.

Foucault considers discourse as a system of representation. Discourse constitutes 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about…a particular topic at a particular historical moment…Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language' (Hall, 1992, p.165). Emerging through a variety of texts and sources (Hall, 2007), a discourse is a group of statements or beliefs that provides a language to talk about or to represent a specific knowledge topic that serves the interests of a particular group of people. In so doing, discourse functions in two ways: it enables the construction of a topic in a certain way, whilst simultaneously

restricting other ways in which the topic could be elaborated (2007). Discourses always operate in relation to power; effectiveness in practice therefore takes precedence over positivist notions of truth and falsity (2007). However, as there is a constant demand in our societies for 'the truth', some discourses act as what Foucault named 'regimes of truths'. These 'truths' are embedded in widely diffused, scientifically-orientated discourses, and mainly lead to evaluation and demonstration (Cousins & Hussain, 1984). Within the field of HMS, the discourses which act as 'regimes of truth' regarding the body are those which privilege scientific and biological perspectives (Kirk, 1990, 1993, 2002; Tinning, 2010).

Discourse can open out a phenomenon for re-interpretation in a new field of rationality (Foucault, 1980). It is primarily concerned with the production of knowledge through language, however, discourse itself is produced by 'discursive practices', which are the practices of producing meaning. A discourse attracts elements from other discourses, linking them to its own network of meanings (Hall, 2007) to create further meanings. A discourse is formed by several statements working together towards what Foucault called a 'discursive formation'. These statements 'refer to the same object, share the same style and…support a strategy' having a certain coherence among them. The statements work together constituting a corpus of knowledge and constructing a particular topic of analysis (e.g. the body), according to the rules of the formation (Foucault, 1972).

In this way, we can identify how some ways of talking about the body have become acceptable and 'normal' within Australian society in general, and in HMS in particular, while some others perspectives of the body are not as commonly employed, and even questioned (see Tinning, 2010; Wright, 2000). However, not all discourses are equal and, following Foucault (1980), some particular discourses function as regimes of truths. Certain regimes, regarded by those who receive and reproduce them as the objective truth, have been uncovered in this study. For the purposes of this research, a discursive formation is understood as a system of regular dispersion of statements which enables us to see, in this case, how the body is considered and constructed within HMS. Salient discourses in HMS influence social practices and shape perceptions, and have real effects and consequences on the ways in which individuals understand and interact with the body.

The body is regulated by discursive practices and disciplinary techniques (such as space, time and movement) that result in popular knowledge and assumptions about it. Some knowledge and perspectives of the body become predominant, even considered as 'normal', whilst others are silenced. From birth (and also before it) the body is measured, evaluated and categorised in different ways, in line with powerful discourses that determine normalcy and acceptability. Biopower, which includes the technologies that are used to control, analyse and regulate the body and behaviour, acts to govern and regulate individuals and populations through body-related practices (Wright, 2009). The essential function of biopower is to monitor bodies and minds. Biopower attempts to control individuals and populations through practices that 'teach' how to be healthy (and consequently, 'good') citizens. As result, biopower analyses the constitution of subjects and their processes of normalisation (Harwood, 2009).

The term biopedagogies is used to describe normalising and regulating practices that take place in different institutions (say HMS), and that are also dispersed through

media. Biopedagogies cause us to reflect on how the body is also a political space (Wright, 2009). Biopedagogies have the potential to influence the process of subjectification through establishing pressure to monitor oneself, usually intensifying knowledge around 'obesity' related risks and 'instructing' people how to eat healthily and be active (Harwood, 2009).

Methodology

The participants in this study were undergraduate students studying Human Movement Studies at an Australian university. They were from the Health and Physical Education cohort, thus were studying to become HPE teachers. Students enrolled in this particular academic program study all the sub-disciplines mentioned earlier in this paper (e.g. nutrition, health and physical activity, sociology of sport, etc.). Participants were in their second year of studies at the time of recruitment. Fourteen students volunteered themselves for the study, 11 females and 3 males. They were aged between 18 and 26 at the time of the first interview. Ethical clearance was gained through the university and pseudonyms have been used throughout when reporting data to ensure anonymity. All of them were white Caucasian Australians with the exception of one international Asian student. Literature suggests that 'whiteness' is typical among HPE contexts (Azzarito, 2009; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Oliver & Lalik, 2000, 2004; Sykes, 2011), and this specific group of participants seem to reinforce this idea.

The data for this paper were generated from interviews conducted by one of the authors as part of a larger study. By interviewing participants we were able to explore how they constructed discourses related to the body and health, as well as the attitudes that they described in regards to the body. Using interviews also allowed us to discover which discourses seemed to be informing their attitudes towards the body and the potential that these discourses had to shape their ideas of professional practice as future HPE teachers. Interviews were conducted on three separate occasions. They were in-depth and organised with a standardised open-ended interview protocol (Macdonald & Kirk, 1996). In this way, the questions were used to guide the dialog but the interviews were largely conversational in style. Interviews began with the most general and 'easy' to answer questions, allowing the interviewer more time to build rapport and develop empathy with participants. The most personal and specific questions were left close to the end of the interview.

Being aware that the researcher-researched relationship can be considered as a relationship of unequal power, the interviewer reflected about her role as interviewer and tried to maintain an open mind at all times to be prepared to find unexpected themes. While the interviewer consciously attempted not to influence participants' answers, she assisted them in verbalising their knowledge using a conversational style throughout the interviews. In what follows, we discuss three of the main emerging themes from the data. We firstly analyse participants' sense of competition, we then explore how they have embodied dominant discourses and practices within HMS and we finally discuss how some of the undergraduates seem to have changed during the degree program.

Competitive by 'nature'

It is widely believed that HPE teachers and HMS undergraduates have usually enjoyed being competitive while playing sports (Evans, 1990). Katrina, one of the study participants, discussed her 'competitive sense' and how much she used to enjoy winning:

> I don't know where I developed it from, but I've always enjoyed winning and beating people and being really competitive. Obviously I found that –[HPE] was an area that I could do really well in. I enjoy being competitive and the satisfaction that comes from winning certain events and things like that. I think it's the competitive edge that kept me going through it. (Katrina)

Katrina's comment is consistent with the corpus of literature about the competitiveness of many HMS/HPE graduates (see for example Armour & Jones, 1998; Brown & Evans, 2004; Skelton, 1993). Katrina's sense of competitiveness was also seen to contribute to the subjectivities of other interviewees, but was not confined simply to playing sports. Rather, their 'competition factor' reached even further, resulting in a kind of 'implicit body shape competition' with their peers. Judith, for example, expressed her opinions about this aspect of her classmates' competitiveness:

> In my degree I'm basically surrounded by people that are sports nuts so they all do sport pretty much and even though I'm going to be a PE teacher and I'm trying to steer away from competitive body issues and that kind of thing, you still in your class and go who's got a better body than everyone else. (Judith)

Judith's comment reveals the implicit competition which existed between students in the HMS program with regard to their bodies. Competitive practices and discourses are not uncommon in HMS settings. HMS students are necessarily involved in a context where competitive discourses and practices in regard to sport, nutrition and bodies are normalised. Extensive involvement in that particular context, totaling on average around five days a week, can lead to some 'body competition' issues, especially among females who are usually more concerned about their appearance (Calogero, 2004), and are more likely to be defined by their bodies.

Rose, for example, stated:

> I don't really look at male bodies. Yeah I don't really look at male bodies as much as I do with females. I suppose you're always, not comparing yourself, but like looking. It's something that you look at all the time. (Rose)

Even though some of the female students explicitly declared their heterosexual orientation, they also pointed out their proclivity to look more at female bodies. Females have a greater tendency to discuss 'good', 'nice' or 'good looking' bodies, whether they belong to figures in the media or members of their peer group (Macdonald & Kirk, 1996). These conversations have the potential to act as a way of surveillance and as a way to 'police' female bodies, as they tend to validate bodies through participation in such conversations. Sarah, another study participant, explained how she would peruse magazines looking for pictures of female bodies, which she would use as both motivation and inspiration for intentional alteration of her own body.

These students' discourses of the body are not solely developed through spending time in HMS, but also through engaging with the academic content to

which they are exposed throughout their years of study. The exploration of how academic knowledge in HMS shapes the ways in which participants understand and consider the body is further explored below.

Embodying HMS discourses and practices

During their interviews, some of the participants were able to recall particular instances which occurred during their HMS degree and had a considerable influence on their thinking. Such was the impact of these instances that, for some participants, they proved the catalysts for changing habits. Lily, for example, explained:

> …when I first left school and came to uni and I learned about all this stuff, within sport science and doing nutrition courses, I became really conscious of my body, being surrounded by people who were in your cohort of similar people. They were fit people as well. I did sort of become - I was always pretty conscious of my body, but when I came to uni, I lost probably - in the first year of uni, I probably lost about eight kilos, I guess, which was just through watching what I ate, because I was learning about calories and what they all mean and what they all did and blah blah blah, so I was sort of - I did watch what I ate. (Lily)

As Lily pointed out, when she started to become more knowledgeable about nutrition, through the program content of HMS, she became more conscious about her own body. The information presented through the nutrition courses acted as biopedagogy (Harwood, 2009) for Lily, as she subsequently altered her eating habits and lost eight kilos. However, it was not only the explicit knowledge presented to these undergraduates which had an impact on them. Some practices that took place in HMS, including during course tutorials and practical experiences, also had an influence upon them and their bodies. One example of this was provided by Samantha, who recalled:

> …last semester when we did exercise physiology we had to do like fitness testing and stuff. Sometimes we had to use those skin calipers so you've got to measure fat; that was a bit - I was really embarrassed about my body then because we had to lift up our shirts and boys had to get skin calipers and measure you. That was really embarrassing. There were girls with really nice bodies so I was really envious. But yeah like coming to uni and stuff like if it's not really to do with my body, then it's fine; I don't really care. Yeah. (Samantha)

In this instance, Samantha's body, which in other contexts would be considered as a private domain, became public domain under the exercise physiology course requirement. Samantha's body was exposed to the gaze of all her peers during the tutorial. Her body was 'numerised' according to traditional techniques used to measure the biomedical and physiological body. Students are obligated to take part in these kinds of practical experiences and, even though their discourses regarding their own bodies may show conformity on a daily basis, participation in such activities may have significant influence on them. It is clear that the body has the potential to evoke a wide variety of emotions and tensions, especially among female students. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the particularities of these experiences and practices.

Samantha also demonstrated how she had embodied dominant discourses of health by trying to be active at every opportunity. For example, she would

consciously take the stairs instead of the elevator in the HMS building. She explained:

> I just try to be active a lot. I really do - nerd - try to take the stairs instead of elevators and stuff. Especially in the Human Movement building if I go up to level five I will take the stairs; I won't take the elevator. Just eat healthy I guess. I don't really eat much takeaway or anything like that. (Samantha)

Some HMS 'health related' courses incite these types of practices and students embody them without offering any critique or resistance. Content from these courses in particular acts as biopedagogies on students, as they are constantly reminded of how to live (and only in one dominant way). Interestingly, participant students expressed that their ideas about the body had not changed significantly during their years studying HMS. As shown in their responses, they tended to uncritically accept dominant discourses about the body. This could mean that they had learnt and acquired these dominant ideas from society prior their enrollment in HMS and that the course content of their degree merely reinforced those ideas. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions where students recognised changes in their ways of thinking as a result of specific engagement with some of the ideas presented to them in the socioculturally-oriented courses.

HMS facilitating change?

Even though the majority of undergraduate students usually begin their degrees at HMS because they have greatly enjoyed sport and physical education (Armour & Jones, 1998; Evans, 1993; Macdonald et al., 1999), some of the study participants learnt that not everyone enjoys sport and physical education as much as they did. Judith and Lily commented:

> I think in high school I probably didn't see that so much because I just excelled in the subject [HPE], I loved it, I was a sports freak. I probably didn't even notice that kids didn't enjoy something; I assumed that everyone enjoyed PE. I think - yeah, going through this course now, that's probably been one of the biggest things, is that not everyone enjoys PE. Not everyone wants to be actually doing the subject, in fact there's a lot of people that don't. (Judith)

> I did one assignment where you had to have a look at your views, sort of analyse yourself, and I guess I've read literature surrounding the body and surrounding the perceptions that PE teachers have of their body and how this can affect the kids that they teach, and I think that is a bit of an eye-opener and something to consider when I'm teaching. (Lily)

Lily became conscious about this particular issue after one assignment which required her to analyse her own life history and read some literature from a sociocultural perspective on the body and how PE teachers' conceptions of the body might affect children and adolescents. Describing the assignment as an 'eye-opener', she reflected that these issues were worthy of consideration for her future teaching career. In this way, some participants manifested 'having a switch' at some point during their years of studies. Two of the participants described these critical moments of realisation during their interviews:

> Some of the courses just provided a different angle to look at sport, to look at PE and health in school and just to open my mind up to education in general. The attitudes and mindset I had towards education when I just left school are a little bit different to how I see them now after having gone through a couple of the courses and understanding a bit more about why some content exists and some doesn't. I thought sport was everything when I was going through school, but there are also negative sides to sports that I hadn't thought of going through it. (Katrina)

> Since I've started [my degree at university] until now -I think I acknowledge more that different bodies are good for different things, but at the same time I'm still going for a fit body or a body that's just average… I still see a fat person and go that's not a body I want… (Judith)

These participants experienced a disruption in their mental habits and ways of thinking (as advocated by Foucault) according to what they had learnt within their courses of study. The content presented in some courses had the potential to disrupt their previous discursive formations regarding the body and health. In a similar vein, Tinning (2010) claimed 'just because young people come into programs of HMS/exercise science and PE with particular dispositions, values and embodied histories with regard to their bodies, sport and physical activity, this does not mean that they cannot change' (p. 115). What were previously considered as unquestionable truths, now were the subject of reinterpretation and construction of new discourses for the participants of this study.

Some students described how they used to believe that anyone who worked hard enough could achieve the body that they wanted, mainly through exercising and diet. Now, as a consequence of their engagement with the alternative discourses presented during their HMS studies, they acknowledged the existence of different types of bodies, each of them with their own genes and metabolism, and that sometimes it is just not possible to modify one's body more than to a limited extent. Their original cognitions were reflective of dominant societal discourses. While some years ago the body was something considered as given and unchangeable –you were born in a certain body, and there was nothing that you could do about that– consumer culture and new technologies have contributed to a shift in thinking of the body as occupying a central role in identity making (Featherstone, 1991). People have become increasingly concerned with the shape, size and appearance of their bodies in the last few decades. Examining the 'unfinishedness' of the body provides a basis to accept that it can be shaped and monitored by individuals and social systems. These students, influenced by what they learn, seemed to think that the body was mainly given and that you can (or should?) work on it to a certain degree. However, while these participants were expressing more accepting discourses regarding the plurality of body types, they still held that some bodies were just not acceptable for themselves, as Judith expressed when she explained her persistently low regard for bodies which she defined as being 'fat'.

Even Craig, one of the most 'health orientated' participants, has recognised that by his final year, as a direct result of what he had learnt at university and also on practicum at schools, he had changed some of his ideas regarding HPE. Two excerpts are provided below from different interviews with Craig, illustrating this change in his ideas:

> I've always really enjoyed sport and I've always tried to keep fit …I thought that PE would be a really good course to get into, especially if I get to run around all those school kids, throwing a football. (Craig, interview 1)

> Probably in the last…twelve months, I had this switch … The value of PE I think has shifted or continue shifting away from staying fit and going more towards what's the actual content of learning in the Physical Education class. (Craig, interview 3)

Craig said in the first interview that one of the reasons he started his degree at university was because he thought that HPE was a good way to keep fit. However, in the final interview he stated that after one year he 'had a switch' in his consideration of the purpose of HPE. According to Craig, this 'switch' was the result of the course content to which he was exposed during HMS courses. However, many contradictions became apparent during Craig's interviews, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

> I don't think that is necessary for a [HPE] teacher to be physical fit. I mean, it helps… (Craig, interview 3)

> PE teachers have a responsibility to show off the best of the human body, in the physical sense. So I think the credibility of a PE– well, this is my own argument, the credibility of the PE teacher comes a lot from their personal appearance. (Craig, later interview 3)

Accordingly, Giddens (1991) suggests that the self is not just a given passive entity but instead is a reflexive project which is constantly being created and recreated. For a change to be significant, it has to happen at a very deep level of the subjective self and to be approached in all its dimensions (Sparkes, 1990). Finally, and concurring with Dowling (2006), we need to be aware of how HMS knowledge, discourses and practices have the potential to influence students, as well as realise that students also have the power to change them. However, we need to provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to be able to engage in a change.

Concluding discussion

Courses embedded in HMS programs present different discourses and conceptions about the body. Some experiences and knowledge which came about during their studies in HMS were significant enough to influence participants' lives and to be recalled during their interviews. In this way, participants had embodied those aspects of the program content that were significant for them. It was also possible to identify how some of the undergraduates' previous beliefs and knowledge were disrupted by their engagement with alternative discourses and practices and, as a consequence, they were able to construct new discursive formations about HPE and the body, creating new networks of meaning.

Academic courses oriented around biomedical notions of health had a particularly significant influence on the students. The discourses underlying these courses represent specific knowledge that serves the interests of particular people. Following Hall's (2007) ideas, dominant discourses within these courses enable the construction of health topics in a certain (and only one) way, and they also limit other means in which the topics could be constructed. In so doing, these discourses are

operating in relation to power. However, HMS discourses and practices are neither liberating nor oppressive (Azzarito, 2009). It is the capacity of students to reflect on and critique dominant discourses and practices that makes transformation possible. However, issues arise when students are not exposed to alternative discourses and subsequently consider those which they are exposed as taken-for-granted truths.

The content, practicums and discourses of the HMS program had the potential to contest students' pre-conceived ideas. Some undergraduates changed their habits according to what they learnt. Through constantly reminding students how they are to live (the healthy lifestyle), content from these courses also acts as a biopedagogy. In this context, just a few examples of developing resistance to dominant discourses and normalisation processes from the courses taught were found among students' comments and remembered experiences. Therefore, this paper has advanced knowledge of how pre-service HPE teachers learn about the body and health.

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[1] Even though it has been suggested that with a poststructuralist Foucauldian framework the term 'subjectivity' is more appropriate than 'identity' (see for example Wright, 2004), here what Wrench and Garrett (2012) claim is taken into consideration: '…identity and subjectivity are interrelated but distinct concepts. More specifically we understand that one's subjectivity is not essential, given or taken for granted, but is constructed through ongoing processes across time and spaces and mediated by a raft of institutional and cultural discursive practices with inherent relations of power. Identity is used in reference to the performance aspects of subjectivity that qualify people relationally, including in terms of gender, ethnicity, class and occupations such as the physical education teacher' (Venn, cited in Wrench & Garrett, 2012). In this way, this paper uses the two concepts in different ways.