Embodying Bernstein: Early Years Learning (EYL), Social Class and the Corporeal Device

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Abstract

Drawing on data from an ethnographic study of three Early Years learning (EYL) settings in central England, the paper explores how 'knowledge of the body' is produced, transmitted and received through various forms of play within EYL and how this is related to educational, social class and cultural inequalities. Specifically, it explores how identities are constructed via intersections of the pedagogic and corporeal devices (PD~CD) and how these intersections give shape to pedagogy when mediated through practitioners' interpretations of children's families and the knowledge they bring to the setting. Following Bernstein we illustrate how social interactions and transactions that characterise teaching/learning contexts at the micro level of EYL classrooms are expressions of power (classification) and control (framing) relations between subjects, discourses and spaces.

Bernstein provides a conceptual framework for not only articulating transactions that define the nature of body pedagogies, in Early Years learning (EYL) settings, but also of describing and analysing them in ways which connect micro and macro social processes, while foregrounding issues of power and control. The pedagogic device (PD) provides the primary structures which underpin school pedagogies and convert knowledge into classroom talk. However, whilst it offers a way to explore the relationships between recontextualised knowledge, organisations, identity and pedagogy, it perhaps underestimates the role of embodiment in the process. Arguing that discourses are mediated for individuals through their material bodies, we invoke the notion of a corporeal device (CD) (Evans et al (2008, 2012) to focus on the body, not just as a relay of messages (other than itself), but rather as a voice 'of itself'. The CD draws attention to how biology, culture and class intersect to create "an internal grammar or syntax" which regulates but cannot control, embodied action and consciousness.

The analyses will prompt discussion as to how intersections of the 'pedagogic' and 'corporeal' device shape the corporeal realities of young children and their developing sense of self in relation to social class and culture.

Key words: Pedagogic Device, Corporeal Device, Early Years Learning, Social Class and Culture

Introduction

The body's materiality has been the focus of much empirical research in recent years (e.g., James, 2000; Prout, 2000; Shilling, 1993; 2008; Youdell, 2006; Evans, et al 2008; Sparkes, 2009) with many researchers of very different theoretical persuasions (e.g., Butler, 1993; Kenway & Bullen; 2010; Luttrell, 2011; Paechter, 2011; Pink, 2011) thinking afresh the relationships between the body, society and culture. In this paper we draw essentially on the work of Basil Bernstein to address these relationships and illustrate how social transactions at the intersection of the 'pedagogic device' (Bernstein, 1990) and 'corporeal' device (Evans, Davies and Rich, 2009) shape the corporeal realities of young children and their developing sense of self in relation to social class and culture. Empirically the analyses centre on Early Years Learning (EYL) in England and the role of physical activity and play within it, in the production of social and physical capital.

Acknowledging that physical activity (or more broadly, movement) occurs formally[1] and informally, both within and outside EYL settings e.g., in family and community environments, encourages us to view pedagogic practice as a process wider than the school/EYL practitioner-child relationship. The amount of resource (time, money, energy, etc.,) parents invest in their child's physical capital outside EYL settings evidently influences how their child's corporeality is recognised and developed by practitioners, and in turn how children move and play, within EYL. Previous research (e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Vincent and Ball, 2007; Evans and Davies 2010; Wheeler, 2011) has clearly documented that social class influences parental investments in physical capital shaping embodiment, but how in particular does it influence children's relationship to their own and others' bodies when mediated through the pedagogies of EYL? Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus' and 'field' offer important means of conceptualising the interrelationship between individual and society without invoking false dichotomies between body and culture, but in our view are insufficient in certain fundamental respects. Maton (2008) argues that when compared to a Bernsteinian mode of theorising, Bourdieu's concepts suffer from a flat ontology i.e., 'there is nothing beneath habitus, fields or capital, which relate

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[1] Formal physical activity encompasses activities organised and led by practitioners or coaches and are often fee paying (e.g. Tumble Tots) while informal physical activity refers to incidental engagements in physical activity, often child initiated (e.g. running in the garden)

horizontally rather than vertically'. In contrast Bernstein's theory contains tight and explicit

abstraction – condensation chains created vertically between concepts e.g. elaborated and restricted

codes have been 'subsumed under higher order concepts' (Bernstein, 2000: 207). Bernstein himself
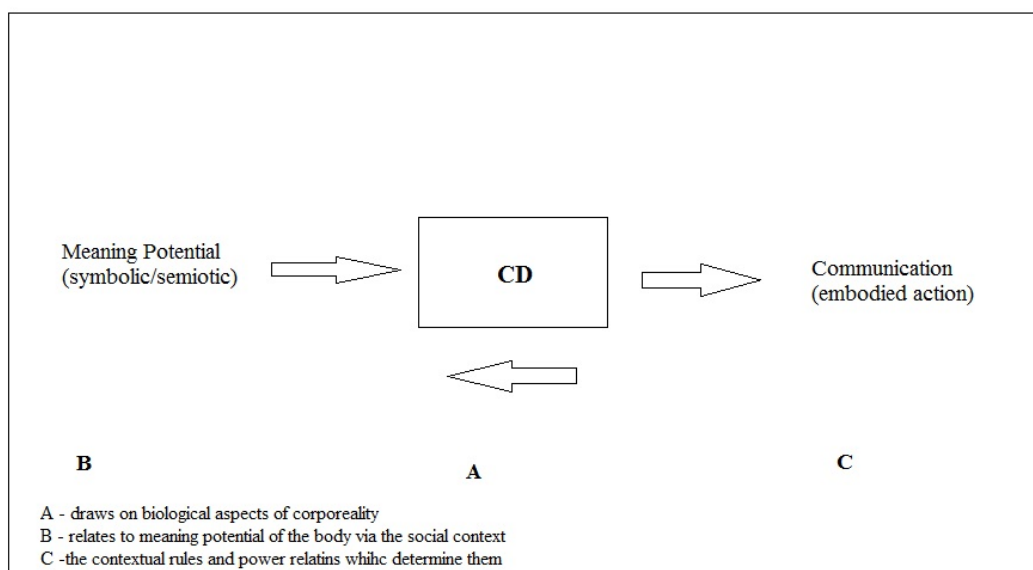
(2000:13) acknowledged this fundamental difference;

> How it (habitus) comes to be is not part of the description, only what it does. There is no
>
> description of its specific formation. We cannot replace habitus by X, that is by the
>
> description of its internal relation… putting it crudely there is no necessity between the
>
> concept or what counts as its realization (Bernstein, 2000:13)

In other words, (Moore2006; 34), 'Bernstein's concept of code, re-writes habitus as a constitutive

process, a progressive pedagogy which can be described through classification (C) and framing (F),

the strength of which can alter and change'. In the analyses that follow, we suggest that Bernstein's

concept of the 'pedagogic device' (PD) suitably embellished with that of the CD (Evans et al, 2009;

2011) goes some way toward providing such a language to better understand relationships between

the body, pedagogy and society that reach both inward to lived experience (to body sense/sentience)

and outward to the shaping of that experience within and by culture simultaneously, a dynamic best

represented as CD~PD (see below).

The Corporeal Device (CD)

Bernstein's attention to pedagogic discourse and use of 'classification' and 'frame', provide a

wonderful model for understanding how social class and power relations become shaped within given

institutional contexts. Over many years, his attention to the social organisation of knowledge has

undoubtedly alerted to the idea that what counts as 'officially' valued knowledge in formal education

is never arbitrary or value free and, therefore, has bearing upon patterns of achievement and success

(Young, 1970; Bernstein, 1975; Kirk, 1992). The PD (Bernstein, 1990; 180) is central to

understanding this process, not least in offering explanation of the regulation of consciousness in

educational settings as extension of socio- economic power relations that exist outside them. The PD

essentially, refers to *a process* whereby the rules for communication and acquisition of school

knowledge (struggled over and established outside schools in Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) and Official Recontextualising Field (ORF) regulate consciousness in the classroom, thereby, legitimating specific identities within pedagogic discourse. For all its sophistication, however, the PD underestimates the role of agency and embodiment in these processes. In this paper we want to illustrate that children experience learning and achieve 'success' (or not as the case might be) not just 'intellectually' or cognitively, but through their bodies' actions and those of significant others (peers, family, EYL practitioners) in situ. In essence, we want to explore 'ability' as a complex relational process in which biology and culture indissolubly play their part. Bernstein's (1990) concepts of 'realisation' and 'recognition' facilitate exploration of these processes, in particular the manner in which the curriculum is interpreted by children. These processes are, however, always mediated by individuals idiosyncratically through their material bodies. Evans, Davies and Rich (2009, 2011) invoke the notion of a corporeal device (CD) to capture this process and the body not simply as a relay or receptacle of messages 'other than itself', but as a voice 'of itself'. The CD draws attention to how biology, culture and class intersect to create "an internal grammar or syntax" (ibid: 393) which regulates, but cannot control, embodied action and consciousness. Unlike concepts of habitus, field, or for that matter the PD, the CD then, reaches both inward to lived experience (to body sense/sentience) and outward to the shaping of that experience within and by culture simultaneously, a dynamic best represented as CD~PD.

Meaning Potential
(symbolic/semiotic) → **CD** → Communication
(embodied action)

←

B   **A**   **C**

A - draws on biological aspects of corporeality
B - relates to meaning potential of the body via the social context
C -the contextual rules and power relatins whihc determine them

Diagram 1: The Corporeal Device (adapted from Evans et al, 2009; 394)

Point **A** highlights the biological and social internal rules which generate and regulate the body's rational, social, emotional and kinetic resources. Point **B,** the meaning potential created by the body's material presence in time, space and place which activates the CD and resulting embodied communication. The rules of the CD reflect social and cultural hierarchies and as such symbolic/semiotic encoded communication is regulated by such hierarchies, resulting in communication through embodied action (Point **C**).

The CD points to the historically habituated embodied dispositions and propensities that individuals bring to social settings consciously and unconsciously and which in part, regulate behaviours within them. It is not to be reduced to an inherent quality or resource of the body (as in habitus), but rather viewed as a process; an interminable dialect of biology and culture in which embodied dispositions both shape and are shaped by the intersections of biology and culture (hence CD/PD). Previously represented as, CD/PD (Evans et al 2009, 2012), such intersections are now better represented as CD~PD, the 'squiggle character', unlike a backslash [individual/society/agency/structure] representing a separation, indicating the inextricable complementary relationship between inner and outer/ the body and culture. It "breathes life back into the dichotomy by representing the opposing tendencies of autonomy and integration as a dynamic which can be tilted in either direction" (Kelso and Engstrom, 2006). The 'squiggle' hereafter represent the relationship between parts and wholes, the primary dynamic of the CD~PD relationship.

The CD~PD relationship then, brings to the fore the learner as an active, embodied presence in time, place and space. It offers means of articulating the interminable dialogue of culture and biology. Neither the CD nor the PD is dissolvable to the other and both are generative of boundary (classification and framing) relationships. Consequently, it becomes important to move beyond merely the discursive aspects of knowledge construction (the social construction of 'abilities', competencies, skills, etc.) and include the lived experience of these processes (as body knowledge/

sense). As Shilling (1993; 16) states, 'the body is the outcome of social forces and relations' and it is during childhood that the body is, if not 'finished' through action in society (James, 2000) then, certainly finely honed.

Methodology

The research is set within three Early Years Learning settings in central England each catering for children aged 3-4years old. Each centre has been given a pseudonym, *Busy Buzzy Bees, Little People and Little Stars*. Whilst there are numerous different types of EYL providers, these settings were selected on the basis of their social setting, geographical location, source of funding (private or state funded), and class and cultural demographic (see table 3).

'Busy Buzzy Bees' (nursery)

'*Busy Buzzy Bees'* is a publicly funded EYL provider set within a local college campus in a large Midlands town. It provides sixty childcare places for children aged three months to five years old (offering fee paying places and free nursery education places[2]) and is commonly utilised by staff at the college or those who work in the surrounding area.

'Little People' (academy nursery[3])

Previously part of a Sure Start Centre, and now part of an Academy, '*Little People'*, is located within a housing estate on the outskirts of a large town within the Midlands area. It serves the local community, providing childcare for children aged three to five years olds, with provision of free nursery education places for children aged three to four years old.

'Little Stars' (pre-school)

The pre-school '*Little Stars'*, is located within a market town in the middle of England, offering free nursery education places for three to four year olds. It caters for a number of ethnic groups within the

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[2] Children in the UK are entitled to free part-time preschool education (15hours per week) from the term after their third birthday (DfE, 2012)

[3] Little People is a nursery situated within a recently formed primary school Academy. Previously it was part of a Sure Start centre. Sure Start centres were set up under the Blair Labour government as a public sector strategy to improve childcare and education and reduce social inequalities.

community with approximately eighty per cent of children on the roll, being from ethnic minorities

(Bengali) and of that, forty-five per cent speaking English as an additional language.

Table 3: An overview of the demographic of each setting

	Busy Buzzy Bees	**Little People**	**Little Stars**
Age of children	3-4years	3-4years	3-4years
Social Class[4] status of those who use the settings	Employed Middle Class parents	Employed and unemployed Working Class parents	Employed and unemployed Working class parents
SES score[5]	18112	8521	1180
Government Funded places (3-4year olds)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fee Paying Childcare (childcare provision outside the government funded session at a cost to parents)	Yes	No	No

The research involved ten months of sustained 'critical' ethnographic fieldwork in the three settings,

with the researcher using participant and non-participant observation, field notes and informal

conversations with children and practitioners to gather data. Across the three settings, eighty children

were observed and seven have been selected to illustrate how social hierarchies and children's

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[4] Defining social class is complex and multifaceted (Chandola, 2000); within this research, the identification of each settings social class is qualitative referring firstly to the researcher's knowledge of each setting and surrounding socio-economic context (supplied by the Office for National Statistics indices of deprivation measure) and secondly to the practitioner's knowledge and articulations of the settings and their clientele.
[5] The SES score was calculated using the Office for National Statistics indices of deprivation measure. A score of 1 indicates the most deprived neighbourhood in England and a score of 32,482 indicates the least deprived neighbourhood in England

subjectivities are formed within EYL through the intersection of the PD~CD (see table 4). The seven

children were selected because they were illustrative of the dominant categories in situ and therefore

representative of the children within the setting as a whole.

The data collected were first analysed ethnographically[6] to determine the organising categories and

concepts of the setting, i.e., analyses were at this point loosely coupled with the researcher's

theoretical frame. Second order analysis imposed the researcher's sociological frame of reference in

questions of equity, social reproduction and control, thereby adding another layer of questions to the

study. In this paper, our data explore how children begin to develop their corporeal realities and a

sense of self in relation to social class and culture. They illuminate how the CD finds expression as

conscious and subconscious embodied action and is given 'personality' amongst relations governed

by the principles of the PD in EYL settings.

Table 4: Seven case study children

Childs Name	*Setting*	*Ethnicity*	*Age*	*Character*
James	*Busy Buzzy Bees*	White British	3	Small in stature but confident and outgoing
Adam	*Busy Buzzy Bees*	White British	3	Small in stature, younger looking than his peers. He demonstrates a

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[6] Some have compared ethnographic analysis as similar to grounded theory (O'Reilly, 2005) although less prescriptive, but given its flexible framework, it is perhaps best to think of ethnographic analysis as continual analysis (Becker, 1970), whilst the data is still being collected allowing for reflexivity and the re-visiting of ideas whilst still in the natural setting. Ethnographic analysis in the context of this paper is the systematic expansion of data beyond description. It identifies patterns in the data and looks at the descriptions between these patterns (Wolcott, 1994).

				shortened concentration/attention span
Rhianna	*Little People*	White British	4	Respected and well-liked by peers and practitioners. She often takes the lead in games
Patryk	*Little People*	Polish	3	Tall and large for his age, often coming across as disruptive and aggressive towards peers.
Liam	*Little People*	White British	3	A shy, slender boy, smaller and less outgoing than the others at *Little People*. He is often found playing with girls or on his own, always taking orders from those he is playing with

| Rebecca | Little Stars | White British | 3 | A small and quiet child who prefers 'academic' play over physical play, often found in the reading area asking practitioners to read to her |
| Jordan | Little Stars | White British | 3 | Much taller, bigger and louder than her peers although less developed in terms of her listening skills, often made to sit next to practitioners during singing and reading time |

Children's Social Structuring and Identity

The PD centres the principles regulating the classification and framing of embodied consciousness. Those regulating each EYL context are defined by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and realised as various forms of 'play';

> 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore…' (EYFS, 2012: 6)

In effect, the ideal imaginary child of EYFS policy is a child who already possess or quickly develops the recognition rules which would allow them to take part in the different forms of play which featured in each context, hence, demonstrate 'ability' and become an effective member of the setting. In the practitioners' eyes children had to manifestly display social and situational competence. Within EYL the body (in motion) is therefore seen as a fundamental learning resource. The type of play learning that took place and the culture of the setting impacts how children are expected to use their bodies and learn. In each setting, practitioners tried to accommodate and build on the knowledge which children brought to the EYL settings. To achieve this, they needed to adopt pedagogical practices which broached the gap between the principles regulating formal knowledge (PD) and the lay culture children have already embodied (CD).

Diagram2: Play in EYL

Work Play
Teacher initiated time dedicated to learning numeracy and literacy skills

Academic Play
Children choose to engage in play focused on learning skills e.g. jigsaws, practicing writing, reading

Physical Play
Involves gross motor movement such as running, riding a toy car, jumping, dancing or rough and tumble play

Spontaneous Movement
Moving to and from activities, between areas to see what is going on

Practitioner Led Play
Formal physical activity e.g. learning different ways to move which has been planned and is led by practitioners
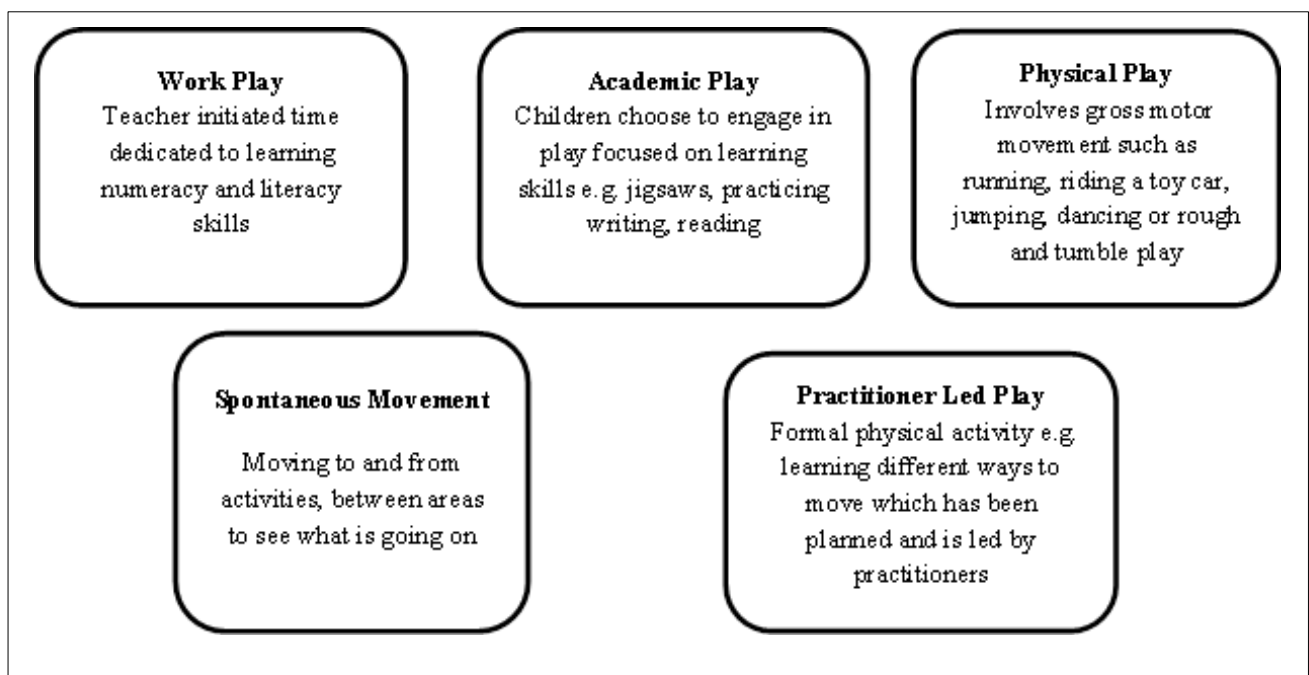
Table 5: Play differences within EYL;

Time spent on each form of play during a typical day	Work Play	Academic Play	Physical Play	Practitioner led physical activity	Spontaneous movement
Busy Buzzy Bees	20minutes (1:1 ratio)	45minutes	20mins in morning	5minutes (not daily)	15minutes
Little People	20minutes (1:5 ratio)	10minutes	50minutes	5minutes (not daily)	30minutes
Little Stars	15minutes (1:5 ratio)	10minutes	40minutes	45 minutes (weekly)	40minutes

There are noticeable and important bounded differences in the use of time and space in each of the settings. *At Little People* and *Little Stars* children spent the majority of their time in physical play (illustrated in table5) and as such they learnt (and were expected to learn) essentially through their bodies in motion. Physical play in these two settings involved, children playing on swings, the climbing frame, or the soft play area (*Little People* only); with children frequently, playing 'chases', 'cops and robbers' or 'pets'.

In contrast, at *Busy Buzzy Bees*, there was a clearer demarcation of academic play and other forms of play and a privileging of learning (through the former) which required a more passive body.

Academic play dominated the setting, and children tended to spend their time completing jigsaws, build Lego or play 'doctors'. In contrast to *Little People* and *Little Stars*, physical play only took place at break and lunch time when children were allowed outside. Consequently, at *Busy Buzzy Bees*, children acknowledged and seemed already predisposed to recognise the distinction between academic and non-academic play and only adopted a more active body outside at play time.

The Good, the Odd and the Difficult

Social hierarchies were clearly evident in each of these settings. Children learned and experienced their 'place' and status amongst their peers in relation to their body, in the process of being identified in the practitioner's eyes as either, 'good' (able), 'odd' or 'difficult', albeit, each identity being defined slightly differently in each setting.

The majority of children at *Busy Buzzy Bees* were identified as 'good', displaying positive attributes, responsive to practitioner expectations, for example, of tidying up toys, sharing, being independent (putting shoes and coats on, etc. by themselves), displaying 'manners' at snack and lunch. These manifest behaviours (knowledge /abilities to recognise and realise in situ instructional and regulative codes) were deemed to have significance beyond the EYL context as skills and dispositions children would be required to demonstrate later within formal education and wider society. They were considered context independent and evidence of 'good parenting' and wider family influences at play. By contrast *Little People* was characterised by a diversity of pupil identities: 'good', 'odd' and 'difficult', with the 'good' child being in the minority. Practitioners often held different views of different children based on their own interactions with that child and pre-conceptions of his or her family background, often suggesting that parents did not (and could not) 'invest' in their child through enrichment activities outside EYL. In contrast to Busy Buzzy Bees, there appeared to be less uniformity of opinion, perhaps because the greater number of children (almost double the number) and the more confined space and longer time children spent at *Busy Buzzy Bees* made it 'easier' for practitioners to observe and get to know all the children personally rather than positionally (i.e. as consociates rather than contemporaries, Shultz, 1967). At *Little Stars*, as *at Little People*, the

categorisation of children was also more fluid and less certain than at *Busy Buzzy Bees*, with children slipping between 'good' and 'difficult' depending on their engagement with the pedagogic discourses of the setting. Due to the high percentage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) children and those from low SES backgrounds, practitioners tended to tolerate poor/difficult behaviour initially (for the first weeks of attendance) until they deemed children had attended long enough to understand the disciplinary expectations of practitioners. For example, Dennis' (a Polish child aged three who had only recently moved to the UK) 'difficult' behaviour (e.g., not listening, being aggressive to others) was initially given leeway due to his lack of English, but towards the end of the year, practitioners began to view him as inherently 'difficult' in a similar way to Jordan (see discussion below). The analysis below adds further detail to these identities, highlighting in the process their situational specificity as reflection of the dynamic of the PD~CD.

The Good

The 'good' child across the three settings was characterised as having good listening skills, demonstrating an interest in 'academic' play and displaying appropriate behaviour at nursery. To accrue the status of 'good', children had not only to recognise these characteristics but express them appropriately through their bodies (how they moved, communicated and in some instances, how they dressed – appropriate clothing for being outdoors or at the art table). Children able to embody, recognise and effectively 'play' within the discursive spaces available to them gained more practitioner time both within *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People* (but not at *Little Stars* -see below). For example, James is described as 'bright' within the *Busy Buzzy Bees* context; he listens, follows instruction and works well with the other children. He has been at the nursery since he was a baby and conforms to the setting's concept of being 'school ready' and as such is often asked first if he would like to take part in a task, and at times is given more 'difficult' tasks to perform. For example, when talking to Helen (practitioner) about the children and the theme camouflage, she comments;

"I mean, I don't explore the meaning of camouflage with all the children just the more able ones like James, with the rest I just mention it…I think the able ones need (to be) pushed more to achieve their maximum"

Furthermore, James appeared to be one of the few children interested in having books read to him, which practitioners where frequently happy to do, consequently he spent more time with practitioners than many other children and so could further develop and demonstrate his 'ability'. James was not only seen as 'academically able' by staff, but also physically able, having an understanding of when to demonstrate a physically active body and when to be passive (in effect he had already acquired quite sophisticate play skills and play sense – instructional and regulative codes);

Example1:

While the children are having snack Helen (practitioner) is demonstrating to another member of staff the exercises she has been doing in the gym after work. The children overhearing Helens conversation, stop talking and being to watch her as she demonstrates abdominal exercises

James: Helen, exercise is for outside

Helen: 'Yes James, running around is, because we don't want to fall into something and hurt ourselves inside do we…'

James: I can do press up too, look (he gets up and shows Helen his press up)….daddy taught me that, he does them at the gym

Example 2:

At snack time James and Amy are sitting together at the snack table, James is counting his raisins and talking loudly to Amy about how he spells his name;

James: 'mines J, A, M, E, S (says it phonetically) and yours is A, M, Y' (says it phonetically)

Helen (practitioner): 'well done James, that's very good, did mummy teach you that?'

Adam: 'That is good James isn't it, were best friends Helen, James and me…'

In the second example, James clearly demonstrates an 'ability' not only to engage with instructional discourses which are highly valued in this EYL setting (in this case orientated toward language development), but also perform such actions in appropriate ways; his transactions with peers (in this case, Amy) are disciplined and 'educative'. Such orientations are perceived by practitioners to be reflective of his parents' investment in his academic development outside the EY context.

Rhianna

Rhianna is regarded by all *Little People* practitioners as a 'lovely chatty child' very 'able' and mature compared to some of the other children' (John- practitioner). Although 'able' within *Little People* does not necessarily mean Rhianna is afforded the same parental investment that James *at Busy Buzzy Bees* is; when asked if she took part in any activities outside nursery, Rhianna commented, "I'm not allowed to go to dance, mummy doesn't let me". Rhianna often assists practitioners with tasks such as tidying up, telling the other children when it is tidy up time and is often rewarded for her 'good behaviour' more than other children, by being allowed to pick songs to sing or numbers to count up to during 'gathering[7]'. Whilst most of the children participate in these 'helping' tasks, Rhianna does them more frequently and consequently receives high amounts of practitioner contact. Claire (practitioner) describes her "like another little member of staff isn't she", while John, sees her as "in control, other children listen to her," her dominance over others and 'teacher' like persona was evident in her interactions with other children;

Example 1:

> During play time, Rhianna decides to play the 'honey bear' game. She gets her friends (three
>
> other girls) to sit in a circle and Rhianna pretends to be the teacher and says 'good morning'
>
> (replicating gathering time). Upon starting the game, three other children join in. Rhianna
>
> takes on the role of the teacher; she asserts her dominance by standing in the middle of the

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[7] Gathering at Little People is similar to registration at Busy Buzzy Bees, but happened in the morning and just before the children leave for the end of the day.

circle and picking (by pointing) one child to be the bear and one to collect the bear's honey. Rhianna control's the game by ensuring she always picks herself or a close friend (one of the three original girls). When her dominance is challenged by Patryk, Rhianna demands the honey off Patryk in a similar manner to the practitioners "Patryk, give me the honey, you're not playing" (holding one hand out, the other on her hip)

Example 2:

John (practitioner): Well those two (Rhianna and Hannah) are the ones everyone listens too and they argue a lot over who is in charge, look see…Rhianna well she should really be in school, she's ready, she's the brightest but parents want her to be five before she goes…there they go, pretending to be one of us

This display of recognising and enacting official instructional and regulative codes of practitioners affords Rhianna high social status not only among her peers but also practitioners who are then more willing to indulge her requests to pick songs or ensure the toy she is playing with is given back to her, because she is seen as a helpful, co-operating child. She uses her physical presence (height) to assert her authority among peers and mimicking practitioners' body language.

Rebecca

Unlike *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People* where the 'able' child could be perceived as spending the most time interacting with practitioners, at *Little Stars*, the 'able' child, Rebecca, is deemed so because she requires (and receives) very little attention from practitioners unless it is praise related. Rebecca is considered a quiet, unassuming child who blends into the background; able to listen, manage her own personal hygiene, put her own coat and shoes on and play with others co-operatively; a stark contrast to the 'difficult' child. She is described as "such a quiet, lovely girl, so well behaved" (Ms Smith).   At *Little Stars*, children are deemed 'able' because they do not require constant practitioner intervention and consequently receive little time with practitioners, unlike those deemed ' difficult' who are allocated a member of staff during singing time i.e., occasions when disruption was felt likely to occur.

These different 'good' identities begin to illustrate the dynamics of the PD~CD. Cleary, each version of 'good' cannot be understood other than as a relational effect of EYFS policy principles enacted uniquely within each setting, and the embodied dispositions of the children brought to those contexts from the family and home. Children at the top of the social hierarchy at *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People* readily engaged with and accepted the instructional and regulative discourses of these settings. They arrive at the EYL context already predisposed with an appropriate embodied consciousness. James, an able child at *Busy Buzzy Bees* is required to demonstrate legitimate (high status/valued) knowledge by engaging (quietly) in academic play. The focus of practitioners is on his play skills/competencies (e.g., reading or writing) rather than his already attuned (and regulated) play sense. In contrast to *Busy Buzzy Bees* and *Little People*, at *Little Stars*, the pedagogic discourse constructed by practitioners privileges the realisation of regulative rather than instructional codes and centres on inculcating the children into the social world of the English speaking middle class cultural habitus of the practitioners. As such, 'able' in this context meant meeting social (regulative codes) following instructions while requiring little attention from practitioners;

> Ms Smith talks to Mrs Jones before taking children to do some 'work play'
>
> Ms Smith: Shall I take these three in with me as well so they can practice their English?
>
> Mrs Jones: Yes, right Eryk, Mohammad and Lola off you go with Ms Smith to play a fun word game. No not you two (pointing at Rebecca and Priya), you two don't need to practice.

The Difficult

Patryk

Patryk is a Polish child at *Little People* who struggles to speak English and consequently finds it difficult to communicate with staff and children, often speaking in Polish to them but without getting a response. He is seen by staff as a 'problem child', not because he is Polish but rather because his listening skills are perceived as poor and they believe he pretends not to understand when being told

off, often finding it funny to have staff chase him round. Claire (practitioner) describes Patryk as; "naughty, he knows what he is doing, and finds it funny and he's aggressive with the other children". This opinion is shared by other practitioners. John describes him as "one to watch out for" when playing with others on the soft play area and Sarah labels him;

> "A funny child, one on one he can be really sweet and good but with other children or during gathering he just wants to do his own thing. He takes toys away from others and can become too boisterous and aggressive. Obviously language can be a barrier between him and us, that's why we often use gestures and sign".

Field Notes 1:

> Patryk is on the computer playing quietly; the boys (Justin, Callum and Duane) come inside and decide to play a 'game with him – they begin poking him in the back and running away. Initially Patryk is engaged in his game on the computer but after the third time, he gets up and chases the boys, kicking and punching. The boys scream and laugh running away.
>
> As Patryk is fighting with the boys, Clara begins to play on the computer. Patryk sees this, leaves the boys, goes back to the computer and pushes Clara off saying, "no my computer".
>
> Clara runs over to Sarah (practitioner) and tells her what happened;
>
> Clara: 'Patryk pushed me off the computer, he's not playing with kind hands, he never does'
>
> Sarah goes and speaks to Patryk

In this example, Patryk is seen as an 'outsiders' by others, he is inside the EYL setting but outside its culture. He is not only positioned as such and attributed negative identity by virtue of his physical stature, but also how the uses his body i.e., his failure to recognise and appropriately enact the regulative rules of the PD. Rather than 'telling the practitioner' that the boys were annoying him and Clara had taken his seat at the computer, Patryk becomes violent.

Jordan

Jordan is viewed by staff at *Little Stars* as a 'difficult' child whose behaviour is very poor, often aggressive and rude to other children. She is one of three girls viewed in this light and is considered as the worst of them. She was frequently observed ignoring practitioners, scaring other children and disrupting singing time, behaviour practitioners believe to be accepted at her home, as Mrs Jones commented ;

> 'She just doesn't listen, not even to mum when its home time. Mum doesn't seem bothered by it; she just waits until Jordan is ready to leave. Not very helpful when we're trying to tell her off for this behaviour at nursery!'

> On one particular occasion, Jordan and another 'difficult' girl were playing 'tickles' – they began tickling each other and then started to tickle a child nearby. The child shrieked, curled up into the corner and began to cry, although spoken to by Ms Smith "play nicely, Priya doesn't like being tickled so don't do it to her", Jordan ignored this and continued to tickle her. Ms Smith, makes the comment to me; "you can tell she (Priya) is intimidated by her, if I was that age, I definitely would be!" It is clear that the staff deem Jordan to be a threat to others, a view not helped by the fact she is bigger and taller than most of the other children and much more outspoken (i.e. her appearance belied her immaturity).

As a result of her challenging behaviour, Jordan spends much of her time under the practitioners' gaze especially during singing time when she is allocated a seat next to a practitioner in an attempt to control her behaviour. Despite this high volume of surveillance and interaction with practitioners, she is given very little opportunity to alter the view they have of her.

Difficult children such as Jordan and Patryk are defined as such (i.e., deviant) because they either cannot or will not display desired behaviours (e.g. sitting still, talking quietly) which lead to negative interactions with practitioners and peers. They either do not or cannot recognise the appropriate regulative rules for behaviour and interaction in situ, in part due to cultural (as illustrated by Patryk), and class differences between the home and EYL learning environments.

The Odd

Adam

At *Busy Buzzy Bees* Adam is considered 'a complex' child who occasionally engages with staff and other children but for the most part remains on the outskirts of the group, often playing by himself or with one or two other children of similar social status as himself within the group. Physically, he is small in comparison to the other children, immature in relation to sharing toys and sitting still, and unlike most of the others enjoys playing with bags, especially carrying bags around with him and playing 'mummies and baby', which in the practitioners' view, highlights his 'alternative' personality.

Practitioners describe him as 'very hands on' in relation to his learning style and "a bit of a wanderer". He uses his body to express his interests and understanding, for example, during 'show and tell', Adam 'beat boxes' and dances to demonstrate his understanding of the sounds letters make;

> Helen: Well done Adam, that's good dancing isn't it
>
> Adam: I like to dance and move around
>
> Helen to the researcher: Adams mum use to be a DJ, he's very into music and dancing, that how he learns best.

To some extent, Adam blends into the back ground, occupying a low social position amongst his peers and in the perspective of the practitioners because he tends to wander aimlessly from activity to activity and often his only contact with practitioners is when he is poorly behaved.

Liam

At *Little People* Liam is considered a well behaved child who listens to practitioners; however, he seemed to find it difficult to form relationships with other children, especially the boys. On several occasions, he was observed on the periphery of the boys' games, always looking in but never being accepted into the game. He was physically slight and looked 'delicate', often crying if someone bumped into him as they moved around the setting. Consequently, whilst he was neither dominant nor

difficult, staff deemed him 'odd', finding it hard to talk to him especially when he was upset because often there was no apparent reason for it. Consequently, Liam became increasingly anonymous within the setting, his lack of confidence meant unlike other children he was unable to assert himself within activities and due to the number of children and the 'demanding' nature of some children he never really made it on to the practitioner's radar. Liam therefore occupied a low position within the social structure of the setting due to his inability to interact with staff and children. Liam's physical body has presence but little authority; it is out of kilter with the contextual rules and meaning systems – communication with other bodies and does not easily fit in. Failing to meet both 'formal' (practitioner) and 'informal' (peer) expectations of propriety Liam suffers the associated alienation. Whilst playing honey bears, Rhianna tells Liam, he is not 'on' because he is not sitting still, Liam begins to cry;

> Sarah (practitioner): 'Liam, its Rhianna's game, you must listen to her'

> Liam continues to cry

> Jane (practitioner): 'He just cries when he doesn't get what he wants, he is not able to share and doesn't like playing with others, Rhianna, just play on and ignore him….Liam, will you come and sit next to me?'

> Liam ignores Jane and continues to cry

Conclusion

Whilst many studies utilising the PD focus on the importance of text and language in the production of identity and consciousness, this paper has foreground how 'the body' is implicated in children's developing sense of self. The empirical data go some way to highlighting the complex assemblages of pedagogic practice within EYL settings and the role of the body in children's experience of learning. We need again to be mindful of the class and cultural dynamics at play in each of these settings. *Little People* and *Little Stars* catered for families of very similar working class background; notwithstanding,

there were nuanced differences between the two settings in the ways they categorised children, perhaps best illustrated through a continuum. At one end there is *Busy Buzzy Bees* which caters for middle class children predominately identified as 'good' by practitioners because parents tend to invest in their children's academic and work play through enrichment activities. They had already acquired the recognition and realisation rules of the setting. At the other end is *Little Stars* catering for employed and unemployed working class families, where the majority of children were deemed to arrive unable to recognise and display the appropriate play behaviours (e.g., sitting still, listening, and 'kind hands') for learning. Here there is cultural difference and dissonance between home (predominately Eastern European or Bengali) and the white British middle class rules and codes of practitioners in the setting. In the middle sits *Little People*, (which also caters for employed and unemployed working class families). Here 'good' children are those able to recognise and realise in situ discipline rules and codes and demonstrate some interest in 'academic' play. These subjectivities are then, situationally specific and if adjudged by *Busy Buzzy Bees* standards (also the ideal imaginary child of EYLF policy) the 'able' child at *Little People* is more 'able' than that at *Little Stars*, but never quite as 'able' as those at *Busy Buzzy Bees* . For example, Rhianna is seen as 'able' at *Little People* but when compared to James (*Busy Buzzy Bees*), she is less able and less well-resourced in terms of parental investment in enrichment activities. Furthermore, the 'good/able' child at *Little People* and *Little Stars* was in the minority, a stark contrast with *Busy Buzzy Bees*, where the 'good' child, of which James was the most 'able', was the majority.

In *Busy Buzzy Bees*, there was no apparent discontinuity between the instructional and regulative codes of the home and those of school. Characteristics (e.g. body movements, dispositions) valued by both the children and practitioners – i.e., displays of 'academic knowledge' were privileged. James displayed such characteristics in the way he moved and behaved, demeanours which manifestly demonstrated his ability to act (e.g., through spelling his name) in a manner which practitioners valued and subsequently praised. Meanwhile, at *Little People*, both practitioners and children recognised and valued the regulative discourse displayed by the 'good' child. As the data reveals Rhianna was listened to by her peers because of her privileged disciplinary codes, which also meant

she received positive attention from practitioners. In contrast, at *Little Stars*, children's physical stature influenced their social status in the eyes of both practitioners and peers. As illustrated in the data above, Jordan was at the top of the peer hierarchy because she was physically the tallest and seen as an intimidating presence by many of her peers. In all three settings the body as a physical (biological) presence was a message system in and of itself in social interaction but given specific meaning by the culture of the setting. Clearly, children's embodiment is the experience of presence in place and time (James, 2000); their size, in terms of height and weight, invariably something over which they have little control, is 'used' either consciously or unconsciously to influences how others view them. Across the three settings, children like Jordan who are seen as 'intimidating' and 'outsiders' by others, are not only positioned as such and attributed negative identity by virtue of their physical stature, but also how they use their body i.e., their failure to recognise and appropriately enact the regulative rules of the PD.

The above analyses therefore begin to illustrate how children experience their bodies in relation to peers, practitioners and social status at the intersection of the CD~PD. The identities described are inherently relational categories, constructed consciously and subconsciously through actions and perspectives of practitioners and children. At the intersection of the CD~PD, these children are inducted into socially classed, self-regulating modes of behaviour, which leaves those who cannot/do not adhere being classed as 'difficult' which could lead to potential educational difficulties as the children progress into 'formal' education .

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