

**The Ability of Gender to Challenge:
Queensland Senior Physical Education**

Thesis submitted by

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Publications

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Walls, G. (Interview, November 1, 2005) *The Postgrad Apprenticeship*. Interview by Ali Benton for Triple J: Hack. Aired on Triple J, November 11, 2005.

Pending Publications

Walls, G. (9-12 March, 2006). *Challenging ability and gender in Queensland Senior Physical Education*. Paper to be presented at the 13th Commonwealth International Sport Conference, Melbourne.

Abstract

Previous research in physical education has historically focussed on the gender issues of single-sex and coeducation, however discussion on alternate groupings of students, is not as significantly discussed. Ability is a factor that has also been infrequently dealt with in this examination. This doctoral research explored from the students' perspectives, the class habitus of single-sex and coeducational Senior Physical Education classes in three North Queensland regional Catholic High schools. This research considered the factor of ability in single-sex and coeducation practical physical education learning environments, and the homogeneous groupings of single-sex schooling alongside a coeducation setting. It did this by examining the relationship of the themes of ability, challenge and gender, which were identified and incorporated into the study's multidimensional methodological framework using the dimensions of Ability, Individual and Environment. It was hypothesised that gender, ability and the learning environment could affect an individual's experiences, perceptions and sense of level of challenge experienced within the physical education environment.

Participants were (N) 117, $n = 78$ male and $n = 39$ female, year 11 students enrolled in an elective Queensland Senior Physical Education subject. A case study method was utilised allowing for the triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative instruments were trialled in a Pilot study and found appropriate for use in the case study methodology. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected over the duration of a study unit which involved an interceptive, team, ball physical activity. Data collection techniques employed were those of survey, observation and interview.

The data analysis revealed that ability was a significant factor in Senior Physical Education learning environments. However, the findings of this research did not reveal gender as a significant factor in the same learning environments. Student perceptions of issues of ability, challenge and equity in the class habitus were both quantitatively and qualitatively linked to ability. Implications of the preliminary findings of this research for grouping students in Senior Physical Education classes indicate issues of equity relating to grouping students based upon ability and gender with the recommendation that further research be undertaken to examine such issues.

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Abbreviations

<i>ACT</i>	Australian Capital Territory
<i>ANOVA</i>	Analysis of Variance
<i>Body</i>	Body Attractiveness (as indicated in regards to the PSPP)
<i>Boys' school</i>	The Single-sex Boys' school
<i>C-PSPP</i>	Children's Physical Self Perception Profile
<i>Co-1</i>	The first of two Coed school Senior Physical Education classes
<i>Co-2</i>	The second of two Coed school Senior Physical Education classes
<i>Coed school</i>	The Coeducational school
<i>FFM</i>	Fat Free Mass
<i>GATE</i>	Gifted and Talented Education
<i>Girls' school</i>	The Single-sex Girls' school
<i>HPE</i>	Health and Physical Education
<i>MANOVA</i>	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
<i>NSW</i>	New South Wales
<i>OP</i>	Overall Position
<i>O₂</i>	Oxygen
<i>PSPP</i>	Physical Self Perception Profile
<i>PSW</i>	Physical Self Worth (as indicated in regards to the PSPP)
<i>QAS</i>	Queensland Academy of Sport
<i>QSA</i>	Queensland Studies Authority
<i>SB-1</i>	The first of two Boys' school Senior Physical Education classes
<i>SB-2</i>	The second of two Boys' school Senior Physical Education classes
<i>SG-1</i>	The Girls' school Senior Physical Education class
<i>SPOCQ</i>	Student Perceptions of Classroom Quality
<i>Sport</i>	Sport Competence (as indicated in regards to the PSPP)
<i>SPPPECE</i>	Student Perceptions of the Practical Physical Education Environment
<i>SPSS</i>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<i>SSEPP</i>	Single-sex Education Pilot Project
<i>Strength</i>	Physical Strength (as indicated in regards to the PSPP)
<i>UK</i>	United Kingdom
<i>US</i>	United States
<i>VET</i>	Vocational, Education and Training

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