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Boys' masculinities in three adventure physical education classes

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**BOYS' MASCULINITIES IN THREE ADVENTURE PHYSICAL EDUCATION
CLASSES**

by

AMY TISCHLER

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. In this chapter, I outline the prevalence of youth obesity, research on the role physical education might play in increasing physical activity levels and youth health, research on students' perceptions of physical education, the key role gender has played in physical education, the need for a heterogeneous gender focus in physical education, the use of masculinity as a framework for understanding boys' experiences in sport settings and school physical education, and the lack of research on boys' experiences in nonsport physical education. I conclude this chapter with the research purpose and questions that guided the study.

In chapter 2, I outline principles of masculinity theory along with the research using them in various social and educational settings and provide implications for how each principle applies to the examination of boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. In chapter 3, I focus on the methodological approach to the study concentrating on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of the critical paradigm. I describe the study methods, including the participants, research setting, data collection and analysis techniques, my perspectives as the researcher, trustworthiness strategies, ethical considerations involved in the study, and my subjectivity. In chapters 4 and 5, I present the findings of the study. I conclude in chapter 6 by connecting the findings to the theoretical framework and previous research, and make recommendations for future research as well as implications for physical educators.

Rationale for this Study

Seven significant issues serve as rationale and support for this study:

- (1) the detrimental state of youth health,
- (2) the role physical education might play in combating youth obesity,

(3) students' negative perceptions of physical education and how this limits the potential for physical education in combating youth obesity,

(4) the oppressive role gender has played in physical education,

(5) the need for attention to the heterogeneity of students by educators and researchers,

(6) the use of masculinity theory in looking at the heterogeneity of boys in the context of sport and sport-based physical education, and

(7) a need for research on boys' experiences in physical education programs that focus on content beyond competitive team sports.

State of Youth Health

Rising rates of obesity are a significant problem impacting youth in the United States (Fahlman, Dake, McCaughtry, & Martin, 2008; Krebs, Baker, & Greer, 2003). In the past two decades, researchers estimated that obesity rates have tripled among children aged 6-11 (Wechsler, McKenna, Lee, & Dietz, 2004) and have more than doubled for adolescents aged 12-19 (Zapata, Bryant, McDermott, & Hefelfinger, 2008). Headlines across the nation declare that children in the United States are getting heavier and most point to a lack of physical activity as the cause (Wechsler et al., 2004).

Research has continued to foreshadow an increase in suffering and illness resulting from the surge of obesity among children (Nash, 2003). Specifically, youth obesity has been linked with negative consequences such as decreased physical health (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer, osteoarthritis, and premature death) and social and psychological problems such as discrimination and poor self-esteem (Dietz, 1998; Freedman, Dietz, Srinivasan, & Berenson, 1999). In addition, one of the most harmful consequences of obesity is its impact on the economy. For instance, the costs of weight-related health care and the value of wages lost by

employees unable to work due to illness, disability, or premature death was approximately \$117 billion in 2000 (Narayan, Boyle, Thompson, Sorenson, & Williamson, 2003).

Overweight youth are more likely to be overweight or obese adults than are nonoverweight youth. Moreover, obese adults who were also overweight or obese as youth often suffer from more severe obesity than adults who become obese in adulthood (Freedman, Kahn, Dietz, & Srinivasan, & Berenson, 2001). The end result is that children are becoming more obese, which is accompanied by a multitude of problems.

Role of Physical Education

Numerous professional and governmental organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), and the U.S. Surgeon General concur that physical education can be a potential powerful tool for reducing childhood obesity. Additionally, Siedentop (2009) found that school physical education interventions produced improvements in students' physical activity levels if procedures relating to the use of time were pursued. For example, students' physical activity levels during recess can be increased through careful planning for attractive activity opportunities on carefully designed playgrounds. Siedentop (2009) stated,

Schools have a long history of addressing the health of children/youth, beginning in colonial times when schools addressed infectious diseases, thus it is not surprising that the education sector is now called upon to address the overweight/obesity epidemic among children/youth. (p. 2)

Researchers have shown that well-designed, well-implemented school programs can successfully increase physical activity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996; Gortmaker et al., 1999). According to Siedentop (2009), "Schools typically provided routine

physical activity through physical education classes, recess, and served as centers for community activity including child/youth activity after school” (p. 3).

Physical education can play an important role for several reasons. First, children are provided with numerous opportunities to be physically active in physical education class. Second, children often learn and develop skills and attitudes in physical education that promote engagement in physical activities outside of class. For example, Shen, McCaughtry, and Martin (2008) suggested that the motivation and competence that is nurtured in physical education will likely impact related behaviors in other leisure-time activity contexts. Third, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, over 95% of children (3 years and older) are enrolled in schools, most of whom attend physical education regularly, making school physical education an opportune place to address the vast majority of American youths’ physical activity.

Students’ Perceptions of Physical Education

Although school physical education is a logical place to address youth obesity, too many students report unpleasant experiences (Carlson, 1995; Davison 2000; Drummond, 2003; Olafson, 2002; Portman, 1995; Streaan, 2009; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Students’ explanations for disliking physical education often center on the instructional (content and pedagogies) and social (teacher-student relationships and peer relationships) aspects of the classroom. Two participants from Streaan’s (2009) study shared insights that summarize much of the research that has examined students’ perceptions and memories of physical education, “I probably would have grown healthier if I had been left completely alone by adults in terms of physical play” (p. 217). Another person shared, “The exception to otherwise pleasant childhood play: those fucking gym classes. Drill, verbal abuse, elitism, sense of futility, and occasionally fear. Yuck” (p. 217).

The narrow range of sport-related content along with the manner in which it is taught appears to significantly contribute to students' negative experiences in physical education (Carlson, 1995; Ennis, 2000; McCaughtry, 2009; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Robinson (1990) described students' negative perceptions of instructional configurations that emphasized elite performance and competition over learning. Low-skilled students reported that participating in a sport-dominated curriculum was not fun when they were unsuccessful, and unsuccessful events were far more prevalent than successful ones (Portman, 1995). Research suggests that students believe that a disproportionate emphasis is given on competition; this emphasis appears to reduce participation and enjoyment (Carlson, 1995; Dyson, 1995). Students have also reported that sport-dominated, competitive structures enhance the experiences of students who already excel in sport-related activities, while demoralizing those with lesser skill leaving them feeling weak, clumsy, and inept (Olafson, 2002; Robinson, 1990).

In addition, there are indications that students find a lack of personal meaning toward the content taught in physical education (Carlson, 1995; Hopple & Graham, 1995; McCaughtry, 2009). According to Ennis (2000), when students do not find sport-based physical education interesting or meaningful, they are often unwilling to put forth effort or participate. Further, when examining whether physical education was of any personal importance to students, Carlson (1995) found that many students classified the content in physical education as having no personal meaning in their lives outside of the context of school. One student commented,

I don't understand why you think it [physical education] will make a difference later in your life 'cause what am I going to do? I am in the office, and I can shoot a wad of paper into the waste basket. It is not going to do me any good later on. (p. 470)

Similarly, when studying students' perceptions of physical fitness testing, Hopple and Graham (1995) found that students viewed fitness testing as a meaningless, painful experience. Students

articulated a desire for activities they found more meaningful in their lives outside of the context of physical education such as yoga, aerobics, walking, outdoor pursuits, and adventure activities.

In addition to the content that is taught, students have expressed negative feelings about how content is taught in physical education (Strean, 2009). For example, students shared that they did not actually learn rules and strategies in physical education lessons, but rather were scowled at by classmates when they broke rules or did not use the proper strategies or techniques during games. Students felt teachers overused decontextual drills, which they regarded as an ineffectual method of preparing them for successful participation in games. One participant stated,

I think the guy had stock in pylons. Yeah, I learned a lot—how to stand in line, how to dribble through cones with different kinds of balls. If I ever face an orange cone in the middle of a game, I'm going to be prepared. (Strean, 2009, p. 214)

Having fun has been a widely reported student goal for physical education (Dyson, 1995; Garn & Cothran, 2006; Strean, 2009). While examining students' perceptions of the construct of fun in physical education, Garn and Cothran (2006) confirmed the multifaceted nature of fun in physical education. They found that the qualities of the teacher (e.g., his or her level of caring for students), the level of tasks (e.g., the level of challenge and competition, the use of calisthenics and fitness testing) and social aspects (e.g., amount of time spent with peers) was related to the fun experienced in physical education, with more caring teachers, a decreased emphasis on competition, and an increased amount of peer socialization being more predictive of students' enjoyment. In the same way, McCaughtry and Rovegno (2003) demonstrated how aligning students' skill levels with tasks and acknowledging student emotion in teaching facilitated a learning environment that was more enjoyable for students. Strean (2009) found that students enjoyed lessons that provided a balance of challenge and a sense of flow as opposed to feelings of boredom or frustration that often resulted when students found tasks too easy or too hard. In

other words, when teachers match the developmental level of the activity with the past experience and skill levels of students, lessons were more fun and students were more motivated to engage. Likewise, the pace of presentation impacted how students experienced challenge and enjoyment in physical education. For example, McCaughtry, Tischler, and Flory (2008) showed that students preferred progression through the content to be fast, as long as the teacher stopped the lesson, implemented modifications, and provided assistance when students struggled. Further, while presenting research on students' perceptions of physical education, McCaughtry et al. (2008) found that many children found it boring and meaningless. The authors proposed that a key way to improve students' enjoyment in physical education is teach content that students find "cool." They stated, "Physical education must move toward activities that children find cool; that they have opportunities to pursue outside the school; and that connect to their family, peer, and community cultures" (p. 275).

Additionally, students have shared how the practice of forming teams in physical education has impacted them in negative ways. Students have described this process as humiliating, as highly-skilled students are chosen first, then friends, followed by average-skilled students, leaving the least-skilled as leftovers to be unenthusiastically "picked over" (Dyson, 1995). Olafson (2002) found that students felt that the practice of forming teams caused differentiation among students (i.e., weak/strong, skilled/unskilled, best/worst), and many students reported that this differentiation left them feeling like "second-class citizens" (p. 70).

Similar to content and pedagogies, the social dynamics of physical education has a profound effect on how students perceive their experiences in physical education. Students' goals in physical education extend far beyond socializing and passing the course. For example, the relationships between teachers and students and the relationships among students play

significant roles in students' feelings about their learning environment (McCaughtry et al., 2008). One of the most widespread findings related to the interpersonal relations between teachers and students is the importance of students feeling cared for by their teachers (McCaughtry et al., 2008; Streaan, 2009). A quote from one of Streaan's (2009) participants provides a poignant example of the importance of positive teacher-student social interaction, "I desperately wanted both of them [teachers] to spend more time with me and neither one of them did" (p. 217). Likewise, Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) found that students believed that teachers provided mostly positive attention (i.e., praise, feedback, high-fives, close proximity, chit chat) to high-skilled students, while lower-skilled students were more likely to be ignored or reprimanded for disengaging or for forgetting gym clothes, even when their motive for doing so was to escape potential humiliation.

Relationships among students can prove equally, if not more, influential in determining a student's experiences in physical education. Portman (1995) found that similar to teachers, students also treat classmates differently by performance and skill. Griffin (1985) found that low-skilled students received the bulk of criticism (e.g., name calling, pushing, teasing, ignoring) from higher-skilled students. Students have also reported the negative feelings associated with being on display and under constant evaluation by peers (Carlson, 1995; Olafson, 2002; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

Although researchers such as Cale (2011) have suggested that school physical education is an ideal site to combat youth obesity, the negative physical education experiences students have reported reduces the potential of physical education to impact youth activity and health in positive ways.

Gender in Physical Education

In particular, gender has been a key factor in the experiences related to physical education, as researchers have widely documented how girls have been marginalized (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; McCaughtry, 2004, 2006; Oliver, Hamzeh, & McCaughtry, 2009, Wright, 1999). Much of this research points to the various ways that gender discourses have functioned to limit girls' participation in physical education. Early dialogue regarding gender and physical education centered on acknowledging supposed natural of female traits and the creation of a girl-focused curricula that supported the development of useful skills needed to carry out their duties as wives and mothers (Vertinsky, 1992). For example, the female body was viewed as frail, and docility was encouraged in order to safeguard the female body for their chief aim in life: reproduction (Vertinsky, 1992). Feminists, however, viewed the medicalization of the female body as a means to assert patriarchal domination and to restrict females' control over their own bodies. Despite these complaints, the perceived differences between males and females formed the foundation on which school physical education has been constructed (Vertinsky, 1992). For instance, boys' physical education was designed to play a role in developing and constructing hegemonic masculinities by emphasizing competitive sports, force, skill, and fitness with the purpose of transforming boys into productive citizens and soldiers (Fitzclarence, 1987). On the other hand, girls' physical education has emphasized cooperation, limited use of space, constrained bodies, and focused on bodies as reproductive machines and sexual objects with the goal of turning girls into socially appropriate, attractive women (Vertinsky, 1992).

However, by the 1960s, notions of the naturalness of gender came under scrutiny (Birrell, 1988). Physician Evalyn Gendel (1967) claimed that the unladylike implication so often applied to physical exertion by the female was "an historical and societal hangover from other times that

was on its way out” (p. 376). Gendel believed these notions had little scientific validity and that being a female did not imply a biological need to limit one’s physical activity. The feminist movement played a pivotal role in highlighting the need for equal opportunity in sport and physical education. In the United States, Title IX of the 1972 Higher Education Act Amendment prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender in any educational program receiving federal funds (Vertinsky, 1992). In school physical education, all girls were to be provided the same instructional opportunities as boys. Although most supporters of Title IX would likely agree that gender sensitivity was the true purpose of this federal mandate, gender insensitivity is still all too common in physical education. McCaughtry (2006) stated, “...the trajectory that it [Title IX] has taken often contradicts the tenets of the legislation itself” (p. 175). For example, because masculine standards were used as the norm for determining equity, equal access did not equate to equal opportunity for girls (McCaughtry, 2004). Girls were provided access to *boys’* physical education, not a curriculum that had relevance to their lives (Vertinsky, 1992).

Because teachers were not trained to implement this new federal mandate [teach in coeducational settings], many teachers developed a practice of ignoring gender, which exacerbated rather than dissipated the differences between girls and boys (Evans, 1989). The practices teachers devised often left boys frustrated with the constraints of having to play with girls. For example, sports such as flag football and wrestling were eliminated from many physical education programs; during games, rules requiring a girl be passed to before a goal could be scored caused boys. These rules resulted in feelings of irritation for both boys and girls (Vertinsky, 1992). These modifications also put forth the notion that girls’ physical competence was inferior to that of boys, and that girls must have the rules changed in order for them to participate alongside boys. Furthermore, as a result of a male-dominated curriculum, many girls

did not have access to programs that addressed girls' health and wellness (McCaughtry, 2004, 2006; Oliver et al., 2009).

More recent gender dialogue has engaged in biological essentialism and girls' empowerment. McCaughtry (2004) examined how one teacher learned to read gender relations as political and social constructs. This teacher perceived political structures such as the school-sponsored beauty walk and facilities distributions as a means of maintaining the idea that girls were evaluated for social status based on their physical appearance and passivity, which left many girls feeling second class to boys. McCaughtry (2006) explained how school physical education, along with the wider-school culture, led to oppression for girls. For example, girls' participation was limited by the physicality and gazes of boys, the physical education program failed to support girls' wellness (i.e., eating disorders, body image), and physically active girls were often labeled "butch dykes" (p. 169). Oliver et al. (2009) also examined the role of gender discourses to understand how they impact girls' physical activity experiences at school. Girls described how boys dominated the playing fields outdoors and left the swings for the girls. They reported comments from boys such as, "you're too weak to play with us" and "you should go do girly things" (Oliver et al., 2009, p. 11). Additionally, these girls' physical activity experiences were limited by disempowering messages that led to perceived gender barriers. Being a "girly girl" was important in their lives, and they felt that their physical activity choices were constrained and did not allow them to be a girly girl and active at the same time. They reported that a girly girl "does not want to sweat," "mess up her hair and nails," or "mess up her nice clothes," and sometimes wears "flip-flops" (p. 11).

Ultimately, gender discourses have played a significant role in the oppression of students in the context of physical education. This has been especially true for girls as well as for boys

who do not enjoy competitive, sport-based activities. Thus, gender is another factor limiting the capacity for school physical education to play a substantial role in combating youth obesity.

Need for a Heterogeneous Gender Focus

There has been a lack of attention to intergroup experiences in physical education research, and assumptions have developed from viewing girls and boys as homogeneous groups (Flintoff & Scraton, 2006). There is a common belief that all girls and women have a set of characteristics which is shared by them as females, which is markedly different from the set of characteristics common to boys and men:

Unitary conceptions of gender are highly problematic. In particular they serve to deny or conceal commonalities in the characteristics and experiences of some men and some women, but also ignore the diversity and characteristics of women and men. The diversity reflects not only that we are not ‘only’ women or men, but also ‘many other things;’ we have multiple identities. (Penney & Evans, 2002, p. 14)

Gender divisions within physical education are manifested in the wider social context of sport, often based on naturalized and biological notions of gender distinctions (Lines & Stidder, 2003). Based on these assumptions, girls and boys are the way they are as a result of their biology. Thus, boys’ physical education has emphasized physical competence, aggressiveness, force and competition, and taking up space, whereas girls’ programs have emphasized docility, cooperation, passiveness, reducing speed, and restricting space (Vertinsky, 1992).

“The needs and concerns of young people may be conflicting with notions of ‘sameness’ across genders” (Lines & Stidder, 2003, p. 67). Gender construction is a complex process. Therefore, the activities offered to boys and girls and the pedagogies used to teach them should not be based on perceptions of biological sex differences as this perception often limits and diminishes students’ experiences in physical education. To exemplify the differences among boys (and girls), more work is needed that identifies and describes intergroup differences and moves beyond categorizing boys into discrete categories.

However, Parker (1996) and Griffin (1985) are two notable exceptions of researchers who have acknowledged the heterogeneity of boys in physical education settings. Parker (1996) recognized the theoretical move from biological essentialism to the deconstruction of gender identities. Rather than viewing boys as being part of a homogeneous group, Parker categorized the boys he studied into three categories: the hard boys, the conformists, and the victims. Similarly, Griffin (1985) identified five participation styles of the boys she studied in the context of physical education: machos, junior machos, nice guys, invisible players, and wimps. This work suggests the need for greater consideration on the multiple ways to be a boy, rather than relying on generalizations that may only account for a small portion of boys.

Essentially, it has become clear that many educators and researchers too often discuss gender as uniform, homogeneous categories, which is a mistake given the findings of Parker (1996) and Griffin (1985). Differences among boys need to be acknowledged in order for physical education to successfully address youth inactivity and obesity because when gender is dichotomized and male is essentialized, the boys who are most in need of increasing their physical activity levels are the boys who lose out. For that reason, there is a need for more research examining the heterogeneity of boys in various physical activity contexts.

Masculinity as a Framework for Understanding the Male Sport Experience

In the last decade, boys have increasingly become of academic interest to researchers (Gard, 2006), and some scholars have started using masculinity theory to explore the heterogeneity of boys in the context of sport (Connell, 2008; Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Hickey, 2008; Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008; Pringle, 2008). Strength, speed, power, muscularity, athleticism, acceptance of injury risk, warrior mentalities, and lack of empathy for other participants are characteristics that have often been described as hegemonic in elite sport

settings. Much of this work rests on Connell's (2005a) conceptual framework of masculinity theory, which is a way of understanding the relation between men and masculinity. For example, researchers have extensively shown that multiple masculinities operate in various social settings, that masculinities are hierarchically arranged, and that hierarchical orderings are produced by social practices.

Hickey (2008) demonstrated how, through the differentiation of insiders and outsiders, boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as marginalized in an elite sport setting were dominated (i.e., excluded, pushed to the margins, ridiculed) by boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as dominant. Similarly, Millington et al. (2008) showed how boys who embodied Chinese masculinities (small, effeminate, and weak bodies) were victims of obvious and concealed forms of domination that assisted in the normalization of White hegemonic masculinities. Additionally, through collective stories of eight men's experiences with rugby union, Pringle (2008) demonstrated how "sporty boys" embodying hegemonic masculinities were privileged, whereas boys performing marginalized masculinities were bullied. Due to their less aggressive modes of participation in rugby, these men recalled humiliating and violent experiences such as being pushed, tripped, laughed at, hung on coat hangers, and having their heads submerged in toilets. Additionally, Gard and Meyenn (2000) reported the physical activity preferences of 23 Australian boys from secondary schools that strongly supported and valued elite male contact sports while revealing various tactics boys and institutions used to normalize the violent nature of sport. Without fail, boys reported that the risk of injury (receiving and giving pain) through physical contact played a major role in their choices of physical activities. They believed a major part of becoming a man required engaging in contact sports where the risk of injury was high and by tolerating pain when injuries occurred.

Over the years, several scholars have begun using masculinity theory to explore male heterogeneity in school physical education with many of the same findings as those in the context of elite sport (Bramham, 2003; Davison, 2000; Drummond, 2003; Larsson, Fagrell, & Redelius, 2009; Parker, 1996). In sport-dominated physical education settings, a hierarchical ordering of masculinities emerged as naturalized and became taken-for-granted or assumed ways that boys ought to be boys. Parker (1996) found that although a hierarchy of “pupil-defined” masculinities existed, the violent and aggressive forms embodied by the “hard boys” were produced as dominant in school physical education whereas scholarly masculinities embodied by the “victims” were shaped as subordinate. Likewise, Davison (2000) reported adult men’s memories of explicit lessons in masculinity that took place during their sport-dominated physical education classes. Collectively, these men felt they were being conditioned to be the right kind of boy even though they did not measure up to the masculine ideals in their school physical education classes. Additionally, through observations of lessons, Larsson et al. (2009) scrutinized the heteronormative nature of school physical education that endorsed the dominance of some boys and found that although teachers were aware of the unequal power relations, they viewed this dominance as normal and therefore managed rather than challenged the dominance. In other words, teachers did nothing to change the hierarchical ordering of students, but instead addressed problems as they surfaced, often in ineffectual ways. Similarly, Bramham (2003) described aspects of boys’ experiences in sport-based physical education programs where particular forms of dominant masculinities flourished. Although some boys were secure enough to resist the doctrines of hegemonic masculinities by participating in activities that were constructed as feminine (e.g., dance, gymnastics), it was not without teacher antagonism and peer mockery.

Masculinity has been a valuable framework for understanding boys' experiences in elite sport settings as well as sport-based school physical education. This literature exposes significant problems for many boys in physical education. Researchers have illustrated that sport-based physical education programs are not inspiring the majority of children to be physically active. For example, McCaughtry (2009) stated,

One need only spend time in many of our schools or read our literature concerning students' voices to realize that many students are not moved by what we do; in fact, all too often they are moved in the opposite direction and become what we popularly label disengaged, discouraged, alienated, marginalized, helpless, isolated, or whatever the term might be. (p. 189)

The students we need to understand the most are not the ones playing football on the playgrounds or basketball on community or school teams (McCaughtry, 2009); instead, attention is needed towards those who are often alone and sedentary on the playgrounds, pushed to the margins during games in physical education, and quite often, unskilled and unfit. This situation makes it especially challenging for physical education to address inactivity and obesity as the boys most in need of positive encounters with physical activity frequently report negative experiences in sport-based physical education.

Masculinity and Non Sport-Based Physical Education

Physical education programs that focus on content beyond competitive team sports (e.g., adventure, dance, outdoor pursuits, and lifetime physical fitness) may provide a context in which masculinities function differently. Although a great deal of valuable work has been done on masculinities in physical activity settings, it has mostly been done in the context of sports. Gard (2001, 2003, 2008) and Humberstone (1990, 1995) are two notable exceptions who illustrated how dance and outdoor education content provided opportunities for boys to enact boy in nonhegemonic ways. Although this work was helpful in understanding how masculinities are produced in nonsport physical education settings, more research is needed on how masculinities

operate in other adventure settings. Additionally, given that Humberstone's work was conducted over two decades ago, more recent work is needed in adventure settings, especially since researchers have found that masculinities change over time (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Indeed, if research suggests that physical education is a place that can combat youth obesity by increasing physical activity levels, explorations are needed in physical education settings where students are learning, having fun, and developing positive relationships with physical activity. This information may facilitate the creation of physical education programs that impact students in meaningful ways.

Researchers have shown that there is more than one way of being boy (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Griffin, 1985; Parker, 1996). Thus, studies are needed to identify which masculinities are produced in nonsport settings and how they are hierarchically arranged. These studies may build on the existing knowledge that, in most social contexts, one form of masculinity usually attains prominence over others, which suggests the need for more research on the role of various social practices (e.g., content, teaching practices, peer relations, teacher-student relations) in the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in nonsport settings. A better understanding of these settings might help to create physical education programs that captivate students so much so that they look forward to participating rather than enacting task avoidance strategies. In fact, this type of physical education might empower students to be physically active outside of the school setting, thus improving youth health.

To that end, the purpose of this study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. What masculinities operated in adventure physical education and how are they hierarchically ordered?

2. How did social practices influence the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in adventure physical education?
3. How did the hierarchical ordering of masculinities produced in adventure physical education differ from sport-dominated physical education?
4. How were masculinities embodied in adventure physical education?
5. What role did females play in masculinities construction in adventure physical education?
6. How did boys resist hegemonic masculinities in adventure physical education?
7. How did the emotional expense of embodying certain masculinities in sport-dominated physical education differ from adventure physical education?
8. How did broader social forces influence masculinities configurations in adventure physical education?

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline masculinity theory, which is the theoretical framework that guided my study examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. The framework rests on Connell's (2005a) conceptual framework of masculinity theory, which is rooted in a social theory of gender, a way of understanding the relation between men's bodies and masculinity. Connell (2005a) rejected the account of a "true" masculinity that is exclusively biologically produced—a view of the body as a natural structure which produces gender difference through genetic encoding, hormonal dissimilarities and the different role of the sexes in reproduction. Bird (1996) also refuted the notion that masculinity is solely socially produced and described masculinity as an ongoing process where meanings are ascribed by and to individuals through social interaction. Connell (2005a) stated,

However we look at it, a compromise between biological determination and social determination will not do as the basis for an account of gender. Yet we cannot ignore either the radically cultural character of gender or the bodily presence. It seems that we need other ways of thinking about the matter. (p. 52)

Therefore, recognition is needed on the significant role of the biological aspects of gender play when bodies enter social spaces. The bodily sense of maleness and femaleness are crucial to the cultural interpretation of masculinity (gender).

This chapter is organized around some of the core principles of masculinity theory (Connell, 2005a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These include: (a) the multiple-masculinities approach, (b) the hierarchy of masculinities, (c) social practices production of masculinity hierarchies, (d) masculinity hierarchies differ across social settings, (e) masculinities are embodied, (f) females' role in masculinities construction, (g) resistance of hegemonic

masculinities, (h) the emotional expense of embodying certain masculinities, and (i) broader social forces influence on local masculinities' configurations.

For each of these masculinity theory principles, I will introduce and explain it generally, review literature that has integrated it into social science research, and explain its relevance for this study of boys' masculinities in adventure physical education.

Multiple-Masculinities Approach

Researchers have explained that multiple masculinities operate within any given social context (Anderson, 2009; Connell, 2005a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kehler, Davison, & Frank, 2005; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Swain, 2006) and that masculinity is not something a boy either has or does not have, nor is it something that increases and decreases.

A multiple-masculinities approach provides the foundation for analyzing masculinity and offers a framework for interpreting the interactions of men in culture with men, women, and children. However, a comprehensive theory of multiple masculinities should also include several key issues (Connell, 2005a; Imms, 2000; Swain, 2006). First, the multiple-masculinities theory should include the full range of masculinities that may exist because masculinities are fluid and dynamic (Imms, 2000; Swain, 2006). Second, the multiple-masculinities theory should regard individual males as having more than a singular masculinity. Third, the multiple-masculinities approach should acknowledge the mobility between masculinities at different times and places in response to unfixed stimuli (Imms, 2000). For example, academic (intellectual) masculinities can also be sporty (active) and less academic (manual) masculinities can also be supportive of nonhegemonic masculinities (Swain, 2006).

Recognizing multiple masculinities has not always been a common belief within modern gender ideology. The initial endeavor to construct a social science of masculinity focused on the

notion of the male sex role (Connell, 2005a). Its beginning goes back to late nineteenth-century arguments about sex difference, when resistance to women's liberation was strengthened by a scientific doctrine of inherent sex difference (Connell, 2005a). For example, women's exclusion from universities was justified by the assertion that the feminine mind was too fragile to handle the rigors of academia. It was believed that the academic life might negatively impact their ability to be virtuous wives and mothers. Resulting research examining gender differences found that sex differences, on most psychological traits (e.g., mental abilities, emotions, attitudes, personality traits, and interests), were either nonexistent or minute (Connell, 2005a). However, differences were prevalent in social settings such as unequal income, unequal responsibilities in child care, and differences in access to social power, which were often justified by the common belief in innate psychological differences (Connell, 2005a).

The multiple-masculinities approach has been the basis of important work with boys in schools over the past two decades (Kehler et al., 2005; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Swain, 2006). Kehler et al. (2005) proposed that recognizing multiple masculinities in school settings was an important factor in understanding how masculinities operate in educational settings, and the dangers of not doing so. They outlined the voices of young men who engaged in counter-hegemonic practices in schools, while suggesting that boys and men are complex categories. The authors shared the voices of boys with masculinities that were marginalized as a result of their lack of athletic interest or ability, small physicality, feminine laugh, walking and sitting the "wrong way", and because they refrained from talking about sexual exploits with girls.

Researchers have also used typologies to identify various masculinities operating in school settings. For example, Mac an Ghail (1994) mapped out a range of masculinities that an "entrepreneurial curriculum" made available to students in an age 11-18 co-educational

comprehensive school. The “macho lads” were hostile toward authority and found academics meaningless to real life. The “academic achievers” had a positive orientation toward the academic curriculum. The “new enterprisers” were involved in mini-enterprise schemes related to vocational fields. The “real Englishmen” considered themselves to be members of the culturally elite, rejected the school’s work ethic, and assumed that talent was naturally inscribed in their peer group.

Similarly, Connell (1989) identified the “cool guys,” “swots” and “wimps.” The cool guys were involved in sports, were known as troublemakers and challenged authority. The swots were enthusiastic students who thrived in academic settings and some participated in sports. The wimps were passive and not athletic. In the same way, Martino (1999) identified multiple masculinities that were enacted by adolescent boys in a catholic co-educational high school. These included the “cool boys,” “party animals,” “squids” and “poofers.” The cool boys played football, were popular among their classmates, and were loud and disruptive in class. The party animals played sports, but were also known for smoking marijuana and drinking at parties. The squids were high academic achievers and did not play sports. The poofers demonstrated feminine ways of speaking and associated with girls as friends.

Masculinity researchers have also identified multiple masculinities in sport settings (Anderson, 2005; Connell, 2005a; Kidd, 1990; Kimmel, 1990; Messner, 2005). For instance, while examining the historical, political, and socio-negative aspects of sport, Anderson (2009) introduced and clarified different forms of masculinity and how they functioned in the culture of team sports. Anderson identified orthodox masculinities as those that helped preserve patriarchy and the dominance of heterosexuality and inclusive masculinities as forms that rejected homophobia, sexism, stoicism, and compulsory heterosexuality. Anderson made clear that

inclusive and orthodox masculinities are configurations of gender practice both encompassing a variety of masculinities.

Pronger (2005) identified violent/orthodox and gay masculinities while pointing out the obvious associations between sports and masculinity and showed how some homosexual men were inclined to participate in individual, nonviolent sports (although he did not deny that many homosexual men engage in violent team sports). Boys who embodied “violent” or “orthodox” masculinities often participated in the most combative sports such as football, hockey, and boxing. Boys who embodied “gay” masculinities often took part in sports that were regarded as less masculine in which success was decided by a combination of skill and artistic expression found in sports such as figure skating, diving, and gymnastics.

Similarly, Whitson (1990) documented athletic (hegemonic) and scholarly and artistic (nonhegemonic) masculinities. Boys with athletic masculinities were encouraged to be aggressive and experienced their bodies in forceful space, occupying assertive, confident, and dominating ways, whereas boys with scholarly and artistic masculinities took up less space and pursued creative endeavors that were less physical.

While exploring the significance of sport in the lives of young South African boys, Bhana (2008) showed how boys asserted “White hegemonic” masculinities and “working-class” Black masculinities (p. 5). For example, middle-class White boys participated in sports such as rugby, cricket, hockey, swimming, judo and karate, whereas Black boys from working-class families played soccer on rough and ready soccer fields.

Light (2008) also identified diversity in masculinities that were formed through memberships in a Tokyo high school rugby club. Light identified hegemonic, culture-specific masculinities operating in the rugby club and class-influenced versions at the institutional level

of the school. The hegemonic masculinities exhibited themselves in ways that games were played and the training methods used to play. That is, stronger emphasis was given on the group over the individual, competitiveness, sense of within group surveillance, and the “war of attrition” in which the fitter, tougher, and more courageous win. Class-influenced masculinities were marked by game styles that focused on the intellectual aspects of game play and staying emotionally calm so that the players were able to think during games, as opposed to aggressive and violent approaches that relied on brute force.

Similar to sport settings, masculinity researchers have identified multiple masculinities operating in school physical education settings (Bramham, 2003; Griffin, 1985; Parker, 1996; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). For example, while investigating boys’ experiences in physical education, Bramham (2003) outlined hegemonic and subordinated masculinities in four inner-city schools’ physical education classes. Boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as hegemonic were described as competitive, tough, physically aggressive, misogynist, heterosexual, brave, and enthusiastic team players. Conversely, boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as subordinate were described as having little commitment to physical education, lacking game skills (for team sports), deploying a range of strategies to disengage, and enjoying activities such as trampolining and badminton. Although he offered characteristics that applied only to hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, Bramham (2003) did not deny boys’ mobility among masculinities and asserted that although categories do have a presence in boys’ lives they should not be treated as “impermeable boundaries or as over-determined and unchangeable responses” (p. 69).

Likewise, Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) identified marginalized masculinities operating in two middle school physical education settings that were dominated by competitive

team sports. These boys were described as having the “wrong” body shape (too fat or skinny), lacking coordination, and being slow, weak, less athletic, unfit, and subdued. Additionally, boys who embodied masculinities produced as marginalized in these settings were often observed making their bodies small, physically positioning themselves away from others, avoiding eye contact, and enacting various task avoidance strategies to avoid ridicule.

Other masculinity researchers have identified specific categories to describe various masculinities operating in physical education (Griffin, 1985; Parker, 1996). For example, Parker (1996) identified three broad categories or “pupil groups” (hard boys, conformists and victims) to structure his research findings. The “hard boys” upheld masculine ideals by displaying acts of violence and aggression towards their peers and possessed anti-school attitudes. The “conformists” made up the majority of the students and took part in the gender game without displaying excessive violence or aggression towards others. This group was also described as being unpredictable in whose side they would take between the hard boys and the “victims” during conflicts. The victims were not athletic, spent too much time with girls, and demonstrated effeminate behaviors. Also, the victims were the main receivers of the hard boys’ violence and aggression both in and out of physical education lessons.

Similarly, while exploring boys’ participation in middle school physical education team sports units, Griffin (1985) identified five participation styles. “Machos” were highly skilled, eager to participate in team sports, extremely active in games, and always played in high interaction positions. Machos were also described as being loud, treated as leaders by classmates, highly physical among each other and rude toward their peers. For example, the machos were observed pointing fingers and laughing at classmates who made mistakes during games. Aside from their physical size, skill in team sport and resentment towards skilled girls, the observed

behaviors of “junior machos” were similar to that of the machos. “Nice guys” were described as being enthusiastic game players and having intermediate to advanced skills, but differed from the machos and junior machos in their interactions with others. Nice guys, although sometimes as skilled as the machos and often more skilled than the junior machos were more apt to treat girls (and lesser skilled boys) as equivalent teammates by cheering for, passing to, and asking for (rather than demanding) passes from girls (and lesser skilled boys). Additionally, nice guys shared highly coveted positions with teammates, played secondary positions without arguing, and were not observed engaging in aggressive physical and verbal interactions characteristic of the machos and junior machos. “Invisible players” were described as being “competent bystanders” (Tousignant & Siedentop, 1983) by moving back and forth across the field as if they were part of the game while avoiding actual participation. These boys participated in ways that allowed them to dodge ridicule because if they did not actually participate, it was unlikely they would make mistakes and provide others with a motive to physically or verbally harass them. “Wimps” were described as being low-skilled in team sports, willing to sit out if there were too many players, were assigned or chose secondary positions in which they had little contact with the ball, wore different clothes (e.g., rock band t-shirts instead of football jerseys), and were often observed being harassed by machos, junior machos, and some girls. Also, wimps did not blend into the games like the “invisible players,” but instead looked detached (e.g., they talked to each other on the field, or stared at a plane passing overhead and missed a ball).

It is also important to recognize that boys can embody more than one form of masculinity at the same time. For example, a boy from skateboard culture may also enact academic characteristics that may not align with the masculinities most supported in that culture. Similarly, a dominant boy in a physical activity setting may enact characteristics such as compassion and

cooperation, which are not characteristics typically produced as dominant in this setting (e.g., like the machos described above). Further, boys who are subordinated in physical education may act out aggression toward other boys who embody masculinities that are produced as even less hegemonic than their own or ridicule a female classmate who does not conform to ideal feminine standards in order to feel less marginalized themselves.

The principle of the multiple-masculinities approach had significant implications for studying boys' masculinities in adventure physical education, as identifying the various masculinities that operated was a crucial first step in my study. Because of this principle, I entered the research setting looking for and fully expecting to find boys "doing boy" in multiple ways rather than limiting my search to boys who were either masculine or not masculine—this principle enlightened me that masculinity is not something a boy either has or does not have, nor is it something that increases or decreases. Identifying multiple masculinities was necessary before I moved forward and explored other principles of masculinity—for example, what does the hierarchy of masculinities look like in this adventure physical education setting? Without first recognizing various masculinities (ways of doing boy), it would have been nearly impossible to identify hierarchical configurations.

Hierarchy of Masculinities

In most social contexts, one form of masculinity usually attains prominence over others. According to Connell (2005a), "To recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination" (p. 37). In school settings, certain masculinities are ranked high whereas others are reduced. "Within any given field, there are those in positions of dominance and those who are subordinated" (Coles, 2009, p. 42).

Anderson (2005) stated, “Much of the study of masculinities centers on how men construct hierarchies that yield decreasing benefits the farther removed one is from the flagship version, something known as hegemonic masculinity” (p. 21). For example, from the perspective of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is often associated with femininity, and femininity is socially located inferior to masculinity (i.e., being a man is “better” than being a woman).

Bird (1996) described how emotional detachment, competition and the sexual objectification of women facilitated a hierarchy among men. Competitive, less emotional men who objectified women were elevated on the social hierarchy, whereas less competitive, expressive men who respected women were positioned lower.

Researchers have identified a hierarchy of masculinities in educational fields (Connell, 1989; Eliasson, Isaksson, & Laflamme, 2007; Frank, Kehler, Lovell, & Davison, 2003; Kehler, 2004; Kehler et al., 2005; Sherriff, 2007; Swain, 2006). While examining how school settings influenced the construction of masculinities at three coeducational junior high schools that were set apart on the basis of socioeconomic status (upper middle class, middle class, and working class), Swain (2006) found hierarchies of masculinities and outlined their main features. Hegemonic masculinities were positioned as the leading form and were based on the possessing the resources of physicality and athleticism. Complicit masculinities were positioned just under hegemonic and were characterized by boys who imitated and followed the hegemonic form. Next was personalized masculinities, which included being an academic achiever, being computer savvy, not subordinating others, enjoying sports and games (but not excelling), and not desiring to imitate the hegemonic forms. The lowest forms were subordinated masculinities which were described as including boys who were less athletic, did not try, had a posh voice, played different games (nonteam sports), were not tough, and were regarded as babyish or immature.

While working with high-school boys, Kehler et al. (2005) illustrated that boys with marginalized masculinities were positioned low on the social hierarchy. Being small, less athletic, sitting, walking or carrying one's books the wrong way, eating salad instead of steak, and talking about sexuality and emotions demonstrated a counter-hegemonic masculinity, which situated these boys against the greater school ethos that supported hegemonic masculinities.

Eliasson et al. (2007) identified the masculinities hierarchy among boys aged 14-15. "Tough" boys were positioned high on the hierarchy, while both "swots" and "rowdy" boys were positioned lower on the social hierarchy. Tough boys played sports, rowdy boys were either too verbally abusive or abusive in the wrong way, and swots were high academic achievers.

Sherriff (2007) showed an obvious hierarchy of peer groups recognized in an educational setting. The "popular," "hard" and "sporty" boys (especially footballers) were elevated to the tops of masculinity hierarchies, whereas the boys regarded as "nonmasculine" or "feminine" were consequently ascribed a subordinate status.

Researchers have also demonstrated masculinity hierarchies in sports settings (Anderson, 2005; Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Whitson, 1990). For example, Whitson (1990) showed how boys who participated in confrontational team games such as basketball, football, and hockey were located above boys who participated in individual sports such as racquet sports, swimming, running, and outdoor pursuits (e.g., biking, hiking, kayaking).

Masculinity researchers have also identified a hierarchy of masculinities in the field of physical education. For example, Parker (1996) utilized the notion of hegemonic masculinity to examine the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in physical education. He found that the "hard boys" were positioned on the top, the "victims" at the bottom while the "conformists" hovered in the middle of the hierarchy of masculinities.

Griffin (1985) found a similar masculinity hierarchy with boys during sport-based units in physical education. Boys identified as “wimps” or “invisible players” who did not exemplify the typical masculine characteristics of toughness, aggressiveness, athleticism, competitiveness, or strength were positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, whereas the “machos” and “junior machos” who embodied the characteristics mentioned above, were unmistakably positioned at the top. The “nice guys,” although highly skilled in sports, were positioned lower on the hierarchy than the “machos” and “junior machos.” Tischler and McCaughy (2011) showed that boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as marginalized in two sport-dominated physical education settings were positioned at the bottom of masculinity hierarchies and boys who embodied masculinities produced as hegemonic were positioned at the top. The hierarchies in both settings resulted from the sport-dominated content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures.

Recognizing that masculinities are hierarchically arranged had implications for examining masculinities in adventure physical education. Not only was it important for me to recognize that multiple masculinities operated in adventure physical education, but it was equally as important for me to examine the hierarchically configurations of masculinities. Because of this principle, I intentionally looked for masculinities that were produced as dominant and those that were constructed as marginalized in this social space and examine the ways in which masculinities were positioned on social hierarchies. Implementing this principle of masculinity theory allowed me to move forward and examine the role social practices played in the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in this adventure physical education setting.

Social Practices Produce Masculinity Hierarchies

Masculinities are interpreted and constructed in social fields (e.g., masculinities are created on-site, not off site). Before being seen as oppressed or privileged, masculinities first have to be made oppressed or privileged. Social practices produce masculinities as well as their hierarchical ordering. Hierarchical configurations are shaped by the events in social settings, which leads to systems of power in which individuals located at the top of the hierarchy are privileged and those located at or near the bottom are marginalized.

Connell (2005a) provided an outstanding discussion of the various and often opposing forms of masculinities in Western cultures, particularly with respect to making sense of the operation of hegemony as it relates to masculinity. Connell (2005a) stated, “A relational approach makes it easier to recognize the hard compulsions under which gender configurations are formed, the bitterness as well as the pleasure in gendered experience” (p. 76). Connell considered the practices and interactions that construct the major patterns of masculinity in the present Western gender order. These patterns include: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized masculinities. According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the pattern of gendered practice which secures the dominant position of men and the secondary location of women. However, this is not to say that bearers of hegemonic masculinities are always the most powerful individuals, as they could be film actors or fantasy characters that are distant from the hegemonic pattern in their private lives. Subordination relates to cultural dominance in the society as a whole. Within the overall structure, there are particular gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men. Specifically, the most prevalent case is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men, as gayness is often associated with femininity (Connell, 2005a). Therefore, many heterosexual

men and boys are also subordinated, as their patterns of masculinities are considered less legitimate. Complicity has some connection with the hegemonic mission, but it does not embody the hegemonic patterns of masculinity. For example, these men benefit from patriarchy, but also respect women. They are also not violent towards women and they contribute to the housework.

To understand the range of processes that are involved in the ways that masculinities are constructed, many researchers have identified how social practices contributed to the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in school settings (Davison, 2004; Paulsen, 1999; Smith, 2007; Swain, 2005, 2006). Swain (2006) stated,

Schools are located in and shaped by specific sociocultural, politico-economic, and historical conditions: individual personnel, rules, routines, and expectations, and the use of resources and space will have a profound impact on the way young boys (and girls) experience their lives at school. Indeed, each school can be said to have its own gender regime that creates different options and opportunities to perform different types of masculinity at each school. (p. 333)

While exploring the construction of masculinities among ten and eleven year-old boys in three schools, Swain (2006) found that the relations among masculinities had much to do with the social practices in these educational fields. The hierarchical ordering of masculinities at each school was a direct outcome of the social mores embedded in these schools, not accidental. It should be noted that Swain did not attempt to use categories as simplistic and restrictive tools, but instead used them to show the range of masculinities, which illuminated the relations among masculinities. Athleticism and physicality were the most esteemed resources across all three schools, which positioned certain masculinities as the leading forms. Therefore, boys who were “top sportsmen” (i.e., fast, skillful, and strong) were elevated to the top of the social hierarchy based on the importance that was attached to the body and physicality. Complicit masculinities were positioned below hegemonic forms, as boys practicing complicit masculinities were good at sports, but not good enough. Because athleticism and physicality were the most treasured

resources, these boys lacked a sufficient number of resources to be accepted into the hegemonic forms, so they were left to follow and imitate the idealized forms. Subordinate masculinities were positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy as the resources available to these boys did not align with the physicality and athleticism that were valued at these schools. These boys were often subordinated for connecting too closely with the formal school regime (i.e., working too hard, being too compliant or over-polite, and speaking formally). They were also seen as having deviant physical appearances, and using body language that was perceived as effeminate. Based on the complexities in each setting, Swain (2006) offered “personalized masculinities” as another form in which boys did not attempt to engage with or challenge the dominant masculinities, nor were they subordinated. Although many of these boys enjoyed sports and games, they found personalized ways of “doing boy” that were often made possible by the social practices at their schools. For example, adventure playgrounds, access to playing in the woods, lunchtime clubs and computer rooms created space for boys to “do boy” in tailored ways without being picked on by their peers. In fact, personalized masculinities coexisted alongside hegemonic forms. Swain (2006) noted that although the nonopposition of personalized masculinities could be interpreted as compliance to the hegemonic forms, it was accepted in this setting and boys who embodied personalized masculinities appeared to have high levels of social security. Because of their social practices (i.e., extracurricular/break-time offerings) these boys were regarded as different, but not necessarily inferior.

While exploring the curricular conditions that contributed to the production of dominant and subordinate masculinities, Mac an Ghail (1994) discussed curriculum stratification as being of primary importance in the hierarchical ordering of masculinities at a school that changed to an “entrepreneurial curriculum” (i.e., technical training model). This new stratification led to high

(academic achievers/middle class) and low-status (less academic/machos/working class) vocational spheres, positioning boys within fixed school subject identities. For example, the high-academic achievers were one of the most well-liked male student groups among the male teachers and received differential treatment which played a major role in shaping middle-class masculinities with an emphasis on academic individualism, intensified peer competition, sporting excellence, and personal ambition and careerism. Conversely, courses for the low-academic students (e.g., the machos) were created to provide these boys with skills that were transferable to their place in the labor market. The high-achieving students had a number of material and social advantages including access to specialist classrooms, were taught by the most experienced teachers, and were afforded the first choice of elective courses. Conversely, the low-academic achievers' (machos) masculinities were constructed through their conflict with administrative authority, as the disciplinary system operated in more blatant modes of interaction with the "nonacademic" students. For example, banning certain clothes, footwear and hairstyles, and high-level surveillance of the students' bodies which included constant teacher demands such as, "look at me when I'm talking to you," "sit up straight," and "walk properly." This group was seen by classmates and teachers as the most visible "anti-school male culture." The authority system, disciplinary codes, curriculum and assessment stratifications, and subject distribution functioned to define a range of hierarchically arranged masculinities.

Researchers have also painted sport as a field in which social practices influenced the hierarchy of masculinities (Anderson 2005, 2009). While examining sport's resistance to the advancement of women and gay men, Anderson (2009) described sport as a "self-reinforcing system" with few internal contradictions by discussing the cultural and structural variables that unite to make it resistant to change. Anderson talked about how sport was born out of the turn of

the 20th century with the intent of teaching boys how to be good industrial workers, soldiers, Christians, and consumers who reject all but a narrow form of masculinity. Because of the ethos in most sport settings, boys who excelled at sport were elevated to the top of the hierarchy of masculinities. Sedgwick (1990) said,

Sport, it would seem, has served well the principle for which it was designed. It has created a social space in which boys are still taught to value and perform a violent, stoic and risky form of masculinity: one based in anti-femininity, patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia. (p. 30)

Homophobia, stoicism, compulsory heterosexuality, and sexism are esteemed gendered behaviors in the field of sport (Anderson, 2005). As a result of social practices that support and require these behaviors, men who engage in orthodox masculinities remain at the top of the rungs of masculinity hierarchies in sporting fields, whereas less athletic, gay, or effeminate men have been subjugated to lower rungs (Anderson, 2009; Messner, 2002). For example, because in sport settings, masculinity hierarchies are mainly structured around physicality and athleticism, boys who demonstrate strength, or who score the most touchdowns, goals, or baskets are positioned at the top of the hierarchy. In order to maintain this high rank, boys must also display nongay, nonfeminine, and nonemotional behaviors. Conversely, boys who are weaker, more feminine, and do not score goals are often viewed as homosexuals (whether they are or not) and are relegated to the bottom rungs of the masculinities hierarchy.

Hickey (2008) illustrated that sport continues to have a reputation in the construction and regulation of hegemonic masculinities in which boys are taught how to “get back up after being knocked down,” “to express themselves physically,” “to impose themselves forcefully” and “to mask pain” (p. 148). Using narratives, Hickey focused on the problematic reproduction of hyper-masculinities when sport functioned to “advance the moral and physical maturity” of boys by nurturing masculine attributes and creating “real” men. For example, a group of 7- and 8-year

olds regularly drew on hyper-masculine sporting discourses to distinguish between tough/masculine and weak/feminine. They used these distinctions to taunt each other and to differentiate insiders and outsiders. Those who played sports were privileged with masculine character attributes (i.e., strongest, hardest, fastest), whereas those who did not were often referred to as “nerds,” “geeks,” and “pansies”, and were positioned as inferior. These narratives strengthened the inclination for members of male sporting groups to engage in bullying, shaming, violating, excluding, and constructing others as inferior.

Similarly, Pringle (2008) examined the influence of sport in the construction of masculinity hierarchies in schools where rugby was known as a “man’s sport” with the capability of turning boys into certain types of men. Sexist views of rugby legitimated its high profile and its place of privilege in schools. As a result, sporting practices privileged “sporty boys” and produced other ways of performing masculinities as inferior. Boys who were willing and able to display strength, pain tolerance, aggression, boldness, heterosexuality, and cool toughness were exalted to the top of the social hierarchy, as these characteristics demarcated manly character.

Anderson (2005) talked about sport as a field providing an ideal venue for the establishment of a hierarchical configuration that positioned boys who follow Brannon’s (1976) rules of “no sissy stuff,” “be a big wheel,” “be a sturdy oak”, and “give ‘em hell” as “top dogs” on the social hierarchy. Athletes who showed fear or weakness and were not able to hold a “stone-cold game day face,” were regarded as having less worth (than their hegemonic teammates) within masculine peer cultures, and were reduced to lower positions on the hierarchy.

Similarly, while studying boys’ activity preferences at two schools with strong reputations for producing high-achieving male contact sports teams, Gard and Meyenn (2000)

outlined a hierarchical ordering of masculinities. Tolerating pain was an important part of becoming a man and demonstrating one's willingness to do so allow boys to be positioned as a "top dog" within their male peer group. Conversely, students who were either unwilling or unable to engage in these aggressive sporting practices were demoted on the hierarchy.

Researchers have also shown how social practices within the field of physical education produced a hierarchical ordering of masculinities. For example, Parker (1996) showed how value structures and academic cultures within schools influenced the hierarchical peer group position of certain boys. The "hard boys" regularly displayed acts of violence and aggression toward their peers in physical education within sporting and nonsporting situations, which elevated their social positioning. For example, students had freedom prior to the start of lessons (e.g., lack of supervision), freedom in the locker rooms, spacious environments where activities took place, and aggressive games in which to participate, which allowed the hard boys to easily dominate others. In the same way, the sexual politics at both schools permitted the hard boys to intimidate and dominate their "victims" by questioning sexual identities and ridiculing certain individuals for lacking sporting skills, which was often associated with homosexuality. Therefore, the hard boys were positioned at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities while the high academic achievement of the victims fulfilled a subordinate position. Parker (1996) said,

...the school as an institution is characterized at any particular time by a gender regime. This may be defined as the pattern of practices that constructs various kinds of masculinity...among staff and students [and] orders them in terms of prestige and power. (p. 18)

Likewise, Griffin (1985) discussed several contextual social factors as potential contributors to the hierarchical configuration of masculinities she identified while studying boys' participation styles in a middle school physical education team sports unit. Participation styles, listed in hierarchical order, included the machos, junior machos, nice guys, invisible players, and

wimps. First, teachers often described behaviors that were consistent with “machos” and “junior machos” as if these were “natural” boy behaviors, which impacted the social hierarchy in physical education. For example, speaking of the machos, one teacher said, “I don’t think you’re ever going to change it [behavior of aggressive boys]. It’s been like that since day one” (p. 107). Another teacher said, “If you can’t cut it physically, you’re at the bottom of the heap” (p. 107). Additionally, when asked about their perceptions of boys who were picked on, two teachers blamed a student (“wimp”) who was often bullied by “machos” and said, “Kids hit on him, but he deserves it” (p. 107). Instead of talking about how they [teachers] influenced the relations among boys, they spoke as if these behaviors were unchangeable. Second, the relationships each boy had with his teacher and classmates in physical education likely shaped his social positioning. For instance, being ignored, blamed, disciplined, ridiculed, looked up to, or praised reinforced different participation styles and social positioning. Finally, pedagogical practices such as class organization, grouping strategies, and teaching styles also affected relations among boys. “How a teacher structures a class and the kind of example a teacher sets for students can either encourage or discourage fair participation and respectful interactions among students” (Griffin, 1985, p. 108). The hierarchical ordering placed machos at the top of the heap and wimps at the bottom.

Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) also described ways that the social practices in two sport-dominated physical education settings produced certain masculinity hierarchies. The content (sport only), pedagogies (emphasized elite performance and competition), teacher-student relationships (positive interactions with athletic boys, negative interactions with less athletic boys), and peer cultures (lower-skilled boys treated poorly) functioned to position

athletic masculinities at the top of the hierarchy and less athletic (in a traditional team sports sense) masculinities at the bottom.

Identifying the role social practices played in producing masculinity hierarchies had significant implications for examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. After identifying the various masculinities produced and their hierarchical ordering, I examined how the social practices and events in adventure physical education produced the hierarchical orderings. I entered the field knowing that the hierarchical ordering of masculinities was a result of the social practices occurring in adventure physical education, which influenced me to closely examine the impact of various social practices in this setting. Such information may enrich and diversify our assumptions about the realities of how hierarchies of masculinities are constructed on site rather than assuming the social ordering is natural or unaffected by the social setting. For example, it may inspire teachers to develop a more critical perspective about boys' participation in physical education and move away from blaming certain boys for being lazy and unmotivated and closer to reflecting on their pedagogical practices.

Masculinities Attain Hegemonic Status

The hierarchical ordering of masculinities emerges as naturalized and become taken-for-granted or assumed ways that boys ought to be boys (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These assumptions are rooted in biology as the natural dispositions of boys, and often go unquestioned. Binaries are then created positioning hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities in opposition of one another. Hegemonic masculinities are seen as normal whereas nonhegemonic masculinities are seen as deviant.

Rarely does anyone (other than the social scientist) seriously question the expectations associated with gender identity or gender norms. Instead, it is assumed that "boys will be boys" and will just naturally do "boy things." By the same token, "men will be men" and will continue to do "men things." Doing men things or "doing masculinity" is simply the

commonplace activity of men's daily lives, recreated over and again, maintaining the norms of social behavior. (Bird, 1996, p. 125)

Based on the "essential natures" of women and men, a great deal of research has discussed social mechanisms that produce gender differences, allowing men to maintain their dominance over women and "other" men (Bird, 1996; Messerschmidt, 2009; Risman, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 1987). "Doing gender furnishes the interactional scaffolding of social structure, along with a built-in mechanism of social control" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147). While advancing a new understanding of gender as a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment in everyday actions, West and Zimmerman (1987) presented several mechanisms that enabled essentialist notions of gender. For one, they found that certain structural arrangements between work and family served to manufacture some capacities (e.g., being a mother) that were previously associated with biology. Even when employed outside of the home, wives did the bulk of the housework and childcare, which was often perceived as a fair system. Next, biological differences were supported by the division of labor into women's and men's work. For example, many jobs are gender marked using special qualifiers such as *female physician* and *male nurse*. *Woman physician* is used as a double-edged sword, one to discredit a woman's participation in an important medical field, and second to question her dedication to being a mother and wife. Consequently, boys learn how to engage with their social and physical environments by using physical strength (i.e., endurance, power, strength), whereas young girls learn to value their appearance (i.e., figure, hair, clothes) and how to manage themselves as "ornamental objects." Gender is an ongoing activity entrenched in day-to-day interaction, not merely a product of a natural order. According to West and Zimmerman (1987),

Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society. (p. 126)

Researchers have defined schools as fields of identity formation in which social practices such as policies, curriculum, pedagogical practices, and assessment strategies are often based on “natural” and “static” notions of gender. For instance, Jabal and Riviere (2007) examined how three high school students negotiated the context-specific conditions, discourses and practices that made school an important site of identity formation. Students’ “border-crossing” identities challenged the taken-for-granted nature of gender categories, and they reflected their identities through dramatizing poetry in which they did not perform static or natural (biological) versions of themselves. For example, one student struggled with being identified as black and was acutely aware of the history that his Blackness carried (i.e., dangerous, fearsome, exotic). Another student battled with the differential expectations of being female (i.e., docile, passive, maternal).

Similar work has been conducted within the field of physical education addressing and challenging naturalistic views of gender (Kirk, 2002; Oliver, Hamzeh, & McCaughtry, 2009; Penney & Evans, 2002; Vertinsky, 1992). “Perceived physical differences and abilities between boys and girls, especially in adolescence, have traditionally formed the bedrock upon which school physical education programs are constructed” (Vertinsky, 1992, p. 373.) Boys’ physical education was designed to promote the development of force, skill, and competence to turn boys into productive citizens and soldiers. Conversely, girls’ physical education cultivated cooperation, restricted their space, reduced their speed and constrained their bodies. Such a system taught girls to underestimate their physical abilities and to view their bodies as reproductive machines.

Basically, certain masculinities are dominant for a reason—not by virtue of the fact that boys are boys, girls are girls, or because they are certain types of girls and boys. “What are so frequently produced and reproduced are the dominant and subordinate statuses of the sex

categories” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 144). Particular values and interests are manifested in the policies and practices of social fields which lead to the hierarchical configurations of masculinities. Therefore, when studying boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education, I examined the structural arrangements and how gender differences were responded to in this setting—I did not regard the hierarchical ordering of masculinities as a naturally occurring phenomenon. For example, did Andy allow girls to sit out because he regarded them as being less active than boys? Did Andy expect all boys to be competitive? Did he frame certain activities as being more appropriate for a particular gender?

Masculinity Hierarchies Differ Across Social Settings

Characteristics that achieve dominant status in one social environment may not dominate in different spaces. For example, the characteristics that often become dominant in physical activity settings (e.g., strength, speed, muscularity, fitness, athleticism) may not dominate in literary or theater environments where creativity, self-expression, and emotion are highly regarded characteristics. These characteristics are also evident in similar social contexts, for example, in different theater environments. “Not only are masculinities enacted differently across cultures, they are also performed differently within groups of the same culture, and by individuals” (Kehler et al., 2005). “Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). For instance, within the offices of a national corporation, hegemonic masculinity may be exemplified by lean, fit, young, assertive businessmen dressed in stylish suits. On the contrary, within a working-class drinking establishment, hegemonic masculinities may be demonstrated by disheveled middle-aged men with beer bellies who are able to consume huge amounts of alcohol (Coles, 2009).

While examining the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the U.S. Navy, Barrett (1996) differentiated among masculinity hierarchies within three different communities within the U.S. Navy: aviation, surface warfare, and the supply corps. Aviation and surface warfare were categorized as “combat specialties” and the supply corps as a “support community.” Although all communities in the Navy perpetuated an image of masculinity that involved courage, toughness, unemotional logic, aggressiveness, and a rugged heterosexuality, there were also different masculinity hierarchies within and among the various groups. For example, aviation was the specialty that evoked the highest status among naval officers, as these pilots were nearest to embodying hegemonic masculinities and also received the highest specialty pay. Autonomy and risk taking were characteristics most highly esteemed in the aviator community since these men engaged in combat. Even within this community, jet fighter pilots were ranked the highest based on risk taking and gender (male-dominated position). Naval officers who operated surface ships (i.e., destroyers, aircraft carriers) made up the largest community in the U.S. navy, and perseverance and endurance were the most highly regarded masculine characteristics within their community because they dealt with bleak and harsh physical conditions aboard ships. Supply officers occupied the lowest rank in the Navy as they had fewer opportunities to demonstrate courage, autonomy, and perseverance. Technical rationality and responsibility were elevated to the top of the hierarchy within this group since the job of a supply officer entailed material tracking, fiscal operations, inventory inspections, and administrative planning. Based on the standards of the distinctive communities, these men drew upon different strands of hegemonic masculinity to safeguard their masculine identity.

Similar work was done looking at how masculinity hierarchies differ across social settings in educational fields (Davison, 2004; Kehler, 2007; Kehler et al., 2005; Swain, 2006).

“Masculinities suffuse school regimes and have established diversity not just between settings but also within settings, where masculinities are produced through performances that draw on the different cultural resources that are available in each setting” (Swain, 2006, p. 331). While investigating the lives of young men in high school, Kehler et al. (2005) discussed how the boys they studied were able to measure the social situation which led them to negotiate and manage their masculinities differently across social settings, as the masculinity hierarchies were different in different places within the school. Davison (2004) reflected on how as a student he found the hyper-masculine setting of the automotive shop floor as an uncomfortable place. Instead, he took art and drama classes and described these spaces in school as inclusive of creativity which produced a hierarchical ordering of masculinities that differed from auto-shop class; masculinities produced as hegemonic in auto-shop were not positioned at the top of the hierarchy in art and drama classes.

Researchers have similarly identified how masculinity hierarchies differ across social settings within fields of sport and physical education (Atencio & Wright, 2009; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Connell, 1990; Gard, 2001, 2003, 2008; Humberstone, 1990, 1995). In the field of sport, while presenting the case study of a champion iron man, Connell (1990) pointed out how masculinity hierarchies differed within the athlete’s peer group than it did in the iron man field. For example, within the elite sporting group, characteristics related to physicality (i.e., ideal performance and body shape) were elevated to hegemonic status. Although some of the hegemonic characteristics were shared within both groups (e.g., homophobia, dominant women), some characteristics of hegemonic masculinity differed. These differences prevented the iron man from demonstrating behaviors that were produced as dominant within his peer group (which

were not the same as in the iron man community) such as rowdiness, drunk driving, fighting, and defending his own status.

Characteristics produced as dominant in one physical education setting may differ from that of other physical education settings. For instance, physical education programs that include content such as adventure, dance, functional fitness, and teach sport inclusively (i.e., Sport Education Model) may institute social practices that deflate hegemonic masculinities and make room for other masculinities (and femininities). Additionally, physical education teachers who employed pedagogical practices emphasizing learning and cooperation over elite performance and competition produced different hierarchical arrangements. In other words, the top of the hierarchy in less traditional physical education settings included masculinities that were often produced as nonhegemonic in sport-based physical education settings.

Humberstone (1990, 1995) compared the masculinity hierarchies in outdoor education to that of physical education settings. In the context of outdoor education boys' behaviors such as showing respect for girls, boys and girls learning and working together in small groups, boys recognizing girls' physical capabilities, boys showing emotion and fear, and not expecting boys to be stronger than girls were ranked high on the masculinities hierarchy. Conversely, in most physical education settings, behaviors such as including and respecting girls, working with girls, showing emotion and fear, and being physically weaker or less skilled than girls were produced as marginalized. Humberstone (1990) stated, "Behaviors demonstrating collaboration, responsibility, and group support were valued and encouraged rather than those expressing aggressive, competitive individualism" (p. 210).

This principle influenced me to examine if masculinity hierarchies differed in various sections of adventure physical education and in other physical activity contexts such as sport-

dominated physical education. During interviews, I asked students to talk about and compare adventure physical education and sport-dominated physical education. It would have been limiting to enter the research setting expecting or assuming that masculinity hierarchies in all sections of adventure education were similar; instead I was open to observing the similarities as well as the differences.

Masculinities are Embodied

Our being is profoundly shaped by our bodies and this embodiment plays a chief role in boys' experiences in many social contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Sparkes, 2004). Jackson (1990) supported this notion when he stated,

Even though my body seems the most private and hidden part of me, I carry my life history on my body, almost like the way the age rings of a sawn tree trunk reveal the process through time. My personal history of social practices and relationships is physically embodied in the customary ways I hold my body, imagine its size and shape, and in its daily movements and interactions. (p. 48)

Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Connell (1987) concurred that our sense of self is securely rooted in our experiences of embodiment and is essential to the reproduction of gender relations. Bodies symbolize and perform particular masculinities, and, for adolescent boys, proficient bodily performance becomes a key gauge in whether or not they are performing boy "right" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Several themes recur in this research showing that to boys, the size and shape of the body are as important as how it is used (e.g., in one's gait, speech, gestures, demeanor, agility, speed, sexual practices) and how boys are persuaded to experience their bodies in forceful, space-occupying, and dominant ways. Boys have expressed a desire to physically perform at a level that allows them to participate and be included with peers (Birbeck & Drummond, 2006). At young ages, boys begin to reflect upon and measure their own bodies with others as well as the images that surround them. This reflection was shown in a study by Birbeck and Drummond (2006) who examined the constructions of body image among boys

between the ages of five and six as, “this is the time when children try to make sense of their body and the bodies of other people” (p. 239). The authors proposed that there is a need to focus on young boys because early development of bodily knowledge may greatly impact children as they grow to be adolescents and adults. According to Birbeck and Drummond (2006), “The earlier we begin to understand the meanings and values that young boys place on their bodies and notions of masculinities the more comprehensive our understanding of boys’ development will be” (p. 240). The boys in their research described larger bodies being strongly linked with physical performance such as running faster, swimming better, and playing football better. These findings are similar to that of Feldman, Feldman, and Goodman (1988) who established that functionality and physical performance was vital to boys. These boys used hegemonic masculine signifiers such as being tall, big and strong to describe bodily importance.

Researchers have identified how masculinities are embodied in the field of education (Davison, 2004; Kehily, 2001; Kehler et al., 2005; Paulsen, 1999). Similar to the work referred to above, boys in Kehily’s (2001) study emphasized the significance of the physicality of the body. Kehily described how themes of embodiment, physicality, and performance played a role in how students attributed meanings to issues of sex and gender. These boys reported that heterosexual relations were regarded as ways of performing particular masculinities that could lead to the attainment of high social status. Kehily (2001) stated, “the physical sense of maleness is constantly recuperated as ‘doing’ heterosexuality” (p. 173). Being strong and big was seen as ways of achieving high-ranking status in the male peer group. Additionally, through engagements with heterosexual sex talk, masturbation and pornography, boys performed a type of heterosexuality that was connected to hegemonic masculinities.

While examining the ways some high school boys resisted heteronormative masculinities through conversations and physical manifestations, Kehler et al. (2005) drew attention to the bodily practices and the communication of masculinity among boys. Through the words of the participants, this article demonstrated how boys frequently assessed how their embodiment was positioned in relation to hegemonic masculinities. For example, speaking (e.g., heterosexual sex talk); the way books were held (e.g., holding them like a girl); sitting, standing, and laughing (e.g., feminine manner); eating (e.g., steak versus salad); and performance in gym class (e.g., skillful versus unskillful) were some of the ways that the boys described their bodies were implicated in practices of masculinities; through bodily expressions, masculine privilege could be conferred or denied. These boys demonstrated a refined attentiveness of how particular masculine embodiments were “saturated” with social standing.

Davison (2004) provided an autobiographical account of critical moments of masculinities and bodies that occurred when he attended junior high school. Davison described the adolescent years as a time in which gendered expectations were extremely important to boys. In school, he expressed his understanding of gender by wearing gothic style clothes and grew his hair, bangs and fingernails long. Other forms of his embodiment were less intentional such as having a slim, less muscular body. As a result of his masculine embodiment, he was often called “fag” and physically abused by his peers. As someone who was marginalized due to his dress, gendered performances and less athletic body, Davison (2004) showed that bodies do matter in schooling. Corrigan stated, “They/we [bodies] are the subjects who are taught, disciplined, measured, evaluated, examined, passed (or not), assessed, graded, hurt, harmed, twisted, reworked, applauded, praised, encouraged, enforced, coerced, condensed...” (1991, p. 210).

Sport is another field where the embodiment of masculinities has been explored and in which the importance of the body has been recognized (Anderson, 2005; Drummond, 2001; Fitzclarence, 2004; Whitson, 1990). Sport is empowering for many boys because it teaches them how to use their bodies to produce effects and how to attain power through practiced blends of force and skill (Whitson, 1990).

For example, Fitzclarence (2004) explored themes that shaped understandings about the body through a case study of an Australian-rules football player. Fitzclarence described the body using the concept of an “action system” located within the boundaries of a layered form of society. Using Giddens’ (1991) work, she discussed four aspects of the body that have particular importance to the concepts of self and self-identity, and specifically related each bodily aspect to the field of sport. These included: (a) bodily appearance, which includes dress and adornment that helps to identify preferences and group memberships (e.g., trying to look like a certain type of athlete by wearing shoes with a particular logo); (b) demeanor, which establishes how appearances are used in daily activities (e.g., for young sports people, learning to move and talk like high-ranking athletes); (c) sensuality, which describes dealing with pain and pleasure (e.g., managing feelings such as fear, shame, anxiety, joy, and excitement within the context of sport); and (d) regimes, which refers to practices of dealing with rules, regulations, and rituals within particular fields (e.g., mastery of the principles of competition and a wide range of skills to be successful in competition). These bodily elements are dynamically incorporated into ways of performing boy.

While identifying the ways in which boys perceived their bodies within the context of their ability in sport, Drummond (2001) identified major themes that emerged from interviews with boys in regards to their bodies which all related to size and how size was implicated in their

bodily performance of masculinity. For example, “being big” equated to the boys’ personal and cultural understandings of masculinity and was perceived as a signifier of masculinity. Drummond (2001) stated, “The young males tend to make a link between strength, muscularity and masculinity as a taken-for-granted triplex” (p. 58).

Concurring with the themes discussed above, the literature also points to the ways masculinities are embodied within the field of physical education. Azzarito (2009b) suggested that it is important that we identify the complex ways identity categories (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, size, and ability) shape students’ experiences of their bodies in physical education contexts. Azzarito (2009b) stated, “Because young people’s sense of self is linked to their physicality development, physical education practices play a crucial role in girls’ and boys’ constitution of themselves” (p. 172). Therefore, the body matters a great deal to boys, as their behaviors, actions, shape, size, and muscularity are means of performing masculinities accurately. Likewise, Paechter (2003) talked about how performing certain behaviors such as forceful actions, aggression, athleticism, taking up space were ways in which boys used their bodies to become real boys.

Azzarito and Solmon (2006) examined how high school students associated themselves with images of bodies taken from fitness and sports magazines and how their meanings about their bodies were implicated in their participation in physical education. Students’ body narratives reflected notions of the comfortable body in which students held positive bodily self-concepts and viewed physical education as a means to maintain their physicality and the bad bodies in which students expressed bodily dissatisfaction and viewed physical education practices as necessary to achieve the ideal gendered body (i.e., slender female and muscular male). Boys tended to participate in sports and weight training activities that were believed to

help them become more muscular and bigger. For example, although one boy enjoyed cardiovascular exercise (i.e., treadmill), he viewed himself as not big enough and therefore engaged in weight lifting.

Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) described the embodied oppression of boys who performed marginalized masculinities in two sport-dominated physical education settings. Their guarded bodies and behaviors stood in stark contrast to the confident bodies and behaviors of boys with masculinities produced as dominant. Their bodies told a story of discontentment toward spaces where they felt awkward and embarrassed. For instance, they wore their oppression by making their bodies small by crossing their arms and legs, tightly wrapping their arms around their legs while cradling their heads in their knees when sitting, placing their hands in their pockets, looking away from others, positioning their bodies away from others, and rarely smiling. When asked about his embodied behaviors, one boy explained, “I sit like that because I’m scared and not glad about gym. Sitting like that means I’m uncomfortable and don’t want to be in there. It helps me feel safer and the other kids don’t notice me as much.”

The embodiment of masculinities had significant implications for examining boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education. Ultimately, when I observed, it was ‘bodies’ that I studied. Observing students’ bodies revealed multiple and diverse ways in which bodies were experienced in the context of adventure physical education. I examined how bodies were used/not used, complied/resisted, and expressed feelings through body language. These bodily narratives allowed me to incorporate my observations into future conversations and interview guides in order to ask the students to confirm, deny, refute, or explain—all of which helped me to understand the bigger picture of how masculinities functioned in adventure physical education

and how embodiment differed in other physical activity settings such as sport-dominated physical education.

Masculinities Change Over Time

Hegemonic masculinities, although they appear rigidly structured, are open to challenge (Coles, 2009). Dominant patterns of masculinities change over time in response to shifting social norms, generational differences in gender attitudes and practices, different cultural dynamics, and resistance by nonhegemonic masculinities (Connell & Wood, 2005). In particular, dominant patterns of masculinities are open to challenge from women's refusal to accept patriarchy and resistance of men who embody nonhegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Moreover, increasing culturally visibility of gay masculinities in Western societies has made it possible for heterosexual men to appropriate elements of gay masculinities and creates new fusions of gender practice (Anderson, 2005; Demetriou, 2001). According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), "Research has very fully confirmed the idea of the historical construction and reconstruction of hegemonic masculinities. Both at a local and a broad societal level, the situations in which masculinities were formed change over time" (p. 846).

Connell and Wood (2005) discussed how the economic, political, and cultural shifts that have been marked as globalization have impacted managerial masculinities. The expansion of global markets, the electronic communication technologies, the reduction of tariff and other obstacles to the trading of resources and the increasing importance of multinational companies and worldwide investment markets are real forces that have emerged as channels for reconstructing masculinities. Collectively, the interviewees in this study offered several ways in which new managerial masculinities strayed from the old (i.e., earlier access to power, MBA programs mixed students of different ethnicities, endorsement of gender equity, increased

acceptance on homosexuality, and working together to reach goals). For example, in a British-based newspaper business, cooperation and teamwork were emphasized, and little evidence of “old-style patriarchal” masculinities was found. This points to a “new-frontier imagery” associated with globalization (Connell & Wood, 2005, p. 349).

On a smaller scale, Irvine and Klocke (2001) illustrated how through a twelve-step program (Codependents Anonymous), men transformed their masculinities and became “different kinds of men” (p. 28). This program encouraged an awareness of hegemonic masculinities and required men to examine their lives for sources of dysfunction associated with stereotypical male behavior and to enact changes where viable. Codependents Anonymous encouraged men to do things differently (i.e., accept failure, emotional tolerance, patient listening) and shaped new ways of being men. Although such programs may not affect large scale change in the reconstruction of masculinities, it offered strategies for some men to “unlearn sexism” and to build equitable relationships in their lives (Irvine & Klocke, 2001, p. 43).

Swain (2006) showed how masculinities were not only diverse, but also how the possibility for change existed in educational settings. For example, a boy from a dominant group (hegemonic masculinities) could be challenged and lose his position of power. Cultural changes may occur that deem the characteristics that permitted his membership into a dominant group insufficient, positioning him into complicit or marginalized categories. He also demonstrated how masculinities changed relative to issues of time and space. For instance, a boy who was dominant on the playground at morning recess could, as a result of fluctuating social dynamics, be relocated to a lower position (subordinate masculinities) during afternoon recess.

According to Drummond (2001), sport has always been a masculinized field. Specific sports have been identified within this ideology as being more masculine than others. For

example, sports with elements of violence and extreme body contact such as football and rugby are often regarded as more masculine along a continuum of masculinities than sports such as gymnastics or bowling. However, changing ideologies surrounding endurance sports such as iron man triathlons and ultra marathons (50+ miles) have come to be perceived as sports that align with the ideals of hegemonic masculinities because of the bodily pain that is endured over extended periods of time when participating in such endurance sports. Consequently, this ideological change provided the setting for a transformed pattern of sporting masculinities, which converted endurance athletes from being viewed as less masculine into exemplars of hegemonic masculinities given their ability to tolerate pain for such extended periods of time.

To better understand the relationship between homosexuality and sport, Anderson (2005) examined the lives of openly gay high-school athletes. He recognized that defining characteristics of masculinities change within the same culture over time in response to social forces, and that not all masculinities are treated equally within the context of sport. He stated,

Sport remains an arena that reproduces a desire for the toughest form of masculinity, an attitude in which “men are men”; an arena in which homosexuality, femininity, and other assumed “weaknesses” are not perceived as being conducive to the ultimate quest for victory. (p. 7)

Anderson (2005) questioned parts of the above notion, and suggested that the criteria for masculinity in sport may be “softening,” especially regarding the acceptance of homosexuality. The outspoken attitudes of coaches were crucial factors that contributed to higher levels of homosexual acceptance. For example, coaches on some teams did not require or encourage hypermasculine behaviors, but instead cultivated the development of unity and friendship. Anderson suggested that the athletes who viewed their coaches as role models were willing to interpret the social world in a similar manner to their coaches. Also, generational differences in

gender attitudes and practices may be playing a role in this change. Anderson (2005) demonstrated that dominant patterns of masculinities are open to challenge, not trapped.

Anderson (2009) used multiple ethnographies to show the major transformation occurring to heterosexual masculinities among university-aged (mostly) white men, athletic males, and less athletic males. He examined sports that are often described as being “at the center” of masculine production (i.e., football, basketball, hockey) as well as those at the “semi-periphery” (i.e., soccer, tennis, track), and men in sports traditionally marginalized (i.e., cheerleading, bowling, figure skating), and showed how masculinities were changing throughout this hierarchy. For instance, he found that within cheerleading there was now an outright acceptance of gay men. These findings are groundbreaking because they show that masculinities are operating differently than in earlier investigations in the same sport. His findings suggest that improving institutional cultures and progressive organizational norms are influencing change.

The principle that masculinities change over time had important implications for studying boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education. When in the research setting, I did not assume that masculinities are static and unalterable or that masculinities that typically attain hegemonic status in other physical activity settings were dominant in adventure physical education. For example, I paid close attention to how girls, boys and Andy challenged dominant masculinities. Further, change is time and space relevant—therefore, I was open to masculinities changing during the course of the study and from one adventure physical education class to the next rather than presupposing that the dominant masculinities remained the same throughout the study or that there would not be differences among the various adventure classes. Finally, during observations, I took certain behaviors to challenge or resist hegemonic masculinities and

incorporated my developing perceptions into future conversations and interview guides, which allowed students to confirm or deny my interpretations.

Females' Role in Masculinities Construction

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was initially created alongside the concept of hegemonic femininity—soon renamed “emphasized femininity” to recognize the unbalanced location of masculinities and femininities in a patriarchal gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In the growth of research on men and masculinities, this association between masculinities and femininities has dropped out of the spotlight, which is unfortunate because gender is always relational and patterns of masculinity are defined in opposition to femininity. Just like studying women and women’s oppression without reference to those who oppress them, it is impossible to study men without referencing women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 1987). Focusing solely on men’s behavior disregards the practices of women in the production of gender hierarchies among men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Paulsen, 1999). The actions of women and girls greatly impact the production of masculinities as well as their hierarchical ordering. For example, when girls pay positive attention to boys (e.g., by talking to, cheering for, or flirting with them) who embody hegemonic masculinities while making fun of or ignoring boys who embody nonhegemonic masculinities (i.e., who are complicit, subordinated, marginalized), they influence the characteristics that are capable of achieving hegemonic status in social settings (Tischler & McCaughy, 2011). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) endorsed the notion that females’ role in the construction of masculinities should be recognized when they said,

As is well shown by life-history research, women are central in many of the processes constructing masculinities—as mothers; as schoolmates; as girlfriends; sexual partners, and wives; as workers in the gender division of labor; and so forth. The concept of emphasized femininity focused on compliance to patriarchy, and this is still highly

relevant in contemporary mass culture. Yet gender hierarchies are also affected by new configurations of women's identity and practice, especially among younger women—which are increasingly acknowledged by younger men. (p. 848)

Researchers have pointed to the necessity of employing a relational approach to masculinity studies (Brod, 1994; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2004; Paulsen, 1999). Brod (1994) observed a trend in the studies of men and masculinities to assume men and women were detached spheres and researched men as if women were not a significant part of the investigation, and therefore, studied men by only looking at men and interactions among men. Similarly, while assessing the usefulness of the concept of hegemony in theorizing men, Hearn (2004) discussed major aspects to the agenda for investigating men's interactions in the social world which looked at different ways of being men in relation to women, children, and other men. One of the major aspects to this agenda was looking at how women differently supported and produced hegemonic masculinities, and subordinate nonhegemonic ways of being men.

Paulsen (1999) recognized the significant role women and girls play in the construction of masculinities in his study which examined a high school program that was implemented to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity as a central part of the curriculum. Although the program targeted boys, a more relational approach was taken by studying masculinities in groups that included girls and boys. According to Paulsen (1999), "While it may be advantageous in some circumstances to work with boys-only groups, much literature suggests that when investigating multiple masculinities with students, it may be more effective to approach the topic in a mixed setting" (p. 3). For example, while addressing the issue of the advantages of hegemonic masculinity for men, students (girls and boys) identified advantages such as economic payoffs and greater power. Even though many of the girls deemed the boys' attitudes "sexist," the students realized that many women and girls support (intentionally and unintentionally) the structures of hegemonic masculinity.

Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) also found that girls played a role in producing certain masculinities as hegemonic and others as marginalized in physical education. Boys who embodied characteristics that were associated with hegemonic masculinities in physical activity settings (i.e., strong, athletic, powerful, fit, fast) often received positive attention from the female students (i.e., praise, close proximity, chit chat), which elevated these boys' masculinities to high positions on the masculinities hierarchy. Conversely, boys who embodied characteristics such as being weak, slow, unfit, and uncoordinated were often ridiculed or ignored by their female classmates, which played a major role in reducing these boys' masculinities to a marginalized status. For example, one boy was shunned from two groups when trying to join a volleyball team. One girl said, "We have enough players, we don't need you" which was numerically not the case, and another girl shoved him toward a different court when he attempted to join her team. Another boy was similarly humiliated when, after a group session he returned to join his class and a female classmate saw him and laughed and loudly said, "Oh, I didn't even realize you weren't here today." He looked at me and quickly looked down while other students laughed.

Theoretically, girls' role in the construction of masculinities has been talked about extensively. However, minimal masculinity research has been done looking at specific ways that this principle functions in social contexts. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated, "We consider that research on hegemonic masculinity now needs to give much closer attention to the practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities" (p. 848). This principle has valuable implications for examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. In addition to observing and interviewing boys in adventure physical education, I also observed and interviewed girls. Working with both genders generated broader, more multidimensional data than if I would have attended to boys only. Examining girls' behaviors in

the context of adventure physical education may enhance our [field of physical education] current understanding of the relationship between females and the construction of masculinities.

Broader Social Forces Influence Local Configurations

Links exist between local (i.e., face-to face interactions of families, organizations, and immediate communities), regional (i.e., level of the culture or nation/state), and global (i.e., transnational arenas such as world politics, business, and media) masculinities. Global institutions influence regional and local masculinities by offering models of masculinity that may be significant in configurations of masculinities at local levels. For instance, masculinities represented and constructed by actors in feature films, professional athletes and politicians provide an outline that may emerge in the configurations of masculinities at the local level. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated, "...regionally significant exemplary masculine models influence--although do not wholly determine--the construction of gender relations and hegemonic masculinities at the local level" (p. 850). Connell (2005b) indicated the need for a global perspective in studies of men and masculinities when she said, "To understand local masculinities, then, we must think globally" (p. 72). The creation of new spaces beyond individual countries and regions make up a world gender order. She identified transnational corporations, the international state, international media, and global markets as the most important "spaces" that impact the construction of local masculinities. She examined the local reconstruction of masculinities under globalization and identified four substructures set up pressures for change on the local level. They included the division of labor, power relations, emotional relations, and symbolization.

Researchers have also talked about how broader social forces influenced local configurations of masculinities in educational fields (Birbeck & Drummond, 2006; Paulsen,

1999). In a study examining a program to deconstruct hegemonic masculinities, Paulsen (1999) used tough Hollywood stars to illustrate the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. He used footage from a scene featuring Steven Segal fighting a villain to conduct a discussion on complicit masculinities and the patriarchal dividend. There was a collective approval from the boys as Steven Segal's character broke the villain's neck. Even though these boys agreed that most men do not behave like that, they found this character to be an exemplary masculine model.

Similarly, Drummond (2001) found that boys identified factors within current Western culture that effected how young boys viewed their bodies. For example, one boy said, "Definitely the media play a big part. I think there are a lot of people in advertising who look good and other people see that and want to be like it" (p. 59). Further, media images led the boys to take action in changing their bodies to become more like the masculine models portrayed in the media.

While investigating the constructions of body image among young boys, Birbeck and Drummond (2006) stated, "Increasingly, men's bodies are being portrayed in ways that commercialize and objectify the male body similar to ways in which the female body has been, and remains to be, commodified" (p. 239). Such media spotlights played a significant role in the development of negative body image for many young males in local contexts.

The common and persistent characteristics that are often constructed as hegemonic in school physical education and sport settings are heavily influenced by the acceptance and admiration for bodily contact in professional sport, tolerance of violence, competition, and homophobia that are represented as symbols of hegemonic masculinity in numerous professional sport settings. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated, "Although local models of hegemonic masculinity may differ from each other, they generally overlap" (p. 850). Therefore,

there are universal characteristics of hegemonic masculinities in school physical education (i.e., strength, speed, muscularity, athleticism, aggression, competitiveness), and the production of such characteristics are often influenced by global social forces.

Light and Kirk (2000) illustrated the interaction between global and local hegemonic masculinities in the field of sport. They showed how a clear structure of masculinities existed at an elite Australian high school in which the specific hegemonic masculinities were formed through the practices of professional rugby football. The masculine practices centered on domination, aggression, brutal competitiveness, and giving all for the school. Hence, regionally significant models of masculinity (i.e., professional athletes) shaped the hegemonic masculinities at this high school.

There is a need for comparative work across local, regional and global boundaries to show how they influence one another. There is also a need to show how one location might show a way forward for masculinities in relation to physical activity—ways that embrace multiple masculinities. Because most class sessions took place in the local community, I had opportunities to examine how broader social forces (masculinity production in community physical activity cultures) influenced local masculinities configurations (adventure physical education).

Resistance

There are significant ways in which boys resist hegemonic masculinities, and this resistance happens at both the top and the bottom of the masculinities hierarchy. Resistance to hegemonic masculinities may emerge in various ways. Some boys and men may present alternate ways of being men (e.g., by protesting masculinities), and others may attempt to “out-do” the existing system (Lusher & Robins, 2009). Boys who embody marginalized masculinities in certain social settings often avoid embarrassment and domination by enacting task avoidance

strategies (Tischler & McCaughy, 2011). Instead of reading boys as passive recipients of domination, we might interpret their behaviors as actively resisting hegemonic masculinities. This interpretation paints boys as active agents taking control through acts of resistance rather than passive objects allowing the oppressive social setting to overpower them. We must show how nonhegemonic masculinities can be resilient even when dominated. Similarly, boys who embody hegemonic masculinities in certain social settings may also resist the hierarchical arrangement by enacting behaviors that resist hegemonic masculinities. For example, treating others with compassion, inviting less athletic boys to play, and maintaining friendships with girls are some of the ways that dominant boys resist the hierarchical arrangement of masculinities (Griffin, 1985).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated that “Children as well as adults have a capacity to deconstruct gender binaries and criticize hegemonic masculinity, and this capacity is the basis for many educational interventions and change programs” (p. 853). A number of researchers have examined boys’ contestation of hegemonic masculinities in various educational contexts (Connell, 2005a; Davison, 2004; Kehler, 2004; Kehler & Martino, 2007; Kehler et al., 2005; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Martino, 2000; Paulsen, 1999). These researchers have pointed out a wide range of tactics boys used to counter their institutional subordination. For example, leadership research shows that minorities found it more difficult than majorities to attain and sustain leadership roles (Hogg, 2001; Lusher & Robins, 2009). Rather than accepting such complexities, social minorities were more likely to take up strategies to redefine the circumstances to reach their goals. This goes along with Connell’s theory of marginalized masculinities challenging power.

Kehler et al. (2005) investigated how some high school boys refused to go along with heteronormative masculinity and used “good buddy talk” as their modes of resistance. Their work demonstrated their willingness to renegotiate masculinities. For example, some boys talked about sex and sexuality in ways that supported this understanding even though these types of conversations were often associated with homophobic discourses. Instead of talking about sex in ways that reinforced their social position (“Hey, did you get some this weekend?”), they developed alternate ways to have safe discussions with other men.

Similarly, Kehler (2004) explored how high school boys upset dominant masculinities through counter-hegemonic practices. Although these boys agreed that there was a certain comfort and safety in being one of the boys, they were willing to “unmask” masculinity by troubling the meaning being male. These boys were described as expressive, sportsmanlike, gentle, open, caring, understanding, articulate, and sensitive, which is dissimilar to how high school boys are often described. For example, one boy helped an opponent to his feet during a hockey game just after checking him. Although considered taboo and closely related to femininity, they also resisted heteronormativity through intimacy with other boys (i.e., hugging, sharing feelings) and refraining from using or laughing at sexist jokes. For example, one boy explained that certain behaviors upheld hegemonic masculinities when he said, “When you laugh at jokes, you have to be careful of what you’re supporting...this is when you have to use judgment” (Kehler, 2004, p. 107).

Kehler and Martino (2007) found that some high school boys questioned the limitations of hegemonic masculinities in schools. These boys described the norms governing hegemonic masculinities as imposing restraints on “being yourself.” For example, one boy said, “It’s like you have to come up and say the right things and do the right things in order to be cool. You

can't just be yourself and you can't goof off in being cool" (Kehler & Martino, 2007, p. 95). Additionally, these boys described hegemonic masculinities as prescribing acceptable methods of public displays of affection with other boys. One boy said, "Certain people you just don't give hugs to unless it's a joke...and there are people that I can really give a hug to and like mean it" (Kehler & Martino, 2007, p. 98). However, it was also noted that it was easier for boys with other forms of cultural or social capital (e.g., being skillful athlete, playing in a band, having good social skills, or being attractive) to challenge hegemonic masculinities, which often allowed them to maintain a socially acceptable masculinity in the eyes of their classmates.

Physical education and dance are other fields that have looked at the ways in which hegemonic masculinities were challenged through boys' participation and experiences (Gard, 2001, 2003, 2008; Griffin, 1985; Risner, 2007; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Risner (2007) explored dance education experiences of young boys in theatrical concert dance from the vantage point of dominant masculinities. For many boys, deciding to dance was a channel for scrutinizing taken-for-granted assumptions about hegemonic masculinities and gender relations.

Central to this work is the notion that dance education may serve as an important means for disrupting dominant cultural assumptions about acceptable ways of moving for males and to challenge cultural stereotypes about male dancers and nonheterosexual modes of sexuality. (Risner, 2007, p. 144)

However, it is important to note that not all males enter the field of dance with a counter-hegemonic agenda, nor can it be denied that some boys and men in dance support hegemonic masculinities and heterosexism through their behaviors. Risner (2007) explored the ways young male dancers confronted heterocentric bias, gender norms, and gendered bodies.

Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) described various ways boys embodied resistance to hegemonic masculinities in two sport-based physical education settings. The boys in this study performed various modes of resistance such as pretending to tie shoes, taking longer than needed

to retrieve equipment, faking illness or injury, stopping participation when the teacher was not watching, deliberately forgetting proper clothes, skipping class, positioning themselves on the margins, and allowing others to dominate during games. One boy explained that he enacted task avoidance strategies to avoid ridicule, “Sometimes the athletic kids take over, but I don’t care because then I won’t get yelled at for screwing up.” Instead of going along with the ethos of hegemonic masculinity, these boys avoided participation and potential humiliation by becoming skilled bystanders. For example, one boy revealed, “When we are getting into groups, I’m on the court but I’m not even doing anything. I’m standing around and walking this way and that way. Moving around makes it seem like I’m participating.” Instead of reading these behaviors as worn oppression, through conversations with the boys, we recognized their behaviors as methods the boys used to avoid embarrassment and domination in physical education.

Griffin (1985) demonstrated that it is not only boys who embody marginalized masculinities that resist and challenge hegemonic masculinities. In fact, boys who were capable of running with the big dogs in physical education gave up their high-ranking social placement and enacted behaviors that lowered their social position. The boys in this study identified as “nice guys” possessed advanced athletic skills, enjoyed team games, assumed leadership roles, and opted for high interaction positions during games. However, they were ranked lower than the “machos” and “junior machos” on the social hierarchy because they were more inclusive of girls and lower-skilled boys in sport-based physical education. Their specific modes of resistance included treating girls as equal teammates, cheering for and passing to girls, asking for rather than demanding passes, sharing highly-desired positions, demonstrating kindness to lower-skilled boys, and avoiding rough physical and verbal interactions with other boys. Had the nice

guys engaged in put downs, ball hogging, and aggressive behavior they may have been elevated to higher positions on the masculinities hierarchy. Humberstone (1990) said,

Girls and boys may accept, reject, or accommodate to the cultural and ideological messages within the curriculum. It remains to be seen whether physical education experiences can be constructed in ways that convey messages counter to the macho, warrior ethos. (p. 202)

When examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education, I looked closely at the various practices of masculinities from the standpoint of the boys themselves. When I observed certain behaviors that I interpreted as resistance or conformity, I weaved my interpretations into future conversations and interview guides, which allowed students to confirm, refute or revise my interpretations. I remained open to seeing how boys wore oppression and enacted dominance (e.g., making the body small, taking up space), as well as how resistance and conformance to hegemonic masculinities were embodied by various masculinities (e.g., enacting task avoidance strategies, dominating during activities, including girls and lesser-skilled boys). Examining boys' masculinities in this setting allowed me learn about boys' resistance from boys themselves.

Emotional Expense of Embodying Masculinities

Emotion is incorporated into masculinity theory as a sentimental attachment regulating actions by embracing certain beliefs (Connell, 2005a; Lusher & Robins, 2009). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated, "Hegemonic masculinities are likely to involve specific patterns of internal division and emotional conflict, precisely because of their association with gendered power" (p. 852). It is the strength of emotion in these beliefs that controls our behaviors. "To view particular beliefs and their associated social relationship as worthwhile, one must believe in their value—people must emotionally endorse them" (Lusher & Robins, 2009, p. 403).

Therefore, boys' embodiment of certain masculinities in particular contexts may come at some psychological or emotional expense, and this applies to both hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic practices of masculinities pressures boys through marginalization ("othering" the experiences of boys or having one's experiences othered), oppression (restricting some boys' opportunities or having opportunities restricted), and domination (limiting some boys' participation or having one's participation limited) to such a degree that boys often behave in ways that are not representative of their true attitudes and convictions (Imms, 2000). For example, embodiment of hegemonic masculinities may not equate to boys' happiness, and they may suffer inner turmoil as a result of enacting the characteristics necessary to attain that privileged status. This emotional unrest may be explained by the notion of cognitive dissonance, "which refers to the discrepancy that may occur between attitudes and behavior, behavior and self-esteem, or between attitudes, which produces feelings of anxiety, or dissonance, that the individual attempts to reduce" (Lusher & Robins, 2009, p. 403). Boys who embody marginalized masculinities also suffer emotionally as a result of not conforming to the hegemonic ideal in that social context (e.g., experiencing social isolation or being physically and verbally abused).

While studying globalization and business masculinities, Connell and Wood (2005) pointed out several aspects of elite businessmen masculinities that caused negative emotional effects. For example, treating oneself as an entity, being willing to move internationally (one year here, two years there), confusion in personal conduct (e.g., having casual sex on the road), and managing one's body (e.g., looking the part) were necessary for promotion and tenure as well as attaining a high placement on the social hierarchy. However, these behaviors associated with hegemonic business masculinities came at a high emotional cost for many of the men.

Researchers have clearly identified and described many of the negative consequences for boys who embody masculinities produced as nonhegemonic in some educational settings (Gard, 2001, 2003, 2008; Martino, 2000; Parker, 1996; Risner, 2007; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). These studies showed, for instance, how being ignored, excluded, dominated, humiliated, and physically and verbally abused led to feelings of isolation, low-self esteem, loneliness, anger, and unhappiness. For some boys, a high emotional price was attached to not measuring up to the hegemonic ideals. While many boys were forced to be in settings in which they endured physical and emotional pain (i.e., mandatory physical education, playing sports enforced by parents), others chose to be in settings where they confronted negative stereotypes and social isolation. For example, while studying the dance experiences of boys in terms of the limitations of hegemonic masculinity, Risner (2007) reported that although boys felt socially isolated, had unmet needs, and suffered from a variety of negative emotional experiences (i.e., keeping their dance life a secret, harassment by peers, perceived as homosexual, having others justify their dance participation by relating them to sports), they persevered in their dance participation because of their love for dance. For these boys, the emotional cost was worth the effort.

However, there seems to be less work examining the emotional consequences for boys who embody hegemonic masculinities in sporting and educational settings. Not all boys who embody masculinities capable of achieving dominant status (i.e., strong, athletic, good looking) are willing to alienate and humiliate others to be recipients of the privileges of hegemonic masculinities. This qualification should be acknowledged, as according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), “Without treating privileged men as objects of pity, we should recognize that hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily translate into a satisfying life” (p. 852).

Participation in sports is essentially compulsory and is made mandatory through its connection with public education (Messner, 1992). In addition to the physical violence sport creates and naturalizes as part of masculinity, it also supplies a psychological violence against the self and others given its public nature. Anderson (2005) declared that in sport, boys and men are constructed to regard aggression toward selves and others as not only “part of the game,” but as a “necessary component of masculinity”(p. 34). For example, they are deterred from withdrawing out of fear of being branded as a quitter or not being tough enough to take it. “It is against their own stopgaps and bodily urges to cease an activity that boys must learn to repress their reflexes, suppress their fears, and oppress their peers” (Anderson, 2005, p. 34).

Although emotional consequences were not explicitly addressed, the notion of cognitive dissonance (described above) may provide insights into why the “nice guys” in Griffin’s (1985) study enacted characteristics that did not align with hegemonic masculinities (i.e., being respectful and inclusive to girls and lesser-skilled boys). These boys may have had a moral desire to treat others with kindness rather than overpowering them; this desire may have outweighed the need to be located at the top of the social hierarchy. The social interactions that would have been necessary to achieve high social status in this setting may have caused the “nice guys” a great deal of inner turmoil because of the discrepancy between their behaviors and attitudes.

The emotional expense of embodying masculinities had a great deal of relevance to examining boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education, especially regarding boys who embody masculinities that are often produced as hegemonic in most physical activity settings since this has not been extensively studied. I did not assume that hegemonic masculinity was by design linked to happiness, but instead I explored the emotional expenses associated with various forms of masculinity. I explored the emotional expense associated with embodying certain

masculinities in adventure and sport-dominated physical education settings. For example, I explored the pressures to conform to the hegemonic ideals in adventure physical education in comparison with sport-dominated physical education.

Connell's (2005a) conceptual framework of masculinity theory was highly applicable in addressing the principles as they relate to understanding the lives of boys and men. Her framework has been used and explored by many masculinity researchers looking at how the principles relate to and affect men and boys in specific contexts such as military, business, school, sport, and physical education settings. For example, the multiple-masculinities approach, the hierarchical ordering of masculinities, and the influence of social practices on the hierarchies of masculinities has been extensively studied. Although some researchers (e.g., Humberstone, 1990) have looked at these principles in the context of adventure education, it was a long time ago and the data were limited in scope. Examining these principles in adventure physical education provided new and distinct information. Many of the principles have not been comprehensively explored, and certainly not in the context of adventure physical education. Examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education offered me the opportunity to examine how each principle operated in this specific physical activity field, which will enhance our understanding of the relation between men and masculinities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the study, I examined boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. This chapter is an outline of critical research methodology and includes a summary of the theoretical justifications and assumptions of the critical paradigm, the research participants and setting, the data-collection methods, the data-analysis techniques, the ethical principles involved in the study, and aspects of researcher bias.

Theoretical Justifications and Assumptions of the Critical Paradigm

It is important to understand theory because theory can help illuminate the world in beneficial and innovative ways that shape how we educate children; how we construe television; how we react to others who have different opinions on political, religious, social issues than ourselves; how we act as voters and consumers; and how we understand and deal with our own motives, worries, and desires (Tyson, 2006). In this section, I outline the theoretical assumptions of the critical paradigm that guided my study of how masculinities (the process of becoming and being male) operated in this adventure physical education setting.

The critical paradigm offers tools that can clarify the world through new and valuable lenses (Tyson, 2006). Although each theoretical paradigm is grounded in particular key concepts, they do not always fit into neat and tidy categories. For example, there are not always clear boundaries between critical perspectives and other paradigms such as interpretive inquiry, feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial research, as the ideas that inform critical inquiry are closely connected to these other perspectives (Devis-Devis, 2006). These blurry boundaries indeed influenced my observations and how I interpreted my data.

Children's experiences in physical education are shaped by the content taught, the pedagogies used to teach, student-teacher relationships, student relationships, as well as the overall culture of the school (McCaughtry, 2004, 2006; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Based on numerous factors, children experience physical education in different, often inequitable ways (Azzarito, 2009a; Davison, 2000; Drummond, 2003; Oliver, Hamzeh, & McCaughtry, 2009; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011; Vertinsky, 1992). The critical paradigm calls for a concentration on the ways in which race, ability, sexuality, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, and power interconnect to influence inequities (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). According to Devis-Devis (2006), "Research that aspires to be critical seeks to confront injustices in society, that is to say, it aims to analyze how present unjust conditions are produced and maintained in order to understand, criticize, and change them" (p. 40). Therefore, the critical paradigm seemed to be a compatible framework for recognizing and acknowledging the inequalities inherent in the practices, pedagogies, and policies of physical education, especially with respect to issues such as the configurations of boys' masculinities.

Because I sought to understand a complex picture of which masculinities were produced, how masculinities were hierarchically arranged, how social practice influenced the hierarchical ordering, how masculinities were embodied, the role girls played in influencing masculinities construction, the emotional expenses of embodying certain masculinities, and the role that broader social forces played in how masculinities operated in adventure physical education, it was impossible to avoid integrating elements from other paradigms. For example, Tyson (2006) stated,

Critical theories are not isolated entities, completely different from one another, separable into tidy bins, like the tubs of tulips, daffodils, and carnations we see at the florist. It would be more useful to think of theories, to continue the metaphor, as mixed bouquets,

each of which can contain a few of the flowers that predominate in or that serve different purposes in other bouquets. (p. 5)

Critical Theoretical Assumptions Regarding Ontology

Within the critical research paradigm, the nature of reality (ontology) is understood as the product of social, material, and historical conditions. Critical theory embraces the notion that multiple realities exist and these realities are situated in political, social, and cultural contexts, with some realities privileged over others (Merriman, 2009). Although the “true” nature of reality can never be attained, critical theorists believe they can capture individuals’ perceptions of reality in the specific and historical contexts in which they are produced and reproduced (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Guba and Lincoln (1998) wrote of the ideological position on ontology, according to critical theory:

A reality is assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but that was, over time, shaped by congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as “real,” that is, natural and immutable. For all practical purposes the structures *are* “real,” a virtual or historical reality. (p. 205)

Critical theorists view cultural behavior and beliefs as historically contextual and believe these cultural insights transform as time passes (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Additionally, behaviors and conditions that seem to be cultural practices among the subjugated have actually been found to be responses to subjugated positions (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). For example, many believe the eating habits of children in low-socioeconomic areas signify cultural preferences, when in fact these eating habits could be the result of insufficient family income.

Critical theory’s ontological stance implicated how I conducted my study examining boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education. The stories and my interpretations were a product of the social, material, and historical conditions that have shaped each participant, revealing multiple realities, with some realities receiving privilege over others. Although I do not

claim to know the true nature of how masculinities operated in adventure physical education, I captured individuals' perceptions of reality in the specific and historical contexts in which they were created.

Critical Theoretical Assumptions Regarding Epistemology

Epistemology, from a critical perspective, derives from differential access to information regarding the historical, political, economic, and social conditions of knowledge that can be known (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Historically, everything seen today is not a given; however, it is the product of thousands of years of production and reproduction (e.g., being the “right” kind of woman means being a virtuous wife and mother). Politically, knowledge does not function in a vacuum, but can be used for particular forms of power/control. The same pieces of knowledge can be reconstrued to serve particular agendas. For example, the obesity epidemic is used by different political camps to serve distinct purposes. Economically, access to knowledge differs based on one's socioeconomic status. For example, knowledge taught in low-socioeconomic school settings differs from information taught in affluent school districts. The counseling that helps higher socioeconomic students take classes, for example, will prepare them for certain higher education paths and college entrance exams, whereas the counseling that lower socioeconomic students might track them into vocational courses like auto repair or cosmetology—courses that would help them get jobs not requiring college degrees. Socially, knowledge taught is often based on various societal ideologies regarding race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability. For example, knowledge is used to teach boys and girls how to “do” their gender the “right” way. For example, boys are fast, strong, competitive, and aggressive, whereas girls are passive, take up little space, and are objects to be desired. Further, knowledge is regarded as something that is transactional and subjective. According to Devis-Devis (2006),

“From a critical research paradigm, there is a rejection of the innocence and neutrality of knowledge and is taken to be inevitably political since it represents the interests of certain groups, usually powerful ones” (p. 39). The researcher and the researched are understood to be interrelated with the values of the researcher influencing the investigation and producing findings that are *value mediated* (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 206). Therefore, knowledge that can be known is strongly linked with the interaction between the researcher and the researched. Additionally, knowledge develops and changes through a dialectical process of historical transformation and continuously erodes lack of knowledge and misunderstandings while enlarging more informed interpretations.

Critical theory’s epistemological stance influenced how I conducted my study examining boys’ masculinities in adventure physical education. I acknowledged that the knowledge I obtained was strongly linked to the interactions between each participant and me. For example, the questions I asked and the manner in which I asked them were connected to my personal, social, and cultural experiences related to physical activity as well as my knowledge about boys and masculinities. Likewise, I acknowledged that each participant’s response was influenced by his or her subjectivities related to masculinities and physical activity experiences.

Critical Theoretical Assumptions Regarding Methodology

Researchers using a critical approach apply emergent designs and naturalistic methods to examine the meaning that individuals derive from their social experiences. The methodological assumptions stem from critical theorists’ positions on ontology and epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). The methodological assumptions emphasize collaborative interactions, the importance of historical context, and the researcher as a political advocate (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppy, Smith, & Hayes, 2009; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The main knowledge

producers are the participant and the researcher. Participants in critical research, along with the researcher, define and describe experiences; the researcher classifies, codifies, enumerates, correlates, and interprets these experiences in conjunction with the participants through member checks (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Critical researchers engage with participants over time; therefore, ongoing communication and interactions may reveal structural asymmetries, critical consciousness, hidden meanings and assumptions, and patterns of oppression (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Critical researchers must modify and develop methodologies to conquer the marginalization of the participants. Throughout this process, participants become involved in the inquiry process to become allies in knowledge production (Devis-Devis, 2006). Research questions are revised throughout the inquiry process to create deeper understandings of participants' experiences. Most research occurs by means of interviews, observations, and journaling (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009).

Critical theorists ask for a focus on how gender, class, culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, and power overlap to affect inequities (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). This focus requires researchers to be conscious of how their own subjectivities and power relationships impact the ways in which they are examined and interpreted. Researchers' biases and values impact the research process. Researchers must acknowledge personal views on social issues (e.g., gender, class, sexuality, ability, race, and ethnicity), dispositions and assumptions and the ways these stances may influence behaviors that are documented during observations, as well as how interviews are organized and administered. Additionally, the ongoing interactions between the researcher and the participant lead to several ethical considerations and require researchers to

abide by ethical guidelines such as explaining the purpose of the inquiry and methods to be used, establishing reciprocity, obtaining consent, and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Although generalizability from one setting to another is not likely in critical research, generalizations can occur when the combination of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, sexual, and ability conditions are alike across contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Critical theorists use transferability to explain the application of research findings. Transferability means carrying out the research in such a way that the individual seeking to use the application elsewhere has enough information to do so. The author can meet this criterion by providing thick descriptions and also by providing the widest possible range of information for inclusion in the thick description. Providing rich descriptions of the setting, participants, methods, purposes, and perspectives to let readers experience the interpretations and decide if these explanations relate to their circumstances and settings. Thick descriptions dictate the level of transferability for those reading the study, as it is up to the reader to make the transfer, not the author.

Critical theory's methodological position also influenced how I conducted my study examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. While conducting this study, I considered how my positionalities impacted the research process. Participants shared in the inquiry process as partners with me in knowledge production. For example, the research took place over an extended period of time by means of interviews, observations, reflective journaling, and e-mail. Questions and interpretations were amended throughout the inquiry process, creating deeper understandings of participants' experiences, which facilitated the development of stories that appropriately represented participants' realities.

Study Methods

In this section I describe the participants, community, school, physical education program, and data-collection methods. Within these descriptions, I outline my rationale for selecting this setting, teacher, and data-collection techniques with reference to how they helped me answer the purpose of the research. I conclude this section with a discussion of trustworthiness strategies and ethical considerations.

Research Setting and Participants

Andy taught physical education at Apex High School, which was located in a mid-sized town in the Midwestern United States. The 100-square-mile school district had approximately 40,000 residents with 6,000 students in eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one alternative high school. The residents were generally middle class and employed in more than 100 small, light industries, agriculture, tourism, and service industries. Thirteen institutions of higher learning were located within a 40-mile radius.

At the time of my study, approximately 1,744 students were enrolled at Apex High School; of these students, 92% were White, 3% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian, and 3% were other races. Most students came from families of low to middle socioeconomic status with 27% receiving free or reduced lunches.

At the time of the study, Andy was entering his ninth year as a physical educator and his fifth year teaching at Apex High School. He was one of four physical education teachers at Apex High School: Two were male and one was female. The physical education program at Apex offered a wide range of courses for students to choose from: Women's Health and Fitness, Life Guard Training, yoga, Pilates, team sports, individual/dual sports, weight training, and adventure physical education. Andy also taught yoga, Life Guard Training and weight training. He recently

received district and school level approval to teach a new course titled Triathlon Training. He taught this class for the first time in the spring of 2010. Of the four physical education teachers at Apex, Andy is the only one who taught adventure physical education and Triathlon Training. The other physical educators taught yoga, Pilates, sport-based classes and Weight Training. The female physical educator taught Women's Health and Fitness.

Andy was chosen through purposive sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I first met Andy at an annual conference for our state's professional organization where he talked about his adventure physical education program. On two separate occasions, I had the opportunity to spend time with Andy and observe his teaching before making my final decision to select him as a research participant. During my first visit, I spent three full school days observing. During my second visit, I spent two full school days working with and observing Andy. His teaching practices and the nature of the courses I observed him teaching confirmed that Andy would be an appropriate match given my research purpose and questions.

I selected Andy based on four specific criteria. First, the courses Andy taught (Adventure Education and Triathlon Training) directly matched the focus of my study, examining boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. Second, he actually *taught* physical activities to his students, and did not have a coaching, free-play, or roll-out-the-ball approach to teaching physical education. Third, based on observations and conversations with Andy, his teaching emphasized the personal and social development of his students over competition, elite performance, and technical skill development. Finally, I found that Andy was at ease during conversations and talked freely about his points of view, especially regarding his adventure physical education program and his beliefs about teaching. For this reason and because I had many opportunities to interact with him, it was easy to initiate discussions and sustain dialogue

during interviews. Because Andy had been teaching this class for five years, he provided valuable insights that helped me understand boys' masculinities in the context of adventure physical education. Additionally, Andy taught team sports physical education classes in previous school years and currently coached baseball, downhill skiing, and cross country. Based on his wealth of experience, he provided insights on how masculinities operated differently in these two physical activity settings (sport-based and adventure physical education), which directly related to the purpose of my study.

In addition to Andy, other participants included students enrolled in adventure physical education. During my previous visits to Apex High School, I found students to be interested in participating in this type of study and willing to discuss their views with me. Students enrolled in adventure physical education helped me understand how masculinities functioned in this setting by sharing their insights, experiences, and feelings regarding adventure education—often in comparison to their experiences in sport-based physical education classes.

Data Collection

Data collection took place during the fall 2010 public school year in which I spent three full school days each week collecting data at Apex High School for a period of 15 weeks. During this time, I collected data through formal student and teacher interviews, e-mailed student and teacher interviews, and class observations. Data collection occurred in a cyclical process by drafting interview guides directed by critical theory and my research questions. Forty-five full school days were spent at Apex High School with Andy and his adventure physical education students. I studied Andy and his students during his three adventure physical education classes each day. First hour ran from 7:50 to 9:07 and consisted of 6 girls and 20 boys; second hour went from 9:07 to 10:17 and was comprised of 9 girls and 17 boys; and third hour ran from 10:24 to

11:34 and consisted of 9 girls and 18 boys. Additionally, when I did not have interviews scheduled during Andy's fifth and sixth hour classes, I attended and observed Weight Fitness and Lifeguard Training in the afternoon. The study continued until data saturation occurred and each research question was answered.

Interviews. Because the purpose of my study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education, interviews with Andy and his students were my primary method of gathering descriptive data because this method allowed me to obtain their perspectives and experiences. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), good interviews can produce rich data complete with words that reveal the participant's perspectives. In this section, I describe how formal (face-to-face) and e-mail interviews were used with both Andy and students enrolled in his adventure physical education class. All interviews with Andy and his students were audio recorded with two digital voice recorders.

Each week I conducted one formal and semi-structured interview with Andy for a total of 15 one-hour teacher interviews. Interviews with Andy took place every Wednesday after third hour at the off-campus location we happened to be that day (e.g., ropes course, beach, and parks). Given the intense preparation that was needed to teach three sections of adventure physical education (in addition to planning for the two classes he taught in the afternoon and his after-school coaching responsibilities), daily interviewing would have consumed too much of Andy's valuable planning time. Therefore, I opted to conduct formal interviews on a weekly basis. However, because I spent the entire day with Andy, I also had numerous informal conversations with him on a daily basis (e.g., before/after school, between classes, during lessons), which was an appropriate alternative for daily formal interviews because they often yielded rich data. For example, for a portion of class time during beach week, Andy and I floated

among the students on the lake on surfboards and chatted. As we watched the students participate, Andy was inspired to share his insights with me based on his observations of student behavior. Students smiled, laughed, and talked with one another—many of whom did not know each other before this class. Andy talked about how this type of behavior motivated him to emphasize social and emotional development over competition and technical skill development because he believed a relaxed approach to teaching bridged students with physical activity and students with each other. During these types of informal conversations, Andy often talked about his philosophies on teaching as well as about previous lessons, which provided me with access to his immediate interpretations and perceptions of class observations. On most days, we did not spend a lot of time talking during class, but we frequently spent the entire time between classes talking about previous classes.

After the 15-week data collection period, I also conducted two one-hour phone interviews and one three-hour formal (face-to-face) interview, all of which served as methods of member checking and provided opportunities to revisit research questions that warranted additional attention. Interviews with Andy allowed me to confirm, refute, or clarify my developing interpretations, which allowed me to better tell his story.

In addition, I conducted 20 e-mail interviews with Andy, which extended beyond the 15-week data collection period. Questions asked through e-mail mainly served as a method of member checking, but also allowed me to seek clarification on my developing interpretations as I analyzed data and wrote my findings sections. The insights he offered during the 38 interviews helped me to answer many of my research questions and ultimately facilitated a better understanding of how masculinities operated in this adventure physical education setting.

During week two of data collection, I began conducting formal and semi-structured interviews with students. Waiting until the second week allowed students to get acclimated to the class and also provided time for them to turn in consent/assent forms. Waiting until the second week also gave me time to familiarize myself with the setting and the research process. Each week, I conducted about six, one-hour face-to-face student interviews (usually two per day) for a total of approximately 84 interviews. I interviewed only students who returned assent/consent forms. I approached most students in person to invite them to participate in formal interviews, which we usually scheduled for later the same day or the next day. Interviews took place before school, during study hall, during lunch, and after school. The majority of the interviews took place inside the school building in public areas that were not heavily populated during the times of the interviews. Two interviews took place off campus at a local coffee shop because this location was more convenient and desirable for particular students. Thirty students (approximately 10 from each section—boys and girls) participated in multiple (2-5) one-hour formal interviews, which took place at various times throughout the 15-week onsite data collection period.

Additionally, I conducted approximately 200 e-mail interviews with students that took place both during the 15-week data collection period (evenings, weekends) and extended six months beyond onsite data collection. The questions I asked during e-mail interviews fit into three categories: (a) follow-up questions to questions asked during face-to-face interviews, (b) new questions that were not asked during face-to-face interviews, and (c) questions asked during face-to-face interviews to students who did not participate in that face-to-face interview. I also used e-mail to invite students to participate in face-to-face interviews and often scheduled interviews through e-mail as well. This method was especially useful as I was able to maintain

contact with students (and Andy) beyond my Monday through Wednesday data-collection days. E-mail interviews generally extended over three to four e-mails. For example, I asked a question, students responded. Next, I asked a clarification question and they responded again. However, some e-mail interviews spanned beyond four e-mails, sometimes less—but four e-mails was average. The majority of students who participated in face-to-face interviews also took part in e-mail interviews, mainly to answer follow-up questions. There were several students (approximately 20) who only took part in e-mail interviews. Of the seventy-nine students enrolled in the three sections of adventure education, I interviewed forty-seven. However, it should be noted that participating in lessons afforded me many opportunities to engage in informal conversations with *all* students enrolled in adventure physical education. Informal conversations took place before, during, and after class.

Student interviews played an important role in helping me answer my research questions and to better understand students' perspectives about adventure physical education—often in comparison to sport-dominated physical education. Ultimately, the data from the 284 student interviews (face-to face and e-mail) helped me tell the boys' stories, which I share in chapter 5.

Additionally, supplementing traditional data-collection techniques with identity-safe methods (e-mail interviews) helped me answer the same research questions as observations and face-to-face interviews; however, this innovative technique allowed me to access the perspectives of students who felt more comfortable answering questions in writing (and in private) rather than in a face-to-face interview, which they may have perceived as threatening. Without this technique, I may not have had access to certain students' insights.

Class observations. A second form of data collection I used was class observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), I observed Andy's

adventure physical education classes three days per week for 15 weeks, yielding a total of 135 class observations. Spradley (1980) outlines five types of participation that range along a continuum of involvement that includes nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, and complete participation. According to Spradley (1980), active participation is a useful technique, but not all social settings offer opportunities for researchers to assume this role (e.g., surgeon or ballet dancer). The opportunity existed for me in this adventure physical education setting so during class observations, I assumed the role of active participant because this type of participation allowed me to gain acceptance and to more fully learn the cultural rules for behavior. Students were more willing to talk with me and participate in interviews when I interacted and experienced the activities along with them as opposed standing off to the side with a notebook, detached from their world—students reported that my active participation played a crucial role in their willingness to talk with me. Additionally, during many of the activities it would have been nearly impossible to observe student participation as they were often spread out in parks, fields, waters, and wooded areas. For example, if I did not kayak with the class, my opportunities to observe would have been limited to right before and after the actual activity—observing from the shore would have prevented me from hearing and seeing student and teacher behaviors and interactions, which would have thwarted my ability to tell the story about masculinities in this setting. This circumstance was common with many of the activities in adventure physical education.

While observing, I looked for how social practices such as content, pedagogies, peer relations, and teacher-student relations contributed to the hierarchy of masculinities in adventure physical education. I watched for behaviors such as students' proximity to others (teacher and peers), open or closed body positions (making body big or small), facial expressions,

participation style (engaged or disengaged), degree of enthusiasm, and level of interaction with peers and Andy. Condensed field notes were taken on site, and later transcribed into expanded accounts (Spradley, 1980). When possible I used word-for-word, verbatim quotes when recording field notes, which allowed me to verify important details and meaning later. Also, I utilized the concrete principle and special detail was noted when recording observable occurrences in the research setting. This process allowed me to discuss specific details with the teacher and students later (Spradley, 1980). Although I recorded situations as they occurred, these observations alone were not used as the basis for interpretation. Rather, I integrated these observations into interviews to access the meaning these events had for the participants.

Class observations (as an active participant) contributed to a greater understanding of masculinities in this adventure physical education setting and helped me answer several of my research questions because I was always there to watch all that was going on. For example, my close-up vantage point of lessons allowed me to identify various masculinities that were operating, to look for how masculinities were hierarchically arranged, and to examine how social practices influenced the hierarchical ordering of masculinities.

Data Analysis

Each data-collection day, I followed a 14-step process that I repeated 45 times and until the research questions were fully answered. This recurring process helped me to carefully assess and interpret data and for the data to be clarified with adequate support as my interpretations developed.

Steps in the Research Process

First, I wrote interview and observation guides based on the research questions guiding my study. For example, in an interview I asked participants to describe the social hierarchies in adventure physical education and past sport-dominated physical education classes.

Second, I engaged in informal conversations with Andy throughout the day. When I observed something of interest happen during class, I asked him about it. For example, I would ask, “I noticed you talking to the group of girls who were late. Will you tell me about that conversation?”

Third, I also engaged students in informal conversations throughout the day. For example, when I observed a female student interact positively with a particular male student during class, I asked her about his during a formal interview. I asked, “I heard you invite Evan (A boy who was diagnosed with an emotional impairment) to lunch today. Will you tell me about why you and your friends are so kind to Evan in class?”

Fourth, I observed the adventure physical education classes and recorded field notes. This process helped me answer several research questions. For example, to help me understand how masculinities were embodied in adventure physical education, I watched for and recorded behaviors such as students’ proximity to others, their participation in the center of activities or on the margins, their interactions with others, and their body language (e.g., whether it was open or closed).

In the fifth data analysis step, I conducted weekly formal interviews with Andy, asking him research-related questions about the different types of students in his adventure physical education classes, the hierarchical configuration of students, and his philosophies and teaching practices as they relate to adventure physical education.

Sixth, I conducted formal interviews with students, which also helped me answer several research questions. For example, I asked students to describe the students in adventure physical education, the configuration of the girl and boy groups, and if certain types of students ruled or were pushed around. I also asked them to define the social hierarchies in adventure physical education, and to explain how it felt emotionally to be a certain type of boy in this class. I subsequently asked them to compare these to emotions they experienced in sport-dominated physical education.

In the seventh step, I posed questions to students using e-mail, in which I asked follow-up questions, new questions to students who did not participate in face-to-face interviews, and clarification questions.

In the eighth step, I transcribed audio-recorded interviews. In the ninth step, I transcribed all field notes from observations and informal conversations into expanded accounts (Spradley, 1980). The transcription process provided me with my first read of the data.

Tenth, I read and re-read all transcriptions to get an enhanced sense of the data. In step eleven, I coded and categorized all transcriptions by finding segments of data and gave it a code in the margins (Charmaz, 2006). I cutout segments of data and placed them into an already existing pile or created a new category. In the twelfth step, I analyzed data categories and wrote short interpretations in a researcher journal that described the category.

In the thirteenth and final step of my research process, I wrote interview guides, e-mail questions, and observation guides for the next data-collection day. These guides and activities included two types of questions: member checking questions based on my developing interpretations from the coding process (e.g., I thought you said this, is that how you see it?) and

questions that elicited new data relative to the research questions (e.g., Why do you think it is so difficult to describe the social hierarchy in adventure physical education?).

Trustworthiness Strategies

Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research requires that studies are conducted rigorously (Merriman, 2009). Researchers must present insights and findings that ring true to readers to increase the likelihood that readers will feel confident about applying the findings to their situations and settings in concrete ways (e.g., to construct social policy, create legislation, or adopt teaching practices). Stake (2005) declared that information acquired in a study “faces hazardous passage from writing to reading. The writer seeks ways of safeguarding the trip” (p. 455). When conducting this research, I concentrated on several trustworthiness principles to substantiate my interpretations. The criteria I used to establish trustworthiness in my study were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility means that research is conducted in such a way that increases the likelihood that the findings and interpretations will be found believable by the readers. I implemented six actions in my study to increase the credibility of the findings. They included prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking. Prolonged engagement is spending enough time in the research setting to learn about the culture, test misinformation and build trust with the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I spent four months at Apex High School working with Andy in his adventure physical education program. Each week I spent three full school days observing and interviewing Andy and his students, thus prolonged engagement helped establish credibility in my findings and interpretations.

Persistent observation is spending enough time in the setting to identify the irrelevant and important characteristics and then to critically examine those important characteristics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Establishing information that was germane or unrelated to the study allowed me to concentrate on the research questions in more depth, which helped me more fully answer my research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the extensive amount of time I spent in the research setting, persistent observation enhanced credibility.

To augment the credibility of findings, one needs more than a single source of information. I used triangulation to build redundancy into my data-collection methods for my study. Using multiple sources and multiple methods of data-collection ensured that information obtained from observations and participants was espoused by others (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Using multiple methods of data-collection allowed me to compare information a participant told me in an interview with observations I made in the research setting. Also, using multiple participants allowed me to compare data collected through observations at different times, interview data collected from participants with diverse viewpoints, and from follow-up interviews with the same participants (Merriman, 2009). These measures lead not only to a deeper understanding of how masculinities functioned in adventure physical education, but also to a greater credibility of the research findings.

Another means of establishing credibility I utilized was peer debriefing. This is a process of exposing developing interpretations to an unbiased peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Merriman (2009), peer debriefing can involve asking a colleague, someone who is either familiar with the topic or new to the topic, to look at some of the raw data and determine whether the findings are plausible based on the data. A peer debriefer also helps the researcher by asking probing questions that compel the researcher to

support emerging interpretations with data, offer other viewpoints, and address concerns relating to the research. A peer debriefer with extensive experience with qualitative research was consulted on a weekly basis to discuss matters and interpretations as the study progressed.

Negative-case analysis, where I refined my assumptions until they accounted for all known cases without exception (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), was another credibility measure that I implemented in my study. The logic of negative cases supposes examining whether the data contain individuals, situations, or themes that do not fit one's analysis (Charmaz, 2006). After establishing data categories, I searched my field notes and transcripts for contradictory data. When negative cases emerged, I compared data to other data in the same category to determine whether the category needed further study, revision, or removal.

The final technique that I used for establishing credibility was member checking. This technique provides a direct method of making sure the findings and interpretations from the participants are not solely based on the researcher's view (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Maxwell (2005),

This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed. (p. 111)

In this study, I conducted informal member checks by including my developing interpretations in future interview guides. Formal member checks took place after data-collection through follow-up interviews (face-to-face, phone, and e-mail) and by providing key participants with copies of the final report and asking them if my interpretations were consistent with the information they shared with me.

Transferability

This trustworthiness technique is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriman, 2009). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985),

The burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do. The investigator needs to provide sufficient descriptive data to make transferability possible. (p. 298)

Although the reader will be the one who decides the extent to which my study's findings apply to their particular situation, I presented enough detailed description of the study's context to allow readers to measure the fit with their situation. Specifically, I provided thick, rich descriptions of the research setting, participants, and the findings in the form of quotes and vignettes. Ultimately, rich descriptions enhanced the possibility of the findings and interpretations from this study to be transferred to other settings.

Dependability

This trustworthiness technique refers to the degree to which research findings can be replicated (Merriman, 2009). However, qualitative research is not carried out so that the principles of human behavior can be isolated, because the behaviors and information examined in the social world is not stable and permanent, but in flux and highly contextual. Merriman (2009) stated,

Researchers seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it. Since there are many interpretations of what is happening, there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense. (p. 220)

Just because numerous individuals may have experienced the same phenomenon does not make the finding more dependable. The more significant question to ask is whether the findings are consistent with the data. I implemented various strategies in this study to increase the

likelihood that my findings were consistent with my data. The first strategy I used for obtaining dependable data was using different data-collection techniques and collecting data from many subjects on the same topic. Second, an audit trail provided me with a means of convincingly showing how I got from my data to my interpretations. In the form of a researcher journal, the audit trail described in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the research process. Independent readers can confirm (or refute) the findings by following the audit trail.

Confirmability

This trustworthiness strategy determines the objectivity of the research, or whether the findings were grounded in the data itself or the product of the interests and preconceived notions of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I collected information in accordance with audit requirements. I gathered raw data in the form of written field notes, electronically recorded materials, and a researcher journal including developing interpretations, data synthesis products, and reflexive notes each data-collection day. The audit trail allowed the peer debriefer and dissertation committee to authenticate the findings of the study (Merriman, 2009).

Ethical Dimensions of Research

Part of ensuring credibility in research is that the researcher is trustworthy in conducting the study in as ethical a manner as possible (Merriman, 2009). Researchers need to be mindful of the ethical issues that permeate the research process and to think about their theoretical orientation in relation to these issues (Merriman 2009). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), ethical dilemmas are not easily resolved or prevented by a list of rules and regulations. I encountered a variety of ethical concerns as I conducted this study. These considerations

included permission to conduct research; participant anonymity; and safeguarding participants' rights, interests, and sensitivities.

I obtained permission to conduct the research through the university Institutional Review Board, the school district superintendent, the school principle, and from the teacher (Andy) by thoroughly describing the study and data-collection methods. I also obtained permission from the students by getting written informed consent from the parent or legal guardian and the student by sending home a letter describing the study. I gave all participants the opportunity to choose to participate in the study. Their permission was obtained by broadly explaining the purpose of the study and providing written informed consent. I assured participants that participation in the study was voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

I secured participant anonymity by using pseudonyms to describe the names of participants, the school, and other identifying features in both field notes, transcriptions, and the final report to prevent identification. All field notes recorded at the research site stayed with me at all times, and were not be left where others could access them. Original field notes were destroyed after they were expanded into an electronic format, and audio-recorded interviews were deleted once they were transcribed. All transcriptions were stored in a locked filing cabinet throughout the study, and only the university advisor and I had access to these documents. At the end of my study, and upon approval of the dissertation committee, all paper copies of interviews and field notes will be shredded, but will be maintained as electronic copies on a portable media storage device for an additional three years.

Where research involves the attainment of information handed over on the assumption of trust between the researcher and the participant, the rights, interests, and sensitivities of the participants must be safeguarded (Spradley, 1980). As researchers, we must consider the

implications of our study from this vantage point as it may have consequences unnoticed by the participants. First, when asking participants to do interviews, there is a large time commitment and potential participants should know how much time interviews will take. Therefore, when getting informed consent from participants, I told them approximately how long the interviews may take. Second, participants have the right to know the aims of the research (Spradley, 1980). Therefore, I shared the purpose of my study with participants when getting informed consent. Third, because I addressed some power-infused thematic issues, it was be important that I addressed the sensitive nature of the topics. For example, I told students that there was no right or wrong answer and that whatever information they were willing to share with me would be extremely beneficial. I also made sure they knew that it was okay to pass on questions that they did not feel comfortable answering and that passing would not upset me or negatively impact our relationship. Additionally, in situations where I suspected students felt uncomfortable, I offered the option of answering questions less threatening methods such as e-mail interviews.

Researcher Subjectivity

Researchers must explain their interests, positions, and assumptions concerning their research (Charmaz, 2006). Such clarifications allow readers to understand the extent to which the researcher's values influenced the conduct of the study and interpretations of the data (Merriman, 2009). This clarification is essential because researchers' biases influence their purposes for pursuing particular research, the questions asked, the manner in which questions are asked, the observations made in the research setting, and how they interpret the data. In this section, I discuss how a social justice perspective and previous studies of students' experiences in physical education influenced my perspectives during this study.

Social Justice Perspective

I taught elementary physical education for eight years. During this time, I learned a great deal about myself, about students, and also about the field of physical education in general. For example, not everything I did as a teacher was great. Not all students loved physical education and based on characteristics such as ability, gender, and sexuality. And students' experiences in physical education were often inequitable. As I became a more reflective teacher and took graduate courses, I realized there were many things that I did that inhibited lower-skilled students from developing a positive relationship with physical activity (e.g., limited scope of content, minimal ways to be successful, lack of choices, emphasized competition and elite performance). Therefore, I searched for and implemented teaching practices that provided equitable opportunities for all students to have fun, learn, and be successful. For example, I broadened the content beyond sport, de-emphasized competition and technical skill development, and offered more choices. I also realized that there was minimal research addressing boys in the context of physical education, especially boys who embodied masculinities not produced as dominant in most physical activity settings. I had a sincere interest in playing a role in constructing physical education into a space that helps students develop positive relationships with physical activity. Studying boys' masculinities in adventure physical education allowed me to begin this process.

Furthermore, I attended to instances in social settings that reflected inequality for groups of people who embodied ways of being that are typically marginalized in physical activity settings. Given that my research interests were centered on looking at boys' masculinities in adventure physical education, it would have been easy for me to interpret this environment as having only a positive, liberating impact on certain boys, while everything they tell me about past experiences in traditional sport-dominated physical education is interpreted as oppressive

and negative. I remained open to alternative interpretations that possibly told me something different from my preconceived notions, such as traditional sport-dominated physical education providing only painful, negative experiences for certain boys and that adventure physical education is only experienced positively. For example, students that have had mostly negative experiences in sport-dominated physical education may have a few positive stories to share about that setting. I used various strategies to facilitate my ability to take notice of the events in the social setting. First, when I observed situations that I perceived as positive or oppressive, rather than assuming my interpretations were accurate, I integrated questions into future interview guides to confirm, refute, or expand my interpretations. Second, interview guides included questions that allowed participants to share opposing or alternative viewpoints. For example, when I conducted an interview containing questions that focused only on negative experiences in sport-dominated physical education, I ensured that the participant had an opportunity to share positive stories. Third, a peer debriefer read and evaluated interview guides before they were implemented to ensure the questions invited alternative views and experiences.

Influence of Previous Studies

Previous studies of students' negative experiences in physical education, especially in hyper-masculine settings where competition and elite performance were elevated above learning, also influenced my perspective in this study. In graduate school, my opportunities to learn about and work with boys' masculinities in sport-dominated physical education were immense. Working with boys and reading the literature regarding boys' experiences in physical education influenced this study as it served as a point of reference when observing and interviewing participants. Using wide lenses during data-collection and analysis helped me to examine the

perspectives and experiences of the current study's participants rather than confusing their narratives with my understandings from past work and readings.

Summary

The purpose of my study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. Although examining only one less traditional physical education setting may cause alarm, it is not a limitation to the research. Using one adventure physical education program allowed me to acquire insider status given the frequency (three days per week) and length of my stay (four months). Examining masculinities in this setting helped me obtain a richer understanding of boys' masculinities because Andy and the students felt comfortable with my presence. If I was studying multiple schools, developing insider status may not be as likely and may have yielded less rich data. This collection of individuals provided me with a wide range of insights, which helped me tell two stories describing how masculinities functioned in this adventure physical education setting.

CHAPTER 4: HIERARCHY SHIFTING PEDAGOGIES: ANDY'S STORY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. Six research questions guided this study:

1. What masculinities operated in adventure physical education and how were they hierarchically ordered?

2. How did social practices influence the hierarchical ordering of masculinities in adventure physical education?

3. How did the hierarchical arrangement of masculinities produced in adventure physical education differ from sport-dominated physical education?

4. What role did females play in masculinities' construction in adventure physical education?

5. How were masculinities embodied in adventure physical education?

6. How did the emotional expense of embodying certain masculinities in sport-dominated physical education differ from adventure physical education?

The major finding described in this chapter is Andy's story—how his program and approach to teaching were driven by a desire and effort to decrease the status differential by building three metaphorical bridges: (a) between students and physical activity, (b) among students in adventure physical education, and (c) between himself and his students. These three bridges were Andy's mechanisms for making the hierarchical arrangements less pronounced. Although Andy intended to create a more equalized social space for all students, his efforts played a particularly critical role in decreasing the status differential among male students—even though this was not his expressed focus. Therefore, discussions on Andy's intent will apply to all

students, despite the actual events, which focused on boys. This emphasis will become crystallized in chapter 5, when student narratives illuminate Andy's approach to building bridges for all students, with specific attention on the masculinities operating in his adventure physical education classes.

I organized this chapter into two themes. In the first I describe the adventure physical education setting, which includes a description of each unit, Andy's reasoning for including each unit, a chronological narrative about how Andy planned for the unit, and examples of situations that occurred during class sessions. In the second theme I discuss Andy's rationale for creating metaphorical bridges with and for his students. This reasoning is important for understanding chapter 5 where I use the boys' words to illustrate the significant role these bridges played for them, both in and out of adventure physical education.

Adventure Physical Education

The school year at Apex High School was organized into three 12-week trimesters, and Andy taught multiple sections of adventure physical education which grew in popularity among students each year. In fact, the class was so popular that it was difficult for Andy to accommodate all of the students who desired to enroll. When Andy began teaching this class several years prior, there were three sections of adventure physical education per year. Due to its increasing popularity, more sections were added for a total of eight sections during the year I collected data and ten sections were offered the following year. During the trimester when I collected data, there were more boys enrolled than girls: first hour (6 girls 20 boys), second hour (9 girls 17 boys), and third hour (9 girls 18 boys).

It is important to clarify my use of the terms athletic and less athletic before proceeding with a description of the two themes covered in this chapter. In most cases I used the term

athletic to describe students who were skilled (i.e., coordinated, fit, agile) in traditional team sports such as football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, floor hockey. Conversely, I used the term *less athletic* to describe students who were less skilled or unskilled in traditional team sports. This rather narrow view of athleticism excludes less traditional team sports (e.g., rock climbing, kayaking, surfing, triathlons, and target shooting); nevertheless, using dichotomous terms such as athletic and less athletic allowed me to draw distinctions between student groups in adventure physical education, especially between boy groups.

The following sections present rich descriptions of each activity unit by describing the unit, Andy's reasons for including the unit, class planning and preparation, and occurrences during class sessions. During the fall semester Andy taught nine units. They included group initiatives, ropes course, beach week, gun safety, adventure racing, paintball, kayaking and canoeing, indoor rock climbing, and water safety. The units are presented in the order in which they occurred during the trimester.

Because most of the activities took place off campus and required nonschool space and equipment, Andy used his time outside of work to prepare for each unit and class period. He often set up the equipment for class on evenings and weekends. He visited local businesses for purchases or rentals. He built relationships with local business owners, for example, by sending thank you cards, adventure education photos, and calendars, or by taking people to dinner. He also made phone calls, sent e-mails, picked up and dropped off equipment, repaired equipment, planned lessons, and attended to many other class-related duties. Despite this heavy work load, Andy worked without complaint and described the benefits students received as being well worth this effort.

There are long hours, but it comes and goes. There are some weeks where there is little work and other weeks where I am like, "What in the hell? Why is this so difficult getting

all of this stuff to come together?” It’s just because that is the way our units go. You know, I can’t control which units are a lot of work and which are not. Paintball, a ton of work, but the profit [student benefits] for paintball is huge and far outweighs my personal expense [time and energy]. As far as me running around, being up late, a canoe comes off the trailer on the road—it’s par for the course. So I always feel like I am in the positive, never in the red. I love the activities. I don’t mind setting up for stuff on the weekends or cutting up plywood. Generally kids want to be here and enjoy it, so I get the satisfaction of knowing that it’s something they can do the rest of their lives.

Group Initiatives

Group initiatives are movement activities based on social themes that challenge the groups mentally and physically. These stimulating problem-solving tasks are designed to help groups develop their capacity to work effectively together and require teamwork for their successful completion. Although the length of this unit varied among classes, on average it lasted about three days and included approximately eight initiatives. If a class accomplished the initiatives in less than three days, they moved forward to the ropes course unit the following day. Conversely, if a class took longer to accomplish the initiatives, Andy did not rush them into the next unit. Instead, readiness to move forward was based on their ability to work cooperatively to accomplish the initial set of tasks. Also, if a group of students was not able to accomplish a task during a single class session, they revisited that initiative the following day. For example, one class was unable to accomplish group jump rope (explained later) in a single class session; instead of progressing to the next initiative, Andy began their next class session with group jump rope until they were successful.

Andy included the group initiative unit in his program because the nature of the activities allowed him to teach core social themes such as respect for differences, problem solving, self-esteem, compassion, leadership, creativity, and risk taking. He believed that teaching social themes at the beginning of the trimester brought a host of benefits: (a) they provided an appropriate context for captivating traditionally disinterested physical education students, (b)

they provided the foundation for the bridges he intended to build, and (c) they prepared students for bigger challenges that would be present in future units and in everyday life. Andy believed there was significance in teaching group initiatives at the beginning of the trimester. He stated,

I always start with group initiatives and the number of days depends on the size of the group. I get a feel from them [students] and whether or not there are distinct groups within the class. I then try to script and present activities in an order that starts with fun, talking, laughing, then move to problem solving, then trust. Honestly, these first few days are probably the most important. If I fail or the class cannot come together, the experience is not the same. I try to be very intentional about what I say and how I say it. I can usually identify who will be a natural leader, who has self-esteem issues, and who doesn't know anyone. I feel like if we emerge from that unit feeling good then it will be a great trimester.

Andy put a great deal of preparation into planning the group initiatives unit. Rather than having a predetermined plan at the start of the unit, he began with group juggle, where students started one tennis ball while standing in a circular formation and created a throwing pattern so each person in the group received a pass to see how many tennis balls they could get going at once without dropping the balls. During this activity he assessed the strengths and weaknesses of each class and selected activities based on their specific needs (e.g., number of students in each class, early assessment of group dynamics). Based on his observations of student behavior, he determined which core social themes (i.e., communication, problem solving, leadership, cooperation, respect for differences) needed to be emphasized for each class. He then selected specific activities that would benefit each class by directly addressing the core themes that he believed to be the most important. For example, when he felt a class needed to develop better group communication skills, he included more activities that required students to use both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. When there were students in class who presented particular challenges (e.g., physical or cognitive disabilities, lacking in popularity, being overweight, experiencing difficulties in interacting with others), he included activities that emphasized respecting differences. When students dominated activities, he implemented tasks

that encouraged students to speak freely while also requiring them to listen to the ideas of others. As he moved through the group initiative unit, Andy observed students' behaviors, which informed future curricular decisions.

During group juggle, Evan, a boy who had difficulty throwing and catching the ball, often caused the group to start over. Instead of getting annoyed with him, his classmates minimized his mistakes and said things like, "Hey, that's okay" and implemented strategies to help him be successful, for example, by throwing to Evan directly, with less speed and force. Girls in the class also paid positive attention to Evan and asked him how he was doing, stood near him during activities and chatted, and invited him to lunch.

By the second day, the initiatives expanded to include more complex activities such as group jump rope. This initiative required that all students get through a 20-foot turning rope without touching the rope and without anyone causing the rope to stop. If someone touched the rope or if someone caused the rope to stop turning, the task was restarted, and anyone who had successfully crossed the rope had to return to the starting side of the rope. Andy explained the activity and then allowed students to work on the task. It took each class several attempts before successfully solving the problem. Each time a class had to start over, they discussed new ideas. For instance, instead of blaming students who tripped on the rope or caused it to stop, they implemented strategies such as slowing the speed of the rope or ensuring that the rope contacted the ground during each revolution, which decreased the chance that people tripped on the rope. Sometimes the activity had to be restarted after only a few people made it to the other side of the rope and other times they had restart after most of class had made it across. No one appeared upset when they had to restart, and I often heard comments such as, "That is okay, man" or "No worries, dude." In one class, the same young man repeatedly, but seemingly unintentionally, ran

into the rope, struggling with the timing when he ran through it. Rather than getting upset with his lack of coordination, the class devised a strategy in which he ran through the rope with two fast and coordinated students—with linked hands, the threesome successfully made it through the turning rope. Upon successful completion of group jump rope, each class celebrated with cheers, high-fives, and smiles.

During group initiatives Andy maintained a strong teacher presence. He often enacted strategies to try to decrease the likelihood of certain students dominating activities. For example, during group jump rope, Andy observed a young man dominating, and Andy “silenced” him, which meant that the young man could no longer use verbal communication during the initiative. Once this boy was silenced, other students took on leadership roles. In another class, Andy silenced two outgoing students. Subsequently, two quiet boys stepped forward, assumed the role of leaders, and helped their class accomplish the task.

Andy ended each activity with a debriefing session where he asked the students a series of questions: 1) What happened during the activity? 2) What did they learn from the activity? and 3) How can they use their newfound knowledge from the experience throughout the trimester and in nonschool areas of their lives?

Ropes Course

A ropes course, consisting of low and high elements, is a challenging outdoor or indoor personal development and team building activity that emphasizes core social themes. Low elements take place on the ground or only a few feet above the ground. When high are usually constructed in trees or made of utility poles and require a belay (explained later) for safety. Including the ropes course unit was driven by Andy’s desire to create a physical education program that built metaphorical bridges for his students to ultimately produce hierarchical

configurations among students that were less pronounced. He also believed that the ropes course unit had the capacity to capture the interest of the traditionally disinterested physical education student. According to Andy, gaining their interest early in the trimester played a significant role in their continued captivation in class activities as the trimester progressed. Andy believed the ropes course unit had a profound impact on many students. He shared,

The ropes courses challenge people mentally and physically yet you don't have to be super fit to do it. It is also a time when I get to see if kids really "get it." I almost always say "this class is bigger than you, bigger than me, and all about helping each other step outside of your comfort zones and take risks." Usually this is the case—kids support one another, celebrate accomplishments—regardless of how big or small. I love that—it almost brings me to tears thinking of it! I also love high ropes because it is all about perceived risk—it is very safe; I have never had an accident there. However, to the kids it feels dangerous so the perceived risk levels are high, and I believe it's good for kids to feel that.

Andy observed student behaviors from the previous unit to inform curricular decisions for the ropes course unit, deciding which core social themes to emphasize and which activities to use. As a fully certified ropes-course facilitator, Andy had free access to a local camp site—an outdoor wooded facility that offered adventure-based activities and overnight stays—which gave him use of the high and low-ropes elements, harnesses, belay devices, helmets, and ropes. In return, Andy maintained the ropes course at no charge to the owner. He replaced ropes, laid wood chips, and provided basic maintenance services to the course. Over the summer, Andy made arrangements to secure two weeks for his fall adventure physical education classes. Each day during the ropes course unit, Andy arrived at least 45 minutes before the class start time to set up the course. This set up entailed getting equipment ready for the low-ropes course, placing belay ropes on the high ropes course and rock wall; laying out harnesses, helmets, and sling lines; and preparing debriefing questions so he was ready to facilitate a meaningful debriefing session at the end of each activity and class session. However, most debriefing questions were derived from behaviors and events Andy observed during each activity.

The low-ropes portion of this unit lasted 3-5 days and consisted of a series of 7-10 movement tasks designed to challenge groups and individuals to work together. Andy taught core themes such as respect for differences, leadership, creativity, communication, and risk taking. Additionally, he believed that the low-ropes elements presented tests of physical strength, stamina, agility, balance, and flexibility; most importantly, the elements invited students to confront emotional issues such as the fear of falling, the fear of failure, and the fear of losing control. Risk was managed by group members who provided both physical and emotional support. During these activities Andy facilitated and when needed, helped students work through each task. Andy also believed that a benefit of the low-ropes challenges prepared students for bigger challenges: the high-ropes course and outdoor rock wall. It was especially important to Andy that all students were emotionally prepared for the units that involved heights, which in his opinion prevented certain students (e.g., those with no fear of heights) from being privileged over students who were afraid of heights. He believed teaching activity units in an intentional order facilitated his ability to create an equalized social playing field for students.

During low ropes, Andy presented an initiative called the group wall. He explained that the goal was for students to work together to get their entire group over a 12 foot vertical wall. First, a couple of students who were strong and agile muscled their way up the wall with some help from their classmates on the ground. Once these students were up, they were able to stand on a platform on the other side of the wall where they helped others. The next group of students got up and over the wall with assistance from the students on the platform. They spent a great deal of time discussing the order in which students would attempt the wall, basing their decisions on the strengths and weaknesses (related to this initiative) of all group members. Students on the ground found ways to lift and push their classmates up while the students on the platform

reached down and assisted their classmates the rest of the way up. They strategically planned for the last student on the ground to be someone who was strong, both physically and emotionally (i.e., not afraid), and thereby capable of getting up the wall without support from the ground. Every class was successful in completing this task: Students cheered, applauded, and celebrated when the last person was over the wall. Andy said,

The low-ropes participation segment is usually 100% mostly because of how I sequence activities. I start with fun activities, low risk, and then I slowly progress to trust activities. Kids have said numerous times that they think these activities are fun—important for the class. I have had students even suggest I revisit this stuff throughout the trimester. I think that is a great idea—I'm just not sure when to fit it in.

The high-ropes portion of the ropes course unit lasted approximately seven days. It consisted of elements suspended about 40 feet above the ground between wood poles. In addition, there was a two-sided climbing wall with an easy and challenging side, based on the number and spacing of hand and foot holds. Although a separate indoor rock climbing unit was included later in the trimester, Andy also made use of this outdoor climbing wall for a variety of reasons: (a) It was on-site with the ropes course and students were already wearing harnesses, (b) students could practice belaying without having knot-tying skills (knots were pre-made), and (c) it increased physical activity levels because only 10 students at a time could be on the high-ropes course. Each of the high-ropes elements were linked together and students chose their direction of travel at each transition point, which was comprised of a platform secured to a pole. While on the course, students were attached to a belay cable with a dual rope sling-line connected to their harness at one end and two clips attached to the overhead cable. Once students were clipped into the overhead cable, the belay cable was removed. As they moved from one element to the next, students completed a “transfer” of their rope clips at specific transition points at each platform. The transfer process occurred with a “ground buddy” watching to make sure the clips were transferred one at a time and ended up facing opposite directions, to rule out the possibility of

failure. The objective of each element was to get from one platform to the other while being physically and emotionally challenged. When students fell, it was only a 1-3 foot drop depending on how much slack they had in their sling line. When students did fall, most were able to lift themselves back onto the cable and continue. The following high-ropes elements were included:

1. The swinging vines, which required students to walk across a steel cable while reaching for ropes suspended 3-4 feet apart from an overhead cable;
2. The tire walk, which included oversized tires suspended from overhead cables that required students to move from tire to tire as they moved toward the opposite platform;
3. The wild woozy, in which pairs of students walked parallel cables that got farther and farther apart as they held onto each other;
4. The rope bridge, in which students walked across a bridge made of ropes while holding onto rope rails on the sides; and
5. The foot bridge, which required students to step on rectangular pieces of wood connected by rope with nothing to hold onto other than their sling line.

During the high-ropes segment of this unit, Andy focused on personal achievements and encouraged students to confront personal fears. While framing (i.e., explaining the activity before participating) and debriefing (i.e., discussing after the students completed the challenges), Andy emphasized the fundamentals of trust and challenge by choice. In doing so, he encouraged, but never forced, students to stretch their comfort zones. Andy especially liked that the activities invited different types of students to step out of their comfort zones, not only particular students. According to Andy, in many sport-based physical education settings in the Apex school district, boys who were less athletic were typically being nudged out of their comfort zones.

During the first two days of this unit students were taught how to put on harnesses and sling-lines, and received detailed instruction on belaying and being a “ground buddy.” The ground buddy system was used to promote safety and positive peer interaction. This system allowed students on the high-ropes course to communicate with a peer who was on the ground, for support, tips, and observation of proper sling line transfers. Belaying is the technique used in climbing to exert friction on a climbing rope so that a falling climber will only fall a short and safe distance. A climbing partner applies the friction at the other end of the rope whenever the climber is not moving, and then removes the friction from the rope when the climber needs more rope in order to continue climbing. During the first two days, students also experienced climbing up the tower (part way or all the way) so they could experience falling and begin to trust their classmates as belayers. Some students seemed to have no fear and excitedly climbed the poles and across many of the elements on the first day, while others were unsure and required more time to absorb the process and gain support from the group to help them step out of their comfort zones. For the first few days of the high-ropes segment of this unit, some students were content with providing ground support by belaying or providing verbal assistance to their peers. Andy encouraged students who went on the high-ropes course on the first day to belay or try the rock wall on the second day to give other students an opportunity to go on the ropes course. Although some students had a fear of heights, all students attempted the climbing wall and high ropes course, even if their participation was limited to climbing part way up a pole or the wall before being belayed to the ground. Andy never forced students to stretch their comfort zones to levels they feared, using the peer support to foster students’ opportunities to experience success. For example, support such as, “You can do it Brian, just put your foot on the tire and reach for the next rope”; “Nice move!”; and “I got you, buddy—just keep looking forward, you can do this!”

appeared to help numerous students get through many of the elements; indeed, on several occasions, students who were discouraged continued on after receiving support. Peer support was multidirectional, meaning that students from different subgroups supported one another. This observation was confirmed during interviews with Andy and the students. At the end of each class session during the high-ropes portion of the unit, Andy facilitated a debriefing session in which he invited students to talk about significant things they experienced or witnessed. He always saved at least ten minutes of class time as to not rush students through this important process. Debriefing never required much prompting by Andy: The students were always willing to talk about significant events. A variety of encouraging remarks were always shared: “Brian climbed to the top of the tower today, even though he was really scared”; “Jeff encouraged me while I was on the swinging vines and that helped me get across”; “Mary talked to me the whole time I was on the rope bridge because she knew how scared I was”; or “Mike belayed the whole class session today.” Students’ engagement during the debriefing sessions suggested their enjoyment in sharing stories about other people’s achievements and ways of supporting one another.

Students who seemed uncomfortable and alone on the first day of class seemed to loosen up and appeared as if they felt like part of the group. They smiled or interacted with others. Andy encouraged this socialization by initiating conversations with all types of students, instructionally and through chit chat, and different types of students initiated interactions with him.

Beach Week

Andy included a two-week beach unit which involved one week of skim boarding, defined as a sport in which a small version of a surfboard is used to glide across the water’s surface. Unlike surfing, skim boarding begins on the beach. It starts with the dropping of the

board onto the thin wash of previous waves. Skimmers use their momentum to skim out to breaking waves, which they then catch back into shore in a manner similar to surfing. Stand-up paddle boarding is a surface water sport in which the participant propels themselves across the water using a paddle (blade, long shaft, and handle) while standing on a long surfboard staying relatively close to the shore. Students first made their skim boards, then participated in one week of beach activities that included skim boarding, stand-up paddle boarding, and surfing.

Andy included the beach week unit because he wanted to connect students with activities they may not have the opportunity to experience outside of adventure physical education. He also believed that because the beach week activities were new to most students that social hierarchies among students would be narrowed. He wanted to show them that doing physical activity did not have to be about a competitive, elite performance, but instead could be about having fun and feeling good. Also, Andy felt that because surfing, skim boarding, and stand-up paddling could be pursued by many students throughout adulthood, he hoped that these activities would be practiced outside of his structured set-up: alone or with others, and at a young or old age.

For each class session, Andy set up all the materials (i.e., saws, buckets, paint, lacquer, sandpaper, brushes, trash cans, paper towel) outside the building before students arrived so they could begin working right away. During the first day of skim board making, students received an overview of the two-week unit, detailed instruction on the skim board creation process, watched an instructional surfing DVD, and saw skim boards created by students from past trimesters. With guidance from Andy and help from one another, students embarked upon their skim board creating process. First they selected a skim board template: either large, medium, or small, based on students' weight. Next, they used skill saws to cut their boards out of a large piece of plywood

(some saws were supplied by Andy and some by students). During the cutting phase of skim board making, students worked together.. For example, while David cut out his board Steve, Craig and Jenny firmly held the board down as he cut, to prevent the board and saw from jerking around. Students with experience using saws assumed leadership roles and helped their classmates (who were often from different subgroups) cut their boards. Next, they sanded their boards, first with a coarse grit to rough up the surface of the board, next with a medium grit to remove smaller imperfections, and finally with a fine grit to polish their boards. A few students brought in electric sanders and shared them with their classmates. During the sanding phase, many students sat on upside down buckets in small groups chatting as they sanded. On occasion, students would feel someone's board and comment on its smoothness. The day prior to lacquering, students took their boards home to add "rocker," which made the nose of the board slightly higher than the tail, allowing the boards to glide across the surface of the water more efficiently. First, they saturated the boards with water (i.e., soaked in bath tub or hosed it down outside), placed a piece of wood such as a 2X4 under the nose, and then placed a heavy object such as a tool box on the top of the board to keep it in place. They allowed the boards to dry in this position overnight, and brought them back to school the next day to behold each other's boards. On the last day they lacquered and painted their boards (some students were not ready to paint so they took their board home to finish over the weekend). During the final phase of skim board making, most students were highly engaged, working together, and helping one another. Some excitedly shared their progress with Andy as he walked around and chatted with different types of students. One young man, who did not typically get along well with his peers, received a great deal of positive attention because of his unique lacquering technique—he used two different colors of lacquer. Some of his classmates praised him and told him how much they

liked his board. Before this day, this young man had not initiated interactions, at least not in a positive manner, with his peers in this setting. After receiving such praise from his classmates, he walked around, showing off his board and talking about his unique design.

The second week of the beach unit entailed skim boarding, stand-up paddle boarding, and surfing. Students arrived (many arrived 15-20 minutes early), put on wetsuits in the parking lot, and got into the water. The air temperature was chilly most mornings. Some students were eager to get into the water and some were not, especially students in second and third hour who had to put on wetsuits that were cold and wet from first and second hour students. The energy level was high as students prepared for class: Students from different subgroups laughed, chatted, joked around, and talked about which activity they would try first. Most students had never tried skim boarding, stand-up paddling, or surfing, and they talked about how excited they were to try these new skills. Many students tried skim boarding first, and most struggled. I observed two groups of students—a group of boys who played on sports teams at Apex High School and a group of girls. Both groups had difficulty skim boarding, but did not give up. They made many awkward attempts and endured hard falls, but they kept at it and accepted help from their more experienced peers. Although skim boarding required a great deal of balance, timing, and core strength, the students who were the most skilled offered help to others were not necessarily regarded as “athletic” before this unit. Stand-up paddling was extremely popular among the students: They were used the entire class period. Because there were only three boards, Andy asked students to share the boards and not use them for long periods of time. Andy believed they were so popular because other than standing up on the board and balancing, stand-up paddling did not require high levels of fitness or coordination to be successful.

There was only one day when the water was conducive to surfing, and students took advantage of this day. Some were eager to surf (those with and without experience), and some chose to not try surfing, which was allowed by Andy, especially because they only had one day to get comfortable and because there were other activities available. Andy taught the students how to catch a wave and “pop-up” into a three-point stance on the board. Some students tried right away; others observed and then tried after watching their classmates. Some students were able to stand up and ride a wave while others spent most of their time trying to stand-up and then falling into the water. However, technical skill development did not appear to make the experience more enjoyable because students were laughing, helping, encouraging, and trying even if they were not skillful.

Although Andy encouraged students to try each activity and offered instruction, he had no set performance expectations or guidelines, and he did not assess students on their technical skills. Students had the freedom to choose which activity they did, how long they did it, and if and when they switched to a new activity. In fact, one day when the water was still, calm, and not conducive to surfing, a group of students developed a creative way to use the surf and stand-up paddle boards: They stood on the board and attempted to jump and turn 90, 180, and then 360 degrees with the goal of landing balanced. Students were laughing, falling in the water, and interacting with their peers in a positive manner. Although this was not how the boards were intended to be used, Andy did not correct the students’ use of the boards. Instead, he let them have fun and appreciated their engagement and enthusiasm on a day when the water was too calm for surfing or skim boarding. He shared,

You saw it today when you and I were sitting on surf boards—I was looking around and going, “This is great,” there’s not much to do on a flat lake, and these kids could all say, “I’m not dressing, I’m sitting on the beach.” But they’re all out on the water; they’re having fun and talking. They could be talking about whose house got tee peed— I don’t

care as long as they're hanging out and they're making those connections a little bit, that's wonderful.

Beach week required a great deal of preparation on Andy's part and was the most expensive unit. About two weeks in advance, Andy contacted a local building supply store who discounted enough high-quality wood, sand paper, and stain for seventy-six students. If Andy had to pay full price for these items, it would not have been possible to include skim board making. Andy reported that the financial aspect of adventure physical education caused him the most stress. He said,

I stress out about our budget *a lot* because if the economy doesn't get better it's going to be tougher and tougher for me to do what I do. Yesterday was a good example—I ordered 35 sheets of plywood, and it's going to cost eight or nine hundred dollars. Two years ago it was six hundred, and so it goes up. There was a 24-hour period where I didn't think we were going have lacquer for skim boards, and I was freaking out. I'm like, shit, we just started, I already paid for and cut up plywood, we have to make them. So then I started thinking, what am I going to cut later down the road [in that specific trimester].

Additionally, as a result of the relationship he developed with the owner of a local surf shop, he borrowed, at no cost, a full-class set of wet suits, eight surf boards, three stand-up paddle boards, and the company's truck to transport the equipment back and forth during beach week. Andy woke up early on these days because he had to drive his truck to the surf shop, pick up the truck with all the equipment, drive to the beach, and unload so the equipment was ready when the students arrived. Between classes he reorganized the wetsuits in the parking lot so the next class could easily access the equipment rather than digging through a heap of mismatched wetsuits. After third hour, he reloaded the truck, which included hanging over 25 wet, heavy wetsuits on hangers, then loading up all the surf boards, stand-up paddle boards, and students' skim boards so they did not have to transport them back and forth each day. Once the truck was loaded, he drove back to the surf shop, got his truck, and returned to the high school. Before and after class preparation took a total of two hours each day and Andy was not heard complaining

Preparing for this unit required Andy to cultivate relationships throughout the school year, not just during this unit. For example, he visited local businesses and talked about his program, sent thank-you cards and adventure education photos and calendars, took business owners out to dinner, made phone calls, sent e-mails, and purchased his personal equipment from these stores. He also invested time telling local business owners about his program, which according to Andy, seemed to increase their willingness to support his program with monetary donations, reduced pricing, and free equipment rentals. Andy mentioned that he often saw the adventure education calendars he mailed them displayed in the stores, which pleased him greatly.

Gun Safety

Gun safety provided students with information so they could comply with state hunting laws and also taught the safe handling of firearms. Andy included this unit because hunting was prevalent in the lives of many of his students, and therefore, he felt it was important to teach them how to be safe around guns. During this unit, students could receive their hunter's safety certification. Additionally, this unit exposed students to unique activities that could be pursued by different types of students in their community and on their own time (e.g., skeet and trap shooting, BB gun tournaments, target shooting, hunting). Andy believed that this unit gave new students a chance to shine. Gun safety lasted two weeks and included one classroom day, six shooting activity days, two spontaneous trips to the pier to see record breaking waves (planned shooting activities were cancelled due to high winds), and one community service day.

The first day of gun safety was a classroom day when the students met the three deputies who led the gun safety activities. On this first day, Andy wanted to excite the students about the unit and told them about the various shooting venues they could pursue. Andy overviewed the unit and the principles that would be emphasized throughout the unit, namely, keeping the

muzzle pointed in safe direction at all times, treating every firearm as if it were loaded, being certain of the target and what is in front of it and beyond it, keeping fingers outside of the trigger guard until ready to shoot, ensuring the barrel and action are clear of obstructions and carrying only the proper ammunition for your firearm, unloading firearms when not in use, pointing a firearm only at something one intend to shoot (i.e., avoiding horseplay), avoiding running or climbing with a loaded firearm, storing firearms and ammunition separately and safely, and avoiding consumption of alcoholic beverages before and during shooting.

The remainder of the unit entailed community service (i.e., chopping wood at the gun club, raking the clay pieces at the gun club, and spreading woodchips at the local high-ropes campsite), outdoor target shooting (aiming at a round object or surface marked with circles), skeet shooting (tossing clay targets were tossed into the air at speeds and angles intended to simulate the flight of birds), bow and arrow shooting, and a BB gun competition (i.e., firing small pellets from a shotgun at targets).

During the outdoor target shooting day, there were multiple types of pistols and rifles available. Students excitedly rotated from one gun to the next while chatting about their experiences. The outdoor targets included metal plates and paper targets. Deputies and volunteers were stationed at each shooting area and students rotated to different guns and targets. The students received specific instructions on how to shoot each gun, and the success rate for their shooting was high. Student groups mixed and interacted—no one appeared to be excluded. Andy participated with the students, which the students seemed to enjoy. Some students gathered around to watch him shoot and called him over when they shot. Many students remarked at their surprise at how much they enjoyed the shooting unit, despite the weather.

During the gun safety unit, a young man named Ernie, who was especially skilled at shooting but was not regarded as athletic, received a great deal of positive attention from his peers. A lot of the praise came from athletic students and the instructors—which was not typical for him in other school settings. At times, students gathered around him to watch him shoot, many of whom had not talked to him before this class (information I gathered through interviews). The day scheduled for skeet and trap shooting was cancelled because the deputy running the day's activities was needed on the road to respond to an over-abundance of storm-related calls due to high winds. Therefore, Andy developed an alternate plan, which involved going to the pier to see 12-15 foot waves, and included an impromptu pier safety lesson. Waves crashed against the pier and temporarily flooded the sidewalk. The wind was blowing the sand so much that we wore safety goggles, which Andy had in his truck for the planned shooting activities. We had sand in our eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair, and pockets, and over 20 photographers lined the pier to cover this historic event (in terms of wave size in this geographic area). Andy took several pictures; his excitement, based on students' behavior, seemed to overflow onto them.

This unit required the least amount of Andy's time and effort compared to the others because it was partially run by the sheriff's deputies and volunteers. These individuals offered their time, equipment, facilities, and expertise, free of charge. At the beginning of the school year Andy contacted the deputies to schedule the dates for this two-week unit. He confirmed which days would be devoted to the various aspects of this unit (i.e., classroom days at the school, outdoor target shooting, skeet shooting, BB gun tournament, bow and arrow shooting, and community service days) The equipment was provided by the gun club and the activities with the guns was run by the deputies. However, certain aspects of making this unit possible was the time

and effort Andy put into cultivating relationships with the individuals at the gun club. First, he attended their board meetings and shared how the gun safety unit impacted his students' lives in positive ways. He brought students to these meetings to share their positive experiences, and according to Andy they were all well received by the board. Second, Andy made time for community service days during this unit when students worked at the gun club. Third, Andy and his wife attended a fundraiser at the gun club called the Checkered Shirt Social. Developing relationships with the gun club, deputies from the local sheriff's office, and local gun enthusiasts played an important role in making this unit possible. Andy became involved in these types of events to express his appreciation to local businesses and service providers who supported his program.

Andy felt that the community service portion of adventure physical education allowed students the opportunity to "pay it forward," giving them a chance to experience and learn about the value of serving others. These efforts not only made certain activities possible, but according to Andy, also imparted an important character lesson to students. Students chopped wood at the gun range (in past trimesters they spread wood chips at the ropes course facility as well) to "pay for" next trimester's students' use of the facilities. The following vignette from my field notes illustrates the significance of community service in adventure physical education:

Andy's relationship-building efforts are part of what makes his program successful. He maintains relationships with folks in the community. For example, he and his wife will attend an upcoming gun club fundraiser called The Plaid Shirt Party. He gets involved in these types of events to demonstrate his appreciation to local businesses and service providers who support Apex's adventure physical education program. Andy taught his students to value these experiences and set a positive example by working alongside his students on community service days.

Although this was not a stand-alone unit, but was integrated into the gun safety unit, I will briefly describe it. Community service at the gun club was planned for two days, but students ended up working so hard that the work was completed by the three classes in one day.

Students self-divided into two groups: wood choppers and rakers. The wood choppers went behind the gun club with Andy and used axes and saws to cut large pieces of wood into small chunks to be used by the gun club. At the end of third hour, which was the last adventure physical education class of the day, students formed an assembly line to transport the small pieces of wood from Andy's pick-up truck to the storage area alongside the building. At the end of the day there was a very large pile of wood that the facilities manager said would last for at least two winter seasons.

Adventure Racing

Adventure racing is a combination of two or more endurance disciplines, including orienteering (navigation using a compass or map), cross-country running, mountain biking, paddling, climbing, and related rope skills. An event can span ten days or more whereas sprints can be completed in a matter of hours. In Andy's classes, each adventure race was designed to be completed in a single class session and included orienteering (using a compass) and running/jogging (also walking, jumping, leaping). There were five teams per class with 5-6 students on each team.

To Andy, adventure racing was a unique outdoor pursuit which created opportunities for students to experience competition in an inclusive and constructive manner by allowing each person to contribute to the team's success. Because different skill sets (e.g., athleticism, analytical skills, compass reading, communication) were needed for team success, there was potential for each student to feel like a valued member of the team. Andy talked about why he included adventure racing:

It is a neat team activity that doesn't require a special set of skills like striking a volleyball, shooting a basket, etc. I like that students learn how to use an old school compass and that they are running through swampy areas, getting dirty, but smiling and laughing the whole time. I like that students are feeling that they are part of a team. This

activity is always a class favorite. Think about it, cold, wet conditions, extremely muddy, running, breathing hard, falling down and the kids still think it is fun!

Adventure racing was a five-day unit and each day required a great deal of planning and preparation on Andy's part. The day before each adventure race he went to the race site and mapped out and set up the course, which included ten to thirteen check points. At each check point he placed a small plastic container with a simple question written (e.g., name a winter sport) on a sheet of paper inside. Once the course was set up, he typed a list with all the points and blank lines for teams to fill in their answers. Following the last adventure physical education class of the day, Andy collected the boxes from the each point and set up a new course for the next day at a different location. Some of the parks where he held adventure races were state parks that were gated until 8:00 a.m. Because Andy's first class began before 8 a.m., he contacted the park ranger a week before to arrange for the park to be opened early so his students did not lose class time.

The first day consisted of classroom instruction where Andy overviewed the unit, explained the rules and modifications (explained later in the chapter), created teams, and taught students how to read a compass. Andy also set up a miniature course outside the school building so students could practice using a compass before participating in adventure races. He believed it was important to prepare students for this activity so that students had an equal chance of succeeding in this unit.

During each race, students used compasses to navigate from point to point in diverse and unfamiliar terrain, and normally moved through it quickly, as it was a race against the clock. They navigated to the first coordinate, answered the question in the box, and navigated to the next coordinate until they found each check point and answered all the questions. On days two through five, students participated in four separate adventure races at different locations that

challenged them in diverse ways (e.g., aerobically, navigationally). For example, day three included challenging terrain that required students to navigate streams, rocks, tree trunks, and swampy areas. Students arrived at the park, gathered with their teams, and discussed strategies. Although certain students seemed to take the lead during discussions, most students contributed in one way or another (e.g., offered suggestions, confirmed the ideas of their teammates, listened). Race starts were staggered five minutes apart, and each teams' clock started when they left the starting area and stopped when all but one member of the team returned. It was cold on this particular day, but I did not hear students complain. Although I could not hear or see student behaviors while they were on the course, I believed they had positive experiences based on their after-race behavior. For example, students finished the race with muddy and wet clothes and shoes, scratched legs and arms, red faces, heavy breathing and one boy lost a shoe in a mud puddle, but appeared happy. After the race, students exchanged stories about situations that occurred during the race (e.g., "Mark fell off the log and when I tried to help him...") and cheered as the other teams finished. Before and after the race, several students praised more than sport-related skills—to their agility, speed, coordination, and fitness—and complimented certain students' analytical abilities (for time efficient route-planning) and navigation skills (for their ability to use a compass). For instance, one boy said, "If it weren't for Ben, we would still be in the woods!" It should be noted that during interviews Ben reported not being acknowledged or appreciated this way in most of his past sport-dominated physical education classes.

Additionally, the team that started last took longer than expected to complete the course on this day. Rather than leaving, most of the other students waited and cheered as the last team finished the race. Although this team had the slowest time (because they missed a coordinate and went back to find it), the support they received from their classmates seemed to make them feel

better because I observed them smiling, high-fiving, and sharing stories rather than appearing humiliated or disappointed.

Many aspects of adventure racing could have made students reluctant to fully engage. For example, the mornings were cold and rainy, running was involved, they had to go through mud and water, and they often finished the races covered in mud and dirt. Even students who during interviews claimed to dislike sport-based physical education and competition participated enthusiastically. Although students often finished races with mud up to their knees, dirt smeared across their faces, and with their legs and ankles scratched and sometimes bleeding from running through the brush, they finished with smiles and excitedly shared stories about the races. Andy was pleased that different types of students successfully participated in this unit.

Paintball

In paintball, players compete to eliminate opponents by hitting them with capsules containing food coloring and gelatin (referred to as paintballs) propelled from a device called a paintball marker (gun). Paintballs contain a nontoxic, biodegradable, water soluble mineral-oil. Games are played on outdoor or indoor fields of varying sizes. Game fields are scattered with natural or artificial terrain, which players use for tactical cover. Paintball games can include elimination, defending, or attacking a particular point or area and capturing objects of interest hidden in the playing area (e.g., flags, hitting cans). Games can last from seconds to hours, or even days in scenario play. In Andy's classes, paintball games were played in a secluded outdoor wooded area and designed so that approximately three games could be played during each class session. Also, Andy modified the rules to facilitate high levels of participation. For example, when students were hit in the arms and legs, they could continue playing. However, when students were hit in the torso or head (students wore protective masks) they were momentarily

out of the game and took a short break. At this time, they went to “home base” (safe zone for teams to gather), refilled their paintball markers, cleaned their mask if necessary, and returned to the game. Students were never out of the game longer than a few minutes.

Paintball was a novel activity that Andy believed connected students with physical activity while also creating a social playing field that allowed different types of students to succeed. This activity could be done outdoors and allowed a wider variety of students to shine. Andy intentionally conducted the paintball activities in a manner that allowed students with a competitive nature to be competitive and students with a less competitive agenda to have fun and participate as well. Although games were competitive, my conversations with students, both before and after the games, suggested that less competitive students had fun because they were able to play without focusing on winning and losing. Andy also believed different types of students could pursue this activity outside of the school setting and after graduation. He wanted the bridges created during these endeavors to be available to students beyond their high school years. About paintball he said,

Paintball is a great lifelong pursuit, great workout, and great way for kids to experience a team environment without special skills to be successful. The adrenaline rush makes you feel alive, and it definitely puts Apex High Adventure Education on the map. How many classes do you get to take where playing paintball during the school day is required!

The paintball unit lasted five days. The first day was a classroom instruction day and the remaining four days were used for game-play. Paintball was one of the most expensive and labor intensive units for Andy. The costs associated with paintball were high because this unit required paintball marker and mask rentals, paintballs (500 for each of his seventy-six students), and two CO2 tanks needed to refill the individual paintball marker tanks. Two weeks in advance, Andy contacted the owner of a local paintball facility and arranged for the rentals of markers, masks, and tanks. The weekend before paintball started, he purchased paintballs (500 for each student)

from a local sporting goods store. At home, he separated the paintballs into 76 gallon-sized storage bags filling each with 500 paintballs to hand out to his students on Monday.

Additionally, not all the paintball guns were completely filled with CO2 when he picked them up from the paintball shop, so he refilled the guns before that Tuesday, the first day of game play, which was a time consuming process. Each day Andy arrived at the outdoor paintball site about 40 minutes before the students and removed all of the paintball markers and masks from the bed of his pick-up truck and arranged them on the ground for easy retrieval. He then carried tarps, extra refilled CO2 tanks (individual tanks to use when tanks were emptied during class), and other supplies to the playing site which was a five-minute walk from the parking lot. He then returned to the parking lot to meet his students.

There was additional work involved for Andy between classes each day. At the end of first and second hour, Andy had to quickly refill the empty CO2 tanks so students in the next class had paintball markers that were full. Additionally, after first and second hour the masks were disinfected so the next class had clean masks to wear. Sometimes Andy took the masks and tanks home to clean/refill after school so he had time to get other work done and eat lunch before teaching his afternoon classes, which were no adventure physical education classes.

Students arrived in the parking lot and looked at the outside of Andy's truck for information on the team to which Andy had assigned them. Next, students retrieved equipment and gathered around Andy for a demonstration on how to fill the "hopper," a plastic holder where the paintballs are placed. He stressed the importance of not dropping paintballs on the cement as they were difficult to clean. He encouraged students to fill their hoppers on the grass instead. Andy reviewed some of the safety information that was discussed the previous day and then together we walked to the wooded playing area.

Once everyone was gathered at home base, Andy explained the first game and sent students to their respective sides of the playing field. Andy framed the game in a manner that deemphasized competition yet facilitated an environment where competitive students could have fun playing competitively. In regulation paintball, any shot to the body is usually considered “fatal,” which eliminates the player from the remainder of the game. Andy’s modifications facilitated an environment where higher-skilled boys did not typically become upset when their teammates were shot and also afforded more playing time for lesser skilled boys. The objective of the first game, Hit the can, was to be the first team to hit the opposing teams’ can that was visibly placed in the center of each team’s designated hill. Each game commenced with the sounding of an air horn necessary because students were spread out on the field. Some boys went out into the open right away while others played more cautiously and found hiding places. Hit the can was repeated about four times, each game lasting between 5 and 10 minutes. Although this game was competitive, different types of students played and had appeared to have fun whether their play was driven by fun or competition. Some boys seemed apprehensive at first and hid behind trees and in bushes. As the unit progressed, their apprehension seemed to decrease because they participated more assertively (e.g., there was less hiding and more movement on the field). During the five-minute walk back to the parking lot, many students talked about how much fun they had—both students who played to win and those who were less interested in winning.

Kayaking and Canoeing

Kayaking and canoeing are paddling sports. Andy viewed kayaking and canoeing as activities that, like many of the other units, had potential to bridge the gap between students and physical activity and could lead to years of participation in many geographic locations with or

without other people. He believed different types of students could enjoy this great outdoor pursuit now as teenagers as well as into adulthood. He shared,

This opens many, many adventures for kids, inside and outside of our state. I love being in the water and watching the kids enjoy paddling around the areas we explore. The full-day trip is an integral part of the unit because we get to be self-sufficient, paddle six miles, have a cookout lunch, and get to know each other outside of school. That is one of those days when the kids start connecting with each other—school walls are gone.

Early in the trimester Andy made arrangements with three companies to pick up trailers of kayaks and canoes which were rented to him free of charge. Andy talked about how he made connections with these businesses,

I introduced myself to the owner at Boat City when I started 5 years ago, and he has been wonderful ever since! I met the Camp Playtime program director at a high ropes training seminar two years ago and mentioned I was starting to become short on canoes because my class sizes had grown. She immediately offered a trailer anytime I needed it! The other connection was when I first started—I set up a meeting with the CEO of another camp site and talked about what I was looking for and what they were willing to help with.

The weekend before the unit began, Andy picked up trailers from three separate locations, one of which was a two hour drive (one way). Andy said, “I do a *ton* of driving, pulling trailers that week and use *lots* of gas!” While transporting canoes, a canoe almost fell off of the trailer. Andy stopped on the highway and secured the boat. On each of the four days of this unit, Andy first drove his truck to the parking lot where he parked both trailers, located across the street from the park where this unit took place. He then hitched the first trailer to his truck and transported the boats across to the park where he unstrapped the boats, removed the boats from the top of the trailer to the ground (so students could easily access them), drove to retrieve the second trailer, hitched it to his truck, and drove this trailer of boats across the street. Andy repeated the process until all three trailers were at the boat launch site. After third hour, students helped Andy load the boats onto the trailers and then he drove each trailer back across the street to the holding site. Before and after class preparation took at least 1.5 hours each day.

Yet again, throughout these set of tasks, I never heard Andy complain. Based on student comments and behavior, the students recognized and appreciated Andy's effort that made the activities possible. Although this topic will be addressed more fully later, I will share one such story that demonstrates student appreciation. On the first day of this unit a group of three girls arrived to class 15 minutes late. The rest of the class had already launched their boats and were paddling down the bayou. Once the girls retrieved a canoe and launched, Andy paddled to them and inquired about their tardiness. He explained how hard he worked that morning to get the boats on site and ready for their use and communicated that their late arrival projected an "I don't care" attitude. He was not angry or yelling, but his message was definitely received because their remorseful facial expressions and body language suggested they felt regret. The girls gave Andy a sincere apology and were not late again. In fact, they arrived about 5 minutes early the remaining three days of this unit.

On the first and second days of this unit, students met at a local bayou, chose a kayak or canoe, and paddled one way up the bayou for about a mile, and then paddled back. The next day they paddled in the opposite direction. Although the experience levels differed greatly (e.g., some were skilled paddlers and sped across the water, whereas some had trouble paddling), some students offered others paddling tips, helped classmates get their boats into the water, and helped others "right" canoes (flipping a turned over canoe right-side up). While paddling, many students stayed in close proximity to others and had conversations. On the first day, Andy asked the students to gather as a group at the turn-around-point so he could take a group photo. The sun was rising over the bayou and students linked together with their paddles lifted overhead. Later that night Andy posted the picture on Facebook (i.e., online social network service that will be described later), and within two days, a male student who reported having negative experiences

in past sport-dominated physical education classes changed his Facebook profile picture to this group photo.

During the third and fourth days, the three classes were combined into two groups and each group participated in a full-day paddling trip. They paddled five miles total: two and a half miles each way. After paddling two and a half miles one way they docked their boats on the shoreline at a park and had a hotdog cookout. Two of the boys, who were not well acquainted before this full-day trip and who reported not liking sport-based physical education, shared a canoe and paddled ahead of their classmates and started cooking the food, chatting the whole time. Because of their paddling skills, other students viewed these boys as athletic in ways that expanded beyond traditional team sports such as basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, and floor hockey to include activities such as canoeing and kayaking. I heard students commending the paddling skills of these two boys.

Indoor Rock Climbing

Indoor rock climbing is performed on artificial structures that attempt to mimic the experience of outdoor rock climbing in a more controlled environment. Indoor rock climbing utilizes a top-roping method in which the climber is hooked to a rope that is anchored to the top of the wall and where the slack of the rope is maintained by the belayers. Characteristics such as the steepness of the walls, interesting routes, and a variety of the hand holds allow many types of individuals to successfully participate in indoor rock climbing. Andy viewed indoor climbing as a challenging, fun activity that can help people stay in shape and meet other active people. Rock climbing was an important part of Andy's life, as he and his wife had a great deal of climbing experience, and he had a deep understanding of the profound impact it could have on students. He saw rock climbing as another activity that had the capacity to create bridges for most of his

students in adventure physical education. According to Andy, rock climbing did not have to focus exclusively on competition and elite performance and could be pursued for years to come.

He said,

Not only is rock climbing a lifelong pursuit, but it is a great workout. It teaches kids to not give up, to problem solve, and to work to find a solution. This unit also allows the nontraditional PE kid an opportunity to excel—skinny kids usually do well. I also love the way kids support one another. I also *love* having the kids out for lunch—another opportunity to socialize outside of school.

The five-day indoor rock climbing unit required a great deal of preparation on Andy's part. However, for this unit, his preparation was less physical and more organizational and administrative. Early in the trimester, Andy contacted the director of a local university's campus recreation center that contained an indoor climbing gym and arranged the dates and times he would bring each of his adventure physical education classes. Andy also planned each day so that students were able to eat lunch together off campus using class funds. The weekend before the rock climbing unit, Andy purchased water, chips, cookies, napkins, and other items to take to a local sub shop where he purchased multiple party sub sandwiches for each class. He received permission from the sub shop to bring outside food items into the shop. Andy worked hard to keep the shop clean and made sure no messes were left behind after the students left.

The first day was an instructional day that took place in the classroom at Apex High School. Andy overviewed the unit and taught students how to tie figure eight knots—knots which are typically used in top rope climbing—and introduced them to belaying by setting up a mock top-rope system in the classroom. He brought in harnesses, ropes, and belay devices so students could practice some skills in class which would speed things along once they were at the climbing gym. Although they wore harnesses and belayed while at the high-ropes course, the knots were pre-tied for them by Andy so this was the first time most students were introduced to knot tying. He recruited experienced students who had taken the class before or who had

climbing experience to assist their classmates. Each of the three adventure education classes experienced a full day of climbing at the indoor climbing gym. On the days each class did not climb they stayed back at the school with a substitute teacher. Andy made special arrangements for students on these days. For example, they went tubing in the snow and watched rock climbing DVDs.

When students arrived at the climbing gym, they were greeted by the manager, and he provided an overview of the day and handed out climbing equipment: shoes, harnesses, and helmets. Next, students received belaying lessons, which they were somewhat familiar with because they belayed on the high-ropes course; however, they did not tie their own knots. I joined Andy, the manager of the climbing gym, and two employees to assess each student's belay technique and knot tying skills before the climbing activities began. This process progressed quickly. Some students were eager to climb, some wanted to belay, while others sat and watched. About ten minutes into the climbing activities, most students actively participated by climbing, belaying, and offering feedback and encouragement. Some students did bouldering, which is a style of rock climbing done without a rope and normally is limited to short climbs over pads (called bouldering mats) so that a fall will not result in serious injury. Many types of students enjoyed the climbing. For example, a boy with a small frame who was not considered athletic and did not enjoy school in general, as evidenced by his high truancy, scaled up challenging walls as his classmates watched from below and cheered. This boy also broke a time record on a particular challenging wall (i.e., a wall with only eight holds in a vertical line on a 40 foot wall with quite a bit of space between each hold—he was short in stature so this was quite an accomplishment), which got his name written on a whiteboard at the climbing gym

acknowledging his accomplishment. According to this young man, he did not receive this kind of praise in sport-dominated physical education classes.

Many students who said they were afraid of heights stepped out of their comfort zones and attempted climbing. Some boys who were considered athletic struggled, while some boys who were not considered athletic looked like they had been climbing all their lives, and many cross-subgroup student interactions were visible. Andy pulled me aside as students ate lunch after rock climbing. He pointed out the positive peer relations that were unfolding in front of us. He showed me that no one was sitting alone, students were smiling and laughing, and everyone was engaged in conversation. He smiled and said, “Now *this* is what it’s all about.”

Water Safety

The water safety unit included classroom lessons and pool activities that taught students how to be safe in and around water. Given Apex High School’s geographic location, Andy felt teaching practical water safety skills were important because they could benefit students in real-life that were relevant within their community. Andy perceived the water safety unit as also reducing the status differential among students because not many students had the skills he taught which allowed students to learn together rather than beginning the unit with certain students privileged and others marginalized. He included time for students to work on their swimming skills and offered instruction. He also believed the skills his students developed in this unit could help them to more safely pursue some of the other adventure physical education activities in their community such as surfing. When talking about the significance of this unit Andy shared,

We live in a state that is surrounded by big lakes, rivers, streams, and smaller inland lakes. Kids—and adults for that matter—need a confident skill base and rescue techniques to help someone or save themselves in an emergency situation. I push kids to surf in some pretty intense situations, so they need to be able to understand what is safe to

be in and how to protect themselves. It doesn't get a whole lot more real-world than that! I really try hard to make the unit fun, but it is the unit I take most seriously.

The water safety unit did not require Andy to outsource facilities, equipment, or expertise which meant this unit did not require as much planning and physical labor as other units. For example, this unit took place in the Apex High School pool, all the necessary equipment was onsite, and Andy possessed the expertise required to teach this content. Preparation entailed making sure the pool was available during all three class sessions on each of the pool days, retrieving equipment for each day, placing it on the pool deck before class, and having activities planned in advance.

The water safety unit lasted four days with the polar plunge (described later) on the fifth day. The first day was designated a classroom day because Andy learned from past student evaluations that 4-5 days in the pool was "too much." On the first day Andy went over the goals for the week and gave meaning and importance to the unit. On days two and three, students learned or practiced basic swim strokes, learned what is safe and not safe when rescuing someone, practiced basic rescue skills, and treaded water with clothes on and made a floatation device with jeans. Day four was also classroom day where the founder of the Beach Survival Challenge was a guest speaker. She was a local woman who lost her teenaged son several years ago in a rip tide drowning and developed this event to emphasize water safety and to prevent future tragedies in this beach front community. Students engaged in the classroom and pool activities with a level of seriousness that differed from the other unit (e.g., there was little laughing or joking). They were especially respectful as they listened, and showed compassion through the kind words they shared in the discussion. Some students cried.

The "polar plunge" was a one day event that took place on the last day of the water safety unit. Although the polar plunge comprised only a small portion of the adventure education, Andy

believed that it impacted students from different subgroups in significant ways. When talking about why he included the polar plunge into each trimester Andy stated,

It's pretty simple—the polar plunge gets kids to do something outside of their comfort zone, helps them feel adventurous, and do something a little crazy. This event also shows the school what kind of mentality is needed for adventure physical education!

Preparation for this event was more organizational than physical. Andy coordinated with a local community center to use their showers and locker rooms after the polar plunge so students could quickly warm up and put on dry clothes. Because he had done this event for the past several years, it took one phone call a few weeks in advance to arrange the use of the community center. The most time consuming aspect of this event was the repeated verbal preparation he provided students. For example, he wanted students to be prepared for this event by bringing items such as towels, water shoes, and dry clothes. Additionally, the timeliness of this event was important as he wanted each class to arrive at the beach ready to jump in the lake without delay. For instance, he asked students to wear their swim suits under warm clothes that could quickly be removed so they could take the outer layer off on the beach just before jumping into the water, and to leave their cars running with the heat on with a bag of dry clothes inside. He mentioned this preparation to the students many times, reiterating the importance of preparation to help make this experience positive.

The polar plunge took place on one day and involved the entire class of students (and teacher) jumping into a freezing lake wearing only a bathing suit and water shoes. The classes met at the beach, left car engines running in the parking lot, stripped down to bathing suits and, on Andy's signal, charged the water, quickly running back to their cars in complete fits of excitement, screaming, laughing, and hugging. When they arrived at the local community center to take warm showers, students entered the building in multiple small groups, many of which

comprised students from different subgroups (e.g., athletic and less athletic students). As they entered the building, many chatted about the extreme event that they just experienced.

Building Bridges

This theme describes how Andy attempted to build metaphorical bridges to try to reduce the hierarchical configurations among students which he believed could ultimately help influence higher physical activity levels among different types of students. In this section, I explain the three metaphorical bridges that Andy tried to create: (a) between his students and physical activity, (b) among his students in adventure physical education, and (c) between himself as the teacher and his students.

Building Bridges between Students and Physical Activity

Andy believed that the near exclusive focus on traditional team sports (e.g., basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, softball) in many physical education programs had potential to create barriers between many students and physical activity. When a narrow range of similarly-configured activities (e.g., invasion sports) were consistently taught, students with elite movement skills in those narrow range of activities were privileged and regularly dominated, while those with less traditional sports participation were often marginalized. Therefore, he implemented several strategies in adventure physical education to try to build bridges between students and physical activity in an effort to cultivate less pronounced social hierarchies. In this section, I describe five ways that Andy attempted to bridge students with physical activity, along with indicators that led him to believe that his strategies worked.

According to Andy, one way that he attempted to build bridges between different subgroups of students and physical activity was by *teaching novel content*, which included activities he believed most students may not have experienced without adventure physical

education. Based on information students shared with Andy, he knew that the majority of them had not participated in most of the activities in adventure physical education. For example, although there were a couple of students in each class who had done one or more of the beach week activities prior to this class, for the majority of students, beach week was the first time they experienced skim boarding, surfing, and stand-up paddling. Limited experience was typical for each unit, and Andy believed that teaching novel content had potential to increase students' willingness to engage with the activities he taught because they knew there would be others who were equally inexperienced. He shared,

I think the novel-nature of the content helps kids want to try and continue the activities. It takes the pressure off because they already know that there are kids in the class that are going to do well and that there are kids that are not—it is just expected.

Andy recognized the novel nature of the activities he included in adventure physical education seemed to attract certain students to his class. He asked, “How many classes do you get to take where playing paintball during the school day is required?” Because of conversations with students and parents, Andy knew that different types of students were engaging in many of the adventure physical activities due to their novel nature. Students often told Andy, “I would have never tried surfing if it was not for this class—I didn't even know you could surf on a lake.” “The first time I saw a stand-up paddle board was in this class. They were so much fun to use.” and “I can't believe how much my son enjoyed the gun safety unit. Because of this class, he now goes to the shooting range.” Andy shared,

I know that more kids are surfing, skimming, and stand-up paddling now than ever before. In the last three years there has been a huge increase in surfers from the ages of 16-22, and many are my former students. I like knowing that I helped connect kids with unique activities that they may not have tried otherwise!

Andy found that the unique nature of the content could connect students with physical activity because groups of students organized outings involving the activities he taught them

which took place outside of school time. Specifically, these typically included students who were new to the activities. He shared,

About 15-20 kids decided on Facebook to meet up at Snowy Creek to cross country ski. There was another impromptu trip, initiated by students, to a downhill ski resort that is just south of us—they went skiing and snowboarding. Most of these kids were kids who are not normally active—they're just kind of finding their thing.

Andy shared a similar story about a small group of students arranging a trip to play paintball at a local indoor facility. These students had not experienced paintball prior to his class. He said,

Just today [which was a Saturday] at 9 a.m. a group of my students met at the high school to go and play paintball. They made the arrangements on Facebook— kids were inviting kids and they invited me too. So that is kind of neat because it shows me that they are definitely into the activities and that they want to do it past our 70-minute class period.

According to Andy, although most of his students grew up in the Apex area, many had never experienced snow sports, and he was thrilled to know that he bridged many students with winter activities. He said,

I think the biggest thing that I feel good about is connecting kids with winter activities. For instance, kids will come up to me on the last day or two of class and say, "Until I took this class, until I did these things, I used to hate winter. Now I can't wait for next winter!" When I ask, "What do you mean?" they say, "Well, we learned how to ski or we learned how to snowboard, and now I can't wait for winter!" That is neat for me to see because that is something they would not have done without Adventure Ed.

Andy also believed the novel nature of the content had potential to build bridges between students and physical activity because several students changed their Facebook profile to pictures taken during adventure physical education. He explained,

What is so cool for me personally is when I see a kid's page and they change their profile picture to something we did. It happens a lot. It shows that the kids feel good about what we do in class. I can't tell you how many girls change their profile picture to them shooting a handgun! Seriously, I told my wife that I am going to do a little experiment. I started typing in girls' names from my class and sure enough, there's one, there's another one—everyone had a picture of them shooting a 9 millimeter. Now whether they all did it because one did it I don't know, but the point is that they want to show, "I can be pretty and I can be tough and I don't have to be the same person all the time." When they are shooting the 9 millimeters they have big safety glasses on and are wearing sweatshirts and jeans and not wearing their nicest clothes, but they all still posted it.

Additionally, Andy believed that the newness of the activities played a central role in facilitating hierarchies that had the capacity to shift from one unit to the next. He shared,

These kids haven't been playing paintball since they were five, but they have played basketball since they were young so by the time they're a junior or a senior, they should know how to dribble and do a lay-up—they should understand the concepts of it. But if I give them paintball gun, they've *maybe* done it once—it's new to most kids.

He believed that the newness of the activities could provide many students with a sense of security because they knew that there were others with similar levels of experience, which meant no one was typically left out. Andy stated,

I think kids find comfort in knowing they are not the only one who hasn't done it. For everything that we do there are a third of kids who have not done it at all, there are a third of kids who have done it, but are not proficient, and there is usually less than a third of kids that are very good. So there's comfort for the nonexperienced kids because they are part of a group in here—"I'm not the only one on the bunny hill. "I'm not the only one who is missing targets at the gun range." "I'm not the only one who doesn't understand how paintball works." or "I can't ride a skim board." The group at the top knows I might be a good snow boarder, but the next unit is rock climbing, and I'm afraid of heights." Everybody knows that, "My time for struggling is coming soon."

To Andy, the newness of the activities allowed diverse student groups to intermingle from one unit to the next, which contributed to fluid social hierarchies. Andy said,

If I'm a traditional athlete, I'm going to do pretty good at every unit in a team sports class. I might not have the hand-eye coordination for badminton or something along those lines, but at least I understand the concept of team, and I'm going to do pretty good still, and I'll probably interact with the same kids from one unit to the next. I don't think I've had a kid yet that is good at everything we do—and I like that because the groups are always mixing and changing. There is a lot of movement from one unit to the next in adventure physical education.

Andy felt that the newness of the activities could potentially build bridges among students and had the capacity to reduce social disparities among students. He observed a great deal of cross-subgroup interaction from one unit to the next. Social interactions were often based on the level at which students participated. In other words, certain students bonded during the kayaking and canoeing unit because this activity was new to them, and they interacted more with

students who were at a similar level. These students were often different from the classmates they had interacted with during previous units.

Andy believed that the newness of the activities played a role in building bridges among students because he often observed students providing one another with support and did not typically witness or hear about students ridiculing each other in adventure physical education. He shared,

I tell them, “You might be good at this, but there is going to be some stuff that you struggle with”—and I tell kids too, “Don’t be afraid to struggle with it because everybody is going to struggle with something.” I say that weekly. There is definitely no ridiculing, there’s no laughing or any of that. In fact, I hear a lot of verbal positives, and I think the newness of the activities plays a role.

To Andy, teaching novel content seemed to connect students with new activities available in the local community, with which most students had no prior experience. This connection seemed to provide them with a sense of new physical activity possibilities in ways that did not privilege students who were already skilled movers.

According to Andy, a second way that he tried to build bridges between his students and physical activity was by *teaching content that emphasized diverse student talents, abilities, and interests*, which provided opportunities for different students to shine throughout the trimester and reduced the social space among students. He believed that the nature of the content in many traditional team sport classes in the Apex school district emphasized similar talents, which meant if students were skilled in one activity (e.g., basketball) they would likely be similarly skilled in other sports as well (e.g., floor hockey). He said,

When you go from basketball to soccer to floor hockey to flag football or whatever it might be, those activities are so similar that if you are good at one of them you’re probably going to be good at most of them. The diversity and variety of what I offer can’t be found in another class. So it’s neat to see different kids excel!

At the beginning of the trimester and for each unit, Andy informed students that because the curriculum was so diverse, they would likely not be good at all of the activities. He said,

You might not be the best at everything. In our class it just doesn't work that way. If you have a fear of heights and you're in team sports, you don't know who has a fear of heights. Our starting quarterback in school could have a fear of heights, and if he does, all of a sudden, boom now he's vulnerable—he isn't good at everything.

Because Andy realized his students had diverse talents, interests, and abilities, he taught activities that he believed emphasized differences in an effort to bridge students with physical activity which gave new students opportunities to shine. He stated,

Changing gears and having kids know that it's okay to struggle at certain things helps break down some of those barriers. If we're talking about physical activity and being diverse and finding something for everyone—it's not enough for me for kids to have one thing they can do for the rest of their life—I want them to have a couple. I say, "Find two or three things that you're really going to want to do for the rest of your life." Teaching similar activities wouldn't allow these connections to happen.

Andy wanted students to realize that each activity could be fun for many, not just certain types of students and addressed preconceived notions often associated with certain activities (e.g., rock climbing is only fun for fit and muscular students and gun safety is only fun for students who have an interest in hunting). At the beginning of the trimester, Andy informed his students that because the nature of content was so diverse that those who excelled would likely change from one unit to the next. He said, "I don't think I have ever had a student who was good at everything we do in adventure education." Andy believed that teaching diverse content had potential to build bridges between students and physical activity. He said,

Most kids are going to be good at something we do, and I think the diversity increases their interest in learning. Because they see Johnny's really good at shooting and they are not. Then the next unit comes and they feel pretty comfortable, but Johnny's struggling. I think understanding the diverse nature of the activities and not expecting to be good at everything minimizes kids' anxiety levels.

Andy believed that because the content was diverse, students could connect with an activity they did not know they were good at or liked. For example, there were a few talented

paintball players in each class—most of whom brought their own equipment and knew they were skilled. Other students discovered they were good as the unit progressed. When Andy moved to the next unit, different students shined—the same kids did not dominate or have the most fun. It was not like going from basketball to floor hockey where the same students often excelled. If a student was not good at or interested in adventure racing, the next unit would likely be profoundly different. Because of this understanding, Andy believed that students were more willing to try activities. For example, at the beginning of the trimester some students reported that they did not like guns or shooting, but by the end of the unit they told Andy that gun safety was one of their favorite activities.. Andy said,

Students who had never held a firearm and were hesitant at the beginning of the unit ended up loving it—they just loved it! In fact, I know a couple of them have already gone up to the gun club to shoot.

Andy reported that it was equally important that his students were aware of how each activity emphasized different talents, interests, and abilities; he did not leave them to figure this quality out on their own. For example, because of the conversations Andy had with students, he knew some were interested in and excited about indoor rock climbing; whereas, others were apprehensive. Therefore, when he framed rock climbing, he told students they would likely be surprised with people’s climbing abilities and that the most successful climbers would not necessarily be those who were considered the most athletic. He said, “You might think a certain person will climb really well and they don’t, and you might not expect much of another person and they will end up climbing really well.” According to Andy, some students said, “Rock climbing is really hard and you have to be really strong.” He told students that physical attributes were not the only determining factor in successful climbing, and informed them of other talents that played a role in successful climbing. He said, “Sure, it helps if you can do ten pull-ups, but if you can do one or even none, you can still be a good climber.” He told students that successful

rock climbing was not limited to physical abilities, but also included other abilities such as problem solving, patience, perseverance, stepping out of one's comfort zone, and a willingness to take risks.

Because of the stories students shared with Andy, he sensed that teaching content which emphasized different talents, abilities, and interests had great potential to build bridges between his students and physical activity. For example, Andy talked about a student who struggled with one unit and was an expert in another. He said,

Joe could barely ski—I mean if at all. He lives in a very rural part of town and he doesn't ski—he is a country boy. When we went to the gun club, he was unbelievable—because he shoots guns, and he's been shooting since he was a little kid. I have never seen anyone shoot that well in five years!

Furthermore, Andy believed that the diverse nature of the content gave students chances to participate in activities at which they excelled, which likely increased their willingness to try activities they had never done, which often led to connections between them and a new physical activity. For example, because gun safety was something at which Joe excelled and had the chance to do in class, he gave skiing a chance and ended up liking it. After the skiing unit, Joe said to Andy, "I think I like skiing." Andy said, "That is a kid who never skied before."

Similarly, during the indoor rock climbing unit a particular young man told Andy that he surprised himself and his classmates with his climbing ability. He told Andy that the indoor rock climbing unit was the first time his talents allowed him to stand out positively among his peers in a physical education class. He said that because of his positive experience in adventure physical education that he planned to return to the climbing gym on his own time. Also, after this young man's successful rock climbing experience, Andy observed him participate during the rest of the trimester with greater confidence and enthusiasm.

Andy believed that teaching a wide range of content that emphasized diverse student talents, abilities, and interests had the capacity to connect students with physical activity which made it possible for different students to shine from one unit to the next. For instance, g transitioning from surfing to kayaking to indoor rock climbing gave many students opportunities to excel throughout the trimester.

A third way that Andy attempted to bridge his students with physical activity was *by promoting a relaxed, low-stakes and fun learning climate*. First, he implemented assessment practices that could build students' confidence, rather than criticize their shortcomings. In other words, he did not emphasize skillful performance or use grading rubrics to assess student learning, but emphasized doing the activity for the sake of fun and experience. According to Andy, although he focused on techniques to a small degree, he did not want the technical aspects of activities to overshadow the personal and social aspects. For instance, during beach week, he taught students how to balance in a kneeling position on the surf board and when and how to "pop up" into a three then two point stance. However, he never focused on micro-level skills to the point where performance learning became more important than the real-life experience. He believed that students would most likely benefit by getting out there and experiencing the activity in ways that worked for them and allowed them to have fun without feeling like they were being watched and graded. For example, Andy had many discussions with his pre-student teacher where he explained his rationale for using assessment practices that aligned with adventure content. Andy shared his thoughts about his pre-student teacher's desire to teach and assess students' technical skills during paintball. Andy stated,

I said, "You can say whatever you want, but you have to keep it to a minimum because we are out here playing paintball and the time burns quicker than anything else we do. So it has to be quick, and they're not going listen that much." And they didn't either. I mean he's talking about tactics and this that and the other thing. It's like you can do some of

that, but you have 25 people whose adrenaline was pumping and ready to get moving. To me it's just about having fun, being out here, and being interactive.

It is not that Andy did not assess student learning; he simply measured success *differently* in ways that did not necessarily privilege experienced students over less experienced students. For example, he did not measure student success based on the speed or techniques they used to complete the high-ropes course or climb a rock wall. He never tallied points during paintball to grade students on wins or losses. He did not use grading rubrics to record technical and tactical aspects of students' game play during adventure racing. He did not grade students on their paddling form or speed during the kayaking and canoeing unit. He did not ask students to submit their paper targets for evaluation or record how many clay pigeons they hit during gun safety. He felt that those types of assessment practices could have a negative impact on bridging students with physical activity. Andy talked about the significant role he believed his low-stakes assessment practices played in bridging students with physical activity. He shared,

I don't assess them on their skim boarding skills. I don't care if they fall off their stand-up board. I don't care about any of that stuff. What I want them to see is that there are some really cool things that they can do often. You've seen the stand-up boards this week—kids love them—they flock to those things. So for me, emphasizing fun is a great way to get the kids outside and have them be active and maybe even realize they're getting a little bit of a work out.

Because Andy did not think there was time to adequately teach students to become proficient at any one activity, he felt it was unfair to assess students on technical skills. His goal was not for students to master any one skill, but for them to enjoy the activities enough that they might pursue them on their own time. He said,

I care more about what kinds of experiences kids have rather than what they actually learn—that's always the way that I have gone about the class. I would love for them to learn stuff and gain physical benefit from it but really there's so much they can learn outside of the activities themselves—life skills. I care more about that than if I can teach a kid how to stand up on a surf board. I think that's what kids remember most about the class—the experiences they had in general, not specific things that they learned—and how they felt when they were doing them.

Andy was aware of the negative impact that assessment practices typically used in traditional physical education classes had on some students' perceptions of physical education. For example, he felt that skill-based, technical assessments likely decreased some students' enjoyment in physical education, which likely decreased their willingness to engage in physical activity in and out of the school setting. The following quote illustrated Andy's frustration working with a student teacher who attended a university that heavily endorsed assessment practices that Andy felt did not align with adventure physical education philosophy. He stated,

Today we were at the ski bowl—34 kids in class snowboarding, skiing, having a blast—totally great day! My student teacher starts being totally obsessed about how she would *assess* this unit. I tell her the kids are all on the hill, active, smiling—they all get an “A.” This wasn't good enough for her. She started talking about skill testing, written testing, etc. I smiled and said, “You will *never* do any of those things with my students. I have worked too hard to build them up.”

The second way that Andy tried to promote a relaxing, low-stakes, and fun learning climate was by de-emphasizing competition, which he believed could play a crucial role in bridging students with physical activity and creating hierarchical arrangements among students that were not dramatic. According to Andy, although the majority of the activities he selected were not inherently competitive, he intentionally de-emphasized competition when teaching. For example, even though kayaking and canoeing were not characteristically competitive, Andy highlighted the fun, relaxing aspects of these activities because he wanted students to enjoy their experience and to not feel like they were being timed or compared to others. Andy was not entirely against competition, as he was a competitive athlete himself and coached three sports at Apex High school (baseball, girls cross country, and downhill skiing). However, he felt that always emphasizing competition in physical education settings created a culture in which certain students were more likely to receive ridicule, which could create barriers between them and physical activity. Andy said,

After a game in team sports class [taught by another teacher] if I'm in my office sometimes boys come in and say, "So and so cheated and blah blah blah, and we lost and we shouldn't have." Sometimes I will say, "Guys, you're acting like it's the Super Bowl or the World Series. Let it go." I mean it is great that they're competitive, but when it gets to that point, I guarantee lower-skilled boys are not having a good experience.

Adventure racing and paintball were the two most inherently competitive units that Andy taught. He intentionally structured these units to enhance the fun factor, without compromising the competitive aspects of the activities. In other words, he felt that it was important for students to experience the competitive elements in both activities, but in a relaxed, low-stakes manner that emphasized fun over elite performance and winning. During the adventure racing unit, Andy modified the rules so that all but one team member had make it to the finish line before their time stopped. He felt that this modification made it more likely that different types of students could contribute to their team's success and it reduced the likelihood that someone would be ridiculed for being slow. Based on student behavior in past units, Andy believed that the less physically fit students often felt like they let their team down because they had difficulty keeping up. He said, "I changed the rules so that the less fit students could find success and help their group, not hold them back." Because Andy's purpose for de-emphasizing competition was to contribute to creating a relaxed learning climate, he did not frame this modification in a way that highlighted unfit students, which he felt could have caused embarrassment and detracted from his intentions. In other words, he did not say, "Okay, unfit students do not have to finish the race with their team." He made the modification available to all students and emphasized multiple reasons why teams may need to take advantage of this modification (e.g., injury, tiredness, illness, diverse abilities).

According to Andy, he similarly framed paintball to integrate the competitive aspects of game play without making elite performance and competition the most important aspects. For example, he modified the rules so that: (a) shots to the arms and legs did not cause a student to

be eliminated from the game, (b) when shot in the torso or head, students were only out of the game for 2-3 minutes, and (c) he did not keep track of wins and loses. These modifications seemed to contribute to Andy's goal of making game-play more fun and less stressful because competitive, high-skilled players did not seem annoyed with the less-skilled players during games because they were not being eliminated which did not negatively impact their team's success and facilitated high levels of participation. Also, students with different playing agendas (competitive, semi-competitive, and noncompetitive) left each paintball session excitedly talking about the games and recalled specific events from games.

Andy wanted to show students that doing physical activity did not have to be about competitive, elite performance, but, instead could be about having fun and feeling good. He said,

Students know that they are going to get the same grade whether they suck or they're great. I think the kids that are great don't feel like they have to show everybody that they are, but it is also good for kids at the other end of the spectrum because they don't feel the pressure of thinking, "Oh man, I've got this rubric I have to hit, and if I don't hit this rubric I'm gonna fail this unit and other kids will know it." Or "I don't want it to be my fault that we lose the game." So it leaves it open for you to take some chances, take some risks, and see what you are capable of doing as an individual—knowing that if you don't do well it's ok. Other people won't make fun of you, you're not going to get a low grade—life goes on.

Andy believed that de-emphasizing competition could decrease high skilled students' expectations during activities that were inherently competitive such as paintball and adventure racing because he framed the activities around fun rather than winning and losing. For example, he said, "I always tell the kids, 'It's adventure education paintball, not real paintball.'"

He believed de-emphasizing competition and elite skill development had potential to build bridges among students because he did rarely observed high-skilled students getting upset with their lesser-skilled classmates during activities, especially competitive activities such as paintball and adventure racing. He also observed the lesser-skilled students take chances in front

of their higher skilled classmates during competitive activities, which he believed was because they were not afraid of being verbally attacked. Andy shared,

Kids don't make fun of each other in this class, and I think it's because they know winning and being the best is not what is important in here—they get that having fun is what matters most—it is part of building our foundation.

Andy believed that de-emphasizing competition and elite skill development had the capacity to bridge students together and flatten hierarchies. Therefore, when students formed relationships in class, it often led them to be active together outside of class, either after school or on weekends. He shared,

I've actually had students tell me that, "Hey this weekend I'm going climbing with so and so" or something like that, and those connections would not have happened without this class. So it's happening—it's not ever going to be to the point where the whole school is different because of it but if it's happening to small groups of kids, and that is a step in the right direction.

Andy believed that his relaxed approach to teaching helped bridge students with physical activity because students told Andy about participating in competitive adventure activities outside of the school setting. For example, two boys told Andy about their participation in actual adventure races in the community. Because Andy knew that these boys were not competitive athletes, he believed that if he ran the adventure racing unit in an overly competitive manner, these particular boys would likely not have been drawn to participate in adventure racing outside of class. Also, Andy was delighted when he observed students use his relaxed-approach principle to motivate their peers during class. He shared,

We were at the climbing gym a couple of weeks ago and a kid was sitting there and said, "Oh, I don't want to try that route—there is no way I can make that." And the kid next to him, without skipping a beat, said, "Dude, it's adventure Ed." I thought, "That is awesome!" The way he said it—if you're someone who didn't think much of this class and you heard that you'd be like, "This is a blow off class." But I was so happy he said that. I didn't say a word. I just stood there and thought, "Thank God." Because guess what—that kid went up to the wall and tried it. He didn't make it, but it didn't matter. *That* is what I am looking for! It's a laid back class—it's chill, but yet my method of

doing that gets them to all do it. I get them all to try. They all try, they all laugh, they smile, and they support each other.

According to Andy, his relaxed approach helped to motivate unlikely students to engage with adventure physical education activities outside of class. He shared a story about a student who came out of her shell and tried things, which he in part attributed to the relaxed approach he employed in his adventure physical education classes. Andy said,

There is this girl I have in class—there is not an athletic bone in her body. She is overweight, she is weak, and she describes herself as a “scaredy cat.” She told me the first week that she is in this class because she wanted to challenge herself. She said, “I’m absolutely freaked out. I don’t think I can do half of this stuff, but I’m gonna just see what happens.” I told her, “I want you to take it one day at a time, and that’s it. I want you to think about what we are doing today and nothing else.” She said, “I don’t think I’m gonna play paintball. I don’t think I wanna shoot guns. I don’t think I wanna ski a lot.” She named off all these things, and I said, “Well you know what, tomorrow we’re doing team building—will you do that?” And she said, “Yes.” You know, she’s done everything! She did high ropes—she said she wasn’t going to do it, but she did. She balled her eyes out and hugged the pole like it was her mom, but she did it.

Andy shared that after the indoor rock climbing unit, this girl attended an after-school rock climbing event arranged by Andy at the local climbing gym. He believed that his relaxed approach to teaching played a role in motivating her to engage with adventure physical education activities outside of the class setting. He said,

She is one of the kids who came climbing from 3:30-5:30. She is not a good climber either. She climbed two routes and barely made them. She hung on the rope and rested a lot, but she made it, and I high-fived her. I was thinking to myself, “Wow, you are here doing this stuff!” It was cool, but again, it’s that kind of laid back approach where she obviously felt successful. She has been fun to have in class.

To Andy, promoting a relaxed, low-stakes, and fun learning climate seemed to connect students with physical activity and allowed different types of students to shine throughout the trimester. Students were not measured or assessed on the technical aspects of skills or compared to others, which allowed social hierarchies to shift because students were constantly be positioned at different locations on the hierarchies.

A fourth way that Andy tried to build bridges between students and physical activity was by *connecting the content in adventure physical education with the physical activities that many adults often do*. He believed that few adults play competitive sports into adulthood. According to Andy, the activities he taught in adventure physical education aligned with physical activities that many average adults do, which he believed could facilitate students' physical activity participation now and in adulthood. He said,

I think teaching activities that can be done by adults does help connect kids with physical activities—especially since I have mostly seniors. I think they've come to this point where they're thinking, "Alright, what's next?" I think they know that the *traditional* team sports stuff is a means to an end. Even in college—intramurals are great, but again, it's just to keep you going. Once you get out of college it's hard because you work, you have relationships and you have to find stuff that you can do alone or with one or two people. I think kids know that it will be hard to get 15 people together to go out and do whatever it is you might do in team sports.

Andy often stated that he also believed that seeing adults (while in the community doing class activities) perform many of the activities they were learning in class, could play a role in building bridges between students and physical activity. For example, because the adults were typically well-liked by the students, different students were acknowledged positively by their peers when they were successful at the same activities as the adult role models. It was "cool" to be good at the same activities as their teacher and other well-liked adults in the community. Andy said,

It's also cool because a lot of the people that we work with are in their 30s and 40s and are guys the kids look up to. For example, the guy who runs the climbing gym just turned 30. All the guys at the shooting range are in their 40s and 50s and they all shoot *way* better than our kids do. Even the paintball guy has come out to visit us a couple of times and he's in his 40s. He played with us a year ago, and the kids loved it! I think that's good because they see adults doing it. And you know, when I do stuff I let the kids know what I did. It's important that they know I like to climb still—I like to paddle. They know when I'm out surfing—somehow they hear about it or I might tell one or two kids—I'll put it on Facebook.

To Andy, each unit he included in adventure physical education had potential to be enjoyed by both high school students and adults. Andy stated,

In the next 30 years they're not playing floor hockey. They're not playing badminton in a gym. They're not playing in a volleyball tournament. I mean the kids can go out and do these adventure activities for a long period of time—it doesn't have to be just through high school. So that's kind of neat for me because I've gotten them to think about, "What am I going to do when I'm 25, 30, and 40?"

For instance, he believed that the gun safety unit could promote physical activity participation among many students and adults. Andy said, "It [gun safety unit] may lead to a lifetime pursuit here in the Midwest. It may lead to competitive shooting, which is another lifelong pursuit." He believed that the kayaking and canoeing unit was also a great outdoor pursuit that could be enjoyed by his high school students and later into their adult lives. He said, "The kayaking and canoeing unit opens many, many adventures for kids—inside and outside of our state." According to Andy, because he spent a great deal of time surfing himself, he witnessed this physical activity being enjoyed by participants of a wide range of ages, from young children, such as his five-year old son, all the way to adults in their 60s. He said, "Surfing is probably the activity with the most impact I have done in my classes. It is a true lifelong pursuit." Additionally, Andy and his wife have done a lot of rock climbing. He shared, "Rock climbing is a lifelong pursuit that can be enjoyed by people of all ages."

Because Andy still communicated with past Apex High School students (via Facebook, school visits, e-mails, phone calls), he knew that many former students pursued some of the adventure physical education activities after graduating from high school.

I definitely hear about what kids do after graduation. Almost all of them say they are into rock climbing because their university has a rock climbing gym or they have a facility nearby. There's been some really cool stuff where kids have actually gone out and purchased equipment and gear and gotten really into something—whether it be skiing, snowboarding—but that's neat when that happens.

When I asked Andy if he thought these graduates would have rock climbed had they not experienced it in adventure physical education, he said,

Some would because they are more athletic-minded, but I think the kids who are your non-athletes would not have. Like the girl I mentioned earlier, she would not have climbed without this class, and now she is talking about buying her own harness and attending a local university with a climbing gym.

Andy consistently reported that that he felt that learning physical activities that average adults do had great potential to connect many of his students with physical activities in the local community. According to Andy, the conversations he had with some former students provided him with the knowledge that this teaching practice positively influenced participation beyond high school. Adult-like content played a role in creating social hierarchies that were capable of shifting frequently throughout the trimester. Because Andy emphasized lifelong participation and fun over micro-level technical aspects of skills, different students could be privileged from one unit to the next. For example, because the activity units usually changed weekly, new boys gained social status, while previously privileged boys lost status.

A fifth way that Andy strove to build bridges between his students and physical activity was by *bridging them to community physical activity cultures* such as outdoor and nature programs and facilities, businesses, and their families. It was important to Andy that students experienced physical activities in their community because Apex is where they lived and where some may potentially spend the rest of their lives.

One way he tried to bridge students to community physical activity cultures was by connecting the most of the activities in adventure physical education to the outdoors and nature. He believed that most realistic physical activity locations were not inside school buildings, but in the community and in nature. He said, “There’s something about being outside in the weather, outside the walls.” Apex High School was set in a lake-front community surrounded by public

beaches, state parks, and many outdoor spaces. Andy often indicated that he wanted to open students' eyes to outdoor physical activity possibilities available that were available in their communities. He said, "I love showing kids what great opportunities they have in their own community." Except for indoor rock climbing, some gun safety activities, and a few classroom days, the majority of the activities in adventure physical education took place outdoors and were no more than five to seven minutes from Apex High School. He believed that having outdoor spaces located in such close proximity to their homes increased the likelihood that students would take part in activities on their own time. For example, group initiative activities took place outside in the grass on school grounds. Beach week took place at a local beach on a major lake. The ropes courses, adventure races, and paintball lessons took place in various local wooded areas and parks. Gun safety took place outside at the gun range. During the kayaking and canoeing unit, boats were launched from local parks into bayous and inland lakes. For instance, Andy believed that the adventure racing unit had potential to connect students with nature in ways that were surprisingly fun. He said,

I love that students are running through swampy areas, getting dirty, but smiling and laughing the whole time! This activity is always a class favorite. Think about it, cold, wet conditions, extremely muddy, running, breathing hard, falling down and the kids still think it is fun!

Andy knew that adventure racing connected some students with the outdoors and nature in real ways because it led two boys to do an independent trail running class. Andy shared that these students requested this class because they had enjoyed running through the trails so much during the adventure racing unit. Additionally, after the adventure racing unit, a few students from the cross country team told Andy that they started running on the trails at the parks because they enjoyed running through them during the adventure races. Throughout the trimester, many students shared stories with Andy about how they were spending more time outdoors being

physically active because of their learning experiences in adventure physical education. For example, one boy told Andy, “I didn’t realize how much there was to do outside!” During beach week, students told Andy they had returned to the beach after school to try out their skim boards, and several Apex High School graduates joined Andy’s classes during beach week to participate in skim boarding, stand-up paddle boarding, and surfing because they heard his class would be there. Other students shared with Andy how their outdoor experiences in adventure physical education changed their perceptions about being active outside and learned that as long as they were dressed appropriately for the weather, outdoor activities could be fun.

Andy shared that another way he tried to bridge students to community physical activity cultures was by connecting the some activities in adventure physical education to programs and facilities available in the community. Andy often declared that he wanted his students to be aware of physical activity opportunities that existed through community programs and facilities, especially as applied to gun safety, paintball, and indoor rock climbing. For example, Andy believed that the gun safety unit had potential to connect his students with the local gun club and all the services it had to offer. It also served to connect students with local law enforcement. Andy believed that it was better for students to become acquainted with law enforcement in this positive, instructional manner rather some other typical adolescent encounters with police (i.e., getting pulled over for speeding). He said, “It is a great opportunity for kids to be around and interact with local law enforcement.” Andy shared how this sentiment was shared by school district administration. He said,

This past Monday night I presented at the Board of Education, and my gun safety unit was brought up by our superintendent, as he really supports it. He thinks it is great to have community police officers connect with our kids in a positive way while also giving them something they can pursue close to home.

According to Andy, paintball and indoor rock climbing also had great potential to provide connections for students with local facilities and programs that offered physical activities and were in close proximity to their homes. Andy knew that many students were taking advantage of these facilities and programs based on conversations he had with them. For example, Andy said, “Kids really enjoy shooting and many continue at the gun club when we are finished. Kids send me messages when they start hunting or shooting, and it is nice to see the follow-up.” In addition, because of phone calls he received from the director of the local climbing gym, he knew that many students used this local facility.

Andy shared that a third way he attempted to bridge students to community physical activity cultures was by connecting some of the activities in adventure physical education to local businesses. Andy said that there were many local businesses that sold items to accommodate the various physical activities done locally, many of which were taught in Andy’s adventure physical education classes. For example, there was a sporting goods store that sold outdoor equipment such as rock climbing gear and kayaks. There was a local surf shop that sold surfing gear including boards, wet suits, and wax. There was a local business that rented and sold paintball equipment. Andy shared equipment purchasing information in his classes to support local businesses and to accommodate students’ equipment needs so they might continue engaging with various outdoor pursuits. Andy realized that some of his students and their parents were often unsure about where to purchase equipment related to the activities in adventure physical education, and he did not want a lack of equipment to prevent students from pursuing activities outside of the class setting. Therefore, he often told students about local businesses that sold and rented equipment related to adventure physical education. According to Andy, he did not want students to think, “I don’t have rock climbing gear, so I can’t go climbing outside of

class.” Therefore, he told students about rental and low-cost purchasing opportunities (i.e., used, clearance) within the community so they could access equipment. For instance, during beach week he told students about a slightly damaged surf board discounted at a local surf shop, and a few days later a young man from his class purchased the board.

Andy knew that his attempt to bridge students with local businesses in an effort to connect them with physical activity worked for some because numerous students and parents told him about their use of local businesses to purchase and rent equipment. Andy referred parents to local businesses when they inquired about where and what to buy. He shared that he had many opportunities to try to build this bridge because parents often called him about equipment purchases. For example, he said, “I get six or so phone calls each year from parents wanting to know what size and type of surfboard to buy their kid, what type of wetsuit.” Also, during beach week a boy told him about the surfing gear he recently purchased from a local retailer that Andy suggested. He believed that the bridge he tried to create between students and community physical activity cultures (businesses) could easily function to increase students’ physical activity while also benefitting local businesses. He said,

I think our community has benefited from it because kids are doing things rather than sitting around and they’re bringing money back to the community—they’re buying things from Wild Willy’s [local surf shop] and other places

Andy conveyed that the fourth way that he tried to bridge his students to community physical activity cultures was attempting to connect families through physical activities. He believed that the activities he included in adventure physical education were activities that many students could do with family members, and often encouraged them to do so. He knew this bridge helped to connect students with family members because several students and parents told him as much. In addition, Andy stated that the gun safety unit could be a great mechanism for

connecting families. He said, “Each fall I get e-mails and notes from parents thanking me for helping their kids to obtain their hunter’s safety card so they can go hunting together.”

Andy shared that teaching activities that could bridge students to community physical activity cultures offered different subgroups of students entrance into physical activity possibilities that most were not aware of before taking adventure physical education. According to Andy, the physical activities students could do in their communities extended beyond team sports, to activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, and gun safety, which opened doors for different subgroups of students to find meaning, success, and social status.

The bridge that Andy attempted to create between students and physical activity was not composed of a single unit, but rather was a combination of strategies designed to create a solid connection between the students and physical activity. According to Andy, he employed these five techniques collectively to create a synergistic bridge effect. Each of these strategies employed alone without the four others would not have likely been as successful at creating the bridges that connected many students with physical activity. It was necessary to have all five techniques working in conjunction with one another to produce the strong connection many students made with physical activity, which according to Andy, led to the decreased status differentials among students. .

Building Bridges among Students

Although most of Andy’s students were high school seniors, many met each other for the first time in adventure physical education. According to Andy, he believed that a positive peer climate was necessary for adventure physical education to encourage most students to be physically active. Andy identified several strategies that he used to try and build bridges among boys and girls, athletic and less athletic students, popular and less popular students, as well as

students of low and high socioeconomic status. Andy believed that the peer culture in adventure physical education could increase many students' willingness to try physical activities. He said,

Kids are *much* more willing to try new things and venture into uncharted territory if they believe they will not be judged as they are in a “normal” school environment. Getting them to that point takes time and intentional actions by me. If I can help them develop these skills, that is better than any grade a student receives in PE or paycheck I get—it is real world, real life stuff!

Andy used the term “normal” in terms of building bridges, to refer to the social hierarchies inside the four walls of the school building. On several occasions, he stated that when outside he believed that many students were more open to learning new activities as well as more willing to get to know each other in ways that might not occur within the four walls. To Andy, the hierarchies had potential to shift in outside spaces. In this section, I describe five strategies that Andy implemented to try and build bridges among students and the examples he shared that led him to believe that his strategies worked.

Andy shared that one way that he attempted to build bridges among his students was by *teaching class off-campus*. He believed that off-campus participation could play a key role in flattening social hierarchies. He said,

Getting out of the school does wonders for breaking down social barriers. There are no hallways to congregate in, no lunch tables to sit at, and kids mix easier. When you think about it, the mix of kids is similar to a regular classroom, but the social experience is *very* different. I don't get it 100%, but something happens when we leave the school. It's not perfect, but a lot of the social barriers start to slowly become dismantled, and by the end of the trimester—I don't want to say they're all gone because that's probably not realistic, but oh man, its way different.

Andy said that carpooling was one aspect of off-campus participation that he used to facilitate socializing in adventure physical education. Because most class sessions were held off-campus and most students were licensed drivers with cars, carpooling was easy to incorporate. He explained to students how these drives, although short, offered ideal opportunities for them to chat and get to know one another, especially with classmates they did not know well or may not

interact with in other school settings. The following field note entry illustrates how Andy framed carpooling to try and build bridges among students,

Andy discussed the practical (i.e., save money and gas) and social aspects of carpooling with his students. He encouraged students to invite those without a ride even if they did not know the person. He told them that the car rides have been reported by other students as being a great time to get to know new people or to get to know people better.

Andy also believed that being outside and off-campus added an element to this class that had a power of its own. He said that students had opportunities to get to know each other on levels that did not typically occur within the school building. He said,

Ah, I love being off campus, being away from school during the day. I like being outside. I think it's a great environment to teach in because it totally takes kids out of the four walls, and you see a different side of them. I also enjoy watching kids drop some of those fronts, and those social circles they run in at school are not nearly as common when we are outside. When we're outside, students are able to communicate better with each other, social barriers come down, and that just happens.

According to Andy, off-campus participation played a role in building bridges among his students because of the positive social interactions he frequently observed when students arrived and departed from the off-campus locations. He saw students talking and laughing as they got in and out of cars. Many of these students did not know each other (or at least not well) before adventure physical education. He also observed a great deal of new friendships unfold during class and many students often shared stories with Andy about their developing friendships. For example, Andy received an e-mail from a student saying that he made new friends in adventure physical education and that he talked to people he would never have to talked to in other classes or school settings. This message was from a boy who reported having negative experiences in past sport-dominated physical education. Andy attributed the connections students made to being outside the four walls of the school building. He witnessed the social hierarchies transition from vertical to more horizontal in outdoor spaces and nature. He said,

It's true...a big part is just getting out, getting away from school. It changes kids' perceptions, and I think that helps drastically. They all act differently—there's that whole pecking order at school that does not exist so much in our class because we are off campus.

To Andy, teaching off campus had the capacity to connect students with one another, which could create a positive peer culture. Andy said that subgroups of students seemed to mix in the outdoor spaces, which he believed allowed them to engage with physical activity in ways that leveled the social playing field because high-skilled students did not ridicule their lesser-skilled classmates, but instead offered assistance. Andy consistently reported that he thought that lesser-skilled students were willing to try new activities because they were not often made fun of when outside the four walls of the school building.

According to Andy, a second way that he attempted to build bridges among his students was by *incorporating meal time into some class sessions*. He shared,

Even though I'm not a food guy, I love making time for kids to eat meals together. I know that food is very social, and I know that kids like sitting down and eating a meal together. It also breaks down some of those barriers because they talk to kids they may not talk to during the school day—athletes and nonathletes chat, girls and boys chat, less popular kids and popular kids chat, and shy kids get brought into the mix.

Andy incorporated several student mealtimes throughout the trimester, all of which were paid for using class funds. For example, on the last day of the gun safety unit, Andy prepared a pancake breakfast for his students at the gun club. During the full-day canoe/kayak trip, Andy arranged a hot dog cookout. On the day of the indoor rock climbing trip, he arranged a group lunch at a local sub shop. On the last day of class, he prepared a pancake breakfast for students in the classroom. During mealtimes, Andy shared that he enjoyed watching his students make personal connections, especially when the connections were among students from different social circles. On one occasion while students were eating and chatting Andy looked at me, smiled, and said, "*This is what it's all about.*"

Andy felt that mealtimes bridged many students together because of the statements some shared with him regarding mealtimes. For example, Andy shared,

Students look forward to it—they talk about it. I hear them say things like, “We’re having a hot dog cookout!” or “We are going to the sub shop before climbing tomorrow!” So I hear them talking about the meals I incorporate into class. They love it!

He also said that mealtimes were effective in bridging many students because of the cross subgroup interactions he observed during mealtimes. He said,

Sure, kids will still sit with their friends, but I look at it like this—if one or two kids talk to one or two people that they wouldn’t normally talk to then it’s a success—and that happens all the time. If that one kid made a connection with someone he might not have made a connection with before—whether it be his hot dog group at the gun range or at the sub shop because there wasn’t a seat available and he was the last one to get a sub and so he sat down with a group at a table and he started talking to an athlete and he’s not an athlete or a girl sat down with the cool girls and she’s not a cool girl—you know what I mean—that kind of stuff happens, so it’s good.

Andy stated that incorporating mealtimes into class helped students make connections that may not have occurred outside of adventure physical education. In addition, it helped to nurture relationships that developed because of other aspects of adventure physical education, that is, novel content, off-campus participation. According to Andy, the mixing of students during mealtime and the relationships they had the opportunities to develop, positively influenced peer relations during the physical activity portion of class by creating less dramatic social hierarchies.

Andy identified a third way that he built bridges among his students was by *emphasizing group support*. He firmly believed that peer support played a significant role in helping students bond with one another. To Andy, support, in turn, played a significant role in flattening social hierarchies and ultimately getting many students to be more physically active. He said, “I want kids to learn about what it means to support each other. I want them to learn about what it means to help someone else be successful.” He talked about the importance of the first few days of class

when students participated in the team building unit and described the role it played in setting the social and emotional tone for the remainder of the trimester. Andy said,

I use the same kind of metaphor *every* trimester—I talk about building a house. I worked construction for a number of years when I was in college. I tell the kids that the most important step in building a house is the foundation because if you screw that up, the house is going to collapse. So I tell them, “These three or four days we are building our foundation, and if you don’t do it right, you don’t do it well, as a class we are going to collapse, and you’re not going to get everything out of this class that you could.” I tell them, “It’s in your best interest and it’s in everyone’s best interest that we build a solid foundation these first three or four days, and if we do, that will carry us through every single activity we do.”

Andy frequently articulated that he felt that it was important for him to market the value of group support to different types of students. For example, he felt emphasizing group support was especially important for shy students with lower self-confidence. To Andy, stressing group support made it more likely that many students would feel a sense of emotional safety, which would make it more likely they enjoy the activities enough to pursue them on their own. He said,

I want to make sure that I’m watching out for the kids who need it the most—the kids who need that safe environment—the kids who need to feel like, “Okay, we’re building a foundation to support *me* because I don’t know anybody and nobody knows my name.” And the kids who need it, I think it makes them feel safe because they hear me talking about building a foundation and we’re going to be nice, we’re going to take care of each other—we’re not going to ridicule—we’re going to support each other.

Additionally, h stated that his approach to encouraging group support inspired some “macho” students to commit to creating a supportive environment in adventure physical education, which further functioned to narrow social hierarchies. He shared,

I tell them, “You will benefit from it personally, we will benefit from it as a group, and this will make you feel like you’re not even at school.” Those things resonate with kids—they want to have a class where they don’t feel like they’re at school. They want to have a class that is exciting and adventurous but also safe and supportive. So when I frame it that way as saying, “Amy, be nice to everybody,” it’s not the same. But when I say, “We’re building a foundation,” those kids that are kind of machos [top of social hierarchy in sport-dominated physical education] that say, “I’m not being nice. Fuck him.” I think those types of kids can wrap themselves around the foundation part because it’s like, “Okay, I’m gonna do my part.”

Andy shared examples of some of the supportive behaviors he observed during previous trimesters with his students to give them a sense of the leveled social playing field he worked to create. He believed sharing encouraged most students to do their part to create a supportive environment. He stated,

I always talk about how at the high-ropes course I've seen things that made me tear up—I say, “I have literally seen things that bring me to tears at the ropes course.” And a lot of times these things happened with kids with special needs that I have in class or kids who have an absolute fear of heights and they just happen to get up the tower because everyone cheers them on. I think that resonates with kids because they are like, “It's happened—he has proof.” You know, even if I embellish a little—it's okay—it gets us to where we need to be.

According to Andy, group support did indeed build bridges among many of his students based on and the group dynamics he observed during classes. For one, he witnessed many students support classmates who were outside their friendship circle. One time, an outgoing boy encouraged a shy boy on the high-ropes course. He watched as students who did not know each other well celebrate successes—athletic and less athletic students high-fived one another after completing a group initiative. He heard popular girls encourage unpopular girls by providing tips on the best routes to take on the rock wall. He heard shy boys share ideas with an outgoing boy during the low-ropes initiatives.

Andy stressed the importance of emphasizing group support to try to create an emotionally and physically safe environment where students felt supported by one another. In adventure physical education, group support facilitated the potential for less pronounced hierarchies to develop, which according to Andy created situations where many students were inclined to work toward common goals with one another.

A fourth way that stated that he built bridges among his students was by *modeling positive social behaviors in public spaces*. He said, “I generally talk to people, shake their hand, and ask them how they are doing” because he wanted to model for his students how to interact

with each other in a positive manner as well. Interested people from the community often approached Andy when he was out in public with students, and he usually made time to speak with these folks. He shared,

I've learned that people have a certain look in their eye when they see us. It is like, "Why are these high school kids here in the middle of the day?" So I always introduce myself and tell them about the class and why we are there, and people will generally respond to that. It is also good for my kids to see me interact with people.

To Andy, modeling positive social behaviors played a role in bridging students in adventure physical education. He said, "It's nice to have the kids see me model that it is okay to talk to people I don't know and be cordial. I hope it helps the kids talk to people in class they don't know." He believed that witnessing his positive interactions encouraged students to behave similarly with their peers. He observed students being pleasant to each other during the majority of class time. He said, "I'm not always good at it but I try. There are days when I'm tired, but a big part of getting kids to make social connections is by modeling, so I try to do it often."

According to Andy, modeling could be an effective way to demonstrate respectful behavior toward students who seemed to be perceived by many others as "different." The following vignette demonstrates how Andy demonstrated respect toward a student who was often made fun of and laughed at by his classmates,

Justin, a student not in this class, poked his head in the door to say "Hi" to Andy. According to Andy, Justin was autistic, socially awkward, and was not often treated respectfully by his peers. Some students chuckled when Justin left, but Andy set the tone by telling a positive story about Justin, which stopped the laughter. He could have yelled at his students for their behavior, but he took a less authoritarian route. Andy later told me he did this because Evan, a student in this class who is emotionally impaired, was similar to Justin. He hoped his students made the connection between the two students and showed Evan compassion during the trimester.

Throughout the trimester, most students demonstrated a great deal of patience and kindness toward Evan. He was included, he was encouraged during activities, he was invited to carpool and to lunch, and his rude comments were often ignored.. Andy believed that his

modeling played a role in their kindness toward Evan because, based on stories Evan and other students shared with Andy, he knew students were not as inclusive of him in other school settings.

Andy also strove to demonstrate a general respect for all people because he wanted his students to value differences in others and respect people who were not just like them. According to Andy, because adventure physical education was composed of different types of students, he wanted them to demonstrate respect for one another no matter what social group they belonged to. For example, during a pancake breakfast in a classroom, Andy asked students to not put cups with liquids into the trash can because it would not be fair for the custodial staff to have to drag a leaking bag down the hall. He said to the students, “They don’t deserve that.” He could have said that the custodians would get mad, possibly implying that their anger was unreasonable, but instead he placed value on the custodial staff. He said,

The big thing is selling it to the kids. If I just said, “Hey, don’t put your liquid in here!” The lesson is *why*. Kids have heart enough to know that, “Hey, if I picked up that bag, and it was leaked all the way down the hallway, I wouldn’t want that.” I want students to see that just because someone is not like them does not mean they deserve less respect.

To Andy, modeling positive social behaviors created a setting where most students frequently treated one another with respect, irrespective of the social group(s) they belonged to (e.g., athletic or less athletic, popular or unpopular, rich or poor).

According to Andy, a fifth way that he tried to build bridges among students was by *having them share “good things,”* which was a strategy he learned from a district-wide training initiative. During this activity, students were invited to talk about aspects of their lives beyond the context of class, which often occurred in a circle formation at the beginning of class. He saw sharing good things as another way to try and bridge students. He stated,

I think that sharing good things gets kids interested in sharing what’s going on in their lives—often with kids they may not normally share things with. It can be anything from

“I stayed over at so and so’s house over the weekend” to “I won this competition and I was part of this team” or whatever, but it gets kids talking to each other.

Andy viewed sharing good things as a way to help students learn about each other in ways that were less likely to happen outside this activity. Andy shared,

Another thing I like about it too is that it helps kids make connections that they might not make otherwise. So a kid decides to speak up about how he likes something or he watched some movie and all of a sudden there is another kid in the circle that says, “I like that movie too.”

To Andy, sharing good things was time well spent in terms of bridging students, even when only one or two connections were made. He said,

Maybe that connection goes further, maybe it doesn’t, but if it does it’s one connection. I have to celebrate those small successes because one kid makes one connection with someone they normally wouldn’t talk to. Well you know what, that’s awesome, and that makes it worthwhile. If there are no connections made that week, then we heard some interesting stuff and we’re no worse off from it—it took three minutes.

Andy felt that sharing good things helped to build bridges between many students because he heard them talking about specific topics that came up during sharing. For example, sometimes small conversations took place during the sharing activity, with exchanges like, “Hey, my brother was at that game too”; or “I want to eat there. Was the food good?” Sometimes Andy heard conversations that stemmed from sharing good things that carried over to activity time. He liked when he heard students talk about nonclass related topics even when it was something as small as, “Hey, where did you say you bought those shoes?” He said, “That follow-up is huge and really gives kids something to talk about.” As the trimester progressed, most students’ willingness to share seemed to increase, which also led Andy to believe in the effectiveness of the bridges he was trying to foster among his students, because many students seemed to enjoy sharing stories about their lives outside of the class.

Andy stated that sharing good things seemed to connect many students with others because through this frequent and recurring activity, students had multiple and daily

opportunities to learn about the lives of their classmates that they may not have knowledge of otherwise. According to Andy and students, the information shared during this activity often led to further conversations and deeper connections than they would have been less likely to make in other social settings. Again, Andy believed the connections students made with each other in class increased the likelihood they would engage with physical activity on their own time, which was one of his ultimate goals.

According to Andy, the five techniques that he implemented functioned collectively to cultivate a social climate in which most students more often than not, felt physically and emotionally supported enough to participate. Although teaching off campus played a major role in bridging many students, as a stand-alone technique, it would likely not have been enough to produce the strong student connections and high levels of participation that were typical in adventure physical education.

Building Bridges between Teacher and Students

According to Andy, positive teacher-student relationships helped bridge students with physical activity. Andy often used a phrase that he heard at a district-wide in service that encapsulated his approach to building bridges between himself and students, “Students don’t care what you know until they know that you care,” which he claimed to embrace wholeheartedly. He believed that for the activities in adventure physical education to make a difference in the lives of his students they must know that he cared about them. To that end, he implemented many strategies in adventure physical education to try to build bridges and reduce the power differential between himself as the teacher and his students. In this section, I describe the three strategies that Andy used to attempt to build bridges between himself and his students along with indicators that led him to believe that his strategies worked.

Andy reported that one way that he tried to build bridges between himself and his students was by showing students that he cared about them through *frequent and positive interactions*. He felt that consistently interacting with different types of students was a small task that could go a long way. He said,

It is important to get to know the people that you work with, and my work is done with students. There are a lot of parallels to the business world because you have to interact with everyone who is on your team—for me my team is my students. By taking the time it takes to say, “Hey, how are you doing today?” I learn a little bit about every kid and help them realize that I am interested in what they do outside of school.

Andy believed that the care he showed his students was likely more important than the content he taught. He shared,

To me it is common sense that kids want you to care about what they do outside of school. Just taking an interest in kids—who they are, what they’re interested in. It’s all about, “Who are you as a student?” It’s not about, “What grades do you get?” If you don’t get that as a teacher, what are you doing if you really believe you are only there to teach kids your subject?

According to Andy, part of demonstrating care involved regularly interacting with different subgroups of students. He did not reserve positive attention for particular students, which he believed had potential to create well pronounced social hierarchies among students. He often shared that he felt fortunate to have the ability to relate to different types of students because it helped him to build bridges with more students. He stated,

I come from a very traditional sports background—I still coach, but yet I have this whole alternative side to me. It is easy for me to connect with different groups—I have a Master’s degree now so when I want to, I can be academic. With my high level kids, I can have a high level conversation. But I also grew up on 10 acres and shot guns and drove trucks and had a dirt bike so I can get along with the rural kids very well—I can mix it up with them no problem. It’s easy for me to connect with the athletes and jocks too because I coach and because I was an athlete. I am also able to make connections with the kids who are at risk. I have had my own problems with addictions, so I get it. Whether all of that is good or bad, it’s the reality of me putting on different hats—not being fake—just kind of changing my perception of what I’m talking about. That is something that I’m lucky to have.

The following vignette demonstrates how important it was to Andy that he treated different types of students with equal attention,

On the final day, Andy showed each class their DVD from the trimester. It was about 15-18 minutes in length. He tried to make sure all students were in the DVD multiple times, but prefaced the viewing with the fact that if students did not feel like they were in the DVD much, or at least not as much as others, that this did not mean that Andy liked them less. He explained that he had a lot of pictures to sift through and found it difficult to identify people in some pictures. He could have not said this, but he did not want students to feel like they were less important than others—so he explained.

To Andy, relating with many types of students seemed to help him build bridges between himself and students because he witnessed a lack of student-teacher connection when teachers did not related to similar types of students. He shared,

Being able to connect with different types of kids is *huge* because I had a guy who shared an office with me two years ago—very nice guy. However, if the kids say, “Dammit” in his class, he writes them up and sends them to the office. So imagine him and me sharing an office. I’d come in and be pissed about something, and I didn’t know he was that conservative until my wife told me because she knows him. I’m thinking, “It’s been three months and I’ve been swearing up a storm in my office”—and he never said a word. He struggled with the kids because he is one person and did not put on different hats. He is from an ultra-religious family—the only types of kid that he talked to were the kids who were like him. The other kids didn’t talk to him. So, getting to know kids and branching out is huge!

Andy felt that part of showing students that he cared involved a certain degree of acting and performing because he was not always interested in the topics they talked about or the activities they liked. However, he believed that remembering things they shared with him and asking them questions about their lives was important to his students. Andy said that when he needed to pretend to be interested, he did so, because he believed that showing an interest in them helped him bond with his students. He said,

I am pretty good at remembering when kids have something coming up that they’re looking forward to—whether its grandpa’s birthday party on Saturday or it’s a hockey game or they’re going on a trip or they’re going to buy some new video game that I could give two shits about—you know what I mean? It’s just remembering that they did it. Whether I have a big interest or not doesn’t matter—just to say, “Hey how did the party

go?” shows that I care. I may not be interested in the topic, but I do care that they’re interested in it. I think that that has been helpful.

When talking about Capturing Kids’ Hearts, a district-wide initiative that emphasized creating a caring, positive social climate for everyone, Andy found that not all teachers bought into the notions presented at the workshop—notions that were second nature to him. He said,

We went through this whole training, and the take-home message was that kids need to know that we care about them. They talked about how a kid will not perform their best in the classroom until they really know that you care about them as an individual. I’m not a genius or anything, but I’ve always believed that. I had some really good teachers when I was young. I had some great college professors who believed in that. Up until we took this training, I thought that was common sense—that everybody knew that. We had teachers sitting in there who were rolling their eyes, and I’m like “Are you kidding me? If you don’t believe in this how have you lasted 15 years in teaching—because the pay isn’t that good? If you don’t care about kids, how will you last?”

Andy also built bridges between himself and students by inviting them to share good things during class. Andy felt that sharing good things allowed him to get to know his students outside of the context of class. The information he learned during this activity allowed him to initiate conversations with different types of students, which he saw as an excellent way to let them know that he was interested in them. He said,

It’s a way for me to learn about kids. I hear what students like, what they are doing. I learn about kids’ lives in ways I wouldn’t get the chance to know otherwise. I can usually remember that stuff pretty good. It’s easier for me to remember that than it is names. It is like, “Okay, he is interested in this or she is into that.” I follow-up with them later—sometimes during class, sometimes back at school.

According to Andy, because he used student information gained during good things to engage them in conversations, this strategy assisted him in building bridges between him and his students. In other words, he did not learn new information about his students and then do nothing; he talked about how he used new information to connect with more students. He felt that most students enjoyed talking with him about nonclass related topics because they often smiled, answered his questions, and prolonged their conversations with him.

Andy felt that demonstrating care through frequent and positive interactions with decreased the status differential between himself and his students. For example, many less athletic boys initiated conversations with Andy on a regular basis, sometimes about class activities and sometimes about nonclass related topics. Many girls talked to Andy. Several athletes talked to Andy. Some shy students initiated conversations with Andy. Various students who reportedly got into trouble in other classes and might not graduate from high school on time talked to Andy. Many students who were on the honor roll talked to Andy. He felt that most students knew that he cared because they chose to tell him things about their lives and confide in him, and in his opinion, they would likely not waste their time sharing with him if they did not think he cared. According to Andy, demonstrating care through frequent and positive interactions with different students helped to build bridges between Andy and many of his students and also lessened hierarchies between himself and his students.

Andy stated that a second way that he attempted to build bridges between himself and his students was by *implementing constructive discipline techniques*. He said that rather than trying to dominate his students with an, “I am the teacher and you are the students” attitude, he found gentle ways to address behavior concerns. Rather than getting upset or blaming students for poor behavior, he was respectful when addressing most situations and believed this respect helped him make positive connections with his students. For example, when going over compass basics during the adventure racing unit, many students were confused and did not quickly adopt this skill. Instead of criticizing the students for not paying attention, Andy attributed their misunderstanding to his own teaching practice and assumed that he had not explained the concepts clearly. He re-explained and went through a couple more practice bearings. Additionally, during the first day of gun safety, some kids came to class with low energy and put

their heads down. Andy addressed the situation in a way that did not seem to cause students to feel angry or embarrassed. He did not demand, “Pick your heads off the table and pay attention!”

He calmly said,

I know some of you may be tired or not feeling well today, but it is important to listen and be part of this so you know what to do at the gun range tomorrow. When I feel tired in class, I find that the more I engage, the less tired I feel.

He spoke to them with compassion and empathized with them by telling them he understood how they felt because he had been at presentations or meetings where he found it difficult to focus. His students responded by lifting their heads without visible resentment and engaged in the lesson. When I later asked Andy about how he handled this situation, he explained that maintaining a positive disposition when handling behavior issues was part of selling the content to the students. He explained,

Part of that is we pull the kids out of the “field” and now they are in the classroom, and for them it is kind of like a downer. It is like, “Oh geez, we’re in the classroom.” I believe that if you can tell them just a little bit about *why*, it makes all the difference. It’s not, “Pick your heads up! Pay attention! Eyes up here!” Threatening them might work sometimes, but I think you’re going to get a better response by trying to win them over—by making a case for why you need or want them to pay attention. Teaching is so much about how you sell, not so much about your curriculum. So you think about what you want the kids to do and find the most effective way to get them to do it—whatever that is, is what you have to do.

Andy felt that implementing constructive discipline techniques helped to bridge himself with his students because they usually behaved and stayed on task rather than cause problems. This well-mannered behavior was evident even for students who reportedly did not always behave well for other teachers at Apex High School. He shared,

I do not have problems with those kids—I just don’t. Part of it is because I find ways to work with them that they respond; to whereas some other teachers don’t do that and they have huge discipline problems with the same kids that I don’t. I do not have to overpower my students for them to know who is in charge—there is never a question about that.

According to Andy, implementing constructive discipline techniques helped build bridges between Andy and many of his students and reduced the status differential between himself and his students. His discipline techniques functioned to draw students toward being physically active and engaging in class rather than turning them off by dominating them with power and authority.

A third way that Andy tried to build bridges between him and students was by implementing a teenager-friendly method of communication into adventure physical education: Facebook. Facebook is an online social network service in which users create personal profiles, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile or “status”. Andy created an adventure physical education Facebook page for use with his classes. He said,

I think using Facebook is the single best thing I have done for this class in five years, and it is all because of my wife because I would not have done it. It is a lot of work—especially tagging pictures, but it is such an unbelievably effective and easy way to communicate with my students. When I get online I can see how many kids are on—it’s ridiculous. It is a way for me to get announcements out—it’s a way for me to share pictures and videos.

According to Andy, when he started using Facebook, he was overloaded with “friend requests” by several current and past students. He knew this social networking system was a major way students corresponded, so he decided to try it in his class by posting messages with class details and pictures of students participating in class. He took pictures of the students as they participated during almost every class session, and made sure all students were photographed. When I asked how using Facebook strengthened Andy’s relationships with students, he enthusiastically shared,

It absolutely makes a huge difference. Kids love to see themselves doing cool things during the school day, and when I "tag" a student it automatically shows on their Facebook page. I know it makes a difference because kids will send me messages

thanking me for tagging them and they change their profile pictures to something we did in class. I have kids who I have never met requesting to be "friends" saying they are freshman and have seen pictures on Facebook and want to get involved—take the class someday.

For Andy, implementing Facebook into his classes enhanced his ability to bridge himself with many students and helped flatten hierarchies between himself and his students. Andy strove to provide students with equal access to communicate with him.

Like the other two bridges, Andy believed that the three techniques he used to build bridges between himself and his students possessed a collective power that increased students' willingness to engage in physical activities, a power that the individual techniques alone did not hold. Collectively, the three techniques were effective in helping to bridge Andy with many students and facilitated the possible of creating shifting status differentials and encouraged different types of students to be physically active in new ways.

The three metaphorical bridges Andy tried to build (i.e., bridges between students and physical activity, bridges among students, and bridges between himself and his students) were his mechanisms for reducing the hierarchical configurations among students and also for increasing the fluidity of social hierarchies. These bridges functioned like a circuit. One bridge was not more or less important than another, but rather, each was equally needed to produce a stockpile of pleasurable experiences for students, which he hoped influenced them to be physically active on their own time. For example, there was a synergistic effect among the three bridges he tried to build.

Students voiced similar perspectives on how social hierarchies operated and explained how the configurations and status differentials did not exist in this adventure physical education setting as they did in sport-dominated physical education settings. I tell the boys' stories in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: LEARNING IN ADVENTURE PHYSICAL EDUCATION: BOYS' STORIES

Introduction

This chapter chronicles male students' perceptions of adventure physical education as an environment that produced masculinity configurations that were fluid and narrow creating social status differentials that boys described as flattened which resulted in extremely positive feelings about the importance of physical activity in their lives. To the boys in this study, the hierarchical configurations in this setting were different from the static and well-pronounced masculinity hierarchies produced in many of their past sport-dominated physical education classes, which left numerous boys with negative feelings toward physical activity. According to the boys, they began to think differently about physical activity variety, physical activity outside of school, bodies, competition, risk taking, perseverance, social relationships, peer support, and prejudging others' abilities in relation to physical activity. These boys directly attributed the changes in their perceptions to the unique content, pedagogies, and teacher and peer cultures in adventure physical education. It should be noted that the boys reported that the majority of their physical education experiences in elementary, middle, and high school were primarily competitive sport, which they often used as comparison points to orient their perspectives on their current adventure education classes.

I tell the boys' stories in two sections. In the first section, I start by showcasing male students' perceptions in their past conventional, sport-dominated physical education classes at the beginning of the adventure physical education class. I then explain shifts in the boys' perceptions of masculinity configurations during and after the adventure physical education class. In the second section, I describe the aspects of adventure physical education that boys felt led to

differential masculinity configurations between traditional sport-based physical education and their adventure physical education, most notably in the fluidity and range of masculinity hierarchies.

Boys' Perceptions of Masculinity Configurations in Different Physical Education Settings

Many boys in adventure physical education at Apex High School started the trimester with somewhat negative perceptions about how traditional sport-based physical education created static, uneven, and stratified masculinity configurations among boys, which led them to develop pessimistic beliefs about the importance of various components of physical activity in their lives. For example, boys from various social positions believed that conventional physical education classes lacked variety in the physical activities that were taught, engaged predominantly athletic boys, and privileged boys with athletic and fit bodies who were inherently highly physical, aggressive and competitive in nature. These perceptions developed through years of participating in physical education classes where competitive, elite sport performance was the primary emphasis.

According to the boys, the adventure physical education setting produced different hierarchical configurations in two respects. First, because of the diversity in the content taught in adventure physical education, the kinds of masculinities that attained social status differed across each content area. For example, in the gun safety unit, some boys who typically did not attain social status through their physical exploits were able to showcase their physical skills and garner respect and status among their peers. Conversely, during the skim boarding mini-unit a completely different group of students found success. The importance here was that because of the content diversity and novelty, different types of boys' physical capabilities were able to flourish and gain status depending on the unit of instruction. In a real sense, the masculinity

hierarchies were always shifting and re-aligning due in large part to the content of the class and the social environment it produced. Second, also due to the type of content taught in the class (e.g., less competitive, new and novelty, focus on social interaction), the boys reported that the stratification between different masculinities was far less pronounced than in their past competitive sport-based physical education classes. In the past, elite sport-oriented physicalities acquired a great degree of social status resulting in wide status configurations between athletic students with strong sport backgrounds and less athletic students with fewer past sport experiences. However, in adventure physical education because many of the physical and social components of the activities themselves were markedly different, and students reported that, in addition to masculinities being constantly realigned, they also resulted in a much narrower range of status separation. Boys felt that although masculinity hierarchies still existed in the various mini-units of the adventure classes, the gap between the masculinities that were privileged and those that were less successful was far less pronounced. In a sense, they reported a leveling of the social environment. The upside in both cases was that between the constant masculinity realignment and the narrower status differentials boys reported substantially different feelings about the role of physical activity in their lives. To them, it was the nature of the adventure activities combined with the its unique pedagogy that functioned to alter how boys' masculinities were configured within this social setting, which in turn influenced many of the ways they conceptualized the importance of physical activities within their lives.

In the following sections, I describe substantial shifts in how these boys viewed physical activity as a result of the ways that the adventure physical education setting influenced their masculinity configurations. For these boys, these shifts in occurred in their views of physical activity in the following areas: (a) physical activity variety, (b) physical activity outside the

context of school, (c) bodies, (d) competition, (e) taking risks, (f) perseverance, (g) social relationships, (h) peer support, and (i) prejudging others' abilities. Each section begins with a description of how boys felt about the issue at the beginning of the trimester and in relation to the kinds of masculinity configurations that were commonly produced throughout their past sport-dominated physical education classes. Then I explain how they felt about the issue as they moved through and after completing adventure physical education. The key finding in this section is that the changes in the ways these male students understood and thought about physical activities centered largely on the ways in which adventure physical education class shaped and positioned different types of masculinities.

Physical Activity Variety

At the beginning of the trimester, male students in adventure physical education consistently described a repetitious K-12 physical education system that frequently inflated social hierarchies among boys and contributed to hierarchical configurations that did not typically change from one unit to the next. In past sport-dominated physical education classes, they recalled often learning the same sports year after year, the same way, and often in the same sequence. Because of their exposure to such a narrow range of content, to them, physical activity largely equated to sports. According to these boys, because the nature of the activities in past physical education classes were so similar (e.g., in sports such as basketball, football, soccer, and floor hockey), male students who possessed characteristics such as speed, strength, coordination, agility, muscularity, competitiveness, and aggression had a greater capacity to be successful participating in the narrow range of sport-dominated content, and were recurrently privileged. Boys from various subgroups (e.g., who reported enjoying past physical education classes and those who recalled mostly negative experiences) similarly described the monotony and hierarchy

inflating qualities of the sport-dominated content, which shaped their feelings about physical activity. For example, this self-defined less athletic young man's definition of physical activity was based on the narrow range of content he recalled learning in past sport-dominated physical education classes. He stated,

Activities in traditional PE are similar in structure creating a hierarchy within the class. Because traditional PE activities are so similar, it's easy for certain types of boys to become the main players in such activities. These are generally the more athletic and fit ones; most likely they play the same types of sports outside of PE class so they are familiar with the rules, as well as the tricks and strategies of said activities. Boys that may not play those sports outside of class are still forced to participate in class, but the actual amount of participation is not necessarily very high. They may try to be involved in the activities, but during the game fellow classmates are more likely to pass to the main players, who are usually the athletic, sporty boys, rather than someone who barely knows the rules of the game.

According to the boys who described themselves as nontraditional athletes, because the activities themselves were inherently similar, across classes and years, they felt they could never move up on the social hierarchies because they did not possess the characteristics they believed were necessary to perform many activities skillfully. To these boys, one needed to be muscular, fast, coordinated, agile, and aggressive to successfully participate in physical activity, which they defined as sport due to the many years of participating in physical education classes that taught mainly sport-related activities. For example, a less athletic young man felt that he was often not a skilled performer because "No matter what activity was being done, class was always the same for me because I was not good at any of that stuff."

Boys who described themselves as traditional athletes shared similar perspectives in relation to the invariable and well-pronounced social hierarchies that were created among boys in their past physical education classes because of the characteristically similar content. This young man offered additional insights as to why he believed certain boys were better positioned to

succeed, which he attributed to experiences that were afforded to certain young boys in early childhood. He shared,

The activities commonly taught in regular PE definitely create hierarchies among boys. All of the games played in these classes are similar, so kids that are good at one are usually good at the others. So you have the elite athletes that dominate and get picked first to be on teams. Also, this generally is the “cool” group. Their parents had money to get them in youth basketball leagues when they were kids and can pay for full, nutritional meals. I’m not saying kids from lower income families are not athletic, but those kids that are put into athletic programs outside of gym class and that get three square meals a day tend to be better at the activities and then they are seen as athletic, and in turn, cool.

Additionally, boys consistently reported that in addition to creating prominent social hierarchies among young men, they found the narrow range of content typically taught in past physical education classes as boring. For most boys, narrow content in past physical education classes created the idea that there was little variability among physical activities. Although this sentiment was shared by various subgroups of boys, the impact of the monotonous nature of the content was described differently among various types of male students. For boys who were frequently positioned at the bottom of social hierarchies, their conceptualization of physical activity was limited to the narrow range sport-related activities they experienced in past physical education classes, which often positioned them below the athletic boys in class. To them, before taking adventure physical education, not only did physical education provide little variation among physical activities, but it also left them feeling unskilled many respects. For the most part, these boys felt that physical activity equated to sport, which led to feelings such as “I am not good at physical activity.” For instance, a less athletic young man shared,

I had a bad attitude about physical activity because when I was in middle school we always did the same sports, and I hated playing basketball and baseball and all that stuff in gym that I wasn’t good at. So in high school I didn’t take gym classes because I hated physical activity.

Less athletic boys often expressed how limiting and boring they found sport activities.

One boy said, “During regular PE we do four things: basketball, football, soccer, and floor

hockey.” Another less athletic young man similarly stated, “PE was pretty much the same gym class that we’ve been taking since elementary school. Physical activity was running the mile and playing games like kickball and soccer. Repetition gets boring.”

Although many self-defined athletic male students described the majority of their past sport physical education classes as positive, they also found the activities tedious. For example, this athletic young man said,

Team sports class is basically your average gym class. It’s fun, but everything you do is basic gym class stuff. It’s all the basics and gets kinda boring. We always played basketball, floor hockey, dodgeball, and badminton; those get boring.

Another athletic young man who reported that he liked playing sports not only found playing the same sports and games in physical education class boring but also recognized that the enjoyment was not shared by all boys, and that this repetition played a significant role in creating social hierarchies that did not often shift. He shared, “They [activities in past sport physical education classes] all had different rules, but no matter how different the rules were they all consisted of mainly two teams competing on a playing field. There was never any diversity in these settings and the same kids had fun.”

I found that while taking adventure physical education, boys’ feelings about physical activity variety shifted dramatically. Their definitions of physical activity expanded to include activities that extended far beyond traditional team sports and included activities such as surfing, rock climbing, skim boarding, target shooting, stand-up paddling, kayaking, adventure racing, and paintball. Because of the diverse nature of the content in adventure physical education, boys a different social environment, one that equalized the playing field among boys and created status differentials that were more fluid and less pronounced than in sport-dominated physical education, which ultimately changed their feelings toward physical activity. According to various boys, physical activity became more than football, basketball, dodgeball, soccer, floor

hockey, and fitness-testing. This shift in thinking applied to different subgroups of boys in similar ways. For instance, a less athletic boy offered a sentiment that was also echoed by many athletic boys. He stated, “I learned that physical activities can be much more fun than the ones learned in traditional PE. In adventure PE we did rock climbing, high ropes, and kayaking: fun things.”

Less athletic boys also described the activities they learned in adventure physical education as interesting and wide-ranging compared to the sport activities that dominated the majority of their past physical education experiences. For instance, one such young man shared,

The things that we did in regular PE don't compare to the things we did in adventure PE. There were some things we did in regular PE that I liked, but they made you play the same games all the time. Each class and activity was an adventure in here [adventure physical education].

Athletic boys described a similar appreciation of the variety of physical activities in adventure physical education, which also led to a more diverse perception of physical activity. A boy who reportedly enjoyed sports and competition stated, “I think the reason students like the class [adventure physical education] so much is that nothing is ever the same.” Similarly, another athletic boy said, “No two activities [in adventure physical education] had the exact same conditions so everything always seemed like an adventure and each day gave us a new challenge.”

Boys also articulated that the variety of physical activities in adventure physical education flattened social hierarchies, which led them to a new awareness that hierarchy inflation or creation was not inherent or the same in all physical activities. They learned that it was possible to be physically active without always being positioned at the same location on social hierarchies because different types of activities emphasized different masculine qualities. During an interview, an athletic boy compared the hierarchy inflation qualities of the sports taught in

past physical education classes with the hierarchy flattening qualities of the diverse activities in adventure physical education. He said,

Adventure PE is completely different because the activities are ones that not everyone sees on a regular basis. No one's parents had them rock climbing or surfing every week in elementary school. Some kids did have prior experience to the activities, but it was recent. Like there were a group of guys in my class that were regular surfers but they had only learned a few years back so they know what it's like to struggle with learning how to surf. They gave us all instruction and helped us rather than showing off. In traditional PE classes, the students learn to play those [common] sports at such an early age that it seems totally natural to them and to have to go back and teach other high schoolers how to play would be like teaching someone in AP (advanced placement) calculus how to add and subtract. In high school, you are pretty much expected to know all the sports. Not many boys have the patience to stop the play and instruct the rules and "how-to's" of the game.

The shifts in boys' thinking that occurred relative to physical activity variety were significant not only because male students were introduced to a variety of new activities in adventure physical education. However, access to a variety of physical activities provided them with spaces to enact different masculinities, which in turn led to profound shifts in how they perceived physical activity. The diverse nature of the activities in adventure physical education often emphasized different male qualities which created hierarchical configurations that shifted. This social dynamic was very different from many past physical education classes where social hierarchies among boys had common and consistent characteristics and were often inflated.

Physical Activity Outside of School

Prior to taking adventure physical education and because these boys believed that legitimate physical activity was primarily limited to sport-related activities, boys felt that physical activity participation outside of the school setting was something athletic boys typically engaged with and something that most less athletic boys commonly avoided, which similarly inflated social hierarchies among boys from one unit to the next. According to boys, physical activity was mainly sport and therefore boys who were fast, fit, coordinated, muscular,

competitive, and aggressive visibly participated in legitimate (traditional team sports) physical activity on their own time, which in turn continually positioned them near the top of social hierarchies. Conversely, boys who were slower, less fit, uncoordinated, less muscular, and not aggressive reported not often engaging in physical activity on their own time, or did so to a much lesser degree, which subsequently positioned them near the bottom of social hierarchies. For male students, physical activity outside of school was most appropriate for athletic boys because for years these were the boys who visibly engaged with the activities they learned in class during their free time. For instance, in elementary school, athletic boys were the ones who most often played sports on the playgrounds at recess and on youth leagues. As they got older, they were the ones seen playing sports in local parks and on organized teams. According to the young men in adventure physical education, because sports were seen as the most legitimate forms of physical activity, athletic boys were frequently positioned above less athletic boys because of their engagement with legitimate forms of activity on their own time.

Prior to taking adventure physical education, less athletic male students reported they were not motivated by past physical education classes to be physically active on their own time because they found that the content usually had limited meaning in their lives outside of school. A common sentiment was shared among many less athletes, “If I didn’t enjoy the activity in class, why would I do it out of class, on my own time?” Low-skilled boys recalled participating in activities that made them feel awkward and embarrassed, which led to unenthusiastic outlooks toward being active outside of school. For example, one boy said, “I don’t feel motivated to go out and be active after playing dodgeball.” Another lower-skilled boy shared similar reasons for not being motivated by past sport-dominated physical education classes. He stated, “PE classes made me miserable and did *not* make me want to be active on my own.”

Higher-skilled athletic boys, were also reportedly uninspired by past sport-dominated physical education, although their reasons were related to boredom rather than ridicule or embarrassment. Because many athletic boys were already participating in sport-related activities during nonschool hours, they reported being uninspired to engage with these sports on their own time. One such young man said, “I did not get inspired by team sports to be active on my own time because those classes didn’t show you anything new. They just stayed within the same sports or games that you’ve played your whole life.” An athletic boy, who was also on the wrestling team, reported that although he enjoyed the competitive aspect of sports, he also desired nonsport physical activities to supplement the sport activities he already did. He stated, “Sport PE did not give me new ideas for things I could do outside of school.” Although sport participation was reportedly enjoyable for many athletic males, these boys also consistently stated that compulsory sport participation in past physical education classes led them to view participation as a chore. Therefore, athletic boys were typically not motivated to be active outside of class. For instance, this young man said,

I wouldn’t say that I have been inspired to be active on my own because it is more like work in those classes. It is like...that’s your duty is to play that sport, and you might not even like it but you still have to play that sport in class. Don’t get me wrong, I love sports. I can play sports and have a good time, but when you’re always doing that in class it’s more work.

Similar sentiments were shared among various subgroups of boys. For different reasons, male students felt unmoved by their past sport-dominated physical education experiences to be physically active outside of the context of class. This young man provided a succinct statement that summarized many boys’ feelings about physical activity participation outside of the school setting, before taking adventure physical education. He stated,

If kids don’t enjoy activities in regular PE classes, they are not likely to enjoy them outside of class. Whether it is because they find them boring or they don’t think they are

very good at the activity, they are not going to spend their free time doing activities they don't find enjoyable.

I found that while taking adventure physical education boys' feelings regarding physical activity shifted dramatically. According to male students from different subgroups, they developed an increased desire to be physically active outside of the school setting and frequently talked about how their free time included more and different physical activities than prior to taking this class. Because the activities in adventure physical education were diverse, different types of boys consistently reported being more enthused to be active during their free time.

For many athletic boys, being active outside of school was different because they found nonsport activities to supplement or in some cases, replace sport-related activities. For instance, a young man who regularly participated in sport-related physical activity outside of school said that the activities in adventure physical education inspired him to also partake in activities that were not sport-oriented. He said, "The adventure races made me want to get into trail running." Other athletic boys reported a desire to replace their current physical activity with something less competitive. For example, a boy who wrestled throughout middle and high school revealed his desire to replace wrestling with something new and different. He shared,

After taking adventure PE I feel like going to the local climbing gym. I wrestled for like seven years and have been looking for something to replace it. I think I found it in rock climbing. It's a blast, and I would not have tried it without this class.

Some male students who did not play sports and did not have positive experiences in past physical education classes replaced sedentary activities (e.g., computer and video games) with physical activities from adventure physical education. For example, this less athletic young man stated, "Adventure PE makes me want to try new things because now I feel motivated to do a lot more stuff. Now I like to go rock climbing instead of playing 'Call of Duty' all day." Another less athletic young man said that his free time was now filled with more physical activities

because of his positive experiences in adventure physical education. He stated, “I’m not so bitter towards physical activity anymore. I realized it’s [physical activity] not just about exercise but that just getting out and doing things boosts my mood—which is worth more than anything to me.”

Additionally, some boys participated in nontraditional team sport activities on their free time, and because these activities gained legitimacy in the context of adventure physical education, these boys realized they were already participating in physical activity on their own time. For example, there were boys in adventure physical education who surfed, participated in sport shooting, and played paintball prior to taking this class. For these boys, adventure physical education created social spaces for them to enact their masculinities in ways that had a positive impact on their social status among other boys because the activities they were doing were viewed as legitimate.

The shift in thinking that occurred for boys relative to physical activity outside of the school setting was significant because adventure physical education inspired different subgroups of boys to be physically active on their own time, which created hierarchies that privileged uncommon and inconsistent from one unit to the next and were often deflated. For many athletic boys, physical activity became something they wanted to do rather than something they had to do. After taking adventure physical education, athletic boys participated in many of the same activities as did their less athletic peers during their free time. For example, boys who played football now also kayaked. Access to diverse activities in class emotionally moved more boys to be active on their own time and facilitated less pronounced hierarchies that allowed new boys to gain social status.

Bodies

Before taking adventure physical education, the boys believed that athletic bodies were better suited for participating in most physical activities than were less athletic bodies, which often inflated social hierarchies among boys and created situations that usually led the same boys to be positioned at the top of the hierarchies and located similar boys at the bottom. In other words, there was little hierarchical shifting from one unit to the next. Because boys reported that sport was typically understood as the most legitimized form of physical activity in their past physical education classes, for most subgroups of boys, strong, muscular, lean, fast, and coordinated bodies were often viewed as the most capable for successful participation whereas weak, fat or skinny, slow, and uncoordinated bodies were most frequently regarded as being the least capable. According to male students, because traditional team sports were the most common forms of physical activity taught in their past physical education classes, new boys were typically not afforded opportunities to gain social status in past sport-dominated physical education environments.

Boys from various subgroups described certain bodies as being privileged over others in in past sport-dominated physical education classes. For example, one young man stated, “If you are fat and slow then you can’t run far and fast. Some boys are sweating after the first play in basketball. Athletic, muscular, and physically fit boys don’t have trouble with running and playing sports in PE.” Another athletic boy similarly shared, “Boys with unfit bodies can’t keep up doing the stuff that we do. When you are in shape, you have a better opportunity at being better at sports and being a better participant, if you know what I mean.”

Boys with less fit bodies had similar perspectives on the types of bodies that were privileged and marginalized in past physical education classes. Boys who considered themselves

less fit often commented on how their bodies were not suited for most of the activities in physical education. About games in past physical education classes, one boy said,

I feel like I can't really play as much as the other kids. I get tired easier [than boys with more fit bodies]. If you're a guy and you're all muscular and fast and stuff you do better. You run faster and throw farther.

Another boy who described his body as being unsuccessful in most activities in past physical education classes said,

Boys that have more athletic bodies can play sports better. When you have a little bit of extra weight, you're gonna be slower [during activities in sport-dominated physical education] and not do the activities as well [as boys with more fit bodies].

Boys who reportedly had less fit bodies also spoke about how unpleasant it often was for them to participate in physical education classes when they felt like their bodies were ill-suited for successful participation in most of the activities. A boy who described his body as unfit stated, "Having a body that wasn't fit kinda sucked. Like I just wanted to sit there and do nothing so I didn't embarrass myself at all." Another boy similarly mentioned that because the activities were so similar his low status among other boys was consistent among different activities in sport-dominated physical education, which led him to be marginalized in similar ways from activity to activity. He shared, "Because I was slow, I was always picked last for teams. That is a horrible feeling." In addition, boys who described their bodies as less athletic (i.e., too fat or too skinny or not muscular enough) reported that they often felt uncomfortable around other boys in sport-dominated physical education classes. A boy who referred to his body as "bigger" said, "I was bigger and not the most athletic person so I was always kind of embarrassed [of my body] in other PE classes."

However, it should be noted that many boys with athletic and fit bodies held dissimilar perspectives from the male students with less athletic and fit bodies. Boys from different subgroups reported that they believed that a boys' body was not the most limiting factor in

successful physical activity participation. For instance, an athletic young man with a fit body said,

It's not all about what your body can't do. It's what they [boys with unfit bodies] think their body can do. I feel that everybody's influenced by other people and so they don't try hard enough because they're told by other people that they can't do it. But they don't know if they don't try hard enough. So that's just what I think.

Similarly, a less athletic boy who described himself as "heavy" believed that his self-confidence and willingness to try allowed him to participate in past physical education classes and that his unfit body did not prevent him from doing so. He shared,

I feel it comes down to the kids that wanna try and don't wanna try. I feel it doesn't always come down to the body cause I am not skinny at all, and I still have fun and participate in every sport. It [body type] is not a big factor, but yet other people make it a big factor.

Additionally, before taking adventure physical education, based on their experiences in past physical education classes, boys from various subgroups and female students thought that a boy's body type played a role in how they were treated by male peers and female classmates. According to boys from different social positions, their limited notions of bodies contributed to the production of wide and pronounced hierarchical arrangements among male students. Some boys with unfit bodies felt invisible to many of their classmates, especially in relation to boys with athletic and fit bodies. One boy stated, "I feel like I am not even there, like the other boys don't even see me. I feel like I don't even matter." A boy with a more athletic and fit body alluded to the notion that hierarchies among male students in sport-based physical education were unchanging, which led to low-skilled boys frequently being dominated by the high-skilled boys. He said, "The small, tiny kids are always overpowered by the big ones, not included really. That would make me not want to try as much." Athletic boys confirmed that male students with unfit bodies were ignored and excluded by the fit and athletic classmates. An athletic boy whose body was self-reportedly well-suited for successful participation in past physical education

activities stated, “We [boys with fit bodies] wouldn’t get them [boys with unfit bodies] involved in the games as much. A kid with a more fit build got more respect from other guys than a boy who is smaller.” Another boy said, “In other PE classes, we [boys with fit bodies] were too competitive and didn’t want to risk losing or anything, so boys with less athletic bodies don’t get included in games as much.”

Students believed that boys with unfit bodies also received less positive attention from girls in past physical education classes, which contributed to masculinity hierarchies that consistently privileged fit bodies from one unit to the next. According to many students, boys with unfit bodies were often ignored and excluded by some girls. An athletic boy shared, “I guess it depends on what kind of girl she is. I think some girls might feel bad for them [boys with unfit bodies] and other girls just ignore them like the rest.” Likewise, another athletic boy stated,

Boys who are too fat or too skinny are treated a little unfairly. Like they are never chosen, and I feel like they don’t get as much playing time. Even the girls are mean to that type of boy and don’t want him to play.

Some female students believed that girls generally paid attention to boys with the most fit and athletic bodies. A girl said, “The build of the guy was the general attention grabber in regular PE.” Another girl shared, “In traditional PE classes, girls would usually pay more attention to guys with the most athletic and muscular bodies. They were typically the boys who were good at sports and the best athletes in the class.” Because the activities in most past physical education classes were so similar (e.g., invasion sports), girls from different subgroups communicated that this social dynamic was not dependent on the activity, but was common among all of the activity units presented in past sport-dominated physical education classes. Instead, the social hierarchies among young men were consistent throughout the trimester in most past sport-dominated physical education classes.

Various types of male students consistently reported that many female classmates paid more positive attention to boys with fit bodies than they did to boys with unfit bodies in past sport dominated physical education classes. For example, one young man with a less fit body recalled that most girls did not pay attention to boys with skinny bodies in past physical education classes. He shared, “Girls mostly ignored me unless I did something that grabbed their attention. Otherwise, I was just someone who was there that they didn’t really notice. They noticed guys with muscular bodies and gave them attention when they played.”

Consequently, before taking adventure physical education, boys believed that body types played a significant role in determining which activities were appropriate for certain boys which in effect, almost always situated boys with athletic bodies at or near the top of social hierarchies while almost always demoting boys with less athletic bodies to rungs at or near the bottom. In other words, boys with fit bodies participated in legitimate (i.e., sport-based) physical activity and boys with unfit bodies did not; therefore, boys with less athletic bodies were consistently demoted to the lower rungs on social hierarchies where the gaps between different masculinities were wide.

After taking adventure physical education, and because of their positive experiences with new and diverse physical activities, boys realized that many types of bodies were suited for active participation. According to boys, they no longer viewed fit, athletic bodies as being a prerequisite for participation in most physical activities. For these boys, social relationships among male students that were more horizontal and less vertical were created, which was dissimilar from past physical education classes. About the activities and in relation to bodies, one boy said, “After taking adventure PE, I see that you can basically get any activity done whether you are big or small.” Another boy similarly stated, “It does not matter if you’re fat or skinny,

tall or short. All you have to be able to do is try and you can have fun with just about any activity.” Some boys described observing boys with bodies that were often regarded as unfit in past physical education classes successfully participate in activities in adventure physical education, sometimes more efficiently than boys with bodies that were regarded as fit. For example, a young man shared, “You know, like going up on the high ropes course, some small boy could zip right up there and a more muscular boy might take longer.” Similarly, another boy said,

Take rock climbing. I mean a kid like Joey who is a football player. He’s a big kid you know, he wrestles, he’s got lots of muscle mass and then you got a kid like Marshall who, ya know, is not strong. A kid who is blind or overweight can climb, it doesn’t matter. If it is hard, you can just choose an easier wall.

Both male and female students reported that girls paid attention to boys of varying body types in adventure physical education which, according to boys, created invisible social hierarches among boys and led to more positive perceptions of bodies and physical activity. Unlike past physical education, girls reported that they paid attention to boys of different shapes and sizes, not only boys with bodies capable of dominating others during team sports. For example, a female student shared, “In adventure PE [girls’] attention was not limited to a certain type of guy, although girls may notice the physical ability and build of some guys more than others.” Another female student stated,

In terms of appearance in adventure PE, girls look at the boys that seem to be in shape, but that does not necessarily mean they are super muscular. This class also gives girls a chance to talk to and build friendships and because of that girls talked to guys they may have never considered in traditional PE settings. Although girls would notice guys who had good bodies and performed the activities well, that did not mean they paid most attention to them in the class.

The shift in thinking that occurred for boys relative to bodies and physical activity was significant because adventure physical education allowed them to realize that body type did exclusively not prohibit or permit participation in physical activity, which created hierarchical

arrangements among boys that were narrowly constructed and dependent on the activity to offer new boys opportunities to gain social status. Boys with fit bodies and boys with unfit bodies developed a more horizontal social relationship than the vertical relationships they had experienced in many past sport-dominated physical education classes that often elevated boys with fit, fast, and muscular bodies to the top and relegated boys with unfit, slow, and nonmuscular bodies to the bottom. Boys' exposure to a wider range of new activities opened space for fast, slow, lean, muscular, fat, skinny, tall, short, clumsy, and coordinated bodies to be deemed capable.

Competition

At the beginning of the trimester, and because different subgroups of boys believed that physical activity equated to sports, they thought that the majority of physical activities were inherently competitive, which often inflated social hierarchies among boys. For many boys, this perception was primarily grounded in their experiences in past sport-dominated physical education classes where they recalled participating in activities such as basketball, flag football, floor hockey, dodgeball, volleyball, soccer, and fitness testing in which the fundamental purpose of these activities was to dominate (i.e., physically take over during games), outplay (i.e., score more points) and outdo (i.e., achieve a faster mile time) their male peers. Various types of boys (e.g., athletic, less athletic, fit, and less fit) consistently described obvious hierarchical configurations that were created when competition was emphasized in past physical education classes. According to boys, those who were fast, strong, agile, and capable of scoring points were frequently elevated to the top of the social hierarchies and boys who were weaker, slower, and less coordinated were demoted to subordinate positions. Boys consistently reported that because

the activities in sport-dominated physical education were so similar, the hierarchies in many of these settings did not often fluctuate by unit.

Boys who were not skilled at many of the traditional team sports believed that the over-emphasis on competition frequently situated them in lower social positions in relation to their more skilled male peers because they did not desire or possess the skillsets to score points and win games. For example, a less athletic young man shared, “The activities in PE usually involved a ball and extreme competitiveness, and I was picked last for teams.”

For boys who were not skilled at traditional team sports, stress and anxiety were expected outcomes when participating in physical activity because they became accustomed to these feelings in physical education classes where competition was emphasized. For example, a boy who did not consider himself to be skilled at team sports said, “It was very tense in PE because every activity seemed competitive.” Another less athletic boy similarly stated, “The activities in middle school PE were always about competition and had a lot to do with being a winner. I hated all that stuff very much.” The competitive nature of past physical education classes also led boys who were skilled at traditional team sports to view pressure and tension as naturally occurring feelings during participation in physical activity. For instance, an athletic young man stated, “In other PE classes, athletic skills and winning were the most important thing and we focused mainly on team sports so I always felt the need to be the best at any of the activities. It was not always fun.” Although this young man was often privileged by the activities and teaching practices, he also endured the stressfulness of consistently having to publicly perform proficiently.

Boys who were not skilled at team sports recalled experiences in past physical education classes in which the over-emphasis on competition left them feeling negative about physical

activity. “Being active was not fun. I think that kids took the competition a little too seriously and ended up getting mad at their own teammates causing a teammate to feel bad about themselves if they make a mistake.”

After taking adventure physical education, boys understood that competition was not an inherent characteristic of all physical activities, and that when competition was not emphasized the social playing field among boys was more equalized. They were introduced to activities that they did not regard as being inherently competitive such as kayaking, stand-up paddling, rock climbing, team building, surfing, and high ropes. Boys consistently reported that adventure physical education showed them that activities could be engaged with at a level that was appropriate for them instead of being forced to compete. However, boys also found that activities such as kayaking, canoeing, rock climbing, and stand-up paddling could also be done competitively and that competition in this sense was not necessarily bad or harmful. A boy said, “I learned that physical activity can be about doing things that I enjoy rather than it always being about winning and losing. That is what surprised me the most about this class.” This athletic young man similarly shared,

The world is far too stressed and adventure PE opened me up to the idea that I can do activities for enjoyment, not only competition. It helped me discover what I truly enjoy in life and that some activities can help keep my mind focused and relaxed.

According to many subgroups of boys, this shift in thinking also applied to activities that they deemed to be fundamentally competitive such as adventure racing and paintball. For example, during these units, boys observed varying levels of competitiveness among the male students. For example, some boys played to win, while others played to have fun. According to different subsets of boys, this aspect of adventure physical education showed them that physical activities were not naturally competitive, but that the competitiveness resulted from the ways activities were framed within various physical activity settings. Many less athletic boys

participated in activities they viewed as characteristically competitive in adventure physical education (e.g., paintball and adventure racing), but players were able to choose the level of competitiveness that suited them, which differed from their experiences in past physical education classes where they recalled competitive gameplay as being compulsory. A boy stated,

I feel like all types of students were able to have fun while participating in paintball, athletic and nonathletic, fit and unfit, competitive and noncompetitive. Everyone got to choose a level of participation they felt comfortable with and still have fun.

Different boys realized that when competition was de-emphasized, even fundamentally competitive activities such as adventure racing could be enjoyed by many types of boys. Indeed, these activities were not limited to traditional athletes who enjoyed competition. For example, a less athletic young man described the hierarchical configurations among boys were not noticeable during adventure racing in the context of adventure physical education. He said,

I thought it was fun because there was some competition there, but it wasn't really like some groups excelled a lot more than the others. We were competitive against each other, but we all really thought we had an equal chance.

According to some young men who were skilled at traditional team sports, after taking adventure physical education, they understood that competition was not necessarily the most important aspect of physical activity. A young man shared,

Competition doesn't even matter in adventure physical education. In other PE classes it usually got really competitive and everyone who was involved was out to win because winning was everything. At least that is how I used to view physical activity. In some situations, I still do, but in adventure PE everyone can participate to have fun.

The evolution of boys' thinking about competition and physical activity were significant because they were not limited to boys who did not enjoy competing in team sports. Depending on how the activity was presented and framed by the teacher, new boys could gain social status when competition was not compulsory. Boys realized that physical activity was not entirely about outperforming other boys and that competition was not inherent in all physical activities.

Boys no longer viewed physical activities as being either competitive or not competitive, but recognized that the culture of each physical activity environment played a profound role in determining the level of competitiveness for various physical activities and that they had choices in their level of play. For example, boys believed that if kayaking activities were framed around competition, the activities may be interpreted as a race and boys capable (and willing) to paddle quickly and possibly reach the destination first would be elevated to the top of the hierarchies. Conversely, in adventure physical education, when kayaking was framed around enjoyment, boys relaxed and became less concerned with paddling fast or keeping up with the other boys.

Risk Taking

Prior to taking adventure physical education, low-skilled boys reportedly felt unwilling to attempt most skills and activities in past physical activity settings because for them, public failure usually led to humiliation. According to athletic and less athletic young men, one's willingness or lack of willingness to take risks in past sport-dominated physical education classes often inflated social hierarchies among boys. Various subgroups of male students consistently reported that the boys who frequently appeared the most eager and willing to try and demonstrated high levels of participation (i.e., higher-skilled boys) in past-sport dominated physical education classes were typically elevated to the top of the social hierarchies while boys who seemed less or unwilling to try (i.e., lower-skilled boys) were usually downgraded to positions at or near the bottom. Low-skilled boys consistently reported that their unwillingness to take risks negatively impacted their location on the social hierarchies in past physical education classes. A particularly low-skilled male student offered his sentiment in relation to risk taking—a sentiment which was shared widely among other low-skilled boys. He said,

In regular PE classes the social hierarchy was created by the skill level and participation and confidence of the students. A high-skilled athlete would be at the top of the hierarchy

in regular PE classes, and boys that don't feel very confident about their athletic ability would be at the bottom because their lack of confidence causes them to not participate to their fullest potential.

Some high-skilled young men agreed that a boy's willingness to participate in sport activities played a role in hierarchical configurations in past sport-dominated physical education but a few believed that low-skilled boys were chiefly to blame for their low placement on these social hierarchies. One high skilled male shared,

I mean team sports is designed to have fun doing sports, but some people look at it in a different way. I feel that if they [lower-skilled boys] participated more they'd have a way better time and it would be more equal. But they don't, and that designs the hierarchy.

Although some high-skilled boys reportedly empathized with lower-skilled male peers in past physical education classes, they also believed that because they were unwilling to try, the less athletic boys themselves were at fault for their low placement on social hierarchies in traditional physical education settings. One high-skilled young man shared,

Because they don't participate and try things I feel like that makes the class bad for them. I mean being shy and not being able to do it, they don't know what they can do cause they don't try. I mean I guess it is their fault for not doing it, but I feel bad because those are the kids that don't get looked at. If you're having fun and doing things, it definitely makes you stand out and be on top.

Many high-skilled young men did not blame the low-skilled boys themselves, but recognized other sources that caused their less athletic classmates' lower social positioning and seemed to appreciate that risk taking for many lesser skilled boys was not as simple as trying or not trying. Although higher-skilled boys reported dissimilar (i.e., more positive) experiences in past sport-dominated physical education classes, some athletic male students seemingly understood why their lower-skilled peers were typically unwilling to take risks in physical activity. Based on their recollection of past physical education classes, some higher-skilled boys recognized that making mistakes often led to humiliation for boys who lacked skill in sport-related activities. A high-skilled male student stated,

I'm pretty athletic so gym classes were never that hard for me, and when I'd make a mistake I could easily laugh it off. But a lot of kids have trouble with things as simple as throwing a baseball and can get easily discouraged and embarrassed when they are unable to do things that some of the more athletic kids can.

Low-skilled boys consistently reported that making mistakes inevitably led to ridicule and feelings of embarrassment. Therefore, when faced with a decision to try activities, many boys felt they were better off avoiding the task than taking a risk and dealing with the potential consequences that often accompanied potential failure. A young man shared a comment that was typical of lower-skilled boys. He said,

In team sports classes I always felt really silly when I messed up. The majority of the class seemed intimidating to me. For the most part, making mistakes made me feel pretty crappy so I did not feel comfortable trying things.

Another low-skilled young man shared similar feelings about his lack of willingness to take risks in past physical education classes. He stated, "I tend to not try much in team sports classes, or at least I don't try hard because let's face it, who wants to be the weird kid that tries hard and everyone makes fun of."

In addition, low-skilled boys who were afraid to take risks consistently reported that their peers paid less positive attention to them. For these boys, not taking risks also contributed to female classmates' negative and infrequent interactions with them. For instance, they believed that many female classmates frequently paid less positive attention to boys who did not take risks, which to them clearly played a role in their social positioning as boys. A less athletic boy said, "Girls paid more attention to the athletes who always participated than to the kids who didn't try, because they were more involved and could potentially make a difference in the outcome of the game."

After taking adventure physical education, many boys felt differently about taking risks in physical activities and recognized many positive outcomes, which created shifting and less

prominent social hierarchies among male students. Boys from various subgroups shared similar perceptions on the social relations among boys in adventure physical education in relation to risk taking. At the beginning of the trimester and because of their previous risk-taking baggage, many low-skilled boys began the trimester thinking that their experiences in adventure physical education would not differ greatly from their experiences in past sport-dominated physical education classes. Therefore, they had not planned to take risks in adventure physical education. However, boys who referred to themselves as non-risk takers consistently reported how their feelings shifted early in the trimester. One low-skilled boy said,

The environment created in adventure PE made the social hierarchy almost nonexistent. Going into the class students see their classmates and sometimes they're kind of skeptical as to how the class will turn out because they notice the high-skilled athletes from their other classes. But once the class gets acquainted and the positive environment is established students forget about what they thought at the beginning and they just do the activities without feeling a lack of confidence about their abilities.

Low-skilled boys gradually realized that it was possible to attempt physical skills without feeling embarrassed or being ridiculed by higher-skilled classmates. A low-skilled young man who reported not taking risks in past physical education classes shared,

Adventure PE impacted how I feel about risks because I now feel more willing to take risks. I find myself wanting to take more risks because it makes me feel alive. I learned that I have an outgoing side. Before this class I wasn't very self-confident, and after being in this class I have become much more confident, and I like to take risks. I learned to not be afraid of failing.

According to boys who described themselves as non-risk takers and risk takers in past physical education classes, adventure physical education led them to think differently about taking risks. Boys who reported being nonrisk takers often talked about how taking risks was no longer something they dreaded, but instead something they embraced. Boys who took risks in past physical education classes reported that they became more willing to try activities they were not sure if they would be skilled at or not, which for many of these boys, was something they

shied away from in past physical activity settings (e.g., “I did not try unless I knew I’d be good.”). Boys from both subgroups often described how this change in perception extended to areas outside of the class and school. One boy said,

I know it's just a class, but it really changed me. I never really took any risks before that class. I always just stayed in my comfort zone, not trying anything new or different. This class really helped me break away from that and got me to see a whole other world. I realized that I love paddle boarding and surfing and that archery is something I want to keep doing. I even talked to my dad about it, and I'm getting a membership at the gun club.

Boys attributed this change to the many positive experiences they had when trying skills and activities in front of their peers in adventure physical education. They realized that it was possible to make mistakes in physical activity and not be ridiculed. A young man who recalled being made fun of in past physical education classes stated, “Knowing that people aren’t always gonna laugh when I mess up makes trying new things exciting instead of dreadful.” A similar young man shared,

I learned to try new things without worrying about being good at them. I feel ok to go out of my comfort zone without being uncomfortable or worried about myself or my abilities. I feel comfortable with myself and because of that I’m ready and willing to try new things because I feel like if I don’t try, I’ll always wish I had.

Even high-skilled boys reported being personally impacted by shifts about risk taking in physical activity. For instance, a boy shared that although he was proficient at most sports in past physical education classes, he was terrified of heights. He felt it was safe to take risks and try new things in front of others when trust was established. He said,

I had been scared to death of rock climbing ever since I was little. Even the sight of a rock wall made my stomach drop. So to be able to get to the top was an amazing accomplishment for me. Without adventure PE I would no doubt still be afraid of rock climbing.

Another high-skilled boy who had not been confronted with the need to take risks in past physical education classes (because most activities came easy to him) shared that he saw low-

skilled boys step out of their comfort zones and take risks in adventure physical education. Because of this observation, he felt safe to engage with activities for which he had no knowledge or skill. He said,

In this class I was put into situations where I was sometimes scared and nervous just because the activities were completely new to me. For example, I had never held a gun before, but at the end of gun safety week I felt completely comfortable.

Boys described this shift as being grounded in two factors. First, different subgroups of boys experienced the positive outcomes associated with risk taking (not only low-skilled boys) so the hierarchies often shifted from one unit to the next. For example, high-skilled boys became more willing to publicly try new activities and activities in which they feared (e.g., scaling heights). Second, because the status differential among male students was significantly decreased, boys' willingness to take risks extended outside of the school setting. For example, because of this conceptual shift, after taking adventure physical education, many boys became more willing to try activities in other physical activity spaces within their communities.

Perseverance

Before taking adventure physical education, boys who were lesser skilled had previously learned to give up at the first sign of challenge when learning physical skills in sport-based physical education. This inclination frequently inflated social hierarchies among boys, and was especially true for the boys who struggled with motor/sport skills learning. According to various subgroups of students, boys who stopped trying early on or who did not attempt activities were relegated to lower positions on social hierarchies, and boys who frequently demonstrated high levels of participation were promoted to the top. Boys consistently reported that because the content was similar in sport-dominated physical education, similar types of boys gave up quickly.

Less athletic boys recalled starting new units in sport-dominated physical education classes feeling incompetent and went in with the mindset that they would do the obligatory “try a time or two” and then give up. According to these boys, feelings of incompetence applied to tasks they had previously tried and failed, or tasks they had not attempted because to them, the activities in these classes had always been so similar (e.g., “I wasn’t good at basketball last week when I tried, so why should I bother trying during flag football?”). One boy shared, “I went into most units thinking, “‘Wow, I’m probably not going to be good at this.’ So, I usually didn’t try for long.”

According to many less athletic boys, they recalled trying certain activities, but giving up at the first sign of difficulty. They saw little reason to give more than a couple of attempts. When they were not successful early on, low-skilled boys reported that they became accustomed to talking themselves out of trying skills. One boy stated, “In other PE classes it didn’t matter how much I believed in myself. If you have zero hand-eye coordination, you’re not gonna make a basket, no matter how many times you try. I gave up fast.”

After taking adventure physical education, boys believed that by attempting activities and not underestimating their abilities, they could develop skills, which caused social hierarchies to fluctuate and afford new male students opportunities to stand out among boys. Because less athletic boys learned to persevere in adventure physical education and demonstrated levels of participation that matched that of boys who were considered athletic in past physical education classes, the social playing field took on a more horizontal configuration, reducing the vertical distance among male students. A boy who reportedly struggled with most activities in past physical education and was often relegated to low positions on social hierarchies shared, “This class taught me to reach beyond my limits and helped me realize that I can do so much more than

I thought.” In adventure physical education, he became a consistent participant rather than one of the boys found roaming the peripheries of the playing areas. Similarly, boys found that giving more than minimal effort led to learning, skill development, and enjoyment of physical activities. One less athletic male student said, “Adventure PE helped me realize that I *can* do things that I once thought I couldn’t when I stick with it.”

Boys quickly discovered that when they tried and did not give up at the first sign of challenge, they could attain skills. A less athletic boy shared, “Giving it my best shot and coming in with an open mind made me realize what I could do.” He went on to talk about how he was able to succeed at rock climbing because he did not give up too quickly. Instead of losing hope and underestimating himself before trying, he learned to try skills that he perceived as being beyond the scope of his ability. He said,

In rock climbing I remember looking at the wall and thinking, “No way can I do that. I’m 5’5 and can’t climb as well as guys who are 6’0+.” I told myself, “Okay, you can do this.” And I did—I worked at it without give up. In this class if you put in effort you can have a great time and create memories of awesome experiences.

The same boy went on to explain how talking himself into trying a task was a significant change from his approach to learning in past sport-dominated physical education classes, where he consistently talked himself out of trying challenging tasks.

Many boys who typically developed motor/sport skills easily learned that they were not naturally proficient at all activities, and that skill development sometimes required hard work, especially when learning nontraditional team sport activities. For these boys, this conceptual change was complicated because they were not accustomed to struggling when learning motor/sorts skills. One such young man shared,

I’ve always been pretty athletic and sports come pretty natural and easy. There were definitely times where I was like, “Damn, this isn’t as easy as I thought it would be.” Ha! In this class other kids [nonathletes] were doing things better than me, and I was surprised that I needed to push myself in some things.

Another athletic young man similarly stated, “It was difficult to change my mindset from, ‘I am good at a lot of sports and I can do everything’ to ‘I really need to work at this.’ This class was not just physical, but mental too.”

This shift was significant because the unique status ordering and stratification of masculinity hierarchies led boys from different social positions to persevere when learning new activities both inside and outside physical education. Different types of male students learned that perseverance was worthwhile and the benefits stretched to areas of their lives outside of the class setting. These thoughts and feelings had been strongly cemented coming into adventure physical education because many boys had experienced lessons in past physical education classes where they either learned that skill development was rather easy or so difficult that it was not worth trying. Boys’ pessimistic perceptions about perseverance that took years to build began to fade and began to turn more optimistic during their trimester in adventure physical education.

Social Relationships

At the beginning of the trimester, the majority of boys felt less willing to step outside of their tightknit friendship circles to interact with people that they did not know or who they perceived to be less like them. According to male students, athletic boys most frequently interacted with other athletic boys and less athletic boys with similarly skilled boys, which to them, inflated social hierarchies because boys at the top typically associated with boys at the top and boys at the bottom most frequently interacted with boys at the bottom. Boys from various subgroups consistently reported that this social dynamic was especially prevalent in past physical education settings. The following quote encapsulates boys’ overall perceptions on social relationships in the context of physical education. A young man shared,

There’s an in crowd and an out crowd in most gym classes. If you’re in shape and athletic, you’re in and if you’re uncoordinated then you’re out. A bunch of movies have

scenes where kids are in gym class and the two cool kids are the captains and there are a couple of nerds that always get picked last. As exaggerated as the movies make these stereotypes, they're not too far off.

Boys consistently reported that they had become accustomed to communicating (e.g., anything other than small talk) and interacting (e.g., anything other than compulsory relations during class) with established friends and those who were most like them. Less athletic boys confessed that approaching classmates in past sport-dominated physical education classes, especially athletic boys, was a daunting task because they feared rejection. A young man said, "In PE, I always felt intimidated to go up and talk to the star athletes. I felt like I had nothing next to these amazing athletes." Because of this fear, many less athletic boys reported that they felt it was emotionally safer to limit their interactions to boys who were most like themselves and to avoid initiating conversations with athletes. A less athletic young man stated, "In sport PE you usually find a friend that you know and you mostly hang out with that person. That is the person you mostly talk to." This sentiment was consistently communicated by many less athletic young men.

Although high-skilled boys did not report a fear of rejection, they communicated that they also reserved high-level interactions for boys who were most like them, often because it increased their chances of winning games in sport-dominated physical education. One such boy stated,

I preferred to hang out with the more athletic kids in team sports because they were good at different sports so we could win. I didn't try to make friends with people I didn't think I could be friends with.

Another athletic young man articulated similar thinking regarding social relations in past physical education classes, but his perspective was not grounded in prospect to win games. In his opinion, this social dynamic naturally occurred in this setting. He said, "That [exclusive social relations] is just the way it was." He shared,

When we are playing floor hockey in team sports, you sit next to your friend and then you go play and then you sit back down next to your friend. When you are done playing, groups just don't mix. I thought this was how it worked in high school.

After taking adventure physical education, boys felt more comfortable interacting with different people. According to boys from different social locations, cross-subgroup communication greatly reduced the status differential among male students. The gap between different masculinities became smaller because boys located at the top rungs of the hierarchies and boys positioned on the lower rungs willingly and frequently interacted. Instead, boys were willing to make connections with students from different subgroups. For example, less athletic and athletic boys regularly interacted. Popular boys and less or unpopular boys made connections. Academic and less academic boys intermingled. Various types of boys consistently made comments such as, "There's a lot of other people that I talk to in the class that I never would have even looked at before." And, "Kids are so willing to talk to people and basically let their guard down [in adventure physical education class]."

Many low-skilled boys consistently explained that after taking adventure physical education, approaching classmates, especially higher-skilled male peers, was no longer viewed as quite so intimidating. A less athletic young man stated, "In here I got to know some of these guys [amazing athletes] and realized that they're just normal people. I don't have to always separate myself from those kids." Some lower-skilled boys' feelings about their high-skilled male peers swayed more positively. A less athletic boy shared,

I would say adventure PE taught me to be willing to meet new people and hear their stories. So I try to accept people as they are rather than finding things I don't like or don't agree with in their personality or behavior like I have done in other [PE] classes.

Many low-skilled boys also reported a greater willingness to get to know new people on deeper levels, which often led to friendships that extended beyond the class and school setting.

This young man said,

One of my new friends is Kyle, and he talks to a lot of the more popular kids so I would have *never* approached him outside of this class. I hang out with him out of school now, because of this class.

This willingness among many students to interact with different kinds of classmates played a significant role in boys' shifting perceptions about social relationships in physical activity settings. One boy defined his willingness to approach male peers who were different from him as an atypical social behavior. He shared,

Like today when we were kayaking, a group of kids kinda hung out near the marsh area near the end before turning to head back. I thought that was cool. Rather than just paddling by, I went over there and was like, "Hey, what's up?" Its [talking to "nonfriends"] isn't as awkward in this class.

Higher-skilled boys described similar shifts in socializing with their lesser skilled male classmates. One such boy said, "Adventure PE really opened my eyes in many ways. I found that I tend to have a lot of things in common with someone who I might have never talked to before."

These shifting perceptions on social relationships in the context of physical education was significant and played a major role in creating fluid, less pronounced hierarchies among boys. Often, in past sport-dominated physical education, social hierarchies and patterns of social interaction were well-established where similar high-skilled, competitive boys with fit bodies interacted with one another while low-skilled, less competitive boys with less fit bodies frequently interacted with one another. For the most part, hierarchical configurations in these settings did not vary. To boys, this social dynamic created an obvious and wide social status separation between high and low-skilled male students. After taking adventure physical education boys realized the benefits of talking with and getting to know new people. Additionally, they learned that not all physical activity settings comprised masculinity configurations that consistently privileged similar boys over others, and this realization led some boys to embrace new classmates beyond the class setting.

Peer Support

Boys across different social locations felt reluctant to offer and receive support from their peers during physical activities before taking adventure physical education. According to boys, this social dynamic especially applied to classmates who were from different social positionalities (i.e., highly athletic/less athletic, high-skilled/low-skilled, popular/unpopular, girls/boys), which often created prominent social hierarchies among male students. Boys believed that a lack of cross-group peer support created greater vertical distance among subgroups of boys, which did not allow different types of boys to gain social status.

Boys reported that in past physical education classes that were dominated by sport, athletic boys typically did not offer support to less athletic peers and less athletic boys were not often receptive to receiving support from their higher-skilled male classmates. Some less athletic boys believed that in past physical education classes, peer support was frequently offered in jest, which made them apprehensive to accept it. Less athletic boys consistently reported that in past physical education classes, high-skilled boys were more likely to flaunt their skills rather than offer help. A young man said, “In team sports classes, typically the kids who are good like to prove to others that they are good and like to show off rather than help, which consequently discourages beginners.” In sport-dominated physical education, low-skilled boys often felt as though it was, “Every man for himself.” When boys did not possess the skills to execute the sport-related tasks, they felt they were typically left unaided. A low-skilled boy stated, “In team sports PE it’s like, ‘Oh, how’d you miss that pass? You’re an idiot!’ Rather than encouraging or helping the teammate, kids just end up getting frustrated with unskilled players.”

After taking adventure physical education, boys reportedly felt more willing to offer and receive support in physical education, which played a significant role in flattening hierarchies

among boys. Less athletic boys became willing to accept help from their higher-skilled peers when they experienced difficulty. According to them, they also learned to offer support when they believed they could physically or emotionally assist a classmate (e.g., saying “You can do this! I know you can!”). Higher-skilled boys reported that they felt more willing to offer support to others after taking adventure physical education. Boys from various subgroups realized that regardless of skill, anyone could provide emotional and sometimes even skill-related feedback that assisted with the physical aspects of activities (e.g., offering advice such as, “If you put your left foot on the green rock just above your knee you will be able to reach the blue hold.”).

Less athletic boys noticed that in adventure physical education, their higher-skilled male classmates were more willing to offer support. One boy shared, “Unlike team sports classes, boys like Herman and Davis [pseudonyms] who were really good at surfing didn’t show off but rather helped the beginners.” Less athletic boys also stated that receiving support from higher-skilled female classmates. An athletic female said that because of adventure PE, she had more of a desire to help lower-skilled classmates, which included boys she would have likely not interacted with in past physical education classes. She stated,

I tried a certain route and got stuck at a particular point. Because of this [experience], I cheered on Mark when he got stuck in that same spot because I knew what it was like to be there. I offered him insight from my experience along with words of encouragement. I don’t think I would have done this in other gym classes.

High-skilled boys described similar shifts in their feelings about peer support. A young man shared, “I see how help and encouragement can affect someone’s performance. You need some sort of support from others to achieve really anything.” High-skilled boys consistently shared that they felt more willing to offer support to their less experience classmates, which was rare in past physical education classes. An athletic young man shared how his perception on peer support in physical activity became more constructive after taking adventure physical education.

He stated, “What really made a difference to me was seeing how other people impacted the success and failure of another. If someone struggled, we wouldn’t let them stop trying—we would push, motivate and help each other.”

Boys learned that providing support did not always have to function in top-down manner such as athletic boys helping less athletic boys. In adventure physical education, male students regarded as low-skilled in sport-dominated physical education classes frequently supported individuals regarded as athletic. For example, one athletic boy’s thinking changed and he realized that he could benefit from peer support when classmates had more experience than he did, which included receiving support from boys who were not typically regarded as athletic. He said, “It [adventure PE] showed me that I need help from others when I am beginner and how to be a leader in other activities.” Male students from various subgroups consistently shared sentiments that aligned with the following statement made by a young man who reported his experiences in past physical education classes were neither negative nor positive.

Students are more likely to accept and offer help after taking adventure PE, and I see that it is often the case that boys who were not considered athletic were able to offer help to the athletic boys. Those who were not considered athletic seemed to do better at finding strategies, so they understood best how to complete the activity even if they were not the best at doing it themselves and so they tend to do well when it comes to offering help to the other students, athletic students included.

This shift in thinking was so profound because boys from different social positions began to conceptualize peer support as a positive characteristic in the context of physical activity. For these boys, offering and accepting help, especially from classmates in different social positionalities evolved to seem normal while in adventure physical education. An additional aspect that made this shift so meaningful was the boys’ discovery that peer support worked in more than one direction. Boys who were located at different levels on the masculinity hierarchies became more willing to give and receive support from classmates.

Prejudging Others' Abilities

Boys from various social positions reported that before taking adventure physical education, they often prejudged the abilities of other boys based on their performances in previous sport units. Prejudgment of others' skills frequently exaggerated masculinity hierarchies because, according to most subgroups of boys, assumptions were often made about low-skilled boys' abilities, irrespective of the physical activity being played. High-skilled boys consistently reported that they used assumptions determined who would be included or excluded from their social groups. For example, "He sucked at basketball and soccer so he will suck at flag football too so I don't want him on my team!"

After taking adventure physical education, boys learned to be more cautious in making assumptions and judgments about others' physical capabilities. For high-skilled boys, their experiences in adventure physical education led them not to immediately assume that their lower skilled classmates would not be able to perform an activity skillfully. An athletic young man stated, "Adventure PE teaches you to not judge others. Most people surprised us and probably surprised themselves. This class taught me to give people a chance."

After being in this class, boys noticed that those who often demonstrated the most skill in different types of physical activities did not necessarily mean that they would be most skilled in adventure activities. An athletic young man shared, "A lot of times [in adventure PE] the people that turned out to be really good were the kids I least expected." For example, during rock climbing boys witnessed the "skinny kid" who had not demonstrated skill in any of the traditional team sports scale up challenging walls while muscular football players struggled on supposedly "easy" walls. During adventure racing, boys reported seeing the "heavy" kid who had difficulty running one mile in fitness testing play a major role in helping his team through

the course. While kayaking, students observed a male classmate who had been a competent bystander in most sport classes efficiently glide through the water, while many of the athletic boys complained that their arms felt like “noodles” after inefficiently paddling a half mile. Boys reported that these types of observations in class played a role in their shifting perceptions about the importance of not prejudging others’ abilities. An athletic young man said,

A lot of people blew me away at what they could do, so immediately I didn’t prejudge what others could or couldn’t do in this class. Some people I thought would have no trouble with things such as the high ropes or the rock wall, but then they would try it and struggle, while other kids who I thought would have a hard time did not.

High-skilled boys also learned to not dismiss girls’ abilities solely because of their gender. In this class, boys had numerous opportunities to observe girls demonstrate skillfulness. An athletic boy shared a story about the lesson he learned about not prejudging girls’ abilities. He and a male friend, along with a female classmate, hiked the local dunes, which he described as being “huge” and “extremely steep.” He claimed that before taking adventure physical education, he likely would not have enjoyed hiking the dunes with a girl because he would have expected her to “huff and puff during the whole thing.” However, after taking this class he said, “I will not discriminate against girls because I think they are not as good as guys anymore.” In general, because of the abilities they saw their classmates demonstrate in adventure physical education, many high-skilled boys shared sentiments such as, “I will not classify anyone as incapable without first giving them a chance.”

Learning to avoid prejudging others’ abilities was a major shift in thinking for boys because prior to adventure physical education, they experienced multiple years of physical education classes that led boys from various social positions to believe that when an individual lacked skill for one sport, they would likely not be good at similar sports. For different types of boys, these common assumptions functioned like self-fulfilling prophecies. For instance, athletic

boys often assumed that less athletic boys were not good at any sport-related activity because of their performances in past sport physical education classes. Because many boys felt pressured by these easy assumptions, those who were less athletic reportedly avoided sports or participated as competent bystanders, which simply reinforced their higher-skilled classmates' original assumptions and hence positioned them at or near the bottom of masculinity hierarchies. These prejudging behaviors grew even more powerful when higher-skilled boys extended these types of assumptions to situations beyond physical education. However, once higher-skills boys' perceptions were confronted in adventure physical education, many reportedly learned to give people a chance before passing premature judgments on others' abilities

The shifts in boys' perceptions about these various dimensions of physical activity described in this section demonstrates how boys from different subgroups directly attributed the changes to the unique content, pedagogies, and teacher and peer cultures in adventure physical education. Their thinking about each issue changed as they participated in adventure physical education as a result of the status ordering of masculinities and the stratification of masculinities which comprised small gaps between different masculinities. The boys from this study should not be read as portraying sport-dominated physical education as evil and wrong and adventure physical education as virtuous and right, because a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching physical education is not the answer. However, adventure physical education at Apex High School resulted in different types of experiences for boys. In this setting, status differentials among boys were much less dramatic than past sport-based physical education classes. Also, depending on the activity, different boys had opportunities to attain different positionalities on the social hierarchies. Combined, these two factors gave boys the impression that hierarchies were often realigned and flattened in adventure physical education. Experiences in adventure physical

education led boys to feel differently about physical activity variety, physical activity outside of school, bodies, competition, taking risks, perseverance, social relationships, peer support, and prejudging others' abilities. Collectively, these shifts led boys to think and feel differently about physical activity, which according to different types of male students, led them to be more physically active in and out of school physical education. Less athletic boys began to feel more positively about physical activity than they did before taking adventure physical education. Athletic young men who liked competition and sports grew more interested in supplementing their competitive sport pursuits with less traditional-sport activities.

Factors in Adventure Physical Education that Led to Boys' Shifts in Perceptions

Traditional masculinity configurations that were, according to many types of boys, endemic to most team sport physical education classes were often flipped upside down in adventure physical education. Several specific aspects of the content, pedagogies, teacher, and peer cultures in adventure physical education at Apex High School led to fluid masculinity hierarchies and reductions in the status differentials among male students. In this section, I show how specific aspects of the (a) content, (b) pedagogies, (c) teacher, and (d) peer cultures led to these shifts while showing how boys compared aspects of sport-dominated physical education with adventure physical education in relation to social hierarchies.

Although I present each aspect of adventure physical education individually, I am not suggesting that each one operated in isolation to bring about the changes in boys' feelings about physical activity. It was the collective synergy of these different parts that interacted together that created spaces for boys to enact masculinities in ways that were different from sport-based physical education.

Content

Boys described three ways in which the content in adventure physical education created shifting masculinity hierarchies that were less dramatic than many sport-dominated physical education classes. These aspects of class included curricular diversity, novelty, and activities that are performed by average adults in their community.

According to various subgroups of boys, the diverse range of content that was taught in adventure physical education played an important role in producing hierarchical configurations among male students that were less pronounced than in many past sport-dominated physical education classes. Learning activities that were inherently different and that required dissimilar skillsets, allowed new boys to gain social status. For these boys, the shifting, less dramatic hierarchies resulted from learning activities that were inherently different and required dissimilar skill sets to participate successfully. As a result, different types of boys had opportunities to excel from one unit to the next and those who were privileged by the activities shifted from one unit to the next. Activities such as team building, high ropes, rock climbing, surfing, stand-up paddling, skim boarding, paintball, kayaking, adventure racing, gun safety, and water safety were so dissimilar that many types of boys were able to connect with an activity and develop proficiency. These experiences meant that different types of boys engaged with activities rather than some participating on high levels, while others wandered the margins of the playing spaces or enacted task avoidance strategies. A low-skilled boy stated, “It's different from regular gym classes because in adventure PE each activity is different from the last and chances are good that everyone will be good at something.” From one unit to the next in adventure physical education, I observed different boys excelling. For example, although there were some boys who were good at multiple activities, the male students who shined during surfing were not the same ones who

stood out during adventure racing. The boys who did well during kayaking were not always the same boys who excelled during paintball. There were some boys who were fairly skilled at multiple units, but it was more common for the “top dogs” to change from one unit to the next. According to most boys, the top dogs in past sport-dominated physical education classes were usually the same male students because the activities were often inherently similar. For instance, basketball, soccer, flag football, and floor hockey were units often taught in sport physical education, and to the boys in this study, these sports required similar skills sets (e.g., tactics and techniques) to participate successfully (i.e., to win and score points). Therefore, boys who were skilled at basketball were likely to also be proficient at soccer, football, and floor hockey, which typically elevated athletic boys to the highest rungs of the social hierarchies. A high-skilled boy said, “Most of the activities [in sport-dominated PE] have the same basic layout and objective so the same kids excel.”

A second way that the boys across social locations believed that the content functioned to create fluid masculinity configurations with little space between each rung was because the activities were novel and new to most students. Boys in this study described the content in adventure physical education as different and innovative compared to the redundant content often included in many sport-based physical education classes. For different types of boys, novelty equated to the activities being more “fun.” A less athletic young man stated, “The activities in adventure PE are fun, like rock climbing, paintball, and surfing at the beach! You don’t get tired of this stuff.” An athletic boy shared, “In adventure not every boy may enjoy *all* of the activities, but there is a greater chance that the activities appeal to many boys.”

Different subgroups of boys consistently shared that the novelty of the content taught in adventure physical education sharply contrasted with the monotonous nature of the activities in

some of their past sport-dominated physical education classes where the same units were often taught each year, often in the same order, and typically used the same drills-based teaching format. Boys believed that the novelty of the activities in adventure physical education led to more types of boys having fun, which allowed the hierarchies to change from week to week and also made the hierarchies among boys less pronounced. An athletic young man said, “In other PE classes you only get to do the same activities over and over within the gym or in the weight room and that gets boring.” Even though some athletic boys described the content in past sport-dominated physical education classes as boring, they also reported having fun because they were skilled at many sports and enjoyed competition. In other words, even though the activities were not novel, they still enjoyed participating. However, many of these same high-skilled boys believed that the mundane nature of the content in sport-dominated physical education reproduced social hierarchies that were common in competitive sporting environments because similar boys, usually other athletic boys, participated and had the most fun while similar other young men, most often those who were not athletic, avoided participation and had less or no fun. This athletic young man shared,

In traditional PE classes the activities taught tend to be fun for only certain students because most activities are alike. There’s not enough variety in the types of activities to do something that everyone will enjoy. So to enjoy them, students have to be competitive and athletic.

Boys commonly described the newness of the activities in adventure physical education as a significant reason for less pronounced masculinity hierarchies that fluctuated from one unit to the next. In other words, because the activities were novel, they were new to most boys in class, which to them, equalized the playing field since boys were learning the novel activities together rather than having a large group of students who were already experts. According to boys from different subgroups, the majority of the students in class did not already possess the

skills needed to successfully engage with most activities at expert levels at the beginning of the unit which contributed to masculinity configurations that shifted from one unit to the next. Boys across social locations recognized and appreciated the hierarchical shifting quality the newness of the activities engendered. A boy who did not describe himself as particularly athletic or less athletic stated,

In adventure PE, most activities are newish to everyone, so the athletic and nonathletic kids are basically on the same level. There is a place for everyone to shine because you're doing things that most people haven't had the opportunity to practice.

A low-skilled boy similarly said, "People are trying things for the first time together, which means they are just as inexperienced as me." Another less athletic boy shared his perspective on how the newness or novelty of the activities in adventure physical education reduced the status differential among boys and compared that to the frequently well pronounced hierarchies he recalled from past sport-dominated physical education classes. He shared, "In adventure PE the activities are new to mostly everyone so there are not in crowds and out crowds like in most gym classes, even the athletic kids struggle." The newness of the activities also led low-skilled boy to feel like the social playing field was more equitable because the experts did not make fun of the beginners. A less athletic young man stated,

The activities [in adventure PE] are different because they are new to me and to mostly everyone in the class—so we're learning together. I don't feel like a fool when I do something wrong because typically no one will notice because they don't really know what's going on either.

According to boys, the content in sport-dominated physical education was usually not new to most of athletic male students, which typically allowed similar high-skilled boys to effortlessly achieve expert or elite status while the same low-skilled boys were demoted to rungs at or near the bottom of the social hierarchies. In summary, familiarity with the activities privileged certain boys from one unit to the next while subsequently marginalizing boys with

little or no experience with the activities because they did not actually learn game tactics or techniques. An athletic boy shared, “In other PE classes, less athletic kids hide in the back corner because there are lines between those who are good at this sport or that sport or those who aren’t good at any.”

A third way that the content in adventure physical education created less pronounced masculinity hierarchies that shifted was learning activities that many average adults can do, which also contributed to changing boys’ overall perceptions of physical activity. According to many subgroups of boys, adventure physical education exposed them to activities that were representative of activities that many adults participate in within the local community. According to some less athletic boys, they learned meaningful activities they could supplement with more sedentary activities such as watching television, reading, and computer games. A less athletic male said, “I have learned skills that can become lifelong hobbies. I now love to rock climb and snowboard and will continue to do these things regularly.” Another nonathletic boy similarly stated, “I am more likely to participate in physical activities outside of class because in this class I’ve gotten the opportunity to try things I can do for many years to come.”

Although some athletic boys reported that as adults they hoped to continue to engage with the sport-related activities they enjoyed as adolescents, they felt that adventure physical education exposed them to activities that could use to supplement or replace sports. An athletic young man shared, “The activities in adventure PE are things we can do our entire life, not just in our teenage years.” Athletic male students often stated that the activities in adventure physical education did not require large groups of people or expert skill to participate which aligned with the practical aspects of adult lives. Boys consistently communicated that the activities that were typically taught in many sport-dominated physical education classes were unlikely to engage in

as adults because of time, financial resources, limited availability of other participants, risk of injury, and lack of access to organized teams. These discoveries awakened the notion among many athletic boys that they would not always want to or be able to participate in sport-related activities as adults. A high-skilled young man shared,

It [adventure PE] shows you some awesome hobbies you could pick up and enjoy throughout your life. That makes the class even more important to take because it opens so many doors for your future. In traditional PE classes you grow out of the games. I don't enjoy the middle school PE activities anymore.

Less athletic boys shared this perspective and in addition offered their lack of technical and tactical sport skills as additional reasons that made it less likely that they would participate in organized sports as adults. One young man said,

In adventure PE we do activities you can do the rest of your life. Surfing, rock climbing, skiing can all can be done as an adult. None require a ton of skill to do. You can do the activities by yourself or with one other person and you don't have to be good at them to do it. In other PE classes, floor hockey, soccer, basketball *can* be done as adults, but they're all competitive sports where a team and skill is needed.

The content taught in adventure physical education was diverse, novel, and could be engaged with by many types of adult men. For many subsets of boys in adventure physical education, these aspects of the content played a unifying role in creating masculinity hierarchies that were much more fluid and narrow than in many sport-based physical education classes. According to male students, because the content in some past sport-dominated physical education classes was monotonous, not new to most athletic boys, and dominated by athletic adult men, the social playing fields among boys were typically unequal. Certain aspects of the content in adventure physical education greatly reduced the status differentials among male students, which reportedly improved many boys' feelings about physical activity. Boys from various subgroups saw how the content in adventure physical education could supplement, and in some cases replace, the activities they were already doing or could do in the future.

Pedagogies

According to different subgroups of boys, there were four ways in which Andy's pedagogies in adventure physical education created masculinity hierarchies that were fluid and subtle as opposed to static and prominent including unit preparation, assessment practices, deemphasizing competition, and incorporating social time into class.

At the beginning of each new unit, Andy spent the first day providing students with the knowledge and skills they needed to engage with each activity on a basic level. For example, he thoroughly described the activity, equipment, safety issues, and students' experiences in past trimesters. He also addressed many of the common student fears (e.g., heights, water, and fear of guns). During beach week he showed an instructional video on surfing and discussed how to go from kneeling to standing on a surf board. He addressed how low-skilled swimmers could engage with this unit, which included explaining how wet suits provided buoyancy and how he would be in the water with them and that he was a highly-trained life guard. He explained how he would not force them to do anything they did not feel safe to try, but that he would offer support. He reminded students that beach week also included stand-up paddle-boarding and skim boarding. Many boys reported that the information Andy provided students played a role in creating playing fields that were more equal because it did not matter how skilled or unskilled they were as swimmers, surfers or skim boarders. Many male students said that without this information certain boys such as skilled swimmers and experienced surfers would have been privileged over boys with a fear of water or no surfing experience.

Similarly, at the beginning of the rock climbing unit, Andy brought in equipment and students practiced putting on harnesses, tying figure eight knots, belaying techniques (he set up a system in the classroom that allowed students to practice belaying without climbers), and

learning and practicing the climbing commands. To ensure the belayer was ready, the climber asked, “On belay?” The climber then waited for the belayer to reply, “Belay on.” Once ready, the climber then followed with, “Climbing.” The belayer then acknowledged the climber by saying, “Climb on.” This set of commands ensured that the climber did not start climbing before the belayer was ready because the belayer needed to keep tension in the rope as the climber ascended. Boys consistently reported that the level of preparation that Andy provided helped different subsets of male students feel prepared and knowledgeable about participating in each unit. In the case of rock climbing, boys who feared climbing were reportedly more willing to try because they understood how they would be kept safe as a climber. During conversations with boys, they stated that without this information that certain boys, such as those with no fear of heights and experienced climbers, would have been privileged over boys with a fear of heights and no climbing experience. This notion applied to all units, not just beach week and rock climbing. However, the degree to which it impacted different male students changed from one unit to the next depending on their past experience with or feelings about each activity.

During interviews and conversations, boys acknowledged that in adventure physical education, Andy put a great deal of thought and effort into preparing students for each new activity unit, which to them, significantly reduced the social disparities among boys because all male students were provided with the same knowledge and skills necessary to engage with the activities, even as beginners. In addition, boys stated that because Andy also explained each unit in detail that for many, this knowledge eased some of their early anxieties regarding the new activities, especially boys who were not skilled in traditional team sports and recalled feeling ill-prepared to participate in those past activities. Boys consistently reported that they felt prepared to engage with the activity. An athletic boy said, “Mr. Barker spends time teaching each new

unit that we do which I think is good because then we have a better understanding of what's going to be happening and feel more comfortable because we are better prepared." A less athletic young man shared a similar perspective on how boys were positively impacted by Mr. Barker taking the time to physically and emotionally prepare students for each unit. He stated, "Mr. Barker puts a lot of thought and effort into getting us ready for each unit. I personally feel it becomes more enjoyable to participate because I have a good understanding of the activity." Boys described specific ways that the time Andy spent at the beginning of the unit influenced positive experiences for many types of boys and allowed the status differentials to shift since the same boys were not marginalized due to a lack of knowledge in relation to activities. A high-skilled boy shared,

In our adventure unit, the race days were preceded by a day of instruction on how to use a compass and the issues that other students have had in the past years and the causes for those issues. Not only did he teach us how to use a compass, but he gave *all* students a chance to experience how the race was going to work before we even began.

Boys also shared examples of how Andy's preparation functioned to equalize the social playing field in adventure physical education. A low-skilled boy said,

The way he teaches all the units was impressive because he gave everyone the same information so no one was surprised as to what will happen. By doing this [inclusive teaching], he created equal opportunities so that no single person or group had a better chance of succeeding.

Boys said that teachers in some of their past sport-dominated physical education classes did not commonly prepare students for most activity units so the boys with prior experience were usually the ones elevated to the higher positions in masculinity hierarchies and that the space between the rungs on the hierarchies were usually quite wide. A less athletic male student stated, "I felt sometimes other PE teachers somewhat lost their energy and drive to *really* teach." For example, boys reported that when they started a basketball unit, many teachers often did not spend time teaching skills or tactics that were needed for invasion sports, but instead quickly put

students into game situations that many boys were unprepared to play successfully. According to some boys, lack of preparation in past sport-dominated physical education classes privileged boys who already had the knowledge of and experience with certain sports and marginalized the rest.

Boys reported that a second way that pedagogies produced masculinity configurations that privileged new boys from one unit to the next resulted from Andy's assessment practices. Because his assessment practices focused on students' personal accomplishments and overall experiences rather than the technical and tactical aspects of activities, many types of boys (e.g., low-skilled, high-skilled, unfit, and fit) reportedly had equal opportunities to earn good grades in adventure physical education. A less athletic boy shared,

[In adventure PE] success is measured by how much you try and how much fun you have doing it. In rock climbing you didn't have to climb the hardest wall, you could struggle up the easiest wall, but as long as you tried and there was a sense of accomplishment and that was all that mattered.

An athletic young man shared a similar perspective on Andy's assessment practices in adventure physical education and recognized that individual effort was more important than high-level skills that could win games. He said,

There's a saying, "It doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you play the game." In adventure PE the game is the activities, and as long as a person makes an attempt that's all that matters. Success [in adventure physical education] is about doing the best you can do personally and also a positive attitude.

Andy did not stand off to the side of the playing spaces with a clip board and grading rubric assessing boys on the technical aspects of their participation. In this setting, boys recognized that there were many right ways to accomplish tasks. For instance, when rock climbing, there were numerous ways to climb, and getting to the top of the wall and demonstrating proper technique did not have a bearing on grades. For instance, boys who used all upper body strength (which is the least efficient climbing technique) and did not fully ascend

any walls were able to earn full credit for the day. The reason for their full credit stemmed from the focus of the assignment: effort, not precision, was the goal. Also, boys who had a significant fear of heights were not marked down when the extent of their participation was putting on a harness and tying into the belay rope without climbing. I frequently observed situations that illustrated how Andy's assessment practices inspired low-skilled boys to try the activities (as opposed to avoiding them), which to boys, subsequently equalized the social playing field among boys because participation was high among many types of boys in this setting. For example, during the rock climbing unit a self-defined less athletic young man sat and stared at the wall for several minutes. A male classmate asked him if he was going to climb, and he replied, "No, I won't be able to make it." The other young man reminded him that in adventure physical education being good did not matter and that he should try it once. After this pep talk, the boy got up and climbed. Although he did not make it to the top of the wall and his climbing techniques were inefficient, he participated. He received full credit that day, because he was assessed on stepping out of his comfort zone and engaging with the activity instead disengaging or avoiding the task all together. Similarly, boys knew that they were not graded down if they lost their balance or took too long to complete an element on the high-ropes course. During beach week, Andy was out on the water with students acknowledging their participation and teaching them how to stand on up the boards and catch waves. However, if a boy had difficulty standing up on the board or catching a wave, he was still able to receive full points for the class period. A low-skilled boy shared, "The adventure PE grading scale focused on effort and enjoyment of the activities. We did not have to do things a certain way."

Although Andy's assessment practices were not necessarily centered on technical skill development, his grading techniques were not so loose or relaxed that students received points

merely for showing up or for trying an activity for a few minutes and then sitting out the remainder of the class period. His assessment practices allowed boys to participate in ways that suited them, which according to boys, encouraged higher levels of participation among many types of boys rather than alienating some boys from the activities.

In past sport-dominated physical education classes, athletic and less athletic boys recalled being assessed on technical and tactical aspects of activities, which according to them, consistently privileged both high-skilled with strong backgrounds in the sports and marginalized young men with low skill and little past experience. A low-skilled boy said,

Performing the skills correctly was definitely part of getting full points in other PE classes. The teachers believed that there was no reason for someone to do them incorrectly unless it had to do with some sort of injury or medical reason. So, if students wanted full points they not only had to participate, but they also had to perform the skills necessary for the activity correctly.

To most boys, especially those who were not athletic, they believed that winning and losing were common measures of success in past sport-dominated physical education classes. To them, winning equated to success and losing equated to failure. A low-skilled boy stated,

In a team sports class, there is one winning team and one losing team and that is how success is measured. The score is kept by points and the one with the most points is the successful one. In adventure PE it's totally different because success is measured on learning an activity. Like during beach week, success was not measured by whether or not you got up on the board and surfed, but if you at least attempted.

Boys reported that students were graded on participation in adventure physical education and because various types of male students found the activities novel and meaningful, that less athletic and athletic young men participated regularly which gave different types of boys equal opportunities to earn good grades. Conversely, according to boys, not all past physical education classes assessed them on techniques and tactics, but instead on dress and participation, which to them was not necessarily bad. However, because some male students, especially those who were low skilled and did not enjoy sport or competition, often disengaged from asks by not dressing in

the proper gym attire, their grades were negatively impacted. This grading system then privileged higher-skilled boys who enjoyed sport and competition because they typically participated on high levels and thus had a better opportunity to earn good grades. Therefore, because not all boys participated on the same level in most activities in past sport-dominated physical education classes, the participation grading system positioned high-skilled boys at the top and low-skilled boys at the bottom. Boys, especially those who were not athletic, believed that they did not have an equal chance of earning good grades in sport-dominated physical education. A low-skilled boy stated,

In traditional PE classes I was graded on dress and participation. If I didn't dress in appropriate attire, I would be marked down and not allowed to participate. As for participation, all students were required to do every activity, and if they didn't, it would be very unlikely for them to get full points for the day.

Andy's de-emphasis on competition was a third pedagogical practice that boys reported created fluid, less pronounced masculinity hierarchies in adventure physical education. Although most of the activities in his classes were not inherently competitive, Andy consciously and purposefully emphasized cooperation and enjoyment over competition, even for activities that were in some cases competitive. According to boys, this teaching practice created social spaces that allowed new boys to shine from one activity unit to the next. For example, although kayaking is an outdoor pursuit and not so much a competitive activity, according to the boys, kayaking with others could be viewed as a race because someone arrives at the destination point first and someone arrives last. This discovery spurred the realization among the boys that it was possible to make many activities competitive. However, because Andy emphasized the noncompetitive aspects of activities, boys reported that the social playing fields among male students became more equitable. Competitive athletes capable of outperforming others were not always elevated to the top because winning and elite performance was not important in this

setting. In other words, depending on the activity, new boys had opportunities to be elevated to high positions on masculinity hierarchies. A less athletic male student stated, “The activities we did [in adventure PE] weren't about competition. They weren't about who was the best. They were about having fun and doing things you enjoy.” Another nonathletic young man similarly shared,

In adventure PE it [the nature of the activities] is totally different because we focused on working together to achieve one goal or relied on others to help you get through a more individual task such as rock climbing. We weren't competing against each other.

Boys from different subgroups reported that competition was often emphasized in past physical education classes and that because certain boys were more athletic than others, they were more likely to be privileged and held in high regard among their classmates compared to less athletic boys. A low-skilled young man said, “In regular PE teachers may say it is not about winning or losing, but it is about being the fastest and strongest because winning is the most important thing.” According to different types of boys, less athletic male students were marginalized because they did not have the necessary skills to successfully participate (i.e., score points and win) most sport-related games. Another low-skilled male student stated,

In other PE classes if you don't win you are a loser. You didn't succeed at anything if you were not on the winning team. If your team scored a dozen touchdowns and the other team scored 13, you still lost.

Boys across social positions acknowledged that some of the activities taught in adventure physical education were fundamentally competitive. However, varying subgroups of male students reported that when teaching characteristically competitive activities such as adventure racing and paintball, Andy regularly highlighted their noncompetitive aspects. For example, he highlighted teamwork, fun, and analytical skills, which according to boys, created new hierarchies among the male students because most students became more focused on having a good time than leading their team to a victory. Boys reported that because winning was not the

most important aspect of participation, many male students were acknowledged for their achievements, even when they did not win paintball games or adventure races. A less athletic boy said,

In the adventure race it [your accomplishments] did matter [even if you didn't win] because you learned how to use a compass, you just ran who knows how long, you ran through the mud and you did all those things. Even if you were not the fastest team, you succeeded at finishing

In addition, modifications were made to paintball games so that the competitive aspects did not outweigh their overall experiences. For example, rather than having captains choose teams for paintball, Andy created teams and posted the lists of teams on the side of his truck in the parking lot near the paintball field. As students arrived, they looked at the list and gathered with their teammates rather than lining up to be picked by their classmates. For low skilled boys, being picked last for teams in past sport-dominated physical education classes was a common way they were marginalized. A less athletic boy said, "I really liked how Mr. Barker picked the teams because the teams were equal and it avoided the 'last picked in gym class feeling.'" Also, boys were not permanently eliminated from paintball games when they were shot, but returned after spending one to two minutes at home base. This modification lowered the stakes and when less-experienced boys were shot, experienced male students did not get frustrated with them because their ability to win was not hindered by being temporarily down a player or two.

Similarly, during adventure racing teams could cross the finish line with all but one player, rather than needing the entire team. This modification allowed injured, slow, and less fit boys to participate without their slowness negatively impacting their team's performance, which meant they were not demoted to the lowest rungs of the social hierarchies because of an over emphasis on competition. A lower-skilled boy stated, "They didn't get mad at you when you

were slower. You weren't marked off during the rest of the races." A higher-skilled young man similarly said,

This [modification] made it more fun because we were more supportive of our slower players. Like everyone was having fun together rather than thinking, "We gotta beat the other team!" It was like, "Let's just do it. Let's just play to play!"

Many types of boys frequently reported that competition played a prominent role in past sport-dominated physical education classes by consistently highlighting similar male physicalities. For many male students, especially low-skilled boys, the heavy emphasis that was often placed on competition caused the learning experience to be more stressful than enjoyable and frequently elevated the same types of boys to the top of the social hierarchies, while other boys were typically positioned at the bottom. A boy who reported being not overly athletic shared, "Sport PE gets way too competitive. You're not just there to have a good time, you're there to win. Everything is just more chill in adventure PE." A similar boy stated, "In sport PE classes, competition is too much. You get some kids that put a lot of pressure on themselves and others to win and others who sit out."

According to less athletic and athletic male students, an over emphasis on competition in past sport-dominated physical education classes raised the stakes on winning, which negatively impacted low-skilled boys because in these settings, someone's lack of skill had bearing on the outcome of the game. Low-skilled boys reported that competition created a playing field in which athletic boys were privileged and less athletic boys were marginalized. Two lower-skilled boys said,

People take competition too seriously in other PE classes. Like if you missed a pass or did a bad throw, people get all crazy. If you miss one pass, people say, "Let's not throw to him anymore because we don't want to risk that." In those classes they only throw the ball to kids who can catch the ball and who can run the ball. You don't get second chances.

Even though it is called team sports, in basketball they give the ball to the good kids who can shoot, and personally, I am terrible at basketball. Not everyone on the team is passed to. So if I do get the ball, I'll pass it to somebody else who can shoot, you know.

According to many boys, the social time that was intentionally built into class was a fourth aspect of Andy's pedagogies that created hierarchical arrangements among male students that were less pronounced. For boys, the social time allowed them to build relationships with classmates they were not likely to talk with in other social settings and often included boys from different subgroups. For example, there was cross subgroup interaction among boys who were reportedly positioned at different places on the social hierarchies in past sport-dominated physical education because of the social time that was incorporated into adventure physical education. One way Andy incorporated social time was by adding in several meal times into classes, which gave students the opportunity to talk to, interact with, and get to know one another while they ate. A boy shared, "The hotdog cookouts were so much fun for us. It was a fun time for us to actually sit together as a class. Not many other classes at the high school do it." During the trimester in which I collected data, there were two pancake breakfasts: one during the gun safety unit and one on the last day of trimester. There was one hotdog cookout during a full day kayaking/canoeing trip. There was also one lunch at a local sandwich shop after indoor rock climbing. During these meals, boys from different subgroups mixed and talked. Boys often anticipated the planned mealtimes on the days leading up to it. For example, "I can't wait for breakfast tomorrow. Mr. Barker is cooking for us!" During meal times, boys mixed and mingled with people they reportedly did not talk to during other parts of the school day. For example, I observed boys sitting with and talking to students I had not before seen them talk to (or at least not a lot), which sometimes included less popular male students interacting with popular female classmates. Further, when I asked boys about my observations in later interviews, they confirmed

that, when they ate together, they interacted with people they did not usually talk to during school.

Another way Andy incorporated social time into class sessions was by encouraging students to carpool to the various off-site locations where class was held, which also produced masculinity hierarchies that were much less evident than in sport-dominated physical education. According to boys, because male students from various social locations (in sport-dominated physical education) often drove together, status differentials decreased. For instance unpopular, popular, athletic, and less athletic boys carpooled together. Because at least 90% of class sessions were held off campus, students had numerous opportunities to drive together to meet for class. A reportedly unpopular young man said, “If you didn't have a ride to get to the beach for example, you either had to reach out to another classmate or hope someone would offer a ride, which surprisingly someone always did!” At the beginning of the trimester it appeared that boys carpooled with people they already knew, but after a short time, boys reached out to boys from different subgroups. For example, unpopular, popular, athletic, and less athletic boys drove together. I often heard students make driving arrangements for the following day—“Hey, you can ride with us tomorrow.” Or “Mike won't be here tomorrow, can I ride with you guys?” Additionally, since the off-site locations where class was held was never more than a seven-minute drive from the high school and for some students lunch was next on their school schedule, boys often ate lunch together before heading back to school, which often included boys (and girls) from different subgroups. I often heard boys say things such as, “Evan, Mark, and I are going to Bill's Burrito Shack after class. Do you want to come with us?” or “If you guys are heading to lunch, can I come too?”

A third way that Andy incorporated social time into class was by having students share “good things,” which gave new boys a chance to shine and be heard and also played a role in decreasing the status differentials among male students. According to boys, because this activity allowed boys from different subgroups to interact with one another in ways that reportedly did not happen in other social settings, spaces opened up for different boys to be heard—especially for boys who felt invisible in past physical education classes. Students always gathered in a circle before or after class, and during this time Andy invited them to open up and share something about themselves. For example, they talked about movies they recently saw, restaurants they ate at, the physical activities they did outside of class, and their pets and families and sports. At the beginning of the trimester, the same boys seemed to share most frequently appeared to be the more outgoing male students. However, after about one week, different boys began to open up and share. During class, I observed boys interacting about the information that was shared during the good things, and male students confirmed that many of the interactions that occurred as a result of sharing good things transpired between themselves and boys who were from different subgroups. For example, athletic boys and less athletic boys, outgoing boys and shy boys, popular boys (and girls), and less popular boys interacted as a result of information shared during good things.

Unit preparation, assessment practices, de-emphasis of competition and incorporating social time into class sessions were aspects of Andy’s pedagogies that collectively functioned to create a more relaxed and equitable learning environment. Boys were not measured and assessed on technical aspects of skills nor was winning important in this setting, which allowed different types of boys to participate successfully. The social time that was built into class allowed boys to interact with classmates (girls and boys) on levels that, according to them, did not occur in other

social settings, especially not other physical activity settings. Because Andy's pedagogies allowed new boys could gain social status from one unit to the next, hierarchies that many male students described as being emblematic of most sport-dominated physical education settings were less visible to different types of boys.

Teacher

Boys shared three ways in which they believed Andy's personality functioned to create fluid and narrow masculinity hierarchies in adventure physical education. These included getting to know different subgroups of boys, supporting different subgroups of boys, and teaching all activities with enthusiasm.

Boys communicated that because Andy showed a genuine interest in getting to know all boys in adventure physical education the social playing field among male students was much more equitable. For instance, they felt that Andy wanted to get to know boys who were enthusiastic about the activities he taught as well as those who were less enthused. Different subgroups of boys also reported that Andy took the time to get to know them in ways that extended beyond the context of class. Boys across different social positions stated that Andy's interest in them extended beyond the high-ropes course, surfing, or kayaking. For example, they believed that he cared about things such as recent family vacations, new pets, and recent sporting competitions. For different boys in Andy's adventure physical education classes, his care created shifting status differentials with small gaps between different types of masculinities. One less athletic boy shared,

He goes around and talks to everybody, gets to know everybody. I like how he pays attention to everyone. He asks everyone how their week is going and if you have a question he will take you aside and talk one-on-one with you.

Different groups of boys also recognized that there were some units that certain boys received more of Andy's attention than others, but they did not perceive this teacher behavior as

negative because they reported knowing that the hierarchies would fluctuate when they moved onto the next unit, and that new boys would receive more of his attention. For example, during the surfing unit, Andy spent a lot of time chatting with the boys who enjoyed surfing, but he also paid attention to other boys. During the gun safety unit, Andy frequently chatted with boys who were highly interested in target shooting, which facilitated opportunities for new boys to gain social status.

Some boys, especially lower-skilled young men, addressed how Andy's visible interest in different types of students helped less athletic boys feel valued. One such young man said,

Mr. Barker is cool. He's builds us [low-skilled boys] up just like everybody else. He doesn't show favorites because I am not an athlete but he still pays attention to me. Having a teacher that cares about all of the students makes the class more enjoyable. Not many other PE teachers actually remember my name or talk to me much.

Conversely, boys reported that some teachers from past sport-dominated physical education classes showed less of an interest in getting to know different types of boys and in many cases reserved most of their positive attention to the more athletic boys who were enthusiastic about sport and skilled at many sport-related activities. A less athletic boy said,

Most team sport teachers connect better with people that play sports, they stay with those groups of people. They don't expect much from the boys that don't, even if the kid is playing his heart out and trying and wanting to learn. The teachers usually push them aside and go with the people that already do sports.

According to boys, especially low-skilled boys, teachers' inequitable attention often created visible hierarchies among male students in past sport-dominated physical education. Low-skilled boys (and some high skilled boys) recalled that some past physical education teachers often gave more positive attention to boys they coached and little than to boys who were less interested in sports. A low-skilled boy stated,

Most gym teachers coach one sort of team or another so a lot of times they will have kids in their classes that they've coached outside of that class so they know them better and seem to talk to them more. I hated him [team-sports teacher], couldn't stand him. He

always just yelled at me because I wasn't really into sports so I wouldn't get dressed or do anything. We didn't get along. If you weren't into what we were doing in class, he didn't like you.

The support and encouragement Andy provided to different subgroups of boys was a second way that boys reported that Andy's personality functioned to create left subtle masculinity hierarchies that shifted from one unit to the next in. One such boy stated,

In here [adventure PE] there are no social hierarchies. In regular PE classes, I noticed that teachers tend to focus on the best students. In adventure PE, Mr. Barker helps everyone equally because the activities are difficult and most kids are struggling with it. He supports everyone because he genuinely wants everyone to succeed and conquer whatever activity we're doing, and because of this, I never noticed any hierarchies.

According to boys, when Andy noticed students struggle with the physical or emotional aspects of activities, he immediately helped. A low-skilled boy shared, "He helps us push ourselves and supports us through it the whole time." For example, when boys had difficulty using a compass, he showed them how to use it, even though he had already provided instruction. When boys struggled to stand up on the surfboards, he went into the water and provided guidance, regardless of the subgroup to which the young man belonged. When a boy was afraid to try an activity (e.g., high ropes, shooting, rock climbing, or paintball), he talked with them and provided encouragement and reassurance. An athletic male student said, "With rock climbing he like knows so much about it. He would be like, 'Alright, now go like this, turn your body this way.' He'll teach you and help you get better." Because Andy demonstrated a willingness to support different type of boys, they reportedly felt comfortable going to him for help. A boy shared, "Like you're not afraid to ask, 'How do you surf, how do you skim board, how do you rock climb?'" This [Andy's support] helps you succeed so you don't feel like an outcast."

Boys reported the same level of support was not provided by some teachers in some past sport-dominated physical education classes, which often inflated social hierarchies among male

students. However, according to different subgroups of boys, it was not that teachers provided more support to the most athletic boys who created these visible hierarchies; the hierarchies stemmed from a lack of support to students in general, which then allowed similar types of boys to be privileged throughout the trimester. This boy said,

Some teachers, like for team sports, can *tell* you about football, they can *tell* you how to play baseball, and yet you still don't get it. They won't go the extra mile to *teach* you—to know who you are and why you can't do those sports.

Because of equitable support from Andy, boys who already possessed the skill sets required for successful participation in team sports were most frequently privileged over boys with little or no skill. For example, boys who had past experience in dribbling, passing, and shooting in game situations for the most part did not need support from the teacher as they had the skills to succeed in basketball. Conversely, boys without the required skill sets were unable to play basketball successfully and were consistently marginalized when teachers in past sport-dominated physical education classes did not provide them with support. A low-skill boy said, “They told us the rules and then they were like the referee. They stood there and watched us play. They didn't make structure and help you get better.”

A third aspect of Andy's personality that boys believed created masculinity hierarchies that varied and were less pronounced in adventure physical education was teaching each activity unit with equal enthusiasm, which played a role in equalizing the social playing field.. For example, during interviews and informal conversations with Andy, he shared that he was most passionate about activities such as surfing and rock climbing. He engaged with these activities regularly outside of the school setting and had done so for many years. Further, he was a highly skilled surfer and climber. According to different boys, because he taught kayaking and gun safety with as much enthusiasm as surfing and rock climbing, more equitable social relations were created among boys because each activity was framed as having equal importance. A

young man shared, “He’s more into it [than some sport-dominated PE teachers]. He does stuff along with us and I think that helps us bond more with him and helps us to get into the activities more. He always tells us that adventure PE is his favorite class to teach.” Additionally, male students frequently shared that Andy’s enthusiastic demeanor facilitated an environment where different types of boys enjoyed participation. An athletic male student said,

Mr. Barker definitely had a positive attitude about every activity in the class. You could see it every day, and you heard it a lot too. He was always telling students how lucky he is, and how much he loves his job because he gets to go outside and introduce all these awesome, new activities to his students. He also keeps a positive attitude because he gets to see the students’ enthusiasm while doing the activities. It was like his enthusiasm radiated from him every day. That’s part of the reason why students had so much fun even if the weather was bad or if it was one of the activities they didn’t necessarily enjoy the most.

Some boys, especially athletic boys, reported that some teachers in their past sport-dominated physical education classes taught certain activities with less enthusiasm than others. A high skilled boy said, “In a team sports PE class you might have someone stuck teaching a sport they might not like. This can make the whole class almost miserable for boys who like the sport.” In cases where teachers seemed more excited about certain activities, boys who were skilled at and enjoyed playing football (or whatever activity was enthusiastically presented) were elevated above boys who did not like or have skill for that particular sport. For example, according to boys, football coaches appeared more jovial when teaching football-related lessons. Fitness buffs seemed more excited when teaching fitness content. For these boys, the more the teacher seemed to like the activity, the more important it became to the boys.

However, a larger group of boys recalled many teachers from their past physical education classes taught most lessons with little enthusiasm. One athletic boy said,

Other PE teachers didn’t always seem enthusiastic in class. They weren’t angry by any means, but every day was the same type of thing. They took attendance, introduced the activity of the day, and then had to act as referee for the rest of the period.

Getting to know different boys, providing support and encouragement to different boys, and teaching activities with equal enthusiasm were aspects of Andy's personality that boys described as collectively functioning to decrease the status differentials among male students. In the end, those aspects led to shifts in their perceptions of physical activity. Conversely, boys reported that some aspects of the teachers' personalities in past in sport-dominated physical education classes generated hierarchical divisions among subgroups of boys because certain boys were privileged by various aspects of the teachers' personality.

Peer Cultures

Boys reported four ways that peer culture in adventure physical education produced masculinity hierarchies that were narrow and shifted from one unit to the next. According to boys, through teambuilding activities, many male students became more willing to interact with classmates from different subgroups, to get to know classmates on deeper levels, and to offer and receive peer support.

According to boys, one way that the peer culture created more equitable configurations among boys was by facilitating opportunities for different subgroups of boys to get to know one another at the beginning of the trimester through teambuilding activities. This aspect of peer cultures decreased the status differentials for these young men because boys talked to and interacted with classmates they were less likely to interact with in school. For example, athletic boys interacted with less athletic boys. Popular boys talked to less popular boys. Academically driven boys intermingled with male classmates who were less academically driven. Shy male students interacted with outgoing boys. Boys who were in the band or theater groups communicated with boys who were not members of these groups. According to different types of

boys, these early interactions that many described as atypical resulted from the teambuilding activities that took place at the beginning of the trimester. A less athletic boy said,

When we did those activities [at the beginning of the trimester] we learned other people's names and got to know each other a little bit better during the first week. Like in other classes I don't talk to anyone, but in adventure PE I talk to just about everyone. It's like, "Hey, what are you doing?" I took so many pictures today of, like, everyone. It was really fun.

Boys realized that it was possible to interact with peers in class even if they did not do so outside of class.. One athletic male student stated,

I wouldn't have gotten to know people like this on my own. I am glad we did the team building activities so that it was not weird or anything when we had to work together. I got to know people in class a lot better. Even if I am not great friends with them, I feel comfortable to talk to them if I need help with something because now I know everyone.

Boys reported that in past sport-dominated physical education classes that they did had few opportunities to get to know one another at the beginning, which helped to create and maintain wide social spaces among boys throughout the trimester. A low-skilled boy shared, "In team sports classes, the sports kids always talk to the other sports kids. In here [adventure PE], everyone gets involved with everyone."

A second way that boys felt that the peer cultures in adventure physical education created masculinity hierarchies that fluctuated from one unit to the next and with small gaps between different masculinities was that boys became more willing to interact with classmates from different subgroups throughout the semester. According to boys, the teambuilding activities ignited the initial connections with classmates that they may have been less likely to talk to in school, which led to boys' willingness to engage in frequent interactions with different classmates throughout the duration of the trimester. A lower-skilled male student stated,

Kids get connected in this class because even though we go to the same high school we didn't know a lot of kids in our class at the beginning. Before this class we hardly ever talked, but now I talk to a lot of new people.

In adventure physical education, boys from different subgroups frequently communicated with one another before, during, and after activities. For example, before class started, boys from different subgroups often gathered as they arrived and initiated conversations with one another. I heard them talk about the days' activities and sometimes they talked about nonclass related topics. According to boys, this easy conversation greatly contrasted with their interactions in sport-dominated physical education where student interactions with new people were much less frequent. A less athletic boy stated,

In adventure PE we are more interactive, we talk to each other more, communicate more. In other classes you usually stick with your friends or a friend. Like I've got weight lifting, and I don't talk to very many of those people. I only talk to my friends and that's basically it. So this class definitely gets you talking to more people.

Boys consistently reported that interacting with different people was more common in adventure physical education than it was in past sport-dominated physical education classes. A young man who reported feeling socially isolated in past physical education classes shared, "In other PE classes there's a lot less interaction, and you're more on your own. Adventure PE is a special class where I get along with and talk to a lot of people and just have fun." This young man went on to talk about how the peer cultures in adventure physical education produced social relations between himself (i.e., less athletic and unpopular) and other boys (i.e., athletic and popular) that were more horizontal than vertical. He said,

Like Mark, I knew who he was but I never talked to him. Now he comes up and talks to me all the time and I talk to him. When we were playing paintball, we were like back to back and hanging out. So you build a lot more friendships in this class.

Because male students could get to know different classmates on deeper levels, was reported by different boys as a third way that the peer cultures in adventure physical education created less pronounced masculinity hierarchies that shifted throughout the trimester. For example, boys who were less athletic and boys who were athletic were interested in getting to

know one another, which played a role in creating equitable status differentials among boys. Boys who were less athletic and athletes developed meaningful relationships in class. Instead, according to boys, the interactions between less athletic boys and athletic boys were similar to the interactions among athletes, which played a role in creating narrow hierarchical configurations among boys. According to this young man, the relationships extended beyond class. He said,

Boys from different groups got to know each other much more than they ever would have in any other class. It's not like a regular PE class that tends to have a separation between athletes and nonathletes, so it's easier for kids to get to know each other and not worry about their skill level or anything like that. Adventure PE connects boys who probably would not have been become friends in any other situation, and allows them to become good friends, not just in class, but out of class as well.

Boys consistently communicated that because they learned new activities together, they were together outside of the four walls of the school building, and social time was built into class there were many opportunities to get to know different people on deeper levels. An athletic male student shared,

I think students were able to get to know each other on a deeper level in adventure PE. A lot of it had to do with the fact that everyone was at least a little bit out of their comfort zone in the class but because everyone acted as a support system to the others when needed so it opened the doors to the possibility of creating deeper friendships than a student would in any other class.

Some athletic young men offered different reasons (than less athletic boys) for aspects of the peer cultures that led to deeper relationships among boys from different subgroups. For example, one high-skilled young man reported that getting to know others, even if they were different from him, was an essential part of succeeding and staying safe in class. And like many other athletic boys, he reported atypical connections that he made with less athletic males. He said,

On things like the high ropes course you are essentially trusting people with the use of your legs or very well your life. If you don't meet people and get to know them, it can be a very awkward class period. I got to know multiple people that, without Adventure PE I

most likely wouldn't have ever talked to. I know a couple people who are dating now because of adventure PE too.

According to different boys, peer relations among various subgroups of boys in past sport-dominated physical education classes were often superficial and insincere, which usually led to inflated hierarchies among boys. For example, when less athletic and athletic boys interacted it was often compulsory (e.g., playing on the same team) rather than voluntary. An athletic boy said, "In sport PE classes, there are no relationships really. You just hang out with your friends and that is about it. You don't get closer to new people." A less athletic boy similarly stated, "In other PE classes we just find our closest friend we have in class and just always stay with them. We don't step out of our comfort zones and get to know new people in there." Boys consistently reported that this mandatory level of social interactions inflated hierarchies among male students. These boys shared,

In a normal gym class you are forced to work with someone. You don't get to talk much or get know their strengths and weaknesses and let them know yours. You don't get a chance to see what you have in common with them.

None of the other PE classes were on the level of adventure PE [relative to peer relations]. In those classes, people tend to stick with the people they know and very rarely reach out to the people around them. There is some teamwork in team sports classes, but it doesn't move beyond to group bonding like in adventure PE.

The following vignette shows how boys from different subgroups connected in ways that reportedly would have been less likely in other physical education classes,

Two boys from different subgroups shared a canoe during the full-day kayak/canoe trip. Before taking adventure physical education, these boys did not know each other. One young man was athletic and reported that he enjoyed past sport-dominated physical education classes and the other was a nonathletic male student who recalled feeling socially isolated in past physical education classes. They paddled along and talked the whole time. They arrived at the cookout site before the rest of the students, and as they continued their conversation they grilled hotdogs for their classmates.

This vignette shows how boys from subgroups that were typically marginalized in sport-dominated physical education classes had opportunities to shine during the paintball unit because

they were able to participate in an activity for which they had knowledge and skill. Boys from different subgroups were inspired to get to know male peers.

Today was the first day of paintball. Wayne and Zack brought their personal paintball gear and were surrounded by interested classmates who eagerly questioned them about their equipment and past paintball experience. In past interviews, these boys described themselves as being “isolated” and “picked last” in sport-dominated physical education classes. Today, in adventure physical education, they were anything but isolated or picked last. In fact, several male classmates (many who were regarded as athletic in a traditional team sports sense) said, “I hope I am on Wayne/Zack’s team.”

Boys shared that a fourth way that the peer culture in adventure physical education created less prominent masculinity hierarchies that varied from one unit to the next was through peer support. Rather than ignoring or making fun of lesser-skilled male classmates, high-skilled boys offered support. For example, boys with skim boarding experience helped lesser-experienced boys rather than ignoring or ridiculing them. A skilled male skim boarder said,

I just help people in here you know, guys that haven’t had the opportunities to do the things that I’ve already done. Like I already know how to skim board so I just helped the other kids. In other PE classes the kids are like, Oh, I’m not gonna help him, he just sucks.” In here we are like, “I’m gonna help him out, tell him what he’s doing wrong, what he’s doing right.” You know, just give him some encouragement.

Similarly, during the canoeing and kayaking unit, boys noticed that those with paddling knowledge and skill did not pass struggling classmates so they could keep up and mingle with the other skilled paddlers or show off. Instead, they slowed down and provided help. This type of support was not limited to the beach unit or canoeing and kayaking, but to all activity units. For example, during the gun safety unit, a male student who was reportedly highly skilled at shooting and traditional team sports stated,

When other boys [low-skilled] had trouble with shooting, we [high-skilled] didn’t mark them off as a failure, we helped. We talked them through it. Like, maybe you are taking a breath in the middle of your shot. Maybe you are moving your body instead of your sites. Maybe you have the gun on the wrong shoulder. We might say, “If you take a breath during your shot, it can throw off your shot. Hold your breath and release it slowly and then squeeze the trigger.” If a boy missed a pass in team sports they would go, “Alright, we can’t pass to him because he’s not going to help us get a point.”

Also, peer support was multidirectional among subgroups. In other words, boys who were regarded as low skilled were not always on the receiving end of the support. For example, boys who reported being less skilled at team sports such as basketball and soccer were observed offering support during various units in adventure physical education for which they had prior knowledge and skill. During the gun safety unit, a young man who was highly skilled at target shooting, which was regarded by boys as a nontraditional sport, provided technical support to male peers who had no prior shooting experience. However, the boys who received help in this nontraditional sport setting were often regarded as highly skilled athletes in relation to traditional team sports such as basketball and floor hockey. Similarly, during units such as high-ropes and rock climbing, low-skilled boys (in a traditional team sports sense) were observed offering emotional support to boys who were regarded as high-skilled at traditional sports such as football and basketball. For instance, during high-ropes I often heard words of support offered by less athletic boys who were belaying for athletic boys such as, “You can do it, John. Don’t be afraid because I have you.” A less athletic boy stated,

The way support worked changed the balance of power in this class [adventure PE], and athletic ability took a backseat. Like with the rope course everyone had to encourage each other. Just because someone was bold athletically didn't mean they weren't afraid of heights. It's a nice balance of power.

According to boys, peer support operated differently in adventure physical education than in many of their past sport-dominated physical education classes. Different subsets of boys reported that masculinity configurations were impacted in different ways in both social spaces. A male student offered his perception on how peer support functioned in each space. Many boys echoed his sentiments. He said,

In traditional PE classes peer support [among boys] was generally sectioned by skill level. High-skilled students would hang out together and help each other in the different activities. That left the lower-skilled students to fend for themselves and if they were lucky the lower-skilled students would try and stick together and help each other during

the different activities. In adventure PE, however, the support generally reached to all the students in the class. Even if the students are not friends they still take the time to support and help other students if they need it. There may have been high-skilled and lower-skilled students in adventure PE, but most people didn't pay attention to skill level, and if they did it did not stop them from helping those people.

Opportunities for different boys to connect through teambuilding, their willingness to interact with classmates from different subgroups, getting to know classmates on deeper levels, and peer support were aspects of the peer cultures that to boys, collectively functioned to create hierarchical arrangements among boys that shifted among units and were less prominent than in many past sport-based physical education classes. Boys believed that these aspects of the peer cultures played a significant role in changing their perceptions of physical activity. In past sport-dominated physical education classes, most boys typically limited their interactions with boys who were different from themselves, which often inflated hierarchies among boys and negatively impacted some boys' perceptions of and relationships with physical activity.

Boys shared how various aspects of the content, pedagogies, teacher's personality, and peer cultures in adventure physical education at Apex High School made it possible for masculinity hierarchies to shift from one unit to the next and ultimately flipped masculinity configurations that are endemic to many sport-dominated physical education classes upside down. Boys described the many ways that these class features significantly contributed to the numerous shifts in thinking that occurred for boys surrounding their thoughts and feelings about physical activity. Boys recognized the access they had to learning in an environment that cultivated positive relationships between students and physical activity, between students and the teacher, and among students. For boys in this study, these aspects of adventure physical education did not consistently privilege certain boys over others. These aspects of adventure physical education contrasted with aspects of past sport-dominated physical education classes

where, according to boys, masculinity hierarchies were usually static and similar male students were often privileged by content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer culture.

This chapter was about boys' masculinities and how adventure physical education at Apex High School produced an environment that created hierarchical configurations among male students that were much less wide and pronounced than in many past sport-dominated physical education classes. In adventure physical education, boys described specific ways in which spaces were created for male students to enact masculinities in ways that were atypical in their past sport-dominated physical education classes. Boys found that the dynamics in adventure physical education significantly decreased the status differentials among male students, which was different from how some of their sport-dominated physical education classes inflated them. After taking adventure physical education, boys thought differently about physical activity, but as the data show, not all boys experienced everything the same way.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine boys' masculinities in an adventure physical education setting. Connell's (2005a) conceptualization of masculinity guided this research. The principal finding from this study was that according to male and female students from a range of social positions the content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures cultivated by Andy in adventure physical education at Apex High School synergistically produced fluidly changing and more narrow masculinity configurations than had previously taken place in sport-dominated physical education classes. In the end, boys from varied social positions suggested that because of the fluidly changing and less pronounced masculinity hierarchies in adventure physical education they had gradually developed different and more positive orientations toward physical activity which, in turn, led to increased physical activity participation in and out of physical education. In this chapter, I (a) connect the study findings to masculinity theory as well as to relevant physical education research, (b) discuss the meaning of this study for the broader field of physical education, (c) consider the implications this study may have for school districts, (d) describe the implications of these findings for physical education teacher education programs, (e) address the study's limitations, and (e) recommend future directions for this line of research.

Connecting Findings to Relevant Literature

In this section I discuss how the findings connect with some of the core theoretical principles of masculinity theory and with relevant physical activity and physical education research. Andy's story and the boys' stories collectively describe how the dynamics in adventure physical education created status differentials among boys that were less pronounced and more fluidly changing than in their past sport-based physical education. First, I explain each

theoretical principle. Second, I explain how the principle surfaced in adventure physical education—in some cases, with a special comparison to how it played out relative to boys' experiences in past sport-based physical education. Finally, I explain how the findings from the current study were similar to or different from past research.

Research Question #1: Multiple Masculinities

In any given social setting there exists a plurality of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Masculinity is not something a boy either has or does not have, nor is it something that increases or decreases. A full range of masculinities may exist in social spaces (Swain, 2006), and because masculinities are fluid and dynamic, individual males should be regarded as having more than a singular masculinity. Additionally, the multiple masculinities approach acknowledges that there can be mobility between masculinities in different times and places and in response to changing stimuli (Imms, 2000). For example, a boy who embodies an intellectual masculinity in a particular time and social space might embody a sporty masculinity in another space and time. Further, it is possible for boys to embody more than a singular masculinity in the same social space. For instance, a boy might be both sporty and intellectual in a particular physical activity environment. Ultimately, given the potential for multiple masculinities and their capacities to consistently shift and be reshaped, boys cannot easily be categorized into systematic categories.

Findings from this study show that boys embodied different types of masculinities in adventure physical education at Apex High School. It was not as if some boys were masculine while others were unmasculine. Boys in this class did not have either high or low levels of masculinity, and although contextual factors consistently allowed new masculinities to be privileged throughout the trimester, contextual elements did not cause boys' masculinities to

increase or decrease. In adventure physical education, numerous types of masculinities operated. The composition of masculinities included varying levels and types of athleticism, popularity, bodies, dispositions, talents, and interests. Many boys in adventure physical education played on organized sports teams, and different games areas were represented among these athletes. For example, many boys played invasion sports such as football, soccer, basketball, and ultimate Frisbee. Other boys played target sports such as golf and disc golf. A few boys played net sports such as tennis. Some boys played fielding sports such as baseball. There were also boys who wrestled or ran cross country. Some boys participated on the school's downhill ski team. Additionally, some boy participated in less traditional sports and physical activities such as paintball, target shooting, hunting, fishing, and rock climbing. Also, numerous boys in adventure physical education reportedly did not play organized sports and generally did not participate in physical activity during free time. For instance, some boys regularly engaged with sedentary activities such as video and computer games. Some boys in adventure physical education enjoyed nonphysical activity endeavors such as singing, playing musical instruments, and acting—many of which were members of the school band, choir, and theater group. There were boys who were shy and less popular and some who were outgoing and more popular.

Findings from this study also showed that boys typically embodied more than a single masculinity while in adventure physical education. For example, some boys with sporty masculinities also embodied intellectual masculinities. This combination of masculinities became especially evident during activities such as adventure racing which invited boys to demonstrate both strategic thinking and physical competence.

These findings, in relation to multiple masculinities, are similar to the findings of other physical education and masculinity researchers. Although most past studies did not identify the

same quantity of masculinities as did the current study, numerous studies have illustrated different masculinities operating in sport and physical education settings. For example, culture-specific and class-influenced masculinities were portrayed in Light's (2008) study that was conducted in a high school rugby setting. Anderson (2009) identified orthodox masculinities and inclusive masculinities within the culture of team sports. Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) found different forms of marginalized and privileged masculinities in two middle school sport-based physical education programs. Likewise, Parker (1996) found dissimilar types of boys that he defined as victims, conformists, and hard boys operating in sport-dominated physical education settings. Similarly, Griffin (1985) identified machos, junior machos, nice guys, invisible players, and wimps in the context of physical education.

It should be noted that this study diverged from past masculinity studies in physical education settings that focused on and identified static masculinity typologies. For instance, the hard boys, conformists, and victims found in Parker (1996) were types of masculinities that remained constant in the physical education settings he studied. Although there were types of masculinities identified in the current study, there were never long-standing typologies because masculinities consistently shifted. Therefore, examining the fluctuating nature of masculinity hierarchies became the main focus of looking at what was going on in these three classes. In other words, shifting hierarchies seemed like a better theoretical approach to describe what I found rather than the multiple masculinity perspective. Also, because events that speak to each research question did not emerge in these three adventure physical education classes, each question was not specifically addressed in this section.

Research Question #1(Part 2): Hierarchies of Masculinities

Within any social environment, particular masculinities take prominence over others (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). To better understand the power relations among boys in various social spaces, it is not enough to recognize a multiplicity of masculinities (Connell, 2005a). It is equally as important that the social relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination among different masculinities are also acknowledged (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Specific masculinities are elevated to the higher levels of masculinity hierarchies within particular social spaces (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, boys who embody masculinities that are privileged in a certain social environment are positioned at high levels on social hierarchies whereas boys who embody masculinities that are produced as marginalized are relegated to the lowest positions (Kehler, 2004; Sherriff, 2007).

According to different subgroups of boys and girls in this study, masculinity hierarchies frequently shifted and appeared flattened in adventure physical education, which led both previously high- and low-status boys to think more positively about physical activity in and out of class. Boys across social locations unequivocally reported that in past sport-dominated physical education masculinity hierarchies were visible, consistently privileged and marginalized the same types of boys, and were prominent, which reportedly limited boys' perceptions of legitimate physical activity and for some boys, especially less athletic boys, contributed to infrequent and unwilling engagement in physical activity. Although not all boys explicitly stated that they noticed hierarchies among boys in adventure physical education, language such as "basically on the same level" and "a place for everyone to shine" suggested that boys did notice the status differentials. It could be speculated that after multiple years of participating in sport-dominated physical education that emphasized competition and elite performance, many boys may become accustomed to social stratifications that consistently privileged similar masculine

characteristics such as strength, speed, muscularity, agility, physical aggression, and exploiting weaknesses in others from one unit to the next.

Different boys in this study consistently reported that because of the diverse content, Andy's inclusive teaching practices, the relationships Andy cultivated with different students, and the bridges he attempted to build among students collectively created status differentials that existed more equitably than they had in many past sport-based physical education classes. Therefore, it is plausible that transitioning to such a dissimilar type of physical education that comprised fluid and narrow masculinity hierarchies providing new boys with new opportunities to gain social status initially clouded their ability to see hierarchies at all. In retrospect, as a researcher, interpreting boys' acknowledgements of hierarchies in the early stages of data collection and analysis may have been similarly clouded by some of the romantic egalitarian claims that have been made about adventure education in literature (Zink & Burrows, 2008). The "we are all equal here" proclamations that have been made about adventure physical education, combined with the boys' consistent declarations of not seeing masculinity hierarchies, made the notion of no hierarchies plausible. After a critical re-examination of statements made by different subsets of boys, it became conceivable that other interesting things could be going on in the data. For instance, due the diverse content Andy chose to include, the inclusive pedagogies enacted by Andy, the bridges he attempted to build between himself and different students, and the positive peer cultures he worked so diligently to create, the idea that the status differentials among boys were not completely flattened, but that they were constantly shifting and flattening manifested itself. Not only did the data from this study show that masculinity hierarchies existed in adventure physical education, it also showed that the distance between the status differentials among boys were narrow, which perhaps gave students the impression of flattened hierarchies.

Shifting hierarchies in this social setting showed that masculinity configurations may be far more malleable than they have been depicted in some masculinity literature. As the content changed, inclusive pedagogies were employed, Andy developed relationships with new boys, and boys continued to develop relationships with classmates, the masculinity hierarchies continually evolved, which according to students, opened doors for new students to shine throughout the trimester. Shifting hierarchies are a normal minute-by-minute part of social life, which points to the fragile and contingent nature of our identities and social structures. For many students in adventure physical education, a light was shone onto the possibility that new boys can shine within particular physical activity settings—the same boys are not always privileged.

Because of the social practices employed by Andy in adventure physical education, boys began to perceive physical activity more positively which, in turn, led them to step onto the bridges Andy attempted to build between students and physical activity and increased participation outside of physical education. Students learned that when activities were inherently different, when teachers offered positive attention to multiple types of students, and emphasized participation and positive peer relations over elite performance and competition, that being positioned on low rungs of masculinity hierarchies was much less consequential than in physical activity settings because it was much more temporary than in settings comprising static and well-pronounced physical activity spaces.

In line with past research, findings from this study show that one form of masculinity takes prominence over others in a given social environment. Researchers have identified masculinity hierarchies in educational contexts (Kehler, 2004; Swain, 2006), sport settings (Anderson, 2009; Gard and Meyenn, 2000), and in physical education (Griffin, 1985; Parker, 1996; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). For example, Griffin (1985) found hierarchies among

boys during a sport-based unit in middle school physical education and identified machos, junior machos, nice guys, invisible players, and wimps. Similarly, Parker (1996) described hierarchies among the hard boys, conformists, and victims in the context of physical education. Likewise, Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) showed how a small group of boys in two middle school physical education classes were hierarchically configured based on whether their masculinities were produced as marginalized or dominant. Unlike the current findings, these past studies did not portray the capacity for masculinity hierarchies to fluctuate and flatten in a particular social space. Factors that influenced the shifts and flattening of hierarchies in adventure physical education are further explored and expanded upon in the following section.

Research Question #2: Social Practices Produce Masculinity Hierarchies

The hierarchical ordering of masculinities are not naturally occurring phenomena. Masculinity hierarchies are shaped by events in social settings, leading to systems of power that privilege individuals who embody masculinities that are produced as dominant and marginalize those who embody masculinities constructed as marginalized (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Particular values and interests are manifested in the policies and practices of social fields which lead to hierarchical configurations within social spaces. Certain masculinities are dominant for a reason, not because boys are boys or because they are certain types boys.

In adventure physical education at Apex High School, hierarchies were not created off-site and then brought into class to function as is. Data from this study demonstrate a powerful notion, namely, that through the synergy of content, pedagogies, teacher and student relationships, and peer cultures, masculinity hierarchies shifted and for different types of boys, gave the appearance of flattened hierarchies. Andy's methods of orchestrating and attending to various social practices in adventure physical education presented genuine and equal

opportunities for new boys to gain social status throughout the trimester. If any of these elements were missing, then the entire social structure would have likely changed. It became clear from the teacher and students that it was this complex amalgam of all four elements that resulted in a more safe and equitable environment that led boys to develop more positive orientations toward physical activity and to engage with it both in and out of adventure physical education and after graduation from high school.

According to boys and girls in this study, there were specific key elements of physical education (e.g., content, pedagogies, teacher, and peer cultures) that led to a safe and equitable environment for students. Boys and girls recognized that because each element was attended to properly by Andy, masculinity hierarchies shifted and appeared flattened. Girls and boys from this study also reported that when these elements of physical education had been attended to inadequately in past sport-based physical education, they often led to widespread privileging of some boys and the traumatizing of others on a consistent basis. Students from various social locations described the ways in which content, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures in sport-based and adventure physical education cultivated two dissimilar boy cultures—one positive, one negative. For different types of boys in this study, because of how the content, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures were managed by Andy, participation in adventure physical education positively impacted their perceptions of and engagement with physical activity in and out of adventure physical education. Based on observations and through statements made by students, Andy played a crucial role in setting all four elements into motion. He is the one who chose the content, enacted the pedagogies, spearheaded relationships between himself and students, and facilitated positive relationships among students. The absence of any

one element would have changed the impact social practices had on masculinity hierarchies in this environment.

Andy chose to teach diverse, less traditional team sport content because he believed that when physical education classes were dominated by sports, similar boys were consistently positioned at the highest levels of the masculinity hierarchies while similar other boys were located at the lowest levels. According to boys in this study, masculinity hierarchies in past sport-based physical education classes were especially static because the sport-content consistently privileged similar types of boys—typically boys who were skilled at invasion sports such as basketball, floor hockey, and football. Conversely, the activities and social dynamics in this adventure physical education context produced masculinity hierarchies that were constantly shifting and flattening, which opened space for new boys to gain social status from one unit to the next. To students in this study, the less traditional, often novel sport content Andy included in adventure physical education played a significant role in creating differently configured masculinity hierarchies because the activities were often new to most students and dissimilar skill sets were required for each. This social practice differed from sport-dominated physical education classes that frequently created similar hierarchies from one unit to the next because the skill sets required among units were so similar. Adventure physical education at Apex High School included content that differed from one unit to the next. Boys who excelled during the team building unit were not always the same ones who did well during the high-ropes unit. Boys who stood out during rock climbing did not always excel in adventure racing. Some boys who did extremely well at kayaking struggled during the gun safety unit. The nature of each unit was so different that opportunities were widened so that new boys gained social status and previously privileged boys lost status.

Although Andy's choice to teach diverse content played a role in creating masculinity hierarchies that fluctuated and appeared flattened to different boys, this social practice did not operate alone. According to different types of students, pedagogies such as de-emphasizing competition, emphasizing the overall experience, building boys up instead of tearing them down, and teaching skills for each unit rather than putting boys in situations for which they did not have the skills, played an equally important role in creating an equitable and safe physical education environment as did the content. Boys recognized that the diverse content alone did not cause hierarchies to flatten. For example, for boys from different social locations, if Andy's pedagogies were less inclusive, activities that were not inherently competitive could have easily been perceived similar to past invasion sport experiences such as basketball and football. For previously low status boys, the inclusive pedagogies Andy chose to enact played an especially significant role in causing their perceptions of physical education to become more positive and their engagement more frequent.

Andy intentionally initiated and tried to build bridges between himself and different students in adventure physical education. If Andy distributed his attention inequitably among boys, the capacity for hierarchies to shift and appear flattened would have been diminished. Andy consistently and purposefully attempted to interact positively and equally with boys from various subgroups and social locations. Although different types of boys were able to access special attention from Andy throughout the trimester because of their level of interest in particular units, different boys benefited because the units were constantly changing. When Andy paid special attention to certain boys, he did not ignore others. For example, during paintball, boys who were the most skilled and enthused about the unit received a lot of content-specific attention from Andy (e.g., talked about equipment and game-play). Different boys could access

Andy's positive attention throughout the trimester which seemed to be especially significant to previously low-status boys who rarely received positive attention from teachers in past sport-based physical education. Conversely, according to boys in this study, especially the less athletic boys, because activity units in past sport-based physical education classes were often similar (e.g., invasion sports), the teachers typically paid most of their positive attention to the same types of boys from one unit to the next (e.g., athletic boys who were especially skilled at invasion sports). This type of teacher-student relationship constructed static and well-pronounced status differentials among boys, which was very dissimilar from that of adventure physical education.

Finally, the role that diverse content played in creating fluid and less consequential hierarchies would not have been possible without Andy's efforts to build bridges among students, which ultimately created peer cultures that students believed fostered positive interactions among different subgroups of boys, and positively impacted how they experienced physical activities in the context of adventure physical education. Students recognized that the positive peer culture in this setting did happen on its own or because the content was adventure-based. For instance, if boys exclusively hung out with boys from similar subgroups during rock climbing, the hierarchical configurations may have shifted a bit and have been slightly less pronounced than in team sport cultures, but would likely have not opened spaces for boys to interact with classmates from different subgroups. Fluid and narrow hierarchical configurations in adventure physical education likely created the impression of flattened hierarchies because new boys consistently gained social status when the activity units changed.

Students from different subgroups recognized that hierarchy shifting and flattening in adventure physical education did not happen miraculously or because adventure settings

effortlessly produced a “we are all equal here” phenomenon. To students, Andy was the person who set in motion the content, pedagogies, positive teacher-student relationships, and constructive peer cultures that led boys to think and feel much more positively about physical activity and to engage with it more frequently on their own time, sometimes with new friends from class and after graduation from high school.

Findings from this study are different from past research because they show that when certain elements of physical education are attended to properly, they can create masculinity hierarchies that constantly shift and appear flattened—in the same social setting. Researchers have demonstrated how social practices in the context of sport elevated athletic males to high levels on masculinity hierarchies, but do not show their capacity to shift within a given social space. For example, Anderson (2005) showed how particular key elements in certain sport settings elevate characteristics such as homophobia, stoicism, compulsory heterosexuality, and sexism to high levels on masculinity hierarchies, while subjugating men who are less athletic, gay, or effeminate to lower rungs. Anderson also pointed out how the cultural and structural variables often unify, making hierarchical configurations resistant to change in particular sporting spaces. Researchers have similarly illustrated how social practices in many physical education settings produced hierarchies that positioned high-skilled athletic boys at the top and low-skilled, less athletic boys at the bottom of masculinity hierarchies. Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) showed how the content, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures functioned to produce static and wide-spread masculinity hierarchies in sport-based physical education. The findings from this study demonstrate that it is possible for masculinity hierarchies to shift within one social space when certain elements within the social space are attended to intentionally and comprehensively.

Research Question #3: Masculinity Hierarchies Differ Across Social Settings

Characteristics that achieve dominant status in one social environment may not dominate in different spaces, even settings that appear similar (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For instance, performance art settings such as choir, band, and theater may privilege qualities such as creativity, self-expression, and emotion while physical activity environments such as physical education and organized sport might produce strength, speed, coordination, and physical aggression as dominant (Davison, 2004). Boys who embody masculinities capable of achieving dominant status in particular social spaces are often positioned at high levels on masculinity hierarchies, while boys who do not embody dominant characteristics are positioned on lower rungs. Because different characteristics are typically privileged in dissimilar social spaces, masculinity hierarchies often differ from one social setting to the next (Davison, 2004). Additionally, based on contextual gender relations, masculinity hierarchies can also differ in social spaces that appear similar. For example, in a physical education class teaching dance, characteristics such as creativity, self-expression, and best effort may dominate while speed, physical aggression, and agility might dominate in a physical education class teaching basketball (Coles, 2009). Additionally, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), based on social practices within similar social spaces, masculinity hierarchies can also differ across social settings that appear to be similar such as two school physical education classes (Coles, 2009). For instance, boys who embody sporty masculinities may be privileged in a physical education class teaching basketball while boys who embody intellectual or theatrical masculinities could be elevated to high rungs on the hierarchies in physical education classes that teach dance. Also, a class teaching basketball in one physical education class may produce characteristics that are

different from those produced as dominant in another physical education class teaching basketball.

According to different subsets of boys in this study, characteristics such as strength, speed, and coordination often dominated in past sport-based physical education settings while adventure physical education at Apex High School typically produced characteristics such as risk taking, perseverance, and cooperation as dominant. Because the characteristics that were constructed as dominant in adventure physical education were dissimilar from many past sport-dominated physical education classes, different boys had opportunities to shine which elevated them to the highest rungs on the masculinity hierarchies. In these two different (i.e., based on content), yet similar (i.e., both physical education classes), social environments, the masculinity hierarchies were differently configured in each setting. Unlike many of the sport-dominated physical education classes described by different boys in this study, sporty boys were not always situated at the top of the masculinity hierarchies in adventure physical education.

Like past masculinity research, findings from this study similarly show how masculinity hierarchies differed across social settings in school. For example, Davison (2004) showed how classes in school privileged different masculinities over others. The hyper-masculine setting of the automotive shop floor situated his masculinities (e.g., creative and expressive) on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchies. Conversely, he described drama and art as classes in school that were inclusive of creativity which produced a hierarchical ordering of masculinities that differed from auto-shop class. Masculinities produced as dominant in auto-shop were not positioned at the high levels on hierarchies in art and drama classes. Additionally, similar to Humberstone, findings from this study show how physical education environments have the capacity to equitably situate boys' on hierarchies even though they focus on physical activity. Humberstone

(1990, 1995) compared the masculinity hierarchies in outdoor education to that of physical education. In the context of outdoor education, behaviors such as showing respect for girls, boys and girls working cooperatively, boys recognizing girls' physical capabilities, and boys showing emotion and fear were ranked high on the masculinity hierarchies. Conversely, she found that in sport-based physical education settings, these behaviors were produced as marginalized.

Research Question #4: Masculinities Are Embodied

Bodies symbolize and perform particular masculinities and, for adolescent boys, proficient bodily performance becomes a crucial measure of one's masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The body plays a chief role in developing, performing, and handling the self (McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010). In addition, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), "Bodies participate in social action by delineating courses of social conduct; the body is a participant in generating social practice" (p. 851). In other words, bodies should be recognized as objects of and agents in social practice.

In this adventure physical education setting, boys used their bodies to symbolize and perform different masculinities similar to boys portrayed in previous masculinity studies. Embodiment in this physical activity space surfaced differently than in past sport-based physical education (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Because of the inclusive pedagogies enacted by Andy, boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as marginalized in past sport-based physical education recognized the ongoing opportunities they had to experience privilege through their masculine embodiment in Andy's class. For example, the diverse selection of physical activities in adventure physical education played a central role in allowing different types of bodies to experience privilege. Unlike past sport-based physical education environments described by different subsets of boys, bodily characteristics such as strength, speed, and

physical aggression were not needed in high levels, if needed at all, to participate in the activities in adventure physical education. For instance, although upper body strength made it easier to paddle a kayak through the water, skills related to physical strength were not emphasized during this unit and different types of boys recognized the importance of this pedagogical element.

Also, through their different masculine embodiments, boys in this study impacted the social culture as much as it impacted them. Boys described feeling emotionally safe in adventure physical education, which according to them, resulted in a desire and willingness to use their bodies to interact with their with their peers and engage with the physical activities. Because boys felt supported in adventure physical education, especially boys who embodied masculinities that were produced as marginalized in sport-based physical education, they used their bodies confidently—because the social environment made them feel safe, they felt empowered to participate, which impacted how masculinity hierarchies were constructed in adventure physical education. Like the boys in McCaughtry and Tischler (2011), less athletic boys in this study described embodied experiences in past sport physical education classes in which they frequently demonstrated guarded embodiment by making their bodies small and less visible, positioned their bodies away from others, and rarely smiled. Conversely, the same boys described experiences that led them to embodied experiences that empowered and inspired them to move in and out of adventure physical education. For instance, in adventure physical education, they presented unguarded body language, participated in the activities rather than enacting task avoidance strategies, and situated their bodies in close proximity to their peers and Andy, interacted with others, and smiled and laughed.

The current findings are similar to past masculinity research in that they show how boys' bodies symbolized and performed masculinities and also demonstrated how boys' bodies are

objects of and agents in social practice in the context of physical education. However, my findings differ slightly because the boys in the current study were active agents through their unguarded approach to engagement in adventure physical education rather than being active agents through embodied resistance like boys in prior research. For example, Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) found a small group of boys who used their bodies to resist the doctrines of hegemonic masculinity through various well-crafted task avoidance strategies. These boys reportedly found it more tolerable to enact task avoidance strategies such as bringing notes from parents, forgetting gym clothes, being competent bystanders, and asking to leave class for various reasons than performing with their awkward bodies. In these sport-dominated physical education settings, boys' bodies resisted hegemonic masculinities and stealthily avoided shame and domination. Conversely, in adventure physical education boys were agents of social practice in liberating ways because rather than embodying resistance and concealing their embodied masculinity, boys in this study confidently used their bodies to participate in physical activities and interact with their peers and teacher. In this social space, boys reportedly did not feel the need to avoid humiliation or to conceal their masculine embodiment because the privileged way of being boy constantly shifted. Even if boys were not skilled at a particular activity, they trusted that their way of being boy while participating would not be laughed at. These boys also knew that in the near future, they would again experience privilege in an upcoming activity.

Research Question #5: Females' Roles in Constructing Masculinity Hierarchies

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was initially created along with the concept of hegemonic femininity—soon renamed “emphasized femininity” to acknowledge the unbalanced location of masculinities and femininities in a patriarchal gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Females play a significant role in the production of masculinities as well

as their hierarchical ordering (Hearn, 1987; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). In the progression of research on men and masculinities, the association between masculinities and femininities has dropped out of the spotlight, which is unfortunate because gender is always relational and social configurations of masculinities are characterized in opposition to femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

In adventure physical education at Apex High School, girls' attention to boys played a significant role in masculinity arrangements. Because of Andy's inclusive pedagogies, instead of consistently giving attention and praise to elite athletic boys as was done in sport-based physical education, girls and boys reported that in adventure physical education, girls gave much more attention to boys with different types of masculinities. For example, because high levels of strength, speed, and coordination were not needed in high levels for boys to successfully participate in activity units and because Andy intentionally implemented pedagogies to try and build bridges among students in adventure physical education, girls frequently interacted with boys of varying levels of athleticism, popularity, body type, and disposition. By spreading attention and praise across a wider subset of boys, girls played a significant role in rearranging hierarchical configurations and flattening the hierarchical arrangements among boys. Girls talked to different types of boys, invited them to lunch and to carpool, had conversations with them, and provided a great deal of peer support and encouragement during lessons.

Similar to past research, findings from the current study show how the actions of girls greatly impacted the production of masculinities as well as their hierarchical ordering in adventure physical education. Past masculinity research conducted in physical activity settings has predominantly shown how girls support, whether intentional or unintentional, configurations of masculinities that are common in many physical education environments that are dominated

by sport, elite performance, and competition. For instance, Paulsen (1999) recognized the significant role women and girls play in the construction of masculinities in his study which examined a high school program that was implemented to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity as a central part of the curriculum. Even though some of the girls deemed the boys' attitudes sexist, the participants in Paulsen's study realized that many girls reinforced the very structures that they were attempting to challenge. Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) showed how girls' behaviors produced characteristics such as athleticism, muscularity, popularity, and physical aggression as dominant and marginalized boys who embodied less athletic, less fit, less popular, and less physically aggressive masculinities. However, in adventure physical education, the manner in which girls constructed masculinities did not reproduce the hierarchies that students in this study described as endemic in past sport-based physical education. In adventure physical education, girls' attention functioned to create narrow hierarchies that consistently shifted because they paid positive attention to different subgroups of boys. This social dynamic is dissimilar from the research done in sport-dominated social environments where girls pay the majority of their positive attention to elite boys, which supports the production of masculinity hierarchies that consistently privilege and marginalize similar types of boys.

Research Question #7: Emotional Expense of Embodying Certain Masculinities

Boys' embodiment of certain masculinities in particular social contexts often come at some psychological or emotional expense (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Dominant practices of masculinities can pressure boys through marginalization ("othering" the experiences of boys or having one's experiences othered), oppression (restricting some boys' opportunities or having opportunities restricted), and domination (constraining some boys' participation or having one's participation constrained) to such a degree that boys often behave in ways that are not

representative of their genuine attitudes and beliefs (Imms, 2000). For instance, embodiment of dominant masculinities may not parallel boys' happiness, and they may suffer internal unrest as a result of enacting the characteristics necessary to gain privilege.

Both previously high- and low-status boys in this study reported experiencing emotional trauma either as perpetrators or victims of marginalization in past sport-dominated physical education. Former high status boys had to choose between including lesser skilled classmates and pleasing other high-skilled classmates. Boys who were formerly low-status in past sport-dominated physical education classes were often victims of marginalization and recalled being ignored and ridiculed. In past sport-dominated physical education, formerly low-status boys consistently reported how the content (e.g., mainly sport), pedagogies (e.g., emphasized elite performance and competition), teacher-student relationships (e.g., less athletic boys ignored by teachers), and peer cultures (e.g., humiliated and excluded by peers) led to feelings of exclusion and anxiety on a regular basis. Conversely, in adventure physical education, different students believed that a variety of factors were responsible for producing different ways of being boy that were sometimes privileged and sometimes not: the content Andy selected, the inclusive pedagogies Andy enacted, the positive relationships Andy cultivated with different students, and the positive peer cultures Andy worked to develop.

Collectively, each of these four elements played a role in reducing boys' experiences of marginalization, oppression, and domination that often accompanied embodying masculinities produced as privileged or marginalized. Boys experienced different social positions on the masculinity hierarchies, which greatly reduced the anxieties that frequently accompanied consistently being placed on the highest or lowest rungs. Many former low-status boys reported that they were not taunted, ignored, or ridiculed in adventure physical education. Many previous

high-status boys described not feeling the need to constantly prove themselves through winning and elite performance, which in the past often caused a great deal of stress and anxiety. Also, previously high-status boys said they no longer had to make decisions that led to them feeling guilty for excluding low-skilled boys because it was not a decision that had to be made in adventure physical education because being inclusive was not only accepted or tolerated—it was expected. Because boys perceived the status differentials as flattened and shifting, being located at the bottom did not result in high-stakes emotional trauma the way it did in past sport-based physical education classes where hierarchical arrangements were cemented and rather wide in status differential. Because the content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures allowed different masculinities to be performed without high emotional expenses, previously high- and low-status boys felt more positive about physical activities and stepped onto the bridges that Andy attempted to build between students and physical. As a result, boys from various social locations reported being more physically active, both in and out of class.

Findings from this study show a way forward in how masculinity hierarchies are understood in relation to boys' emotions, especially in physical education settings. There are key elements of physical education that determine how masculinities will be hierarchically configured, which impacts boys' emotional experiences in the context of physical education. When elements such as content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures are attended to properly, they can lead to safe and equitable environments because dominant practices such as marginalization, domination, and oppression are much less evident.

Past research has shown what can happen when key elements of physical education are attended to inadequately. For example, Anderson (2005) found that when violence and aggression were regarded as standard characteristics of masculinity in sport settings, they led to

psychological trauma for the perpetrators and the. Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) illustrated how marginalized boys enacted task avoidance strategies to avoid being humiliated by their peers and teachers in two sport-based middle school physical education classes. The boys they studied preferred the consequences associated with nonparticipation (e.g., being excluded by peers, loss of points and being reprimanded by teachers) over the embarrassment that accompanied not participating the “right” way (e.g., scoring goals, demonstrating coordination, and physically dominating space). Similarly, Davison (2001), Drummond (2003), and Streaun (2009) demonstrated various unpleasant experiences that led boys to describe physical education as a miserable space where they were emotionally and physically abused by their peers (e.g., hung on coat racks, heads submerged in toilets, and ridiculed for “unmasculine” clothing). Conversely, literature shows how triumphant and joyous it is to be a “top dog” in sport-based physical education settings. The “machos” and “junior machos” (Griffin, 1985), the “hard boys” (Parker, 1996), and the “go getters” (Zmudy, Curtner-Smith, & Steffen, 2009) were looked up to by their peers, were highly skilled, participated in the center of activities, and received positive peer and teacher attention.

The findings from the current study differ from past studies in that this study show a way forward in terms of decreasing the emotional expense of embodying particular masculinities and highlights the possibilities for different types of boys to experience emotions more positively in different physical education settings. For instance, when the content was diverse, the pedagogies were inclusive, the teachers were attentive to different types of boys, and the peer cultures were constructive, the emotional expense that often accompanies dominant and marginalized

Implications for the Field of Physical Education

Because students in this study perceived new masculinity configurations they likewise developed new, more positive feelings toward physical activity. After all, the goal of physical

education is not to flatten hierarchies; it is to produce motivated movers. But, as data from this study show, it is not plausible for physical education programs to produce lovers of physical activity without also dealing with elements that affect the masculinity environment.

First, the findings from this study suggest a need to critically examine how specific elements of physical education directly influence social hierarchies in physical education. The content that is included is one critical element that can impact the social organization of students in physical education. When the content consistently privileges similar students from unit to unit, semester to semester, and year to year, many students, especially those who are less athletic, become estranged from physical activity and often end up not making it part of their everyday lives, especially outside of the physical education setting where they have a choice whether or not to be active (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). If a physical education curriculum is dominated by a particular content area (e.g., sport, lifetime fitness, dance, adventure), students who embody certain types of masculinities and femininities will likely be privileged. Therefore, I do not suggest excluding sport content or to exclusively teach adventure content—I suggest teaching activities that are new, and “cool,” and that go beyond “our dominant focus on the biophysical dimensions of understanding students” (McCaughtry, 2009, p. 195) may lead more and different types of students to develop positive orientations toward physical activity. The findings do not suggest that each activity unit in physical education can similarly privilege all students, as this notion may not be realistic. However, the findings do suggest that physical education programs can include diverse content that consistently allows new students to shine, which for many boys in this study, changed how they engaged with physical activity in and out of adventure physical education.

To produce motivated movers, the pedagogical practices employed by the teacher must be equally interpreted as an element that can influence the flattening and reordering of hierarchies, ultimately impacting how students perceive physical activity. Although teaching diverse and cool content can flatten hierarchical configurations in physical education, it does not function alone and therefore, we must also closely examine *how* content is taught and delivered to students and try to understand how pedagogies play into status differentials among students. It is possible for a physical education curriculum to consistently marginalize similar students by enacting pedagogies that alienate certain students even when teaching a diverse curriculum. For example, teaching dance while emphasizing technique, precision, and elite performance would privilege students who are interested in and proficient at dance while possibly pushing away those who are disinterested and less skilled. If the purpose of including dance content is to get more students inspired to move, it is important to incorporate pedagogies that invite different types of students to participate. For instance, by emphasizing effort, enjoyment, and less elite modes of performance, more students may choose to be involved in class, students may be inspired to participate outside of class.

It must also be recognized that the relationships between the teacher and students and among students in physical education also impacts the nature (i.e., static or fluid) and width (i.e., narrow or wide) of hierarchies, which can play into students' perceptions of physical activity. Teaching diverse content and enacting inclusive pedagogies will not likely have the same positive effect as it did in adventure physical education at Apex High School if the teacher consistently offers the majority of their positive attention to the same types of students. Like the other elements teacher-student relations and peer cultures can be attended to inadequately, which has been clearly shown in past research (Strean, 2009; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011) or they

can be attended to appropriately, like in this study where students described social hierarchies that were continually flattening and being reorganized. It is important to recognize that when the teacher provides attention and support to different students from unit to unit and class to class, hierarchies shift and the status differentials among students decrease. Likewise, when the peer cultures in physical education invite and encourage positive interactions among students from different subsets, this social dynamic can change and cause the hierarchies to reconfigure and flatten, which in turn, this can shift students' perceptions of and engagement with physical activity in and out of school.

When content, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures are attended to adequately, different types of students are provided with stockpiles of positive movement experiences (Wellard, 2009) in ways that can move students emotionally in order to move them physically (Kretchmar, 2000, p. 268). However, in order for these elements to reshuffle and flatten social hierarchies, intentional actions have to be put into motion—these elements will not naturally fall into place.

Second, when the content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures are attended to properly, masculinity hierarchies develop the capacity to reshuffle and flatten. Findings from this study were less about adventure physical education and more about shifting hierarchies that created masculinity configurations that were much less dramatic than in sport-dominated physical education. These findings are significant because the flattening and shifting status differentials do not have to be limited to adventure physical education. The masculinity configurations in adventure physical education at Apex High School may be produced in various types of physical education environments. Similarly, the status differentials that are endemic to traditional sport-based physical education classes may also be created in adventure physical

education settings. Although great things happened in adventure education at Apex High School, similar outcomes are possible in other physical education spaces. Similar status differentials could exist if Andy taught in a more traditional physical education setting if for example he included content from all four games areas, implemented inclusive pedagogies, spearheaded positive relationships with students, and built bridges among students. I speculate that social hierarchies could also shift and flatten in a sport-based physical education setting. The point is that the attention he gave to each element in adventure physical education led to hierarchies that continually fluctuated and flattened. Hierarchies did not flatten and shift not just because it was adventure physical education.

Third, when masculinity hierarchies are in a constant state of fluctuating and flattening in the context of physical education, this dynamic can positively impact students' perceptions of and engagement with physical activity. Because Andy attended to these four critical elements effectively, hierarchies consistently shifted and appeared flattened to students. Together, these big parts of the picture led different subsets of students to develop more positive outlooks toward physical activity, which led to their increased participation in and out of class. The underlying theme was Andy's passion to create movers, which was observably reflected in his teaching practices and was noticed by boys and girls from different social locations. Systematically, when critical elements of physical education are attended to properly, social hierarchies can shuffle and flatten which in turn, can positively influence students' views of physical activity and how they engage in and out of physical education.

Student positioning on social hierarchies can be equally impacted by content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures. If students are positioned below their athletic peers during all or most of the units during a physical education semester, the effects of continual

marginalization likely intensify from one unit to the next and negatively impact how they think and feel about physical activity. However, if students are positioned below their peers during a few activity units (as opposed to all or most units) the negative impact of being on the bottom may be much less potent and long-lasting on students' overall perceptions of and engagement with physical activity. Andy's intentional actions and the resulting behaviors of his students can serve as a road map for other physical education programs trying to build bridges between students and physical activity. These findings contribute to the broader field of physical education by demonstrating that social hierarchies can consistently shift setting and that status differentials among students can become much less pronounced than previously assumed.

Implications for Physical Education Teacher Education Programs

Based on the findings from this study, I recommend the following strategies for improving PETE programs to facilitate teacher candidates' understanding of how social practices impact hierarchical configurations among boys and girls and how status differentials influence their perceptions of physical activity inside and outside of physical education.

Integrate Critical Consciousness of Hierarchies into Coursework

Physical education teacher education programs should help teacher candidates develop a critical consciousness about how social practices produce masculinity hierarchies and how students' feelings about physical activity can be impacted by their status among other students. This suggestion does not suggest that PETE students be taught to eradicate social hierarchies in their classes because power relations and status differentials are naturally occurring aspects of social life. Also, teacher candidates should not be trained to perceive social hierarchies as inherently harmful because, as data from this study demonstrate, hierarchies are not inherently "bad." When different boys had opportunities to continually experience varying hierarchical

locations in adventure physical education, being located on the bottom rungs did not naturally lead to marginalization in the same way as it did in physical education classes where the hierarchical configurations remained static. To be effective, lessons to help PETE students develop a critical consciousness should be well-planned, intentional, meaningful, and continuous throughout their professional preparation. I present four suggestions for how this concept might be integrated as an ongoing lesson throughout PETE coursework.

Discussions. Because the majority of PETE students reported that they experienced K-12 physical education in positive ways (Dewar & Lawson, 1984; Templin, Woodford, & Mulling, 1982), it might be difficult for them to think about individuals who are not like themselves—particularly students with negative feelings about physical education and physical activity. For instance, Schempp and Graber (1992) wrote, “The influence of these early socializing experiences carry far into teachers’ careers and provide a continuing influence over the pedagogical perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors of physical education teachers” (p. 334). Based on these findings, it is crucial to engage PETE students in discussions about how the content, pedagogies, teacher, and peer cultures function collectively to create status differentials among students in physical education. Further, depending on status differentials, students’ engagement with physical activity outside of school can be positively or negatively impacted. Data from this study showed that because of various social practices, boys not only participated in physical activities more during classes, but their participation extended outside of classes into their lives in the community outside of school and after graduation. Conversations about hierarchies should start in the early stages of professional preparation because PETE students can be resistant to new knowledge and techniques and may resist new knowledge (Lawson, 1983; Placek et al.,

1995; Schempp & Graber, 1992). Waiting until they reach junior, senior, or student teaching status may be less effective than starting early.

Content and methods courses are also appropriate spaces to have these discussions as these classes address *what* and *how* to teach. By discussion, I do not suggest a “one and done” approach in which one conversation takes place through a PowerPoint at the beginning of the semester and the topic is never again explicitly discussed. According to DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2010), “Redundancy can be a powerful tool in effective communication” (p. 10). Instead, to decrease ambiguity of this concept, I recommend that the discussions are ongoing and woven into all aspects of each course. In courses that include fitness-related content, students can be part of discussions that address the type of students who are most likely to be privileged and those most likely to be marginalized by different activities (e.g., Pilates, yoga, step aerobics, BOSU, resistance training, Tae Bo, jump rope, stability balls line dance, hip hop dance, stepping, swing dance, ballroom dance Latin dance, country western, children’s literature and dance, cultural dances invasion, net-wall, target, and fielding games). Students who are high-skilled at tennis may not excel at disc golf. Less athletic students will likely be placed on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchies during a basketball unit. The same types of students will not always be positioned on the top if invasion sports do not dominate the content in physical education. In classes that teach adventure education content, PETE students can discuss how various cooperative initiatives and outdoor pursuits can inflate hierarchies among students in physical education. They can compare the skill sets needed for various outdoor pursuits, and consider how the social differentials might be impacted when dissimilar skill sets are needed from one unit to the next.

PETE students should be invited to think about how pedagogical practices contribute to status differentials among students. Hierarchical configurations can function equitably in different physical education settings. For instance, students can be offered the choice of playing on competitive or recreational teams when engaging with sport content, especially invasion games. PETE programs should offer teacher candidates' opportunities to learn about the significance of offering equal care attention to different students because it should not be expected that they will naturally learn how to effectively establish positive teacher-student relations. The ways in which peer cultures influence how children think, feel, and engage with physical activity should be integrated into conversations in PETE programs so that teacher candidates have multiple opportunities to develop a critical awareness of how important it will be for them to intentionally and purposefully cultivate positive peer cultures in their future physical education classes. It is important that PETE students realize that their students will not instinctively or willingly interact positively with their peers in the context of physical education, even when the nature of the content is seems cooperative.

For example, they can talk about the types of students who are most and least privileged when (a) assessments are based solely on technical skills, (b) students are graded on skills not taught or learned in class, (c) competition is emphasized, (d) elite performance is celebrated, (e) boys are encouraged to dominate space, (f) the teacher interacts positively with high-status students and negatively with low-status students, and (g) students are not encouraged to interact positively with peers from different subgroups. To better serve their future students, PETE students should realize how students are impacted by the hierarchies that are created in physical education.

It is important that PETE students understand that it is the collective nature of social practices that powerfully influence social hierarchies, whether the hierarchies are wide and pronounced or narrow and subtle. It is possible for well-defined social hierarchies that consistently privilege the same types of students to be produced in physical education classes that teach only adventure content. It is not impossible for a sport-dominated physical education class to produce narrow and subtle social hierarchies that offer different students opportunities to shine. There are numerous hierarchical possibilities, and PETE students must understand how hierarchies function before they can create equitable learning environments that offer different students multiple opportunities to shine.

Lesson and unit plans. Content and methods courses typically provide PETE students with multiple opportunities to develop unit plans, write lesson plans, and practice teach. These assignments can be constructed to foster the development of teacher candidate's critical consciousness for how pedagogical practices impact social hierarchies. For instance, physical education lesson plans often include elements such as learning focus, assessment plan, task presentation, task structure, learning cues, and feedback focus. Additional elements such as "task differentiation" or suggestions to increase and decrease task difficulty, which can be referred to as "turning up" and turning down", can be added to the lesson plan format requiring PETE students to explicitly address strategies to minimize privilege. Privilege can also be addressed in lesson objectives and assessments. Teacher candidates could be required to include objectives and assessments that are aimed at enhancing the learning experiences of different subsets of students. For example, when teaching a hip hop dance unit, PETE students can think about the types of student who will most likely to be marginalized. Marginalization is not limited to students being ignored, ridiculed, or excluded from activities by peers and teachers. Students are

also marginalized when the content does not have meaning in their lives outside of physical education or when they lack interest and skill for particular activities. The severity of marginalization increases when the same students are consistently exposed to content that is not meaningful. The distinction here is that students can be marginalized by others and by the content itself. During lesson planning, teacher candidates should learn that marginalization and privilege are not always based on students' skill levels or prior experience. For instance, it is entirely possible for students who are not skilled in hip hop dance to be excited and interested in the content. Integrating objectives with a social justice purpose would require PETE students to think about and address issues of privilege in the effort to develop lessons that facilitate learning and fun for students of varying levels of skill, interest, and enthusiasm for the specific content.

Observations. Teacher candidates could observe how K-12 physical education classes privilege and marginalize different types of students. For example, they might be asked to identify groups of students who participate on the periphery, participate in the center, enact task avoidance strategies, have fun, and those who do not appear to have fun. Following each observation, teacher candidates can be assigned a reflection paper in which they address how elements such as content, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures impacted the status differentials they observed and how these elements may have influenced student engagement. In the reflection papers, PETE students could also be asked to address the changes they would make to the lesson to create less dramatic status differentials —that is, if they observe classes where they interpreted hierarchical configurations among students as pronounced.

Resource reviews. Preservice teachers could be asked to identify characteristics that have potential to marginalize or privilege certain students. For example, PETE students might be

asked to find resources for teaching yoga (e.g., assigned textbooks, YouTube clips, and instructional DVDs). For this assignment, students could be asked to identify aspects of each resource, including their interpretation of how pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures could be attended to while teaching a specific content area to reduce the status differentials among students so that different types of students might enjoy the lesson enough in class that they choose to engage with it outside of class.

When covering dance content in PETE courses, teacher candidates can be asked to review resources for different dance forms such as line, hip hop, stepping, swing, and Latin dances. When learning about fitness content, they may review sources for activities such as step aerobics, stability ball, resistance-band training, yoga, Pilates, BOSU, Tae Bo, and jump rope. Students could also be asked to critically examine how standardized fitness tests function to privilege certain students over others. When learning to teach sport content, students could review resources for teaching activities for each of the four games areas. Reviewing resources for different content areas while considering student privilege and marginalization may help teacher candidates develop an awareness of how content functions to produce hierarchies among students.

Also, this review process could become a practice in which they instinctively engage well into their professional teaching careers. It may inspire them to think beyond the content a particular lesson or unit to consider how other critical aspects of the lesson influence students' perceptions of physical activity. For example, they may see the need to implement more inclusive pedagogies, initiate frequent and positive interactions with different types of students, and cultivate a peer culture where students feel safe and included. These experiences should also

help students understand that they are the conductors in their classes and great things will not magically happen without their purposeful actions.

Equal Representation of Content Areas

PETE programs should consider broadening the scope of content they teach to preservice teachers. Because sport-related content dominates many PETE programs in the United States (Bahneman & McGrath, 2004), preservice teachers are often exposed to content that limits their curricular knowledge during their professional socialization experiences. Exposure to diverse content during professional training may provide first-hand experiences about how content produces hierarchies by causing the hierarchies among PETE students to fluctuate. This experience may heighten preservice teachers' awareness about the role that content plays in hierarchical configurations, which may inform future curricular choices. Equal representation of content may lead PETE students to find themselves located across different social positions as a result of being exposed to diverse content.

Physical activity options for teaching diverse content in PETE programs include, but are not limited to, lifetime fitness, adventure education, sport, and dance. Lifetime fitness might include activities such as yoga, Pilates, step aerobics, resistance band training, BOSU, martial arts, jump rope, stability balls, and various functional fitness activities. Adventure activities can include various outdoor pursuits such as hiking, biking, orienteering, skiing, surfing, sledding, paintball, adventure racing, triathlons, stand-up paddling, skim boarding, kayaking, canoeing, and rock climbing. Adventure content can also comprise cooperative initiatives such as team building challenges, low-ropes initiatives, and high-ropes courses. Dance types that can be incorporated into PETE programs include hip hop, stepping, creative, line, country western, swing, Latin, ballroom, dance to children's literature, and various cultural dances.

Research shows that sport content dominates in many PETE programs (Bahneman & McGrath, 2004). Physical education teacher education programs should evenly balance the four games areas so that preservice teachers have exposure to the content and methods for teaching in each area in ways that inspire different types of students to engage with the content both in and out of class. Preprofessional physical education programs often lack curricular diversity, which may unintentionally perpetuate the consistent privileging of certain students over others and drive a wedge between certain students and physical activity.

In order for PETE students to be better prepared to inspire different students to be movers, they should have planned and purposeful opportunities to be involved in conversations about the potential consequences of teaching limited content, especially in relation to less athletic students within the context of sport-dominated physical education, and how for them, limited content can become especially detrimental when combined with other critical elements that are not attended to properly such as pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures. For example, in sport-dominated physical education settings in which the teachers enact pedagogies that emphasize elite performance and competition, less athletic students are marginalized not only by the content, but also by the pedagogies. Likewise, when the same students consistently experience negative relationships with their teachers and regularly excluded and humiliated by their peers, it becomes even less likely that certain students will be inspired to engage with physical activity because they choose to.

In order for PETE programs to foster the development of preservice teachers' knowledge of how social practices impact status differentials among students, PETE students should be provided with learning experiences that teach about the diverse content possibilities and methods to teach each content area. Students can be encouraged to think about how hierarchies could be

impacted if teachers intentionally sequenced content to privilege different students from one unit to the next. To this end, teachers should aim to sequence lessons within a unit to facilitate these shifting hierarchies. It is important that PETE students understand that all types of dance within a unit (or activities within any content area) will privilege different students because various dance forms require dissimilar skill sets. For instance, going from salsa to the cha cha would likely privilege similar students. However, going from salsa to hip hop dance might allow new students to excel because the inherent characteristics of these two dance forms are different.

Activity-unit sequencing within a semester has the capacity to privilege different students from one unit to the next. Physical education teacher education coursework should encourage teacher candidates to think about and understand how going from a unit such as basketball to floor hockey can impact social hierarchies versus going from basketball to units such as adventure, lifetime fitness, or dance. Students can be encouraged to consider how sequencing activity units to facilitate hierarchies that shift from one unit to the next so that previously low-status students have a chance to excel. Teacher candidates can also consider how to negotiate unit length as a mechanism to produce fluid, less dramatic hierarchies. For example, going from a 2-week basketball unit to a 3-day dance unit may impact hierarchies differently than if each unit lasted 1 week.

It is not enough for PETE programs to teach diverse content to preservice teachers. Instead, each content area should be equally represented in coursework. If credits are not evenly distributed, even a well-rounded PETE program (i.e., one that includes dance, lifetime fitness, sport, and adventure education) may not create shifting hierarchies. For instance, when content course requirements comprise multiple three-credit sport-related courses (e.g., team sports and individual sports) and one-credit nonsport course (e.g., dance and adventure), the implicit

message interpreted by PETE students may be, “sport content is valued most” and “nonsport content is insignificant.” Content should be equally represented in PETE coursework. The idea is that if PETE students are exposed to curricular diversity during teacher education, they may be more prone to teach a diverse curriculum in their future physical education programs.

Recruitment

PETE programs might consider recruiting potential teacher candidates who are physical activity professionals outside of sport and not former athletes. The assumption here is that these professionals already have the knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and desires to teach nonsport content. These professionals might be a welcome addition to PETE cohorts because they could impact the overall culture of classes by offering perspectives that are unique to the group. It is equally as important for PETE programs to recruit potential teacher candidates who have a desire to implement pedagogies that are inclusive of different types of students and progress beyond emphasizing technique, elite performance, competition, and roll-out-the-ball approaches to teaching students in physical education.

Marketing strategies such as developing and dispersing program brochures, presenting at high school college fairs, and contacting local recreation centers are some methods that could be used to attract and recruit less traditional PETE students. Another strategy might be to create opportunities for teacher candidates to minor in specific areas of physical activity such as dance, adventure education, and lifetime fitness. These courses could be offered on- or off-site. This type of program offering may attract less traditional PETE students.

Part of the recruitment process could include entry interviews as a way to measure potential PETE students’ initial aspirations about teaching physical education and specifically their feelings about teaching diverse content, employing inclusive pedagogies, nurturing relationships

with different types of students, and cultivating positive peer cultures. Although decisions about a potential candidate should not be made in a single meeting, in some cases, it may serve as an initial filter which is beneficial to both potential students and PETE programs. For example, students who are attracted to PETE programs because of a strong desire to coach (but not so to teach) could be counseled in a direction that better suits their desires and interests. These overall suggestions underscore the importance that PETE programs attract students who are predisposed to teach more than sport-dominated curricula, enact pedagogies that inspire different types of students to engage in and out of class, develop relationships with students from different social locations, and foster and create positive peer cultures. I am not suggesting PETE programs swap traditional recruits for less traditional. However, recruiting fewer traditional, sport-oriented students may create a diverse cohort of PETE students which could have a positive impact on the overall preprofessional socialization experiences.

Implications for School Districts

The findings from the current study suggest many ways to improve K-12 physical education programs. The following are recommendations for school districts to create physical education programs that consistently privilege different students in an effort to build bridges between various types of students and physical activity in an effort to influence their engagement in and out of physical education class.

Curricular Approaches to Build Bridges between Students and Physical Activity

School districts should consider strategies to provide students from various subgroups with opportunities to excel in physical education classes. The findings from this study suggest that when students have opportunities to experience different locations on social hierarchies (rather than consistently being positioned on the bottom or top), they are more likely to engage

with physical activity outside of school. I have six suggestions for how this task might be accomplished. Some of these suggestions parallel the recommendations for PETE programs.

Curricular diversity. Findings from this study showed that teaching diverse content that extended beyond sport exposed different subsets of boys to new ways of being physically active. Boys who enjoyed sport and competition began to appreciate and engage with less traditional sport physical activities as a way to supplement their sport-related physical activity. Boys who previously achieved low-status in past sport-dominated physical education classes reported replacing some of their sedentary activities such as playing video games with physical activity. This observation has relevance for both boys and girls. I recommend that school districts take a critical assessment of their curriculum and evaluate the types of students who are most likely privileged and marginalized by the content embedded in the official district curricula. When content offered in K-12 physical education programs is dominated by a particular type of sport (e.g., invasion sports such as basketball and soccer), similar types of students are privileged. My first content recommendation is that all four games areas are equally represented in sport-related physical education classes. When K-12 students are offered an equal balance of invasion, net-wall, target, and fielding games, it is more likely that the hierarchies will shift and be less pronounced. Diverse content will give previously low-status students more of a chance to excel, which can have a positive impact on how they perceive physical activity now and into adulthood.

My second content recommendation is that nonsport content be represented equally in the K-12 physical education curriculum. I am not suggesting that nontraditional sport content fully replace sport content; rather, I am advocating for curricular diversity. Curricular diversity creates spaces for different types of students to rise to higher levels on social hierarchies and allows students to experience the full range of content. I suggest that along with traditional sport

content, that school districts include activities such as lifetime fitness, dance, and adventure. At the elementary level, it may be possible to integrate diverse content throughout the K-5 experience so that each semester and year, students are exposed to many different content areas. At the secondary level, it may be possible to offer various electives or into general physical education classes that are commonly offered to ninth-graders.

My third curricular recommendation is to sequence activity units to allow different students to excel from one unit to the next. When sequencing units, transitions should be avoided that move from one invasion unit (e.g., basketball) to another invasion unit (e.g., flag football). For instance, after a basketball unit, which is an invasion game, teachers should introduce a target game like disc golf because the technical and tactical aspects of these two games areas are very different and new students will have opportunities to excel. When teaching a particular unit such as dance, consider sequencing different consecutive dance forms. For example, a stepping unit may follow a swing dance unit. Another curricular approach is to spread content areas throughout the semester or school year. In other words, instead of teaching five forms of dance back to back, disperse them over the duration of the semester or school year. Purposefully planning how activity units are sequenced can open spaces for hierarchical configurations to frequently shift, which could potentially reduce the negative impact of being on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchies. These practices can prevent the same students from being positioned on the bottom or top of social hierarchies for an extended period of time because the content constantly shifts.

My fourth curricular recommendation is to adjust the length of activity units. Teaching diverse content and sequencing may not be enough if each unit does not receive equal attention in terms of time. For example, teaching a two-week flag football unit after a two-day creative

dance unit may impact hierarchies differently than if each unit lasted one week. It cannot be avoided that certain units require more or less time to teach, but in general, for hierarchies to shift frequently and in a manner that creates narrow status differentials, unit length should be taken into consideration.

My fifth curricular recommendation is to de-emphasize competition and elite performance in K-12 physical education. This recommendation applies to activities that are inherently competitive such as traditional sports and activities that are not inherently competitive such as lifetime fitness and adventure content. At the early elementary level (i.e., Grades K-2), students should have multiple opportunities to develop a wide range of fundamental movement skills in a physically and emotionally safe environment without the added pressure of winning and outperforming others. At the upper elementary level (i.e., Grades 3-5), students should be provided with opportunities to use skills contextually, in ways that gradually become more complex—and complexity does not have to be in the form of competition. At the middle (i.e., Grades 6-8) and high school levels (i.e., Grades 9-12), students should be afforded continued opportunities to develop and use skills contextually without being forced into situations that create pronounced status differentials such as standardized fitness testing and overly competitive game-play. Rather than eliminating competitive aspects of activities, I suggest offering students options so they can decide the level at which they want to participate. For example, during an invasion sport unit, the teacher can offer competitive games and recreational leagues. Rather than the teacher assigning the level, students could choose their level themselves. The findings from this study suggest that students' perceptions can be expanded beyond these dichotomous categories by the ways the teacher frames these options.

My final recommendation for school districts is to make the less technical aspects of teaching physical education more visible in the physical education teacher-evaluation process. For example, in addition to assessing how well teachers deliver content (e.g., methods and cues used when teaching on-the ball defense tactics during an invasion sport unit), they should be evaluated on pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and the peer cultures observed during their lesson. These less technical aspects of their lesson should be given equal weight in their formal evaluations. If one or more area is lacking, they should receive feedback on their areas of weakness so they can attend to all elements of physical education properly. In addition, these evaluations would be most effective if performed by individuals with extensive physical education knowledge and experience because they know what to look for in terms of techniques/tactics, pedagogies, teacher-student relations, and peer cultures in the context of physical education.

Professional Development Opportunities

Through professional learning opportunities teachers can be provided with insights that help them adequately address important elements in physical education. In addition to attending content and technical teaching-related workshops and conferences, they can also attend professional learning venues that focus on the social dynamics of teaching physical education. The knowledge they gain may help them to teach in ways that facilitate the creation of hierarchies that shift and flatten throughout the school year.

School districts should consider providing physical education teachers with professional development opportunities that are specific to curricular diversity and progressive teaching practices that challenge the status quo of teaching the same content, in the same order, using the same teaching methods. It is in the best interest of K-12 students for school districts to help

teachers understand the need for content and pedagogical changes in ways that are interpreted as possible and palatable, especially teachers who are unfamiliar with nonsport content. Teachers should be afforded professional opportunities to enhance their skills in relation to developing relationships with students and creating positive peer cultures in physical education. This could entail sending teachers to well-known physical educators in the area who are effective at developing relationships with different students as well as relationships among students. This could also entail supporting or requiring teachers' attendance at professional workshops and conferences throughout each school year.

Professional Learning Communities

Through professional learning communities (PLCs), school districts can bridge students with physical activity by creating hierarchies in physical education classes that are in a constant state of flux and much less dramatic than the static hierarchies produced in many sport-dominated physical education programs. The term PLC has been associated with recent calls to action to build collaborative professional cultures in an effort to focus on the learning of each student (DuFour et al., 2010; Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders, & Goldenberg, 2009; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001 & 2006; Reeves, 2006). DuFour et al. (2010) defined PLC as “an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (p. 11). This approach involves collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve a common goal. The work of a PLC cannot be done by one individual, but requires many individuals uniting as team across an entire school district. For example, the school or district is the PLC and each collaborative team contributes to the growth of the process. According to DuFour et al. (2010), a PLC is “ongoing—a continuous, never-ending process of conducting schooling that has a

profound impact on the structure and culture of the school and the assumptions and practices of the professionals within in” (p. 10).

Physical educators could function as members of subject area teams within their school (e.g., science, English, and health), grade level teams, or subject area teams with physical education teachers from other schools. In these collaborative teams, physical educators would have multiple and ongoing opportunities to engage in collective inquiry into best practices in teaching and in learning which can lead to an “acute sense of curiosity and openness to new possibilities” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 12). It should be noted that PLCs are not occasional meetings when teachers meet with colleagues to complete a task and they are more than dialogue based on common readings. On the contrary, the PLC process is intended to challenge the status quo among physical educators and could provide spaces for them to constantly explore better ways of bridging different students with physical activity. For example, collaborative teams could examine how different physical activity content and pedagogies privilege certain students and search for ways to create less profound status differentials among students.

Physical Education Teacher Recruitment

The above recommendations become much more plausible if physical educators are willing to enact pedagogies that lead to social hierarchies that shift. Therefore, it is important for school districts to recruit and hire teachers who are willing and able to create learning climates that produce fluctuating hierarchies. Creating job descriptions that comprise these qualities is one way to recruit such applicants because districts can specify required and preferred job qualifications, which could include a willingness to teach diverse content, enact inclusive pedagogies, continually build relationships with different students, and cultivate positive peer cultures. Another method is for school districts to develop lines of communication with

universities that have PETE programs, which can enable hiring committees to learn about prospective hires beyond the information provided in application materials. These strategies better equip hiring committees to identify applicants who best fit their program requirements.

Study Limitations

Although this study provides significant contributions to the literature on masculinities in physical education, it is limited in many ways. Apex High School was situated in a geographic space with many unique features such as lakes, which made possible activities such as surfing, skim boarding, stand-up paddling, and kayaking. Students also had access to wooded areas that facilitated activities such as adventure racing and paintball. In addition, local facilities such as a campground with a high-ropes course, an indoor climbing gym, and a gun club made the high-ropes, indoor climbing, and gun safety units possible. These unique features within close proximity to the high school make the findings from this study less applicable in geographic spaces without these features.

The student and teacher demographics could be perceived as a study limitation because the majority of the participants were White, middle-class individuals. Similar participant demographics limits the vantage points from which Andy and the students talked about boys' experiences in adventure physical education. A diverse participant population by social class and race would have afforded the potential for more varying perspectives.

Last, the unique characteristics of the teacher, Andy, could be seen as a limitation in the applicability of these findings in other contexts, since not all teachers may embody the same devotion towards adventure physical education. Andy worked long hours before and after school, spent his own funds on class expenses, demonstrated a tireless effort to teach inclusively, and was determined to include content that was meaningful in the lives of his students. Additionally, Andy was knowledgeable about most of the activity units he taught. In units where his

knowledge was limited, he sought help from experts (e.g., deputies during gun safety). Andy's personality was unique because these qualities are often in short supplies among American physical educators.

Future Directions for Research

The central findings in this study involved the capacity for masculinity hierarchies to shift in a given social setting, and ways in which the fluidity created social hierarchies that were much less dramatic than in many sport-dominated physical education programs, which ultimately led to changes in the ways that boys viewed the role of physical activity in their lives. Because the status differentials fluctuated and the pronouncement among boys was much less dramatic than in most physical education settings that emphasize sport, competition, and elite performance, boys' perceptions about numerous aspects of physical activity grew more positive and strengthened. According to the boys in the study, these shifts in perceptions led to increased physical activity participation among different types of boys in physical education, outside of the school setting, and into adulthood. Findings from this study may guide future research into the ways that physical educators can enhance the process of bridging different subgroups of students with physical activity. In this section, I present four recommendations for future research.

First, I recommend studying status differentials among students in additional adventure physical education environments because each adventure physical education program has unique qualities. Studying more adventure environments could show how social practices in some adventure programs create fluctuating hierarchies similar to that of Apex High School. Conversely, other adventure environments might comprise social practices that produce hierarchical configurations that are static and pronounced. Studying social hierarchies in different adventure physical education settings might illuminate the notion that although

adventure physical education environments can be democratizing, the setting itself does not naturally produce fluctuating and narrow social hierarchies.

Second, I recommend studying status differentials in non-adventure physical education settings to examine the nature of hierarchies in relation to students' perceptions of and engagement with physical activity. Studying social hierarchies in physical education settings that teach sport, fitness, or dance might highlight the notion that although past research has shown how sport physical education settings create static and pronounced hierarchies, the hierarchies in these settings may have the potential to function more inclusively. Although past research has confirmed that certain hierarchical configurations are endemic in particular physical education settings, new knowledge might suggest that not all adventure physical education classes are the same. Researching gendered norms in different physical activity spaces may show the nuances among adventure and sport-based physical education programs and show the different ways that each space produces unique status differentials. Further, because physical education is not limited to sport or adventure content, studying how hierarchies are produced in physical education classes that teach lifetime fitness and dance content is also a research direction that might provide knowledge that will increase physical education's capacity to bridge different types of students with physical activity both in physical education and beyond.

Third, I recommend that researchers introduce the idea of shifting hierarchies with students and physical education teachers in future research. Explicitly addressing shifting hierarchies may inform new aspects of physical education classes that create inflated or deflated social hierarchies. I suggest using the knowledge produced from the findings in the current study to inform future inquiry with physical education students and teachers.

Finally, I recommend research that aims to understand the unique qualities of different physical education teachers in diverse physical education settings. This may illuminate other teacher qualities with potential to create physical education classes similar to adventure physical education at Apex High School. For example, Andy's way of attending to content, pedagogies, teacher-student relationships, and peer cultures was effective in building bridges between students and physical activity, himself and students, and among students. I speculate that there are many other teachers in the field of physical education achieving similar results while doing so in ways that differ from Andy. Because there are many paths that lead to the same place and because there are many "right ways" to teach, it would be helpful to hear other teachers' stories to get a broader understanding of how different successful teachers truly inspire their students to move in and out of the school setting.

The findings from this study made several important contributions to the existing literature regarding masculinity configurations in the context of school physical education. These findings translated into numerous recommendations for PETE programs and school districts alike. These findings also suggest several areas for further inquiry. These suggestions for current practice and future research have the potential to foster deeper understandings of how social practices produce masculinity hierarchies among males and how different hierarchical configurations influence boys' perceptions of and engagement with physical activity. This knowledge can guide the development of physical education programs that dissolve barriers between students and inspire them to move inside physical education, outside of class, and into adulthood.

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ABSTRACT**BOYS' MASCULINITIES IN ADVENTURE PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

by

AMY TISCHLER**May 2012****Advisor:** Dr. Nate McCaughtry**Major:** Major (Physical Education Pedagogy)**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

The diminished state of youth health in the United States has been a rising concern over the past few decades (Fahlman, Dake, McCaughtry, & Martin, 2008; Krebs, Baker, & Greer, 2003). Headlines across the nation declare that children in the United States are getting heavier and most point to a lack of physical activity as the cause (Wechsler et al., 2004). Understanding adventure physical education might help to create physical education programs that captivate students so much so that they look forward to participating rather than enacting task avoidance strategies. In fact, physical education might empower students to be physically active outside of the school setting, thus improving youth health. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine boys' masculinities in adventure physical education. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Connell's concept of masculinity. One teacher (Andy) and students from three sections of his adventure physical education class were observed and interviewed for fifteen weeks.

The main findings from this study showed how Andy's program and approach to teaching were driven by a desire and effort to decrease the status differentials among students by building metaphorical bridges. Andy's adventure physical education class created social status

differentials that boys described as flattened which resulted in positive feelings about physical activity in their lives inside and outside of physical education.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Amy Tischler completed her PhD in Kinesiology in the College of Education at Wayne State University in 2012. She received numerous awards during her time at Wayne State, including the 2011 American Kinesiology Association Writing Award, the 2011 Wayne State University Garrett T. Heberlein Endowed Award, and the 2009 AERA Graduate Student Award. She received her Bachelor's degree from Wayne State University in 1999, and a Master's degree in Kinesiology from Wayne State University in 2003.

Her current research draws from a wide range of critical perspectives examining how masculinities operate in K-12 physical education. In her dissertation, she looked at how masculinities functioned in an adventure physical education setting. She is an active member in the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) as well as the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Amy is currently a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in La Crosse, Wisconsin where she teaches courses, conducts scholarly inquiry, and provides service to her university, field, and community.