DISCIPLINE AND LEARN

> **discipline,** *v*. [a.F. *discipliner* (12th c. in Hatz.–Darm.) or med.L. *disciplinare*, f. L. *disciplina* DISCIPLINE sb.]
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> a. *trans.* To subject to discipline; in earlier use, to instruct, educate, train; in later use, more especially to train to habits of order and subordination; to bring under control.
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> Oxford English Dictionary (1989, p. 735)

A vivid memory I have from my years as a high school history teacher in the outer western suburbs of Sydney, Australia, is looking at students and thinking that some just didn't know *how* to learn. I remember standing in front of the class, watching their bodies fidget, having great difficulty assuming the stillness and degree of focus necessary to complete what they were doing. This was not the case with all students. There were those who settled into work quickly, demonstrating an ability to apply themselves. Restlessness and difficulty concentrating seemed more of a problem for the less able students, but I still wondered why there was such a marked contrast in the application to work that these students displayed. Part of the problem was a difference in ability. Study of history at a secondary level requires students to read and write with reasonable proficiency; skills that are assumed competencies by this stage of education. While students continue to develop their literacy skills in high school, it was quite clear that many of the students who were experiencing difficulty had not yet acquired a good grasp of the mechanics of writing, such as spelling, punctuation and basic syntax, despite being in their eighth year of school. This made the construction of the various types of texts they were required to write an almost impossible task for some. It became clear that to address this problem I would have to place a much stronger emphasis on teaching writing rather than simply the content of my subject.

It was at this point in my teaching career that I embraced what was then the fledgling genre-based approach to writing, a technique that focuses on teaching the structural and grammatical features of the key text types of schooling (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). Despite finding the approach useful, I remained frustrated with the way many students continued to experience difficulty with writing, despite my best efforts to teach them. After a number of years teaching and developing expertise in the field of literacy education, I was appointed to a literacy consultancy position in the Department of School Education working in primary and secondary schools in the western suburbs of Sydney. I visited numerous classrooms and observed many lessons and continued to see those same restless bodies I had seen in my own classroom years before. It began to occur to me that in the years I'd spent trying to improve students' writing I'd ignored the role of the

body in learning. My focus and that of the approach I had been working with had been curriculum content; the structure and grammar of the texts students were expected to write. While this is fundamentally important, especially given its neglect within education for some twenty years[i], the way the curriculum was to be implemented was given far less attention. Pedagogy seemed to be collapsed into curriculum with the focus on *what* was taught rather than the practicalities of *how*. Rather than an outright neglect of pedagogy, however, it was more a matter of its reshaping. There was a move away from the craft of teaching – or what Durkheim (2002, p. 2) refers to as the 'savoir faire of the educator' – towards a greater emphasis on student-directed learning, resulting in a reduced role for the teacher. This shift has considerable implications for the ways in which the body is configured pedagogically. I realised the reasons why a number of my own students had trouble settling down and concentrating was that they lacked the discipline to do so. While I was quite strict in terms of classroom management and provided a considerable degree of teacher direction, I only saw my junior secondary students, aged 12–14 years, for three, 40-minute lessons a week and so my impact was minimal. Also, by this stage of their education, students seemed to have already acquired a particular set of work habits. The ways in which they conducted themselves in class and their overall approach to learning appeared quite engrained, dispositions formed largely during the seven years of their primary education. This seems a formative period in terms of students' academic demeanour, a time during which certain dispositions to learning are acquired that are as much corporeal as they are cognitive.

Yet this bodily aspect of learning and its impact on cognition receives little attention within educational theory and practice. While students' bodies may figure as a classroom management issue, learning is generally conceived in cognitive terms; the corporeality of the process is largely ignored. This is particularly the case within the current educational paradigm in which the tenets of progressivist education favouring student-directed learning and limited teacher direction prevail (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Reese, 2001)[ii]. While the high point of progressivism may have passed and there is now a perceived need for a more explicit approach to teaching than was the case during the 1970s and 1980s (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994; Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1998; National Curriculum Board, 2009), there seems little understanding as to how this is achieved. The practices many teachers employ still bear the stamp of progressivism, with student-directed learning now very much a part of the commonsense of teaching. The more strict disciplinary codes characteristic of instructional pedagogies are largely viewed as anachronistic (Burbules, 2003 p. 194). This is particularly the case in the early years of school where the existence of a romantic notion of childhood seems to prohibit a more interventionist style of teaching. Instead, emphasis is placed on establishing a learning environment with minimal regulation to allow students the "freedom to learn" (Brady, 2006; Nolan, 2006; Silberman, 2006). The teacher's role is to facilitate, rather than to direct, learning (Watkins, 2008). In practice this is realised through a predominance of group-based and independent learning activities over

whole-class instruction, which the increased use of IT in classrooms has seemed to exacerbate. These less teacher-directed methodologies result in a far more relaxed disciplinary code framing classroom practice and a greater tolerance of talk and movement than is the case with teacher-directed approaches.

Crucial to this book is the argument that while there are different types of learning, successful academic engagement requires that students develop a form of bodily discipline conducive to applied intellectual effort. Different pedagogic modes are informed by different conceptions as to how this is achieved and exert differing degrees of disciplinary force upon students' bodies. This book has a different take on discipline than is captured by the usual talk of classroom management. It includes the formation of self-discipline internalised by students but shaped by the discipline inherent in a teacher's pedagogy. Discipline, however, is typically construed as a form of subjection in contemporary educational thought and practice and this negative meaning is often used as a rationale for de-emphasising the teacher's role and promoting student-directed learning. Yet the etymological roots of discipline are not found in subordination. Originally, to discipline meant to instruct, educate or train, with the implication that learning was dependent upon a teacher directing a student's acquisition of knowledge and skills. This earlier meaning has an enabling quality that is generally lost within current usage. Where this meaning is retained is in learning a sport, with training and discipline understood as necessary aspects of sporting achievement. In learning a sport, however, the role of the body is foregrounded. Within the academic realm the body is deemed relatively insignificant. The focus is on the mind with training viewed more as an impediment to creative and spontaneous thought, as if there is no requisite training for scholarly endeavour. The ways in which discipline can capacitate students' bodies and minds with the potential to be both transformative and emancipatory is rarely considered within current educational inquiry (for exceptions to this see: Slee, 1995; Millei, 2010; Parkes, 2010). A truly transformative and emancipatory education, however, needs to embrace the kinds of discipline that underpin educational success.

DISCIPLINE AS ENABLING

Discipline is generally only conceived as possessing reproductive tendencies. Little thought is given to how the processes of reproduction may also prove enabling. Reproduction theorists view schooling as one of the key mechanisms through which social inequality is maintained, although there is considerable variation as to how this is approached. In the 1970s Bowles and Gintis espoused the quite crude principle of correspondence, focusing on schools as essentially instruments of economic reproduction. Other perspectives are more concerned with the complexities of how reproduction is realised through socio-cultural means (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Willis, 1977; Apple, 1979). None of these approaches, however, seem to give any attention to the enabling potential of pedagogy and the role discipline may play in this. Rather, what tends to preoccupy reproduction theorists is broad socio-structural outcomes. There is very little

examination of the practices involved in attaining these and the resources they may provide students. These analyses characteristically focus on the relative achievements of students in relation to their parents' income, occupation and other variables (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu, 1998a; Teese, 2007). While such forms of inquiry are valuable in foregrounding the inequalities embedded in educational systems, they tend to obscure the enabling processes of schooling. By not focusing on practice, they fail to capture the ways in which economically advantaged children actually get the competencies that are inequitably distributed and the ways in which teachers can work against inequality at a classroom level. This is not some simple romanticising about the power of teachers to change lives that has become a staple of Hollywood movies, but a realistic assessment of the possibilities of engaged pedagogy.

There are, of course, exceptions to this neglect of pedagogic practice both within and outside the broad spectrum of scholarship dealing with educational reproduction. Bernstein's work on the linguistic codes governing schooling examines reproductive processes in more detail and why they are inequitably distributed (Bernstein, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1990). Through an investigation of classroom practice and the language of schooling, Bernstein was able to identify the different patternings of language underpinning working class and middle class discourse; what he termed restricted and elaborated codes. To Bernstein, there are distinct parallels between the elaborated code used by middle class students and the discursive structures of academic writing. As a result he felt working class students were disadvantaged because the restricted code framing their patterns of speech impeded their ability to read and write. There has been considerable criticism of this argument. There are those who claim Bernstein's work denigrates the language and culture of the working class (Labov, 1972); those who challenge the linguistic efficacy of his notion of code (Tannen, 1982); and those, such as Bourdieu (1994), who critique Bernstein's work on the basis that it fetishises the discourse of the middle class (Harker and May, 1993). I wouldn't argue that education unfairly valorises middle class culture, but I do assert that it is through educational institutions that the middle class maintains its monopolisation of important socio-linguistic competencies. Despite these criticisms, Bernstein's work has proved influential within the sociology of education (Singh, 2002; Fritz, 2007; Au, 2008; Maton, 2009) and literacy pedagogy (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Hasan, 1999, 2002; Nash, 2006). His central concern in investigating classroom practice, however, is language. His notion of pedagogy is framed almost entirely by the linguistic. The corporeality of learning – the various disciplinary techniques that teachers use and the ways in which they impact upon students' bodies – is not his focus. This is not so much a criticism of Bernstein's work, given it falls outside the parameters of his inquiry, but it serves to highlight how the body is often ignored in studies of pedagogy.

Emerging from the same politically progressive tradition as reproduction theory, critical pedagogy does make allowance for the enabling potential of education; yet is does so by conceiving discipline in negative terms. Theorists such as Giroux (1988, 2004) and McLaren (1989, 2003), who found reproduction theory yielded little scope for articulating any transformative role for schooling, proffered an

alternative theory of education. They assigned teachers a radicalised role to "empower students both as individuals and as potential agents of social change by establishing a critical pedagogy that students can use in the classroom and in the streets" (McLaren, 1989, p. 221). Yet, despite the visionary rhetoric underpinning critical pedagogy, there seems little substantive account of how these ideals are realised at a classroom level (Heilman, 2003). This is particularly the case with Giroux and McLaren's work. As Gore (1993, p. 34) comments, "… their approach is centred on articulating a 'pedagogical product' rather than pedagogical practice, that is, a social vision for teachers' work rather than guidelines for instructional practice". The same cannot be said about all those working within the field of critical pedagogy. Freire (1972, 1985) and Shor (1992), for example, are concerned with explicating the ways in which critical pedagogy is actualised within classroom practice. What characterises the pedagogy they advocate, and which is implicit in the more abstract accounts of Giroux, McLaren and other theorists working in this field, is an underlying progressivism premised on the recognition and liberation of student voice rather than the formation of specific new capacities. Although acknowledging the need for teachers to maintain a certain degree of authority in their role of empowering students, the methodology underpinning critical pedagogy is essentially student-directed, framed by a limited degree of disciplinary force. Freire (1972, pp. 46–47) draws on these pedagogic principles in his critique of traditional, teacher-directed learning, or what he terms "banking education":

1. the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
2. the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
3. the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
4. the teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;
5. the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
6. the teacher chooses and enforces his (sic) choice, and the students comply;
7. the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
8. the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
9. the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of students;
10. the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

Here, Freire casts students in a passive role with the heightened degree of disciplinary force generated by teacher-directed pedagogy conceived solely in negative terms. While acknowledging that traditional teaching methods are potentially repressive, such a possibility is not unique to teacher-directed learning. Although not undertaken in such an overt manner, progressivist pedagogy can exhibit similar tendencies (Sharp and Green, 1975; Walkerdine, 1984; Kalantzis, Cope, Noble and Poynting, 1990; Sriprakash, 2009). Moreover, it 'throws the baby out with the bathwater'; it ignores the significant social powers conferred upon those, such as academics, through the attainment of traditional literacies.

DISCIPLINE AND LEARN: THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

While also acknowledging its ability to repress, discipline can enable; enskilling bodies to perform in various ways. While a range of theorists and conceptual resources are drawn upon to examine this perspective in the context of schooling, emphasis in this book is placed on Foucault's notion of discipline, Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the habitus and Spinoza's monism and approach to affect and desire. Each of these contributes to a rethinking of the body and its role in learning, highlighting the impact of pedagogy and its ability to capacitate. As with the generally negative stance on discipline within educational theory, Foucault's work has a similar emphasis. He is often lauded for his take on the enabling potential of power, especially in his later work on technologies of the self (Foucault, 1990). However, this 'positive' conception of discipline is largely rhetorical and subordinated to a concentration on discipline as primarily negative. This is clearly evident in his juxtaposition of the terms 'discipline' and 'punish' in his seminal text of the same name. Here in this book, however, the productive possibilities of discipline are highlighted, as the title *Discipline and Learn* conveys. While making an obvious reference to Foucault, this book does not simply provide a Foucauldian analysis of the body and learning. The conceptual tools that are drawn upon owe much to his genealogical method and analysis of temporal and spatial schemas. However, in focusing on the enabling aspects of discipline, a mechanism is required for articulating the ways in which disciplinary force not only circulates and is embodied but accumulates as a form of agency in relation to individual practice. In the context of schooling and with the focus here on literacy, it needs to demonstrate how teachers' practice impacts upon students' bodies and the extent to which different forms of embodiment assist in the difficult process of learning to write. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is helpful in this regard because it provides a means for negotiating the social/individual nexus, the relationship between pedagogic practice and student outcomes. Despite its benefits, there are aspects of Bourdieu's concept that prove problematic in analysing the role of the body in learning, such as his emphasis on the unconscious and largely corporeal nature of the habitus. In making little allowance for the intervention of consciousness, Bourdieu's habitus provides a far too deterministic interpretation of practice. This is evident in his application of the concept to education. In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* and *State Nobility*, Bourdieu only seems to account for the reproductive, as opposed to transformative, processes of schooling. As with Foucault and discipline, this book takes the kernel of Bourdieu's generative conception of habitus and gives it centre stage in an analysis of pedagogy.

In examining the role of the body in learning and especially learning to write, it is also important to give consideration to the role of the mind. Rather than viewing the two as separate, following Spinoza, it is useful to think of them as a single substance operating in parallel in the determination of practice. It is not so much that the habitus needs to make allowance for the intervention of consciousness but rather to view consciousness as itself embodied, with practice understood as a dialectic of bodily habituation and mindful reflection. This is the position taken in

this book, that the body is not simply a corporeal entity; it is also invested with reason using embodied understanding as the basis of scholarly endeavour. Infused with a Spinozan monism, the habitus not only informs and guides, but responds to the workings of consciousness in the process of negotiating being in the world[iii]. While Bourdieu does take account of consciousness in his logic of practice, it functions more as an epiphenomenon rather than an integral, and integrated, aspect of action. To Spinoza the mind and the body act in concert, but it is only through the body and its capacity to be affected that we come to know the world. Affect functions as both force and capacity with pedagogy and the discipline it generates carrying varying intensities of affective force. A Spinozan interpretation of habitus, therefore, not only allows the dispositions resulting from the accumulation of bodily affect to shape practice, it also allows the embodied consciousness that is produced from this corporeal engagement with the world.

Central to the accumulation of affect and the formation of a scholarly habitus is the role of the teacher. Although students begin school with different dispositions to learning, the disciplinary force generated by their teachers' pedagogy can have a considerable impact. It may prove enabling, investing their bodies with the capacity to learn. As Elias (1982, p. 328) writes, "No society can survive without a challenging of individual drives and affects, without a very specific control of individual behaviour". The form of "control" Elias intends is not disempowering but rather, by training the body for scholarly endeavour, a student can be empowered to learn. Indeed, it is only through conceiving "control" as empowerment that the unequal distribution of certain capacities and their links to relations of power can be understood. A complementary effect of the formation of a scholarly habitus seems to be an increase in the desire to learn. This tallies with Spinoza's notion of desire. As he explains, "It is clear that we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it and desire it" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, 111, P9, S). If students possess the necessary bodily disposition it is more likely they will apply themselves to their work framed by a desire for academic achievement. It is this I feel that was missing from those restless bodies I'd witnessed in my classroom years ago.

ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

While this book raises questions about the nature and cultivation of the desire to learn, in particular the extent to which it is derived from the accumulation of bodily affect, its central concern is the relationship between discipline and the formation of a scholarly habitus in the process of learning to write. To do this, the body is explored from three different perspectives; as bodies in theory, bodies in text and bodies in practice, organised as three different sections within the book. The first of these sections comprises two chapters. Chapter 1, Conceiving the Body, surveys different conceptualisations of the body: the phenomenological perspectives of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, the early sociological account of Mauss, and its more recent treatment following Foucault's rediscovery of the body as an object of

socio-cultural concern. These various theorisations are assessed in terms of their usefulness in understanding the role of the body in learning with consideration given to the need within education for an approach that embraces both the body and the mind. These concerns are also addressed in Chapter 2, Pedagogy and the Mindful Body, but focusing more specifically on the work of Bourdieu and Spinoza. In light of this analysis, a reconceptualisation of Bourdieu's notion of habitus is proposed, drawing upon Spinoza's psychophysical parallelism which frames the empirically based chapters in Section 3.

In Section 2 the focus shifts to bodies in text, the ways in which bodies have been configured textually and the implications of this for pedagogic practice. Emphasis is given to the temporality of bodies, how they are shaped historically, a perspective often neglected within socio-cultural analysis (Shilling, 2005, p. 14). As with schools in most Western English-speaking nations, those in Australia have experienced considerable change since the beginnings of public education in the nineteenth century. The move from traditional to progressivist teaching techniques, and factors such as the rise of educational psychology, have left their mark on approaches to pedagogy and the body of the learner. These shifts are explored through an analysis of English Syllabus documents within the New South Wales education system, which drew on trends from both the United States of America and the United Kingdom to inform its earliest syllabus in 1905 through to those of more recent years.

In Section 3 emphasis is placed on bodies in practice. It provides an ethnography of two very different primary schools conducted over the course of a year examining the pedagogic practice of a kindergarten, Year 3 and Year 5 teacher in each. The specific focus is the disciplinary techniques employed by these teachers: their organisation of the pedagogic space, involving classroom design, ambience and the use of this space; classroom regimen, where noise level, movement and student composure are considered; and their implementation of the writing curriculum, focusing on lesson content, duration and each teacher's overall approach. This analysis not only highlights the impact of the teachers' practice on their students' ability to write, but also students' overall disposition for academic work and the extent to which they have acquired a habitus for learning. In the concluding chapter, Disparate Bodies, there is a return to the issues raised in Chapters 1 and 2. The corporeality of learning is reconsidered in light of the examination of bodies in practice with a call for a reassessment of the role of discipline in the process of learning to write and in the formation of dispositions to learning in general.

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CORPOREALITY AND LEARNING: THE BACKGROUND TO BODIES IN PRACTICE

Despite growing scholarship within the field of education on the role of the body in learning, much of this remains at the level of theory or textual analysis without close examination of bodies in practice. Yet to fully grasp what bodies do and how they come to be, close observation is required. This is not so much to obtain a true

and accurate account, as ethnographies need to be understood as always culturally, spatially and historically situated (Kenway, Kraak and Hickey-Moody, 2006). Yet ethnographic methods and especially those of observation can reveal the minutiae of practice that may otherwise remain obscured. In investigating bodies and learning within a classroom context, these techniques proved insightful in capturing the impact of particular spatialities and regimens and revealing the different ways in which pedagogy disciplines bodies and promotes different dispositions to learning. Six audio-taped observation sessions were conducted in each of the six teacher's classrooms. Extensive observation notes were compiled and teaching stimulus material and student work samples were also collected over the course of the study. The observation lessons were generally undertaken twice a term during the first three of the four school terms. This was not always possible given demands on the teachers' time, but on average each observation lesson was 1½–2 hours in length and so a total of 10–12 hours of each teacher's classroom practice was observed with some of a longer duration[iv]. At the conclusion of the classroom observation period towards the end of the school year each teacher was interviewed about their teaching background and aspects of their pedagogic practice. Both school principals were also interviewed at this time to gather additional background information on each school.

The two primary schools investigated, here called Westville Public School (PS) and Northside PS, are very different schools having comparatively diverse student populations in terms of socio-economic background, ethnic mix and geographical location[v]. Westville PS is located in an outer western suburb of Sydney. The socio-economic status (SES) of the children attending the school is very low, which is reflected in its classification as a disadvantaged school receiving additional government funding[vi]. While there is a spread of household types, a number of students live in public housing with either one or both parents unemployed. Students are drawn from a diverse range of ethnic and language groupings, with 38 percent of the population from a language background other than English (LBOTE). The highest non-Anglo ethnic group is Filipino followed closely by other Pacific Islander students of mainly Samoan and Tongan backgrounds. Students from a variety of other nationalities and ethnic groups are represented at the school: Korean, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, Indian, Pakistani, Turkish, Croatian and Serbian. In addition, the school has a high Aboriginal population of 7 percent, compared to the national average of 2 percent.

Unlike many schools in the area, it has a pleasant environment with much time and money devoted to landscaping and overall 'beautification' of the school grounds. At the time of the study the student population was 577 with a staff of 21 classroom teachers and nine support staff in the areas of learning difficulties, English as a Second Language (ESL), Library, Aboriginal Education and Community Liaison. With a few exceptions, particularly at an executive level, the staff was young and relatively inexperienced. In the year of the study there had been a complete turnover in the senior executive at the school with the appointment of a new Principal and Deputy. The new Principal was quite candid in her assessment of the school. At the time of her appointment, she had been informed

that Westville was "a cutting edge school" especially in its approach to literacy but she felt this was not the case; a view backed up by the school's continued poor performance in external standardised literacy tests. Although the Principal displayed a genuine admiration for her staff's commitment to their students, she felt welfare needs were given precedence over academic concerns, an ethos seemingly generated by the disadvantage of its student population.

The second school involved in the study was Northside PS, located in a northern and higher SES suburb of Sydney. Established in 1928, the school has three imposing two-storey brick buildings and a number of demountables on a well-maintained site. Northside is considered one of the top primary schools in NSW based on its results in external standardised literacy tests, with a number of its students regularly awarded scholarships to prestigious high schools within the private system and places at selective state high schools. This impressive performance is assisted by the school having Opportunity Classes (OC) in Years 5 and 6, drawn from gifted and talented students from schools within the district. This contributes to what the Principal referred to as the school's "very good reputation both in perception and reality" and the "very positive and very strong ethos" of its staff. In contrast to Westville, the staff at Northside were much older and far more experienced. Nothside was also much larger than Westville. At the time of the study its student population was 870 with 42 teaching positions. There were also ESL and Library support staff. The recent growth in the student population was largely due to an increase in high and medium density housing in the area, placing considerable pressure on Northside to accommodate rising student numbers. The school had also witnessed a dramatic increase in its LBOTE population, which at the time of the study was 75 percent from mainly Chinese backgrounds and countries elsewhere in East Asia. There were also many students from Korean, Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds. While the rapid rise in the LBOTE population resulted in the need to employ ESL staff, the initial language difficulties that the ESL students experienced did not significantly affect the school's external test results, which the Principal described as "considerably well above the state average".

Initially this was not intended as a comparative study of the two schools. I assumed that major differences in teaching methodology would occur *within* each school and relate to age, experience and the level of class taught. While there were variations, there were also distinct similarities in relation to the pedagogic practice and overall educational philosophy of the teachers within each school. It also became clear that, despite individual differences, students from the three classes in each school displayed marked similarities in relation to their dispositions to learning. In contrast, there emerged quite distinct differences *between* the schools and the collective pedagogical philosophy and practice of the teachers in each site. The reasons behind this and the part played by a process of pedagogic embodiment are explored in detail in Section 3. Prior to this, different ways of conceiving the body and the theoretical framework used to analyse the teachers' practice is discussed in Section 1.