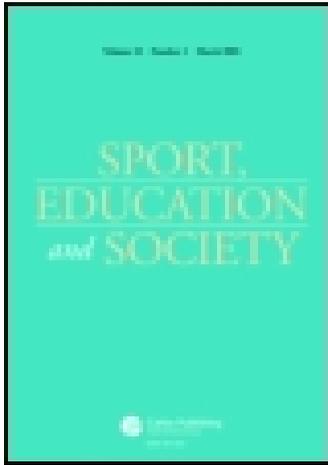


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Publisher: Routledge

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Sport, Education and Society

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cses20>

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Published online: 20 Nov 2014.



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To cite this article: Dean Barker & Claes Annerstedt (2014): Managing physical education lessons: an interactional approach, Sport, Education and Society, DOI: [10.1080/13573322.2014.969229](https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.969229)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.969229>

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Managing physical education lessons: an interactional approach

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Physical education (PE) lessons involve complex and dynamic interactive sequences between students, equipment and teacher. The potential for unexpected and/or unintended events is relatively large, a point reflected in an increasing amount of scholarship dealing with classroom management (CM). This scholarship further suggests that unexpected and disruptive events negatively impact on learning and can have deleterious effects on teacher health. Despite considerable potential for these kinds of events, many PE lessons occur in structured, organized ways. The broad purpose of this paper is to consider how classroom action becomes ordered in PE contexts. To this end, an interactional approach is put forward including the specific analytic concepts of *directives*, *epistemic authority* and *deontic authority*. To exemplify the approach, the micro-dynamics of a situation in which a group of students are building a human pyramid is examined. The examination draws attention to: how the teacher engages in a series of interactions with the students to move the sequence forward; how the students themselves achieve order through their interactions with one another; and how the characteristics of the activity help to organize the students' behaviors and limit possibilities for action. The discussion is located against a backdrop of current CM scholarship. Reference is also made to two aspects of social context: the increasing prominence of managerial discourse in educational arenas and the significance of student-centeredness in pedagogical theory. Both aspects appear to influence how order can be achieved in PE today. The analysis raises issues related to pedagogy, management and authority which are addressed in the final two sections of the paper.

Keywords: *Order; Classroom management; Interaction; Student centered learning; Directives; Epistemic authority; Deontic authority*

Introduction

At practically any point in a physical education (PE) lesson, there are a myriad interactions taking place involving students, equipment and teacher (McCaughy, Tischler, & Flory, 2008). The potential for unexpected and/or unintended events is—compared with other school subjects—relatively large. When one considers the dynamic relationships between people and inanimate objects emerging in open spaces during PE lessons, it is remarkable that much of the time, activities and even entire lessons, occur in structured, organized ways. The broad purpose of this paper is to consider the order of classroom action and to this end, we put forward an interactional approach (Goodwin, 2006). To exemplify the approach, we consider

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the micro-dynamics of a situation in which a group of students are building a human pyramid. We demonstrate how the teacher engages in a series of interactions with the students to move the sequence forward and how the students themselves achieve order through their interactions with one another. We also draw attention to the way that the characteristics of the activity help to organize the students' behaviors and limit possibilities for action. The sequence raises a number of issues related to pedagogy, management and authority which are addressed in the final two sections of the paper.

Managing PE lessons

Achieving order is an important element of pedagogical practice (Macbeth, 1991) and instructional texts for teachers often include sections on how to maintain control of lessons (see for example, Chapter 3 in Grout & Long, 2009; Chapters 6 and 7 in Siedentop, 1991; or Chapter 27 in Tinning, McCuaig, & Hunter, 2006). Despite the imprecise character of 'achieving order,' we have located our focus within discussions of classroom management (CM). This is largely because we share a concern with CM researchers for how teachers' intentions are realized in educational contexts (Bertone, Mèard, Flavier, Euzet, & Durand, 2002; Kulinna, Cothran, & Regualos, 2006; McCaughtry et al., 2008).

Much of the literature on CM in PE concerns issues of disruptive behavior (Cothran, Kulinna, & Garrahy, 2003; Garrahy, Cothran, & Kulinna, 2005; Supaporn, Dodds, & Griffin, 2003). CM has generally referred to preventing undesirable behaviors or dealing with them once they have occurred (McCormack, 1997). Investigations of CM have focused on acts ranging from non-participation to swearing to chewing gum (see Kulinna et al., 2006 for a comprehensive list of behaviors considered disruptive by teachers). The attention that disruptive behavior has garnered is not necessarily surprising: more than 20 years ago, research suggested that this kind of behavior has a negative impact on learning (Fernandez-Balboa, 1991). Ample literature also indicates that disruptive behaviors increase teacher stress and have deleterious effects on teacher health (Cothran & Kulinna, 2007; Lavay, Henderson, French, & Guthrie, 2012). Put simply, there are good reasons for investigating 'bad' behavior.

There has been increasing interest in CM (Lavay et al., 2012) and the last 10 years have seen theoretical advances. Research using Doyle's ecological theory has provided sophisticated understandings of management in PE (Supaporn et al., 2003). Ecological theory frames class life as a set of three related systems: managerial, instructional and 'student social.' The model foregrounds the notion of a 'program of action,' a concept used to denote the meeting point of subject content and management (Hastie & Siedentop, 2006). Within this model, *primary vectors* are used to refer to the teacher's agenda. Students have *secondary vectors* which 'serve to test the robustness of the primary vector' (Hastie & Siedentop, 2006, p. 215). Key in the model is that teacher behavior is—in a dialectical manner— influenced by student behavior. Research using this framework suggests that teachers

frequently reduce the instructional demands of tasks in order to secure student cooperation (Hastie & Siedentop, 2006).

As well as providing empirical and theoretical understandings of how things get done in the classroom, research into CM has been generative in a practical sense. Scholars have proposed a range of strategies for preventing misbehavior. It is beyond the scope of this paper to review these strategies. They include useful recommendations such as setting standards early and being consistent (Cothran et al., 2003), using humor and praise (McCormack, 1997), and providing engaging, meaningful and developmentally appropriate lessons and units while developing positive relationships with students (Cothran & Kulinna, 2007).

While there is ample scholarship on preventing and dealing with disorderly behavior, how things get done in 'normal situations' *sans* undesirable behavior has received little attention. On the one hand, whether we want to prevent/manage unwanted behavior or encourage/facilitate wanted behavior could be considered immaterial because we end up in the same place. On the other, framing CM in terms of negative behavior establishes a specific focus and potentially provides teachers and students with antagonistic positions, a point noted by McCaughy and colleagues (2008).

It is also worth considering the broader social context. We want to raise two related points. Management is an organizational term that has been drafted into classrooms. Despite Evans and Davies' (2004) suggestion that teachers are 'increasingly steered by the barren managerial mantras of liberal individualism' (p. 10), the extent to which managerial discourse is employed by teachers to explain their work is unclear. Discussions around the place of management thinking in higher education though have been occurring for some time. Clarke and Newman (1997) for example, proposed that two themes underpin new managerialism in higher education: (1) universalism, where all organizations are governed by the same rules and irrespective of their aims, need to pursue efficiency; and (2) isomorphism, where commercial organizations are the most naturally occurring forms of coordination and all other kinds of organization should follow this model. Apple (2004) adds that managerial discourses generally involve two central claims: that efficient management can solve any problem and, echoing Clarke and Newman (1997), that practices for the private sector are appropriate for other fields.

From a managerial perspective, features of lessons such as 'talking out of turn' and 'non-participation' (Cothran & Kulinna, 2007) become problematic because they take time away from achieving goals set out by the teacher (or classroom manager) who is in turn trying to achieve organizational objectives that are set out in the form of curricula and syllabi. This kind of behavior becomes 'disruptive' because it wastes time and upsets the flow of the lesson. These same actions can be framed using other discourses. Non-participation can, for example, be expressed as a sign of the irrelevance of the PE lessons to students' lives. In fact, in a Deweyan sense, most kinds of unexpected, disruptive and indeterminate events can actually provide possibilities for learning (Quennerstedt, Öhman, & Öhman, 2011; see also Helsing, 2007).

A second consideration relates to student centered learning. Current learning theories often suggest that teachers should devolve power to students and teaching should be done democratically.¹ It is ironic that at a time when progressive rhetoric is fairly well established in official and academic educational texts, teachers are increasingly expected to meet well-defined, standardized learning objectives. Billig (1988) suggests that the tension between authoritative teacher control and democratic, student-centered education constitutes a dilemmatic tension in teaching and that teachers must navigate somewhere between two ends of the spectrum. He goes further to suggest that while democratic language may be common in official educational rhetoric, there is little evidence to suggest that today's students are more empowered than previous generations.

In short, there has been sustained interest in how teachers achieve order in the classroom with researchers largely focusing on how teachers can prevent or deal with disorderly behavior. Dealing with disorderly behavior has typically been referred to as CM, which could be considered euphemistic and could be seen to discursively frame the work of teachers in organizational terms. Researchers have not considered order as an everyday occurrence that is achieved in many lessons and it is this phenomenon that is examined here.

Analytic framework

To examine order in a PE context, we have adopted an interactional approach. Scholars working in this tradition have been interested in the micro-dynamics of 'how things get done' in everyday exchanges and have concentrated their enquiries on topics ranging from telephone calls with doctors (Curl & Drew, 2008), to family dinners (Craven & Potter, 2010), to parents getting their children into bed at night (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2013). A focus on naturally occurring events—what Macbeth (1991) refers to as 'practical action' (p. 283)—is based on the idea that we can look at situations that are seemingly familiar and discover novel features and patterns in what people are doing. With respect to educational settings, interaction theorists have been interested in issues such as turn taking, differential speaking rights and compliance and conformity (Lindwall, Lymer, & Greiffenhagen, *in press*). One of the well-known theoretical observations of interactional research is the Initiation-Response-Evaluation or IRE sequence (Lynch & Macbeth, 1998; Mehan, 1979). In this kind of sequence, a teacher will pose a question to which they already know an answer, receive a pupil response and then evaluate the response in relation to the known answer.²

In the analysis of interactive sequences in general, the notion of 'directives' has proven useful (Antaki & Kent, 2012; Goodwin, 2006). Directives are 'the basic resource through which interactions are constituted' (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2013, p. 123), and can take the form of a proposal, a suggestion, a hint, a request or a command, amongst other forms. In line with Searle's (2000) *speech act*, directives are used to do things (see Bertone et al., 2002, for a consideration of speech acts and

CM in PE lessons). The comment, ‘Thank you boys’ by itself could constitute a directive if uttered by a teacher with a specific tone, stance and gaze.

The question of *whose* directives will shape the future nature of an activity has been of special interest and speaker authority has received extensive consideration. Originally, directives were thought of as *indicators* of institutional roles (Kent, 2012). From this point of view, teachers could be expected to issue directives and determine future possibilities for action, since they have an institutionally more powerful role. While teachers may indeed issue directives relatively frequently compared to students (Macbeth, 1991), situations of non-acquiescence have led theorists to note that institutional roles do not guarantee actors the right to determine future action and that even when institutional hierarchies exist, the subtle management of local entitlements is a common feature of most interactive sequences (Kent, 2012).

Theorists have typically identified two interrelated dimensions of authority: epistemic authority and deontic authority (see Harjunen, 2009, for an engaging discussion of authority and in particular, how teachers view their own authority). Epistemic authority refers to the right to know, describe or assess (Kent, 2012). An individual might claim epistemic authority on the basis of her experience or perhaps on the basis of formal qualifications. Of course, claims to epistemic authority may be connected to an institutional role but a role cannot guarantee that epistemic authority will be granted. Most teachers will experience occasions where their students stake claims to greater epistemic authority, and the legitimacy of claims in these cases need to be negotiated.

Deontic authority has to do with who can set the rules about what should or ought to be done (Craven & Potter, 2010). In his classification of speech acts, Searle (1976) describes how people are involved in not only getting their words to fit the world (the right to say how things are, relating to epistemic authority, described above) but also *getting the world to fit their words*. When a teacher verbalizes a plan for the lesson to her students for instance, she is attempting to exercise deontic authority. Similar to epistemic authority, deontic authority is not something that someone has beyond or outside of the interaction even if again, it may be influenced by an institutional role. Rather, it is an ‘interactional accomplishment, claimed, displayed and negotiated at the level of turn-by-turn unfolding of the interaction’ (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012, p. 315).

Irrespective of authority claims participants can, in most cases, choose how to respond to directives and responses will have a significant influence on the trajectory of the interactive sequence (Goodwin, 2006). In line with Goodwin (2006), Kent (2012) suggests that directives can be met with *compliance* where the future actions of other participant(s) are in accordance with the directive (what Stevanovic and Peräkylä, 2012, refer to as ‘deontic congruence’ p. 302), or *resistance*, where the future actions of the other participant(s) are not in accordance with the directive. She also notes that individuals sometimes respond with *incipient compliance* whereby they comply but not in full accordance with the directive.

Methods

The empirical material presented below comes from a broader investigation of learning in Swedish PE lessons in eight different schools at lower- and upper-secondary level. The investigation involved observations of four lessons, semi-structured interviews with six to eight students as well as the teacher, and textual analysis of local syllabi at each of the schools (see Quennerstedt et al., 2014, for a detailed account of the methodological approach taken in the investigation). Undertaken in four geographical locations by a team of seven researchers, the investigation resulted in a significantly large corpus of empirical material. Due to the nature and focus of the analysis conducted for this paper, along with the primary aim of the paper being to consider the ways in which an interactional approach provides insights into how order is achieved in classrooms, only one interactive sequence is presented. The sequence comes from a lesson in a lower-secondary class (students aged 14–15) and was selected as an ‘emblematic case’ (Gobo, 2004, p. 419) since it contained features that were typical of many of the lessons observed (for example, a focus on student participation rather than skill learning, a high level of interaction between students, a relatively low level of teacher input). At the same time, with only 14 students present, the lesson contained fewer students than most other lessons observed.

The sequence was filmed by two researchers with a handheld and a stationary video camera. The introduction of cameras is likely to have affected the participants although neither the participants nor the teacher appeared to be particularly conscious of our presence. The stationary camera was not effective in capturing student dialog so recording from the handheld camera is relied upon for the description below.

The sequence comes from the final session in a series of lessons on gymnastic activities. During the lesson, students had been rotating around three stations in groups of four or five. The sequence begins with the teacher’s verbal utterance and covers the process by which the students move from milling around to a pyramid formation (4 minutes and 25 seconds). The students had attempted the pyramid activity in a previous lesson and the task was not completely novel to them. The relevance of this task-familiarity is considered in the Discussion section.

The sequence was transcribed verbatim. The original language was Swedish. English translations were made with a view to staying close to the original meaning rather than the literal translation. Frames from the video footage have been included and the students in the pictures gave consent for the empirical material to be used for research purposes. The research project follows the ethical guidelines stated by Swedish law as well as the Swedish Research Council and pseudonyms have been used for teacher and students (see also Quennerstedt et al., 2014 for further ethical considerations in the project).

The case: building a pyramid

After approximately 30 minutes of gymnastics work at stations, the teacher moved from the mini-tramp station to the thin mats and invited all students to make a human pyramid together.

- 1 Teacher: Should we build a pyramid? How many are in ... want to join?
Everybody that ... eh.

There is a lot of noise and it is not easy to hear the teacher's suggestion over the multiple conversations taking place. At this point, five students wait to the left of the thin mats, a boy and a girl also to the left of the mats stop a playful tussle and the girl pushes one of the mats closer to the other two mats with her foot; two boys (S5 and S7 on hands and knees, respectively in [Figure 1](#)) continue working on their handstands seemingly oblivious to the teacher's directive (see [Figure 1](#)). A third student, S6 (extreme right, [Figure 1](#)), turns his attention away from S5 and S7 with whom he has been working and toward the teacher and other class members.

- 2 S5: [to S7] Or I'll try like this
- 3 S7: [to S5] Yeah!
- 4 T: [loud] Good! How many are ... so that we see how many we shall work with
- 5 here ... Now you have to be ready here! Lars (S5), do you want to take part?

S5 and S7 continue to work on their handstands despite the teacher's address and despite the other students standing around the mats for approximately eight more seconds. S2 (second from left in [Figure 1](#)) moves the action forward. She goes on to the mats, talking out loud. Midway through her sentence she turns her attention to S5 and S7.

- 6 S2: Me, Anna and Sara ... Should we stand down there then? Hallo [to S5 and
- 7 S7]..., you have to be the base! (see [Figure 2](#)).



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

S6 returns to the conversation about the handstand with S5 and S7. The three appear to pay S2 little attention. There are at least two conversations taking place at the same time.

- 8 S6: [to S5 and S7 in relation to handstand] Then, then he just climbs in
 9 S?: Aaaaah! ... [student off-camera yells for no apparent reason. The noise is
 10 loud but is absorbed by the multiple discussions taking place]
 11 T: One, two, three, four, five, six. You two ... (inaudible). Four ..., can ten
 12 participate? Four, three, two, one.

S6 goes down on his knees and is the first to form part of the pyramid base. It is difficult to say whether this is a result of S2's move in line 6 since S2 did not address S6 directly or whether he is complying with the teacher's directive. He is bigger than most of the other students and it is hard to imagine him kneeling on the other students' backs. Almost immediately, S1 (third from left in Figure 1) comes and kneels down beside him ready to form the base (see Figure 2). S5 is still concentrating on his handstand and two discussions continue to run parallel: one related to the pyramid task and one related to handstands.

- 13 S5: [to S2] Didn't you see that I ... was doing a handstand?
 14 S6: [to the group, possibly to the teacher] Yes, we have four as the base.
 15 S2: [to S5] Hell, you didn't stand on your hands
 16 S5: [to S2] No, I was holding like that! [demonstrates with his hands splayed pointing downwards]
 17 S2: [to S5] No, but I saw it! From here to there [traces diagonal from floor to wall with her hand] isn't difficult.
 18
 19 T: [to the group] Ok, four ... ten to work with.
 20 S4: Sophie (S2), can I take a photo with your cell phone? [S4 is watching from out of frame and will not take part in the activity. S4's directive is not related to either conversation taking place.]
 21



Figure 3.

- 22 S2: Yes! [S2 runs to the other end of the gym to get her mobile phone and is
 23 absent for the next 18 seconds]
 24 S7: Four, ...four at the bottom!
 25 T: Four, three, two, one.

At this point, there are only two students on the bottom row and both S7 and T's utterances appear to be attempts to recruit people for the base. S7 gives S5 quite a forceful push with his elbow and S5 then goes and kneels in between S1 and S6 (see [Figure 3](#)). There is much less noise and the attention of the students is now focused on the mats and the three students forming the base. The next extract involves the students deciding who is going to join the base. Since no one appears to want to be at the bottom, one student asks the teacher to do it.

- 26 S9: The whole bunch! [Shouting from off-camera. This comment seems to
 27 suggest that S9 would like all students to be involved in the pyramid. It is
 not acknowledged in any observable way]
 28 S5: No, I will be here. I'll take this place, then we will manage. The five
 29 biggest ones! [It is unclear why S5 makes this comment. He is perhaps
 30 indicating that he is ready and that the group should continue.]
 31 S7: One more ... Göran! [S7 speaks to the teacher and nods in the direction of
 the mats]
 32 T: No, I am not taking part!
 33 S5: Yes, Göran ... [T takes a half step backwards] Oh come on!
 34 S7: What about you? [Hits S8 (center foreground in [Figure 3](#)) lightly on the
 shoulder]
 35 S8: (inaudible) [Puts hands on hips, scratches his head and looks around
 36 perhaps for someone else to do it].
 37 S2: I'll go! [S2 returns from getting her phone and joins the other three on the
 bottom—see [Figure 4](#)]



Figure 4.

- 38 S7: Yeah Sophie!
 39 S5: Hell yeah! [A response to S2 taking the fourth position on the bottom tier]
 40 S3: I'll take your picture!
 41 S9: I'm down at the bottom. [Comment does not connect to any other comment]
 42 S2: Yeah, do that! [in response to S3]
 43 S6: No, but bigger! [Looks at the two other students on his right and signals that their hands are not far enough apart].
 44
 45 S5: Four, three, two
 46 S7: Four, three, two, one. [At this moment consensus is reached and four students now form the bottom tier. S2 moves from kneeling to being on her hands and knees. The other three follow in quick succession making it possible for the second tier with three students to climb on]
 47
 48
 49 T: Now we'll see if you fix this?

Two students begin to climb into the second tier positions. S2 watches them do this but then moves out of her 'ready' position and says that there is a problem with where she is.

- 50 S2: Ok, but the funny part is that I am just about down here and the others are
 51 up there ... [Shows with her hand how much higher the backs of the others are]
 52 S5: Oh come on! Stop complaining. I get the whole weight on me here in the middle.

S2 goes back down into her 'ready' position and the three students that make up the second tier begin to move into place. As S10 climbs up, S7 takes her hand and puts it on the side of the back of S6. See [Figure 5](#).

- 53 S7: Come on! Yes on Liam and ... Come on! There and there ... on the side of him ... on the side!
 54 S3: Ok ... next one



Figure 5.

- 55 S5: Next.
56 S7: Next!

Tiers one and two are now in place. Two girls (S11 and S12), who so far have been standing to the left of the group just watching without saying anything, look at each other, smile and quickly move up behind the pyramid ready to climb into position. S5 cannot see that they are in motion and encourages them to begin climbing.

- 57 S5: Are you statues or what ...? Get up!
58 T: Yes, next group! Now you go for it!

S11 and S12 climb into position quickly. They make some anxious noises while doing it but smile and laugh. There is a lot of complaining from the students on the first and second tiers. The third tier is in place for only a moment before those on the right hand side of the pyramid (above S2) lose balance and slide off. At this point, a number of the students scream, groan and talk. As they reposition themselves, they discuss how they need to change things.

- 59 S2: No ... this is not gonna work!
60 S6: It will! It will!
61 S7: We can make it!
62 S2: But Mikael, I am too low. You have to change with me and stand here!
63 [She moves up to S7 who is still in his place at the center of the second tier and pokes him in the shoulder]
64 S7: There is a lot of nagging coming from you! [S7 says this while moving
65 down onto his knees in the place previously occupied by S2 – see
Figure 6]
66 S5: What? ...Can't you do it?



Figure 6.

- 67 T: Now is the time! Steady!
68 S6: Widen your legs! Widen your legs ... so that they get space! [possibly to
69 the other students on the bottom tier in order for students to climb up
more easily]
70 S7: Like this!
71 T: Steady in your arms ... ok. [Loud]
72 S12: Like this! [She holds her arms out in front of her to show how far apart
73 the legs ought to be. This is an interesting move given she is standing
74 directly behind the people that she wants to follow the directive]. You
75 must move closer to each other ... the two of you. [While S12 is talking,
76 S2 puts her hands on S7's haunches much like you would shift a large
77 dog. She maneuvers him into a position described by S12 and then
nudges him closer to the others on the bottom tier with her foot]
78 S5: I am ready!
79 S6: You have to watch out!
80 S7: Aaargh!
81 S5: No Erik, stop it!
82 S7: Are you ready?
83 S6: Then ...you have to get closer you two! You two have to
84 T: Sophie and Calle, you have to
85 S3: But why don't you cross your arms like this? [meaning interlinked with the
86 next person's] It's much better!
87 S7: Yes, cross your arms!
88 S6: Move closer to each other!
89 S5: Get closer!

The second tier quickly climbs into place and there is a moment of silence as students concentrate. Immediately after the second tier is in place, the two girls that make up the third tier begin climbing up into position. This takes several seconds and a few comments are made in the process:



Figure 7.

- 90 T: Now you have to be stable down there! [2 second pause] Lower your back Pelle!
- 91 S9: Come on, fight guys! [The boy goes down on his knees in front of the
- 92 bottom level and shouts loudly]
- 93 S6: Could you lower a bit?
- 94 S9: That's it!
- 95 S6: Yes, that's it!
- 96 S5: What about Johan (S8)? [The third tier is still incomplete which S5 may or
- 97 may not realize. The comment spurs Johan into action and he quickly
- 98 approaches the right side of the pyramid to begin climbing to the top]

The third tier is complete about approximately one second after S5's comment and the teacher congratulates the group.

- 99 T: Yeah! Nice!
- 100 S5: Nice!

Johan ascends the pyramid (see [Figure 7](#)). S9 (who wanted everyone to be involved) stands to the side of the pyramid looking like he will offer Johan assistance. Several students in the pyramid smile at the mobile phone which S3 is using to record the performance. Other students cannot pose and are starting to slip out of place.

- 101 T: Hurry up!
- 102 S7: Aaaargh!
- 103 S3: Sophie, Sophie, Sophie
- 104 S?: A bit more, a bit more, a bit more!
- 105 S?: Ajjj! I'm about to die!
- 106 S?: No, no we're going to drop it

Just before S8 can make it to the top, the right side of the pyramid slips and S8, S2 and S12 slide from the pyramid. S8 lands on one foot and then does an exaggerated roll onto his back. A lot of students cry out at the same time.



Figure 8.

107 S's Ahhh (Ouch!); Fuck! Fuck, Johan! Hurrah!

The pyramid is now fragmented. The students that are still in formation start to ease themselves away from one another. There are several small conversations taking place and for a moment, it is unclear whether the group will try again. The teacher concludes the attempt in the following:

108 S5: Damn it, that was heavy!

109 T: [moving closer to the students who are now sitting, lying and kneeling on the mats] Good job!

The students pull themselves off the ground. S13 who shifted the mat with her foot at the beginning but has said nothing since moves directly to S3 to see the photo on the mobile phone. She is quickly followed by S2, S7 and then S10, S11 and S12 (see Figure 8).

Discussion

The above sequence opens up a number of aspects for discussion. We want to concentrate on: (1) the teacher's directives during the course of the activity; (2) the importance of the students' actions in achieving order, and then we will widen our focus somewhat to consider; (3) the order that inheres within the activity.

A first point to note is that the teacher initiates the activity in a weak or indirect way with limited claim to entitlement (Antaki & Kent, 2012). He begins with an invitation in line 1. This turn is interesting because the second sentence effectively renders the first obsolete—why consider whether to build the pyramid if they are already determining who is going to be 'in'? This disjointed logic may be the reason for the repair that is done in the second sentence. This is consistent with the teachers

referred to by Billig (1988) that attempted to reconcile differing but legitimate ideals of control and freedom, as well as teachers identified in the CM literature who appeared reluctant to specify rules or control students in an authoritarian manner (Supaporn et al., 2003). Most students in this case still recognized the teacher's invitation as a deontic claim and complied in various ways (discussed in detail below).

Reflecting an ostensibly liberal or at least, non-authoritarian approach, the teacher says relatively little during the course of the activity and the students have a number of opportunities to discuss what they are doing. The sequence could almost be considered an example of progressive, student-centered learning (Bergqvist & Säljö, 1994), in concordance with the tenets of group or problem-based learning (Wright, Macdonald, & Burrows, 2004). The students appear to be responsible for building the pyramid and the teacher appears to facilitate rather than direct. Indeed, the teacher frames the task in this way in line 49 when he says: 'Now we'll see if you fix this?' At the same time, the teacher accomplishes a significant amount of deontic work at the beginning of the activity. In lines 4–5, 11, 19 and 25 he emphasizes the number of students needed for the pyramid, setting important parameters for the activity. These lines alone rule out a number of possibilities for action and the students are really only left to decide who will fit into what position. In this respect, the teacher's actions help the sequence to converge (Wright & Forrest, 2007) on a specific outcome. Strengthening this convergence, the teacher provides a series of tips at points where student actions might have led to alternative sequence trajectories.

The teacher's occupation of the space directly in front of the pyramid is also connected to his 'production of authority' (Macbeth, 1991). The students' pyramid construction has similarities with a stage performance, an effect supported by the floor mats, a student (and the researchers) taking pictures/video, and the history of acrobatics as an activity to be displayed. Like a director, the teacher can see all the students and they can see him. Lynch and Macbeth's (1998) use of the term 'orchestration' to describe the work of teachers seems particularly apt here. The teacher's spatial position provides legitimacy to his claims to know and it is at least partly due to this position that his directives make sense—he can see things which the students cannot. The importance of this spatial positioning is highlighted during the exchange in which a student asks him to join the pyramid (lines 31–33). The student's verbal move provides the teacher with the prospect of changing his performance of authority and could have led to the students exercising authority in ways associated with student-centered learning (Bergqvist & Säljö, 1994). The teacher however, chose to continue to enact epistemic authority through his place in the gym and missed the chance.

Although the teacher was centrally involved in creating order, consistent with earlier research (Supaporn et al., 2003), most of the students played important roles as well. The sequence shows how some of the students stood in the right place, directed their gaze in the right direction, told others where they should be or how they should hold themselves and shifted equipment. These are all apt examples of

what Goodwin (2006) refers to as ‘collaborative action’ (p. 520) and all contributed to the construction of the pyramid. Some of these actions can be seen as compliance (Kent, 2012) but other student actions were much more directive in nature (for example, lines 87–89, nudges with elbow or foot). In this way, although the possibilities for claims to deontic and epistemic authority are bound, the students are still active in the unfolding of the interactive sequence.

Regarding the nature of the students’ claims to authority, many of them were done loudly, briefly and indirectly. They were also made predominantly by those already in the pyramid who were claiming authority through ‘knowing’ how long they could hold the others up. This authority was recognized by the other students who hurried and moved closer. While there is a certain logic to issuing these directives for everyone to hear, the indirectness of the shouting may have also served to leave listeners’ deontic rights—essentially their views of themselves as decision makers (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012)—intact. These rights appeared to be challenged in at least two places, including in lines 34–35 and 64–65 and we would contend that student performances of authority could provide an interesting avenue for further research.

Of course, not all actions facilitated order in the activity. Some students talked over the top of one another, used offensive language, ran off and refrained from participating. These actions may not be as disruptive as the student conduct observed by Bertone and his colleagues (2002) but they are in line with actions previously defined as requiring management (Cothran & Kulinna, 2007; Garrahy et al., 2005). Significantly, these actions occurred and still the activity was accomplished. The teacher did not manage them in a traditional sense and the actions did not *become* misbehavior in the context of the activity. The main action that appeared to stymie the development of the sequence—the two boys who refused to move away from their handstands—was dealt with by S2 who told them bluntly that they need to kneel down. We are left with the rather philosophical question running counter to Lavay and colleague’s (2012) call for greater attention to be paid to management techniques, which is whether the teacher responded effectively to the boys by *not* defining their actions as off-task behavior? After repeated viewings of the sequence, it is difficult to conclude that a ‘stronger’ attempt at control (Craven & Potter, 2010) from the teacher would have been advantageous and Siedentop’s (1991) suggestion to ignore ‘tolerable infractions’ (p. 109) seems particularly relevant here. As a possible explanation for the effectiveness of this strategy, it may have been that treating the boys’ lack of compliance as misbehavior would have emphasized their ability to exercise deontic authority. While somewhat counter-intuitive, it may be that eschewing traditional management actions such as warnings and reprimands may have helped this teacher continue to ‘do authority’ and achieve order in his classroom.

Just as the teacher and students interacted in more or less organized ways, so the characteristics of the task played a part in the establishment of order. The number of possibilities for making a human pyramid with approximately 12 people is limited. Potential trajectories are further constrained when body sizes are considered (it is

unlikely for example, that the heaviest person will assume the apex position). We have also noted that the activity had been practiced in a previous lesson and the students therefore had experience with the task. These ordering characteristics are not uncommon in PE and most games and tasks have explicit and implicit rules and patterns that govern how participants engage in them. Indeed, drawing on the work of Foucault, Kirk (2002) notes that the team games that are practiced so frequently in PE lessons exemplify disciplinary technologies and are often used to normalize and regulate students' conduct.

This observation encourages a reconsideration of several CM theorists' conclusion that some PE teachers use games to secure cooperation because students find them fun (Hastie & Siedentop, 2006). An alternative or rather complementary explanation is that many students and a significant number of teachers enjoy the order and familiarity that games provide in the 'inherently uncertain' (Helsing, 2007, p. 1317) environment of teaching and learning. In other words, it is possible that fun and order are two sides to the same coin. This idea resonates with Durkheim's (1961) notion of preference for habitual action as well as more recent interactional work (Lindwall et al., *in press*). Rather than 'giving in' to students and trading learning for compliance, it may be the case that, like the attraction of McDonald's hamburgers for many people, popular games provide the promise of order and predictability. One implication is that if teachers can introduce new activities while maintaining a degree of familiarity and order (which many physical educators obviously do), students may well find novel tasks fun.

The question of learning in well-known activities still remains and CM theorists have rightly expressed concern about whether students actually learn from participating in popular, highly familiar games and pursuits (Hastie & Siedentop, 2006). McCaughy and colleagues (2008) have in a similar vein, noted that teachers lower task requirements to keep everyone involved and Placek's observation that many teachers settle for 'busy, happy and good' students appears to be frustratingly persistent (Supaporn et al., 2003). We agree that from a traditional learning-as-acquisition perspective, repeatedly participating in popular activities has a rather limited potential to bring about learning, even if the activities are effective in bringing order to the classroom. It is even difficult to argue that the pyramid building task described above resulted in students acquiring demonstrable skills or knowledge that they did not have before they started the activity. The teacher certainly did not attempt to verbalize learning about safety or body composition for example, through questioning or de-briefing. At best, one might argue that the students improved their—rather vague and difficult to assess—teamwork skills. At the same time, other learning perspectives may provide some justification for the repetition of popular activities. From a transactional standpoint described by Quennerstedt and colleagues (2011), learning can be seen as the construction of meaning which is 'indissolubly connected to the relations that are created in and by action' (p. 162). Students may not have *picked up* new skills or concepts by building the pyramid but they may have developed capacities to *act* in particular ways. This may in turn have increased the students' potential to take part in other activities, even if this potential may not be

readily visible. For this reason, we are reluctant to dismiss the learning potential of activities that are not obviously novel.

Conclusion

CM has typically been related to misbehavior. Scholars have subsequently tended to focus on student actions that are incongruous with, or pose a challenge to, the intentions of the teacher. In this paper, we have drawn attention to the ways that a teacher produces authority and order in the classroom, and shown how students help to co-produce this order. In supporting these points, we adopted concepts used in interactional scholarship, elucidating the nature of directives issued by a teacher and his students and how these affected interactions in situ. We further proposed that the teacher's production of authority contained attempts to negotiate competing educational ideals: one related to control and discipline and another related to democracy and student choice. The result of this tension was a learning sequence that provided students with opportunities to talk and contribute to the development of the task but within boundaries set by the teacher and the task. Rather than see the teacher's work as a kind of pretense that contains only a veneer of the democracy and student-centeredness touted in progressive educational rhetoric (Bergqvist & Säljö, 1994), we are inclined to view it as an inevitable result of valid but competing cultural ideals. These ideals can be articulated unambiguously in theoretical situations but need to be tempered when it comes to practice.

A central contention throughout the paper is that the production of order can be considered an element of management. There seems to us to be little reason for management to focus solely on negative behavior. In the private sector, managers do not concentrate on what their staff should *not* be doing and as Siedentop (1991) commented, 'appropriate behavior is *not* the absence of inappropriate behavior' (p. 99, emphasis in the original). In fact, we are concerned that current CM discourse could set up antagonistic relations between students and teachers where they do not already exist and encourage teachers to frame student actions as deviant and inefficient. In thinking about new managerial discourse and its assumption that management can solve any problem (Apple, 2004), we are wary of situations where student actions that could actually stimulate learning are turned into undesirable blemishes that teachers believe they are supposed to eliminate. Expecting teachers to eradicate behaviors like 'talking out of turn', 'whining' and 'getting upset after losing'³ could prove unrealistic and ultimately contribute to the detrimental health effects and alarming teacher attrition rates that scholars have identified (Lavay et al., 2012). Changing the way we think about management—and we admit that there is much research to be done here yet—may open up alternative ways of positioning students that are conducive to learning.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Oskar Lindwall and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful and encouraging comments on earlier versions of this paper.

Funding

This work was supported by the Swedish Research Council [grant number 2010-5182].

Notes

1. Piaget (1972, cited in Bergqvist & Säljö, 1994, p. 151) commented: ‘What one wishes is that the teachers would stop lecturing and instead stimulate the students’ own investigations and their own efforts and not be content with just handing over solutions to the problems to them’, a sentiment that is easily recognizable in contemporary texts (see for example, Wright et al., 2004).
2. IRE sequences have been identified in instructional texts in PE—see Wright and Forrest (2007) for a critique of model questioning techniques in Game Centered Approaches teaching resources.
3. These examples come from a list of 59 disruptive behaviors identified by middle and high school students in an extensive survey conducted by Cothran and Kulinna (2007, p. 218).

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