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## Different, like everybody else

Three children with ADHD and their experience of Physical Education

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## **Abstract**

This master's thesis is a qualitative phenomenological research that seeks to learn more on how children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experience physical education. This group of children has different traits and bias concerning their relation to the school setting (Engh 2014, Rønhovde 2004), which I wanted to learn more about. Phenomenological research seeks to answer the question as to what the nature of a phenomenon is, and how the phenomenon is essential to the human experience. The focus was continuously on the *experience of physical education (PE)* for three children, with the selection criteria: diagnosed with ADHD. In my attempt to keep true to the participants' experiences I utilized the phenomenological frameworks of Max van Manen.

Methods of collecting material and the analytical approaches are informed by the work of Steinar Kvale. The empirical material is based on unstructured interviews and observations of three children (one boy and two girls) at three different secondary schools in Norway. All three participate in the general education. The experiences that I encountered through interviews and observations was analyzed and structured into three themes: 'Structure' 'Physical Value/Valued Activities' and 'Heat of the moment'.

The results are discussed through utilization of the 'ability' theory put forth by John Evans. To better understand the 'ability' theory I make use of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories as a foundation. The results and discussions show that the experiences that these children have are related to: structure given by their teacher, the value/de-value of certain activities/physical capital and how they as individuals are able to adjust to the habitus of the field.

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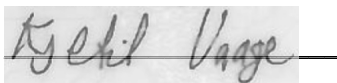
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kjetil Vaage". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background. A horizontal line is drawn below the signature.

**Kjetil Vaage**

# 1. Introduction

This master's thesis investigates the experience of physical education for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and does that with qualitative interviews and observations. The research is structured utilizing a phenomenological approach put forth by Max van Manen. Steinar Kvale influences the analytical methods used. The empirical material is discussed through the 'ability' theory put forth by John Evans, with Bourdieu's sociological theories as a foundation. Evan's quest for reflective consciousness around 'ability' and how 'ability' is reproduced in the socially configured field of physical education has helped me develop my own thoughts and reflections in this thesis. The 'ability' framework is used as a guide for understanding, analysis, reflections and discussions of the empirical data material. This introductory chapter describes how and why the research came about, as well as the purpose of it. These descriptions include the background for the study and the direction of the research, together with the main research questions and a short description of the structure of the thesis.

## 1.1 Abbreviations and clarifications

<b>ADHD</b>	Literatures I have read use the abbreviations ADHD, AD/HD and also on occasion ADD; in this thesis, I have chosen the abbreviation ADHD. ADHD means Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>PE:</b>	Physical education E
<b>'Ability'/ability:</b>	The use of 'ability' it is to be understood as a reference to the theoretical concept of 'ability'. The use of ability with out apostrophe is to be understood as the intended meaning of the word: "the capacity to do something".

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

In the world of teaching, there is rarely time to give all focus to one specific individual. Most of the time, teachers have a full class (or more) with many students that need attention. At the same time, teachers should try to understand and learn as much as possible about the different individuals they teach, to better understand the meaning of their learning experiences (van Manen, 1990). I am interested in the pedagogical aspect of teaching and how learners experience physical education. I especially want to be able to interpret and reach deeper into the individual experiences of children with ADHD in

the PE setting. I believe that through phenomenological research I will be able to get closer to the subjective conscious experience of these individuals. I wanted to learn more about what is meaningful to them and to take a closer look into their realities.

Through this phenomenological project I want to give as much of my love as possible: my love and care for children. To better understand their way of relating to the world. I wanted to give them the opportunity to tell me of their own experiences. I wanted to talk with children whom might have a bad reputation, a misunderstood behavior, or a way of conduct in social situations and school settings that is maybe not necessarily recognized as the correct manner of behavior. I believe I can be a teacher with a strong relationship to these children and in some ways make their daily setting, if not easier, at least better understood. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to listen to the voices of three children with ADHD, in order to better understand their experiences of PE.

### **1.3 Research Question**

According to Fitzgerald (2005) the majority of research work relating to the curriculum and pedagogical aspects of inclusion does not really dig deeper and listen more carefully to the voices of disabled people. It is vital that the voices of all learners should be heard and taken into account. I believe that it is not enough just to listen to these voices; we also need to take these voices seriously and let them impact the way we teach, in order to increase our understanding of others' barriers and how we can assist learning in the best possible way. My research question is therefore: how do children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder experience PE?

### **1.4 Clarification of the direction**

Phenomenological research seeks to answer the question as to what the nature of a phenomenon is, and how the phenomenon is essential to the human experience. For this master thesis I have chosen to use the diagnosis ADHD as a selection criterion. In this I mean that I will try to uncover the true meaning of experience through the first person individual experience of PE. I will *not* focus on the objective medical diagnosis or *the third person* experience. My intended focus area is on the subjective and individual *experience* of PE.



It is therefore important to clarify that I do not try to figure out how these children experience being diagnosed with ADHD in relation to PE or how it is to *have* ADHD in PE.

The focus of this master thesis is *how* do children with ADHD *experience* PE.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

This thesis starts with an introductory chapter, chapter one. In this chapter I give an introduction to underlying aspects and reason for the thesis: purpose of the study and the research question. In the second chapter- ‘blast from the past’ - we learn about previous research that has been a part of molding the research question and I give a short introduction to ADHD in relation to physical activity, education and PE. The Third chapter outline the theoretical framework of ‘ability’ informed by John Evans, through Bourdieu’s sociological concepts. This chapter has together with chapter six made the discussions in chapter seven possible. Chapter four outlines the underlying methodology and methods used to collect material. In chapter five I elaborate on how data was collected and the process of analysis. In chapter six the material is presented. Chapter seven offers a theoretical discussion in relation to the theory on ‘ability’ and ADHD literature, with a short conclusion. Chapter 8 discusses the limitations of the study and final thoughts are given.

## **2. Blast from the past –** previous research and a brief introduction to ADHD

In the first extract of this chapter a short introduction to previous research that has been a part in molding the direction of the study. I give light to previous research that focus on listening to the voices of children with disabilities in the inclusive setting of PE.

Second, I give a short introduction to ADHD. What it is, how children with ADHD are known to behave and then I go through some of their typical traits. In this particular extract I also look at ADHD in relations to physical activity, how they relate to schools in general and PE specifically. In the last extract of this chapter I explore some parts of the Norwegian school system and the Norwegian PE Curriculum that might influence children with ADHD and their experiences in PE.

### **2.1 *Listening to the voices***

Previous research has found that children with special educational needs want to be and enjoy being part of the consultation process in terms of making decisions about their own education, and children with disabilities enjoy PE when they are making a valuable contribution to lessons (Coates & Vickerman, 2008). Since the late 1980s more and more emphasis has been placed on researching the experiences of children and adolescents with disabilities in PE, what they have to say about PE (physical education) and how they experience it (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011; Sanders, 1996).

Few studies has taken into account disabilities that are not visible through a physical impairment, disabilities that are considered cognitive and developmental disabilities (Bishop & Block, 2012; Healy, Msetfi, & Gallagher, 2013). These disabilities are also a part of the inclusive setting in PE and the challenges and behaviors may be of a different character than other disabilities and other peers in general. So even though the amount of research valuing the voices of young pupils' experiences has increased during the past years the amount of research on the topic is still considered inadequate. There is a lack of research that gives a voice to children and adolescents with disabilities and their experiences of PE (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011; Fitzgerald, Jobling, & Kirk, 2003; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). Most of the studies conducted utilize the reflections of adults with physical disabilities (Bredahl, 2013; Coates & Vickerman, 2013) and young learners with physical disabilities and their experiences of PE (Blinde & McCallister, 1998; Fitzgerald, 2005; Goodwin, 2001; Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000).

Out of nine inclusive PE studies listening to the voices of children with disabilities reviewed in 2008, only two research articles concerned developmental disabilities, and none of them specifically addressed children diagnosed with ADHD (Goodwin, 2008).

In conversations with physical educational teachers and others about this project, I was often met with the idea that PE must be a perfect place for children with ADHD. Their point of reflection evolved around the idea that PE is an arena where other skills than the pure academic skills are valued. In PE you do not need to sit still and concentrate on specific tasks. It is a place where you may move freely and play around. These comments made me reflect and it touched my curiosity. PE is still an environment for learning, where the rules for how to behave and the demands of paying attention to the tasks given are still relevant. It might seem that people tend to forget that PE is both a dynamic, social and physical environment (Healy et al., 2013) and that you will find ADHD at any intellectual level (Rønhovde, 2004). These children struggle with reaching their potential because of their lack of ability to concentrate, vigilance, struggle with keeping quiet and calm and issues with controlling impulses. How do they experience PE? In PE, where the activity level in general is high for all the children, where the structure is more fluid and the distractions are many?

Looking for research on ‘ADHD and Physical Education’ I found that most of the research focused on ‘ADHD and Physical Activity’ or ‘ADHD and Classroom Education’. Very little were directed towards ‘ADHD and PE’. Previous studies conducted were often centered towards the sport experience and sport behavior. They looked at the functionality when it comes to learning a motor skill, motor control, and their self-perception when learning a new skill (Bishop & Block, 2012; Harvey et al., 2009; William et al., 2014; Lee, Causgrove Dunn, & Holt, 2014). I did not find any research concentrated on the personal experience of children with ADHD in PE. I found one research looking at ADHD in relation to PE, in this study they looked at the possibility that children with ADHD have an exaggerated belief in their motor skill competence and how well and how fast they actually learnt a new skill (Bishop & Block, 2012).

On the basis of this information presented above: previous research and my knowledge and interest in all children's experiences of PE. I decided to research how children with ADHD experience PE. I want to learn more about *how they experience* PE.

Classifying children with ADHD to be one thing or another is not interesting to me. What I find interesting is learning more about particular individuals and letting them tell me something that I did not know, or something I would never learn in any other way than to ask them personally. This thesis investigates their experience of PE using a phenomenological perspective. I consider this a very interesting approach to develop deep knowledge of a subject. I believe phenomenology will help me uncover the true meaning of children's experience of PE. For the purpose of phenomenological research where we look in to the lived experience it is not necessarily relevant to give a detailed summary involving the vast medical aspect of ADHD. However it might be relevant for the research and also valuable for the reader to have some background information to previous research on ADHD in relation to physical activity, school and physical education.

Therefore a brief introduction to some of ADHD' typical traits will be given in the next extract. This introduction gives both value to international studies and I try to relate findings to the Norwegian School system. Hopefully, this introduction will not pollute our understanding and interpretations of the analysis and findings. It is important that we meet the research with a relative openness to the children's unique experience (Finlay, 2009; van Manen, 1990)

## **2.2 ADHD**

See the naughty, restless child,  
Growing still more rude and wild  
(Heinrich Hoffmann, 1846)

According to research and information papers, ADHD is considered a heterogeneous disorder that influences many domains throughout the life of the affected, with learning problems as one of the main features of their diagnosis (Farone & Biederman, 2002; Lee et al., 2014; Loe & Feldman, 2007). These problems are caused by the inability to

pay attention over a longer period, over-activity and impulsivity (Mercugliano, 1999). These symptoms manifest behaviorally in inappropriate excessive motor activity, hasty actions, talkativeness and difficulties keeping focused on specific tasks (Barnard-Brak, Davis, Sulak, & Brak, 2011).

Research have found that children with ADHD in school age and their behavior referenced to a norm show that the activity level, their impulsivity control and attention span, is relatively stable across cultures (Rønhovde, 2004). From this we may read that children with ADHD and their behavior or reaction patterns are similar across cultures. This also why I have considered it to be adequate to utilize international studies to a large extent and not only Norwegian.

For some children in general it takes a lot of energy to sit still and stay calm, it may even exhaust them. For a child with ADHD, it might even be physically painful to sit still or pay attention (Rønhovde, 2004). It is important to understand that children with ADHD do not have the possibility to control their inner turmoil (Engh, 2014). It is what happens right here and now that is important to them. The child only attend to it's own needs. Having to wait until after class to go and drink or have a break, to wait in line, waiting for information and to pay attention. It might be hard for them to understand why they have to wait and why they should not leave when they do not want to wait any more. They do not reflect on the consequences of their own behavior nor the behavior of others, and they do not include the past and future in their present appraisal (Rønhovde, 2004).

Children with ADHD do not have any visual features that tell us something specific about their learning situation. They might therefore be seen as individuals with “invisible/hidden” disabilities (Rønhovde, 2004; Bishop & Block, 2012). Many people look at ADHD as a part of the majority of variations within the diversity of humankind, rather than a disease and their erratic behavior might make it very difficult for a teacher to figure out whether it is the kid or the pathology that is causing their problems of misbehavior. When a child does not have any outer visible indication that there is something disturbing their behavior they might face challenges of expectations they cannot meet (Rønhovde, 2004).

### **2.2.1 ADHD and Physical Activity**

According to Harvey et.al 2014, children with ADHD demonstrate movement skill problems and they lacked conceptual understanding of purpose and goals related to participation in sports.

Problems with perception or body awareness are not criteria for the diagnosis of children with ADHD, but it might be connected to the problems that they face in learning situations (Rønhovde, 2004). Visio/spatial perception and body awareness are important factors in learning physical movement skills. Children with ADHD experience exclusion from activity and they lack a conceptual understanding of the purpose and the goals related to physical activity and sport (Harvey et al., 2014).

In 2009, Harvey et.al found, based on the participants' movement skill assessment and interviews that the ways in which boys with ADHD experience physical activity are different than how boys without ADHD experience physical activity. The movement performance differences between the two groups were consistent with previous research, concluding that most of the boys with ADHD resembled novice athletes in their movement skill performance.

### **2.2.2 ADHD at School and in PE**

PE is not only a physical environment; it is also a social environment and a learning environment. Where teachers may have certain expectations on how the children should behave and pay attention. If teachers also expect children with ADHD to have a better experience and be more involved in PE than at the school in general there might be a discrepancy in teachers expectations and the actual behavior of the child with ADHD. The narrower the borders given by the teachers for what is acceptable, allowed and normal, the more deviation we might have. Introducing the child for tasks where they do not possess the control of the situation have caused children to leave, become aggressive or refuse to do the task (Rønhovde, 2004).

A purposive sample study, exploring the perception on inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and/or disability in mainstream secondary PE, found that teachers felt uninformed about the physical activity behaviors of children with ADHD. To them, children with behavioral problems were the most difficult children to teach

(Morley, Bailey, Tan, & Cooke, 2005). Children with ADHD have a greater need for structure than other children. They need a predictable school situation that takes control of the outer structure so that they more easily may control their inner turmoil. They need a predictable plan, repetition, friendly guidance and clear boundaries (Engh, 2014).

“The traditional classroom requires of the ADHD student everything that he or she is not good at: sitting still and not talking, concentrating on skills work, and not acting or speaking impulsively” (Ruschko, 1996, p. 89). In addition children with challenging behavior often struggles with low self-esteem. Aggression might be a way to deal with their own insecurity and the way that they camouflage insecurity, sadness or feelings of failure. What might seem as an exaggerated behavior from others perspective might be the only way the child with ADHD know how to handle different and difficult situations. They do not always understand why some actions turn to certain outcome and why they behave as they do. To punish them for their misbehavior might lead to aggression, repetition of actions or an immediate apology with out any real understanding on why they give the apology (Rønhovde, 2004).

If children with ADHD have problems with estimating time, space and distance, and have problems with perspective, like their position in the room and the shape of an object. Their inability to receive, interpret and understand these impressions and signals may cause a problem in a learning situation in PE. If the child has poor body awareness and weak time/space orientation, it might struggle finding the right body parts and this lack of body awareness might lead to lack of control over muscle power in play and cooperation with other children in relation to the environment. Terms like right-left, up-down, past-present, and terms concerning the persons relation to the environment might cause troubles for the child and the teacher (Rønhovde, 2004).

### **2.2.3 ADHD, Norwegian school and curriculum**

In Norway the prevalence of ADHD is said to be around one child for each class either diagnosed or undiagnosed with ADHD (Sosial- og helsedirektoratet, 2005). The Norwegian Core Curriculum emphasizes the importance of adjusting teaching according to the student’s capability, gender, social and cultural background (K06). In Norway this is what we call “tilpasset opplæring” or adapted teaching. According to the Norwegian curriculum the intention with adapted is to have an equal and just education

for all. “The mode of teaching must not only be adapted to subject and content, but also to age and maturity, the individual learner and the mixed abilities of the entire class” (K06, KRO1-04 p. 19).

According to NOU (2009:18), inclusion is about equality, this means that adapted teaching is about equality. We are to understand equality as the right to be different and to be treated thereafter (NOU 2009:18). These aspects are also a major part of the Physical Education Curriculum (K06). Physical Education plays an important part in developing the diverse and respectful social human being. “The physical activity culture, such as play, sports, dance and outdoor life is part of how we establish our identity in society and what we have in common. (...) The social aspects of physical activities mean that physical education is important for promoting fair play and respect for one another” (K06, KRO1-04, p.2).

The Norwegian Curriculum opens up for all children to take part in the general educations and physical education should play a major part in working together and to be respected as we are. The Norwegian school system is built up on the idea of being as adaptable and inclusive as possible. It is the teacher’s responsibility to adjust their teaching and instructions according to the different children’s needs (Engh, 2014). Very often the school system is well equipped to include the large group of “equal” and understandable behaviors (Rønhovde, 2004). But how do we deal with behaviors we do not understand?

Our own perceptions of others behavior will be colored of our own attitude, norms, moral and our own raising and education. It might be that a child’s behavior, which might seem to us as a deviating behavior, is actually the most normal that the child is able to behave in his or hers understanding of the situation. It is often important to understand the situation from the child’s perspective and how they understand the situation. What is the underlying reasons for his or hers behavior? New information around the situation on the underlying reasons might improve the way that we as teachers approach the situation and meet the learner with realistic expectations and increase the possibility for learning and success (Rønhovde, 2004). Children with ADHD are more affected by their need for motivation to do a task than other children.



All children need to be motivated, children with ADHD needs it more (Rønhovde, 2004).

In this chapter I have given a short introduction to the purpose of the study, previous research, and why I have chosen to focus on children with ADHD and their experiences in PE. People might consider PE as the perfect place for children with ADHD. As it is an arena where you may run around and “get out” some of their hyperactivity. We have seen that children with ADHD might often meet “double trouble” and lack of understanding, as they do not have any outer visible indication that tells us about their situation and they might therefore meet expectations they cannot meet. Their activity level, impulsivity and attention span are relatively stable across cultures. The Norwegian school system is built up on the idea of being as adaptable and inclusive as possible. The teacher is responsible to adjust their teaching to different children and their needs (Engh, 2014). But the teachers might struggle to fully understand how to teach and direct children with ADHD.

Previous studies tell us that the common notion of children with ADHD as more athletic is not necessarily true, and their behavior might often be misunderstood. I therefore consider it of importance to learn more about these children’s experiences of PE. In order to do that I will utilize the theory on ‘Ability’ put forth by John Evans (2004) presented in the next chapter.

### 3. Theory

This chapter starts with the issues and reflections around the term ‘ability’ put forth by Evans in 2004. To better understand teachers’ normative perceptions of ‘abilities’ and how they have been able to reproduce it within the field of PE, the conceptual tools of Bourdieu is presented. Furthermore, the thesis look into how sport performances and masculine hegemonic dominance have a great influence on PE and how this has influenced teachers’ contemporary knowledge of ‘ability.’

#### 3.1 ‘Ability’

In 2004, Evans wrote an article around ‘ability’ that has influenced the later years sociological understanding and educational research in the field of PE. In “Making a Difference? Education and ‘Ability’” Evans (2004) builds his reflections on the theoretical work by Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. In this article he asks us to explore and continuously question how to best ensure educational development. Through Bourdieu’s work on social dynamics, Evans offers a discussion of how ‘ability’ is understood, developed, reproduced and embodied within contemporary PE. Through his reflections, Evans (2004) asks whether it would make a difference if teachers and learners interpret ‘ability’ as something else and more than just “unproblematic assumptions (...) about motivation and health-related behavior, or ‘fitness’ or ‘talent’ for ‘performance’ in the interest of health and/or participation in organized sport” (p. 96).

Evans (2004) argues that it is important to be concerned with the issues of ‘ability.’ He believes that it is important to develop a better understanding of how different interpretations of ‘ability’ implements different outcomes of learning. Evans (2004) asks us to reflect upon “what ‘abilities’ are recognized, valued, nurtured and accepted, while others are rejected by whom, where and why in school?” (Evans 2004, p. 104). It is important to mention that the issue is not that ‘abilities’ are valued in PE; the issue is that some ‘abilities’ are *more* valued than others on probable false pretenses (Evans, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2005; Hay & Macdonald, 2010). We might see this in the emphasis on hegemonic ball sports and team sport, rather than dance and developmental exercises. I believe that this especially turns into a conflicting issue for some learners’ when teachers assess and grade their students by the use of their gut feeling, or when teachers

and peers value a narrow set of ‘abilities’, like soccer or handball skills, as superior to others (Standal, 2015). This type of evaluating and devaluating standards may cause teachers to doubt the individual ‘ability’ of certain children. As a result, this might lead to labeling of some sort of normative ‘good’ behavior, which in turn leads to reproduction of a narrow set of ‘abilities’ rather than production and development of individual potential (Evans, 2004).

According to Evans (2004), there has been a change in education; schools have turned more and more towards the narrow definition of a compensatory purpose. This notion of compensatory education within the school system might contribute to a generalized belief from the teaching staff that some families lack something that needs to be compensated for, or that some children have a lack of abilities that needs to be compensated for. Through these means, compensatory education might contribute to teachers’ diminished expectations of what some learners are actually able to accomplish (Evans 2004). In most pedagogical settings teachers need to make well-substantiated choices that will have an impact on the pedagogical practice. A well-functioning school system should be able to confront structures of inequalities by having critically reflective teachers that reflect upon their own organizational structure and educational practice (Standal, 2016). How ‘ability’ is understood depends on processes of valuation and recognition. It is therefore important to question which (and whose) abilities are valued and recognized in PE and what consequences such recognition has for pedagogical practice (Standal, 2016; Evans 2004).

Evans (2004) leads us to reflections on whether a narrow set and definition of ‘abilities’ might move the attention away from the educational quality and reduce the capacity and education of PE. By this, creating a negative effect on children’s actual development. It might be time to bring attention away from labeling children as deficient when these children’s behaviors do not fit the common acknowledged standards of education. As mentioned earlier, Evans’ article from 2004 builds on Bourdieu’s thoughts on inequalities that appear in society or through socialization within education and life at large.

To better understand how certain ‘abilities’ and normative perceptions are allowed to reproduce within the social field of PE, I have also chosen the theoretical framework

developed by Bourdieu. There are by this date, a couple of studies that undertake a relation to Bourdieu's conceptual tool, through the perspective of children and their experience of inclusive PE.

### **3.2 The field and habitus of PE**

Utilizing the analytical concept of field developed by Bourdieu, we are able to systematically expand our understanding of the social relations that impact our behavior, learning and educational praxis within PE. A field is defined through the struggles and battles for assets that are valued within specific areas of social life. These valuable assets are called 'capital' and it is what gives the field its definition (Wilken, 2008).

According to Hay & MacDonald (2010), Bourdieu noted that within each field, different agents undertake and generate values and beliefs that reward the most adherent through socialization and legitimation of relationships that reproduce specific values and beliefs.

Some of the defining characteristics of educational fields are overt. These may include the syllabus, a school's work program, school and classroom rules, uniforms, etc. Other features of fields such as a teacher's expectations, values and beliefs about PE and PE students are less overt or readily observable but no less powerful influences on the constitution of a field. (*Hay & Macdonald 2010, p.4*)

The values, beliefs and expectations of a field are learned cultural behaviors and competencies with a cultural value that may function as a sort of social beneficial and exchangeable capital. Per se, capital is a valuable asset that different agents hold, and it is something they have the possibility to accumulate or exchange for other valuable assets. Bourdieu's theory concerns many different types/forms of capital e.g.: economical capital, social capital and cultural capital (Wilken 2008). Within the educational system social capital and cultural capital would be the preferred valuable assets to utilize and act upon. In PE these assets may be exchanged into physical capital, as the body is a bearer of symbolic value that may be converted into cultural capital or social capital, and vice versa (Shilling, 1993).

Capital is the first factor that contributes to the development of the social body (Shilling, 1993). According to Shilling (1993), the valued physical capital may be a possessor of distinctive power and symbolism that may accumulate other resources; this may happen when “the production of physical capital refers to the development of bodies in way which are recognized as possessing value in social fields” (p. 127). These valuable assets of capital are closely connected to an individual’s habitus and the field’s habitus. “For Bourdieu, social life can only be understood by considering the embodiment of individuals within particular fields, such as PE, through their habitus” (Fitzgerald 2005, p.46). Each individual in a field possesses an embodied habitus that impacts their behavior and social relationships. We need to understand better what the embodied habitus is for each individual to understand how he or she relates to a field and social situations.

In sociology, habitus is widely used to explain embodiment, our immediate reactions and deep-seated bodily knowledge. “Habitus is the second main factor which contributes to the development of the body” (Shilling 1993, p.123). In PE as in any other social field, social relationships are unpredictable in nature, causing people to improvise their way through life (Wilken, 2008). To live a social life, we have all embodied some implicit basic rules, cues and guidelines for social interactions. This is our habitus. It is an implicit, long-lasting and embodied knowledge that operates below our level of consciousness, where it helps us to understand and leads our actions in different situations. It is expressed and evident through our perceptions, beliefs, ideals, behaviors, competencies and appearances. Our habitus is acquired through our social interactions within a specific field. Differences are created through the interests of the people involved and the socialization process in the school and life setting (Hay & Macdonald, 2010; Wilken, 2008).

According to Evans (2004), our habitus are embodied competencies learned and acquired through certain fields. Our habitus are reflected in how we ‘carry’ and communicate with our bodies in daily social interactions. It is something upon which we do not reflect; as it is some sort of tacit knowledge located deep within our bodily behavior and human embodiment (Shilling, 1993). “According to Bourdieu an individual will be judged on their ‘ability’ to deploy the relevant habitus within a given field” (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 51) and within these given fields, some embodied social

structures are more desirable than others and may therefore be perceived as ‘abilities.’ The possession of the right or wrong ‘ability’ has consequences for learners in PE, where some are privileged and others are marginalized (Hay and MacDonald, 2009). This might create differences and potentially little room for actual educational development, and cause our dispositions to be acquired through cultivation within a specific field, reflected in how we behave (Evans, 2004).

In effect (our dispositions) may be perceived as ‘abilities’, embodied social constructs, meaningful only in their display and are always and inevitably defined relationally with reference to values, attitudes and mores prevailing within a discursive field. (Evans 2004 p. 100).

In Norway the field of PE has developed from the military discursive of discipline, where objective knowledge and measurable results have been idolized since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Goksøyr, 2008). Since the Second World War, the field has been dominated by the idea of health and sport performance development (Goksøyr, 2008; Säfvenbom, 2010) Given that learners are bound to several different discursive fields, not only to the educational field, we have to be aware of the embodied physical resources that children have and also acquire through socialization outside the educational arena. We have to recognize that there are differences in physical capital constructed within and outside the school setting, and how we should address these differences (Evans 2004).

### **3.3 Contemporary Knowledge of ‘ability’**

Sport competencies and performances have great influence on PE and how teachers assess and grade their learners. Furthermore, there is still a large focus on sports in PE, and their masculine hegemonic dominance is embodied within the field (Dowling, 2011; Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). According to Evans & Penney (2008), teachers’ behavior and how they conduct their lessons have a deep-seated cultural history that is not necessarily based on the preferred way of teaching.

With the empirical article: ‘Still feeling like a spare piece of luggage? (...) Hayley Fitzgerald (2005) utilizes both Evans and Bourdieu in an attempt to better understand the embodied identities of five young disabled boys in the Midlands of England. Fitzgerald’s study tries to increase the “limited understanding of young disabled

people's experiences of PE and school sport" (p. 42). The article illustrates how the participants of PE have a normative conception of 'ability', where high levels of motoric competence are recognized as the standard for what is 'good' or the 'norm' (Fitzgerald 2005, Evans 2004) How PE teachers understand 'ability' have consequences for the children they are supposed to educate. Fitzgerald (2005) illustrates a connection between the learners' motivation and teacher recognition for learners' 'ability,' and how a normative presence and conception of 'ability' is recognized and valued through a narrow set of masculine and competitive forms of activity. The teachers in Fitzgerald's study seem to rank different forms of sporting skills against each other. In this process, the teachers conveyed a message, either explicit or implicit, whereby the pupils are told how they should behave and what kind of sport they should excel at in order to gain status. Fitzgerald (2005) proposes to change the discursive praxis in PE, and according to her it might be time to redefine which qualities and skills are valued within the field of PE, to better meet the differences and individuals possibility for development and learning. The road to change acquires reflective teachers, as change "does not only require the reconceptualization of the qualities valued in PE but also a radical rethink about the activities and practices that could best support this work" (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 55).

In 2011, Fiona Dowling did a study on PE Teacher Education. She found that a classical idea of normative good PE practices have prevailed in the Norwegian PE sector. The student teachers in the PE field often felt more comfortable working with students that have high amounts of personal involvement in sports, which showed 'good sporting performance' and high and low 'ability grouping.'

It is seemingly legitimate among PE student teachers in Norway to dismiss the vast majority of pupils as being 'uninteresting' and as potential 'time-wasters'. Moreover, the talented pupils are, in effect, constructed as being there for the PE teacher, as opposed to the PE teacher being there for the good of (all) the pupils (Dowling, 2011, p.213)

Though this might seem very harsh, it is also an indication to the social structures of valued and recognized competencies in PE. Within contemporary education there are some central perspectives that impact our understanding and interpretation of 'ability,' and they all have different implications for the learners: both developmentally and

experientially. The impact of the perspectives depends highly on the people observing, and their orientation on ‘ability’.

‘Ability’ may be something inherited and stable, used to describe a normative nature of competence as performance-oriented and/or, as the teachers in Dowling’s study showed us – and in the issue put forward by Evans (2004) – talent-focused. Certain norms of ‘ability’ are either valued or devalued, and more often these abilities are something children have more or less of (Standal, 2015). It may also be something more modifiable related both to nature and social and cultural learning (Hay & Macdonald, 2010). ‘Ability’ may either be seen as inherited competence, a social process or a combination of both. It is a loaded word, with dangerous consequences when used unwisely (Gillborn & Youdell, 2001). “For example, a person who believes that ‘ability’ is fixed (the entity theory) and who has a low opinion of their ‘ability’ will feel helpless and avoid challenge within achievement contexts” (Hay and Macdonald, 2010 p.2). According to Evans (2004), schools identify winners and losers and they separate the ‘able’ and ‘less able.’ In this way, perceptions of ‘ability’ are used to identify winners and losers, even though they value a narrow, specific set of abilities.

If PE is going to become a subject for learning, rather than a place for fulfillment of potential and stereotypes (Gillborn & Youdell, 2001), we need to discuss and reflect upon the norms employed through teaching processes (Standal, 2015). Without reflective practices in schools, there will be no development for learning (Imsen, 2009, p. 459). We cannot “reduce ‘ability’ to something akin to ‘physical intelligence’; a kind of God-given, homogeneous, immutable entity programmed (or not as the case might be) for (top-level) sport” (Evans 2004, p.99). It might be time for a broader view of what actions, behaviors, physical entities and solutions are recognized, valued and possible. How teachers view differences becomes especially important as “the perceptions young people have of teachers can influence their attitudes and feelings towards (...) PE” (Fitzgerald 2005, p.52).

In this chapter we have seen how Evans utilize the analytical concept of field, habitus and capital developed by Bourdieu to systematically expand our understanding of the term ‘ability’. Our understanding of the term ‘ability’ will impact our educational praxis within PE. We have seen that some ‘abilities’ are *more* valued than others. The field is



defined through the struggles and battles for assets and in PE and these assets are based on a narrow set of abilities. These 'abilities' might reduce the educational quality of PE and creating a negative effect on children's development. Some children might lack certain 'abilities' that need to be compensated and how 'ability' is understood might give different learners different experiences. I therefore believe that Evans notes on 'ability', these empirical research articles and the sociological standpoints of Bourdieu are relevant for this master thesis as they offer a broader understanding of learners' experiences and how the consciousness of teachers are embodied in their habitus through their lived PE practices in the field of education.

## **4. Methodology**

Before going into the process of research one needs to know “what” he or she want to learn more about and “why” it is important (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). I started to ask these questions already at the start of my second year at the master program, where young learners experiences of physical education caught my interest. What methods I needed to use, came to me through my interests of their *experiences*. This led me to phenomenology as an underlying reflective direction, and I chose interview and observation as data collection methods.

First in this chapter I want to go through some of the most important aspects of phenomenology, so to better understand the intention and the direction of the study. In the first part of this chapter I talk about phenomenology in general. I give a short introduction to the thoughts of van Manen and his ideas around ‘phenomenology as practice’, ‘lifeworld’ and ‘lived experience’. I do this to give the reader an insight into philosophical background of the methodology utilized in this thesis to better understand the methods used and why they were chosen. Second in this chapter I elaborate on the methods used and the combination of observation and interview. Third I give a short introduction to the three participants in the study.

### **4.1 Phenomenology**

The aim of this study is to learn more about the lived experience of young people participation in Physical Education. By using phenomenology, I seek a deeper understanding of the experience. In order to fully grasp the complex concepts of phenomenology and how to best conduct research, the researcher should always be aware of which tradition he or she follows (Finlay, 2009). This master thesis has its roots planted in the phenomenological methodology of the Dutch school put forth by van Manen (Dowling, 2007; van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenological research seeks to answer the question as to what the nature of a phenomenon is, and how the phenomenon is essential to the human experience, through “systematic, explicit, self-critical and intersubjective study” (van Manen, 1990, p. 77). Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophers in the phenomenological tradition have challenged the way knowledge is understood and developed (Dowling, 2007).

Their realizations of the possibility to generate knowledge and relative truths through conversations, narratives, context, environment and interrelations (Kvale, 2007), have shaped the process of this master thesis.

#### **4.1.1 Phenomenology of practice**

Van Manen's phenomenology of practice has a great influence on the way I understand phenomenological research. His methodological contributions are of particular importance for this master thesis. In phenomenology of practice the term 'description' is used to include both the interpretive and the descriptive phenomenological element. We search for the basic experience to the world as we live it, as we find it in all its different forms. Any experience of a lived life can present itself and is of value to the researcher (van Manen, 1990). In searching for true meaning of a phenomenon the researcher may utilize different methods to uncover these meanings. In my search for greater knowledge about the experience of physical education for students with ADHD, I have chosen interview as my main method and observation as a secondary method. This does not mean that these are the only methods to uncover meaning structures of a phenomenon. But I consider them as the best methods for this particular study. Interviews are "particularly suited for studying peoples' understanding of the meanings in their lived world" (Kvale, 1996, p. 105). Observations give access to their experiences from their perspective through my eyes (Fangen 2010).

#### **4.1.2 The 'lifeworld' and the lived experience**

The 'lifeworld' is colored by our pre-understandings and dispositions that we hold; *it is the world of lived experiences*. It is our immediate experience of the world that we live in; it is the way the world looks like through our eyes, as we see it, in the pre-reflective moment of present. To uncover these experiences we need to reflect upon them. That is why I have decided to do interviews with the participants right after PE. Because I aim to seize their experiences as lived, pre-reflective. They are then able to describe their experiences directly through their consciousness, without reflections, it shows that the experiences have certain qualities that they are able to recognize and it might therefore be of great value for the research (van Manen, 1990).

According to Van Manen there are four fundamental 'lifeworld' themes. These themes are referred to as existentials and they structure the 'lifeworld': lived space, lived body,

lived relation and lived time (van Manen, 1990). These four existentials are valued as appropriate approaches to phenomenological research. To better be able to understand and use these four existentials as productive themes for phenomenological question, reflection and writing van Manen (1990) have given each of them an epithet: Lived space = spatiality, lived body = corporeality, lived time= temporality, and lived relation = relationality. I will now give reason for their relevance to this particular study.

Spatiality (lived space) concerns how the place where we find ourselves and it affects how we feel. Each space has a different relation to the way we feel and relate. Different spaces give different meanings to us. So when a child experience physical education, it is not only the mere presence of the teacher or the other students, it is also the room and the environment that influence the way we act, speak and think. The environment that we are placed in affects us. This is one of the reasons why I have chosen a modified participant observation, as we will learn about later. When we want to learn more about the world individuals live in, we ask them about the nature of the spatiality that give meaning to that particular experience. Though there are some commonalities in how we experience spatiality, we all experience the environment differently and children might experience it in other forms than adults (van Manen, 1990). This is of particular importance to remember in this study regarding children's experience of PE. How do they experience the gymnasium hall? What is it like going it to the changing room? How do they experience their school?

Corporality (lived body) refers to the fact that we are always bodily in the world; our first reference to another person is through the body (van Manen, 1990). The way our body behaves impacts how others see us. How different activities in PE are felt on the body depends on the enjoyment and the past experience of PE and how we show our feeling may differ. In PE our body is also much more present than in any other school subject. Our body reveals something about us; at the same time, it may conceal our true appearance. It may be a deliberate act or an unconscious behavior. Your body has an affect on the people around you, and the people around you affect how you see your body and experience your bodily behavior.

‘Are you, small and agile’,  
Or ‘big and strong’  
Or are you,  
None of the above?

If you are uncertain in a situation a teacher's or a peer's gaze might make a difference to the way your body behaves: it may cause awkwardness or self-awareness (van Manen, 1990). "The teacher always look at me and tell me that I am doing it wrong", or it may give you the self-confidence that you need to be able to learn a new motoric skill: "My teacher sees me! He knows who I am, he thinks well of me". This also shows how corporality is closely related to the *relationality* (lived human relation).

The lived human relation to another is the interpersonal space that we all share. It is how the other is physically presented to us through socialization and communication. Relationality either confirms or disconfirms our expectations of others. "As we meet the other we are able to develop conversational relation which allows us to transcend our selves" (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). In PE we especially see how corporality and relationality is closely related: In PE relationality may be the physical contact, the communication with peers, or both and the impact these interactions has on how you experience the PE sessions. What is it like having so many children running around? The gaze of others, how does it affect you? Are you self-aware or are you self-confidence? Our self-worth might impact our relationality whether or not we trust our own embodiment and we might transcend this message to peers and teachers. A human relation is not only defined by our language all parts of human communication is a part of the relationality.

Temporality (lived time) is a relational time, dependent on the subjective experience and where the subjective is in life. Children have a different temporal way of being in the world than an adult. The past and present is not the same for children as it relates to personal life stories. (van Manen, 1990). How long 60 minutes actually is for a child depends on the experience of these 60 minutes. These 60 minutes of PE is experienced subjectively. It might depend on the enjoyment and past PE experiences. Do the hour of PE never end? Or do the hour vanish before they have even started? This is how temporality is understood and how temporality might impact these children's experiences.

In this part of the methodology chapter I have given an introduction to Van Manen's phenomenology of practice. I have done this so that the reader may understand the complex concepts of phenomenology and why I consider the Van Manen's direction to

be relevant for this study. The four fundamentals: spatiality, corporeality, temporality and relationality underline this relevance and they give meaning to the two methods chosen to better seek deep meaning of children's (*with ADHD*) experience of PE. In the upcoming extract I will inform about the methods chosen and why I have chosen a combination of semi-structured interview and observation. The process of collecting data will be elaborated on in chapter five.

## **4.2 The combination**

According to Kvale (1996), the research question should lead the researcher to the correct research methods. "The method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator in the first place" (van Manen, 1990, p. 2). I considered semi-structured interview (from now on called interview) and observation as relevant sources of data collecting methods for this particular study. I believe that a combination of participating observation and interview would give the richness and elaboration to the specific phenomenon in question: "How do children with ADHD experience physical education?"

To incorporate both interview and observation into the research is called triangulation. Triangulation increases the validity of the material and it gave me an opportunity to investigate the lived experience both through the spoken and unspoken words (Fangen 2010). Observations were used to watch what the participants were doing, to what they were saying to other peers and teachers and to feel or get a sense of their experience. Interviews were used to obtain qualitative descriptions about their experience of *participation* in PE.

I decided to use interview as my primary source of data, and for secondary method I chose observation. I did this because the goal of this study is to get an insight into the meaning of experience through the eyes and voices of three children. It is the children whom shall inform us of their experiences. It is therefore important to observe the world they live in and notice how they react and behave in their environment, but also enquiry on their own reflections and personal life stories through use of interviews (van Manen, 1990)

To gain access to the experience of children, it might be important to play with them, talk with them (...), follow them into their play spaces and into the things

they do while you remain attentively aware of the way it is for children (van Manen, 1990, p. 68).

### **4.3 Participants in observation and interviews**

In qualitative study, quality of the subjects is more important than the quantity, and there is a clear notion that many qualitative studies would benefit from having few subjects (Kvale, 1996). Few subjects gives the researcher the time needed to investigate of the experience through analyzing the structures and reflecting on the meaning it has to the lifeworld (Kvale, 1996; van Manen, 1990).

I have used purposeful sampling in collecting participants. I found the participants through contact with the organization ADHD Norge. I e-mailed the organization and asked them to share an information letter with their members. They shared the information on their Facebook-page. This led to parents contacting me on behalf of their children. I then chose three older children because of their immediate relationship to the phenomenon in question (Vedeler, 2000). I carefully choose the participants using the following criteria: primary/secondary school, age range 10 - 15 years, public school, included in regular PE (not part of special education). These criteria's were chosen to enable a common understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

For this study, it was feasible to select three participants who met the inclusion criteria and showed an interest in participating. Three to ten participants are typical numbers of participants for a phenomenological study and it should be sufficient to have few rather than many (Creswell, 2013; Kvale, 1996). The three children chosen, one boy and two girls, were all in secondary school and their age range from 13-15 years. Eva (14), the youngest girl of the informants lived in a large house together with two parents and one sibling. Kris (13), the only boy in the research lived in a small townhouse together with his mom. Annie (15) the oldest girl lived in a house together with her parents and four siblings. All the children participate in general PE and in general school settings. To better keep the identity of the participants' secret I have given all of them pseudonyms. I will here give a short introduction to the three children in this research.

The first informant I met was Annie (15). Annie is a very active and talkative girl who had a lot to share. At our first meeting, I learned a lot about her dreams and plans for the

future. She wants to go to a sports-oriented secondary school, and after graduating she wants to work with animals in the zoo. She participates in after-school sports and activities almost every day of the week. Her favorites are American football and handball. She tells me that sometimes, she can get very frustrated and agitated in certain situations, especially when she feels unfairly treated. She tells me that in these situations, when the teachers or peers do not pay attention to the rules of the game, she will start arguing with peers and teachers. She also tells me that she loves animals, she tells me about her plans of start working at Kristiansand Dyrepark (Zoo). She plans travels to southern parts of Africa to stop illegal hunting and take care of large and dangerous animals. But before this she would love to get good grades so she may start at a school that specialize on top sport education.

The second informant I met was Kris (13) he was the only boy and also youngest in the research. According to him, he is an active boy that enjoys being outside. Outside he can do all kinds of different sports, but he especially enjoys ice hockey, downhill skiing, cycling and swimming. Kris did not talk a lot, so I had to be really careful not asking to many questions so that he would have time to answer, but at the same time asking enough questions so that the conversations would keep going. At his home I got the impression that he was not all that happy about PE. He told me that he often experienced PE as a stressful environment. Many times he needs to go outside of the gymnastic hall and take a break. All the noise and action in PE and at school makes him very tired.

The third informant, Eva (14) came forth as a pretty shy and quiet person. She considers herself to be more of an introvert, especially when she does not feel comfortable in a situation. She tells me that she is more of an extrovert when she is enjoying herself, and then she feels more comfortable and will easily share and talk. She has always liked to be active, and she enjoys using her whole body. She enjoys dancing and fresh air. She is not sure why she likes dancing, but she thinks it might be because she has the body for it. Her younger brother also participates in dance. When I asked her about ADHD, I discovered that she does not really mind if people know about her diagnosis. She enjoys being with friends. Even though she does enjoy PE and being active, she is also a little frustrated with the fact that PE places more emphasis on activities and skills that she



does not have or is not skillful in. She could tell me that ball sports made her uncomfortable and she really did not enjoy it.

During the whole process with finding the participants and before I ever met them, I was unsure whether or not I should address them as children, teenagers, young adults, youngsters or older children. It is usually between the ages of 11 – 18 people describe or think of the children as at the verge of becoming an adult, biologically. Legally we are all children until we meet “the age of majority” (adulthood). In Norway the age of majority is above 18 years. This means that in Norway, by law, all people below 18 are considered to be a child. As a teacher, it felt very natural to me, with out patronize to address the participants as children. After meeting with all of them, it was clear to me as a *researcher*, that even though they might have reached puberty to some degree, they all acted and portrayed themselves as children. They are definitely not younger children, more likely they are older children. I have chosen to only use children. This is why I consistently and with out doubt address these participants as children throughout the whole master thesis.

In this chapter I have informed the reader about the methodological direction that has lead to the two different data collecting methods utilized for conducting this research. I have given reason to why I consider observation and interview relevant for this study and why I wanted to do a pre-observation/interview meeting. I have explained why a combination of the two is an important triangulation approach when researching the experience of children. In the last extract I have explained how I found the participants and why they were chosen based on certain criteria. They were chosen because of their immediate relationship to the phenomenon: the three children chosen, were all diagnosed with ADHD, they all went to secondary school and their age ranged from 13-15 years.

## 5. Data collection

The focus of data collection was constantly directed to the nature of the experience of physical education (PE) for these three young students diagnosed with ADHD in Norwegian schools. The primary source that I used was semi-structured interview (again, for simplicity: *from now on called interview*). The secondary source was observation. Observation is used as a reference guide for the interviews. The third source was an introductory meeting. The third source did not influence the analytical findings to a large extent. The introductory meeting was used to develop trust between the participants and me. In this chapter the order of presenting the way data was collected follow the order of how it was collected. First I met with the participants at their home. A couple of days later I met them at their school for observations and interviews. I did observations at the same day as interviews were conducted. Key issues with qualitative data collection, like the role of the researcher and the strategy of the project, are also depicted in this particular extract of the chapter. Extract four of this chapter describes the ethical considerations. In extract five, notes on validity and reliability is discussed. Strengths, validity and certain weaknesses of the study's methods are discussed throughout the chapter, when appropriate. In the latter of this chapter the process of analysis and how I searched for themes in interview and observation is described.

### 5.1 *The first meeting*

Before observations and interviews at the schools I organized a pre-observation/ pre-interview meeting. These meetings were the first building blocks in the foundation of a trusted relationship between us, the meetings allowed the children to talk freely and we had the opportunity to learn more about each other. All three children, together with their parents, chose to have the meeting at their own home. Each meeting was different in form, length and surrounding. They were decided by the social norms, environment and timing. In all of the meetings at least one parent was present when I arrived.

I started the meeting with information about my self and the background for the study. I opened up for any question the parents or the participants might have about the study. After a short talk with the participants and their parents, the parents left us alone. The exception was in my meeting with the only boy. His mother would stay much longer

and in the beginning she was doing most of the talking. While she was there, I was afraid that she would stay through out the whole meeting and by that making the conversation more restricted. After some time she would leave us alone so we could talk more freely. Reflecting back on the incidence it might be that her present was important in the beginning of the meeting, as the boy was very shy.

When the parents left, the participant and we could start our unstructured conversations. I did not take any notes during these conversations. It was important to create a relaxed atmosphere and to keep a constant flow through the conversation. I wanted to learn more about everything that did fascinate or interested them. We talked around subjects like future plans and what they liked for dinner. We also talked about ADHD and their diagnosis. I decided to talk about ADHD at these meetings, rather than at the interviews and during observation. I did this to sort of to clear the air before observations and interviews. Annie and Eva did not mind about it and they did not care who knew and who did know about their diagnosis. It was more important when they where younger. Eva now considers her self to be just like everybody else. For Kris it was much more of an issue and he did not feel comfortable talking about it. Field notes were taken in my car immediately after the conversations. The field notes were written into a notebook and then later a summary was rewritten into a computer. These meetings were important as I learned a lot about their personality and how we interacted. These experiences here gave me some heads up on how I should run the interviews and it eased the meeting and the observations at the schools. Each meeting lasted for about 60 - 90 minutes.

## **5.2 Observation**

The main purpose of the observations was to get an insight into their behaviors and actions in the PE sessions to better understand what questions would be relevant and increase the information base for further analysis of the interviews. I experienced that the observations gave me information so that I was be able to ask better probe questions later in the interview section. The observations allowed me as a researcher to be involved and at the same time keep a distance from the objects (Fangen, 2010; Vedeler, 2000). Through the type of observation that I conducted, I was able to establish some sort of relationship with the participants being observed (Vedeler, 2000) and it was useful in providing additional information about the learners for the interviews later.

Many researchers have been forced to develop their own methods when working with children (Jensen, 1988). My idea was that the field notes from observations could be used as building blocks and a starting point for conversations and questions. This worked well in all the interviews. Before starting my data collection I believed that for children it might be easier to talk about situations and actions that has just occurred. I experienced that talking about things that had just happened lead the participants into reflections and stories of previous experiences and previous feelings of past PE sessions, not only the present one.

The plan was to meet the participants at their schools, do observations and then do the interviews. Arriving the schools I was nervous and self-conscious. But I did my best to relax and after a while I felt more comfortable with the situation. I arrived early so that I would be able to figure out the school area and to get a sense of the school atmosphere. According to Roar Engh (2014) a physical learning environment that works well for children in general is not necessarily a learning environment that works well for children with ADHD. I therefore considered it of importance to get a sense of the school atmosphere and especially the PE hall/gymnasium was constructed. I met up with the participants before the observation and interview. I also had time to meet their contact teacher.

Each school had to give me a permission to do the observations and an information letter was given to all the children in the class. At every school I arrived to I first met with the participants and then they led me to their teacher. I had a short meeting with the teachers before I moved around at the schools and before I actually started doing the observations. It is said that observation “(...) requires a heightened degree of consciousness, awareness of fine-grained detail (...)” (Angrosino, 2007, p. 42). Given myself time to get to know the building and the surrounding and letting everybody know about my presence, gave me the time, space and awareness to give all my focus to the participants during the observations.

Before arriving at the schools I was sure I had been able to establish a good relationship between the subject and me so as to open up the study to rich descriptions, inattentive behavior of the researched, and to decrease the tension one might feel while being observed (Fangen, 2010). As I met the children at their various schools I tried to take

part in conversations, I asked questions when I considered it to be appropriate and I took a step back and blended in with the teachers when needed. Through reflections and a will to change, I considered it appropriate to leave the informants alone to a greater extent than what was originally planned (Fangen, 2010).

Utilizing a modified participating observation enabled me to choose my amount of participation. In participation observation it is not necessary for the researcher to take part in all the activities (Vedeler, 2000), and it allowed me to conduct observations through brief periods together with interviews and conversational settings (Fangen, 2010). Taking a great step back and isolating myself from the lived space, giving them their space to freely unfold, without being aware nor reflecting on my presence. I experiences that the observations gave rich picture of the lived experiences in the real life, as lived (Vedeler, 2000).

As a way of recording the data from observation, field notes were taken before during and immediately after the observations in a notebook. I did 15-30 minutes of observation before each of the PE sessions. In addition observations where done after each PE Session, lasting 15-30 minutes. I did observation in one PE session for each of the participants. All PE sessions lasted for 60 minutes and the total time for each observation lasting from 90 – 120 minutes. The field notes were short and descriptive so as to better focus my attention on the actions and occurrences happening. The field notes contain the descriptions of the conversations during informal interviews, conversations overheard between participants and peers/teachers, and they describe certain situations. After each observation more descriptive notes were written and important cues were added. Later in the same day the field notes were transferred to a computer file, to ease data analysis and important cues were added (Fangen, 2010).

### **5.3 Interview**

Interview in a phenomenological project may be used in situations where it might be easier for the informant to talk rather than to write about their experiences; in this respect the interview may serve as a terminal for a conversational relation to develop a richer and deeper description of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). Interviewing children gives them an opportunity to express in their own words the essence of their own experiences, as they live them, through their eyes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The

interviews were conducted semi-structured on a one-on-one basis. The interviews were semi-structured and took place directly after the PE sessions as I aimed to seize their experiences as lived, pre-reflective. Through the interview questions and clarifications about the PE sessions were made, together with general questions about their experiences in PE.

I did one interview with each participant, each interview lasted approximately 30 – 60 minutes. The length of each depended on the attention span of the children, their ability to elaborate and the amount of questions I had from observing. In addition to questions from observation the interview followed a loosely tied pre-made interview guide that covered a list of questions (Kvale, 1996). In this interview guide I deliberately left out any question related to their diagnosis. If their diagnosis were important to their experiences in PE, then I wanted it to come from them and not from my questioning.

Throughout each interview it was necessary to continuously follow up on the answers given by the informants with probes. These probes were used to explore new angles and to get clarification, many of the probes were collected from observation. The interviews were helpful in my effort to reach deeper into the meanings of their experiences (Kvale, 2007). The interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim to text for further analysis. I felt that the interviews with the participants went well. It seemed like the interviewee got a good opportunity to describe, clarify and elaborate their experiences from PE. I also got the opportunity to acquire clarification regarding actions noted in field notes through observation (Angrosino, 2007).

#### **5.4 Ethical considerations**

During the entire research process special considerations should be given to the concerns of ethical issues (Kvale, 2007). My reflections and considerations, and the methods implemented, are important factors together with dignity and respects towards the participants. Guidelines and principles for human research studies exist to ensure that a project is conducted without causing harm to the participants' lives. These guidelines concern the respect for dignity, free and informed consent, vulnerable persons, privacy and confidentiality, justice and inclusiveness (Markula & Silk, 2011). I do not consider these principles as objective codes because human relations are never situated in a vacuum, but in a context (Angrosino, 2007).

Free and informed consent is an official necessity when conducting any kind of research. All participants voluntarily agreed to be involved in the study. The methods in which participants become involved in any kind of research is often an indication of the voluntary involvement (Markula & Silk, 2011). As described earlier, the informants were collected in this research through an ADHD organization and their Facebook-page. Information about the research project was shared on their Facebook-page and the parents of the participants made the initial contact. This might be a good indication that the informants were interested in contributing and sharing their knowledge and experiences with the project.

I consider it important to be aware of the fact that the parents made the initial contact, more precisely their mothers. Most of the children did not engage in the initial contact. However what we may do is interpret the words and the way the parents established contact on behalf of their children. The parents would refer to the children's interest in the project and asked on the children's behalf whether or not this project could be of "relevance to them." This might indicate that it was actually the children who persuaded the parents to make contact and not vice versa. The social network that was used to reach out to them is a network that is utilized just as much by youth as by adults, if not more. To insure that these children wanted to participate I felt it was important to meet them and talk with them together with their parents and later alone only the two of us. I did this to ensure that they knew what the study was about and that they did not feel pressured by their parents to participate.

I consider human dignity as the basic principal for ethical research. In western cultures, human dignity derives from the ideal of individual autonomy that further transfers into respect. I have tried to be aware of the cultural context and carefully develop ethical procedures that protect the participant's personally defined principles throughout the whole research project (Markula & Silk, 2011). By turning the participants into collaborators of the research project I wanted to protect their individual autonomy. I believe it made it possible to reflect and dig deeper into the experience together with the participant (van Manen, 1990).

Before the research started I notified the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) about the project. I notified them because some personal information needed to

be obtained for the process. After contact was established with the participants the parents signed an informed consent for them. Throughout the process I emphasized that they had the possibility and the right to withdraw at any moment during the research. This should happen without the researcher putting any pressure on the researched to continue participating (Markula & Silk, 2011). It was therefore important for me to give as much information about the project as possible early in the process, to open up for feedback from the children.

Children with a diagnosis might be seen as vulnerable participants, as they might lack the ability to comprehend the purpose of the research, and the research might have an impact on their situation in a school setting (Markula & Silk, 2011). This required special considerations by me, concerning the participants' interests. It was important for me to protect their lives by giving them complete anonymity. Complete anonymity may best be reached with the use of pseudonyms for each of the participants and the research settings (Markula & Silk, 2011). I have also not given any information through this research to specific geographic position.

It is also important to be aware of the need to protect the child's privacy concerning their diagnosis in the observational settings. This setting might lead to difficulties, as the peers in the class should also be informed about the research since the researcher will participate in the classroom setting. Here I considered it to be important that enough information was shared, while still protecting the privacy of the researched. The type of observation utilized in this research involves a large amount of interaction and situations that may cause unintended harm in some way (Angrosino, 2007). It was therefore of importance that the personal values of both the researched and myself guided us to the best possible solutions for the thesis, in an attempt to deal with the subjects in a fair and trustworthy way (Angrosino, 2007).

In the interview settings I continuously and to the best of my knowledge took into account the openness and intimacy of the situation. I was also aware of the possibility that I could potentially lead the subjects to share unintended information (Kvale, 2007). "The personal closeness of the interview relation puts strong demands on the ethical sensitivity and respect of the interviewer regarding how far to go in his or hers questioning" (Kvale, 2007, p. 27).



Any personal information was kept separated from the empirical material. The material collected through interview and observation will not be used for any other purpose than what is stated in the information letter given to the participants (Markula & Silk, 2011). All personal information about the participants was kept in a different place than the anecdotes, text and audio. The personal data was deleted after the research was done.

In this research I try to learn more about children with ADHD and how they experience PE. The inquiries and the questions that I ask might have reflective beneficence to the researched, as the research might lead to new knowledge about their own situations and the experiences to themselves. As much as possible, I try to give value to the words of the participants and in this way, give the research meaning to the participants themselves, others and researchers alike. Constantly, throughout the whole process, I wanted to be aware of and reflect upon the ethical situations that might come up during the research process. I wanted to be consistently open for changes and letting the subjects be a part of the study as much as possible.

### **5.5 Validity and Reliability**

Similarly to Kvale (1996), validity and reliability are terms that do not exist in my vernacular. In qualitative works it is rarely possible to conclude truths and documented findings in the same way as in quantitative methodology. Instead, I have tried to the best of my knowledge to be pragmatic in the work and presentation of the material in this thesis project. According to Kvale (1996) “ascertaining validity involves issues of truth and knowledge.” My truth and knowledge has constantly been under the pressure of how well I have conducted my craftsmanship. “Validation comes to depend on the quality of craftsmanship during investigation, continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings” (Kvale, 1996, p. 241).

The verification of the work cannot be separated to a certain stage in the process of investigation; rather, it needs to be a constant part of the whole project. It is not up to me to validate the truth of the project; it is a question of connection between the honest presentation of material and the reality in which the material exists.

My experience in using both methods is that I was able to get a nuanced impression of these children’s experiences. Unfortunately the time span available for this master study

did not give room for a true participating observation where I had the opportunity to play together with the informants. But I believe that there was time to establish a trusted relationship with the participants, the use of a pre-observation/interview meeting was an important factor to ensure the quality and validity of the project through a safe and secure close relationship with the participants. It was essential that they trusted me as a researcher while being observed, and later when they elaborated on their own experiences through interviews. It is said that many researchers have been forced to develop their own methods when working with children and when researcher approaches younger informants, it might be hard to engage in meaningful conversation without being close to them, letting the children learn who you are and you who they are (Jensen, 1988). I considered observation as vital for the research as PE is a physical subject. Through the use of participating observation, conversations and unstructured interviews, I experienced the participants had many opportunities to give rich and honest descriptions of their experiences in PE (Kvale, 1996; van Manen, 1990). After interviews and observations it was time to look through the data material, transcribe the interviews and re-write the field notes from observation, before starting on the analytical process.

## **5.6 *The process of Analysis***

In this analysis I have utilized the analytical approaches for qualitative projects by Kvale (1983) and the philosophical framework by Van Manen (1990). Kvale's approach to qualitative analysis has led my thoughts and helped structure my work. To search the structure of meaning of these three children's experiences in PE, I have tried to build a reflective text upon their descriptions, anecdotes, thoughts and their own reflections. I have done this by structuring the multitudes of phenomenon presented to me through my observation and interviews under specific themes (Van Manen 1990). All situations presented in this chapter are collected from observing and interviewing three children, diagnosed with ADHD and they tell us how they experience participating in PE.

### **5.6.1 Searching for themes in interview and observation**

In my search for themes I used both the verbatim and the observational anecdotes. According to van Manen (1990) it is easy for anyone to do analytical reflection. It is easy because it is something that we all do constantly without thinking about it. When I first started to read the data material collected I was frustrated: "wasn't this supposed to

be easy”? I read, and re-read, but it was like hitting my head into a brick wall to get out of a room. I got nowhere. I could not find anything meaningful; the worked only seemed meaningless. It was painful. I went back to the theory on analysis and tried again. I found that to be able to articulate themes, we need to look for their phenomenological qualities, and so we need to ask: How do themes come about (Van Manen 1990)? According to Kvale (1983) we should start the process of analysis with the question: How should I structure this unstructured material to better comprehend and offer a structured analysis? I found that Van Manen (1990) recommends three separate approaches a researcher may use to uncover themes and structure their material. For this particular study I have utilized the highlighting approach by van Manen (1990), together with Kvaes methods of interpretation (1983) and my own methods of color-coding

I transcribed interviews from audio to verbatim and transferred field notes to the computer. While working with the data material I found that the process of transcribing depended much more on me as researcher and the intended use of the material (Kvale, 1996). After all and observations and interviews were conducted I formulated them into a structured and condensed entity. At the start of this project while working with the research question I read a lot of research papers. These reading may have influenced my pre-assumptions and ideas to how these children with ADHD do experience PE. Working with the material I realized that some of my pre-assumptions was challenged. These children were not interested and did not always experience PE in the same way that I had learned through ADHD literature. I realized that I had tried to “bracket” my pre-assumptions, but I had not been able to do so. I started asking questions about my own pre-understanding and became more and more curious to the text and what these children where trying to tell me. Instead of “bracketing” my acquired knowledge I used is as a guide to understand the phenomenon (Finlay, 2009). I started asking questions to how these experiences came about instead of only looking for answers that would answer my research question. Working with the material in this matter gave me a direction and openness so that their experiences would lead the process of analysis and I was able to utilize my previously acquired knowledge.

All my interviews were done in Norwegian, and I wanted my informants to read them and give feedback as to whether or not they approved the verbatim and their intended

meaning. Once approved, I sat down with all the papers, reading them all at once and then I translated them into English. At the first level of translation, a lot of the interpretations were kept in a very orally linguistic style of writing, in order to stay loyal to the children's style of talking. This was done in an effort to retain the atmosphere and the common sense of the interview situation as long as possible throughout the analysis process, in order to better keep the meaning of experience as lived, pre-reflective. This level of interpretation was more or less shaded into the second level of interpretation and analysis. Kvale (1983) implies that we should go beyond the subjective experience of the interviewee; while at the same time, remain close to a common sense of understanding. Each interview was later reread and analyzed and then certain aspects of the way the children spoke were altered to better suit academic language. This was done to condense the material even more and to put focus on the themes relevant to the research question I intended to answer.

I started to highlight themes and marking quotes of importance. I read each condensed interview again, one by one, and increased the number of notes and themes. The third time through reading each of the condensed interviews, I started to remove whatever was redundant whilst adding things that I might have overseen. All major quotes were later translated, and then large parts of the interview were translated into English.

Using the highlighting approach, I as the researcher read the translated interviews several times and then highlighted statements and phrases that seemed essential (van Manen, 1990). In terms of the observation notes, observation data was collected via field notes that contained descriptions of the observations. The field notes contained descriptions of certain situations that occurred before, during and after PE lesson. The highlighted statements and phrases were later copied to another document. In this document I tried to write out each of their experiences, giving headlines to certain paragraphs. I kept each of them separate and re-read each document. I started to highlight certain themes that I found to be of common experience to each of the participants. I then gave each participant a font color. This is my best way to do any research paper. When I give certain documents or articles' a specific color I am able to copy-paste and move written text around with out worry of where I have found the information. This opens up for endless possibilities of structure and meaning as it gives room for me to work uninterrupted with the material. Placing all of what I considered to

be the experiences that gave most value to the phenomenon in one document, giving each person a color code was the last thing I did before I started to organize the material into themes. I found three themes that I consider best represent the full experience of the participants (van Manen, 1990).

To better structure the process, I utilized Kvale (1983) and his method of interpretation. I followed his guide and separated between three levels of interpretation: self-understanding, common sense and theory. After writing and re-writing, reading and re-reading I felt that both the interviews and the field notes started to “*shade into each other*” (Kvale, 1983 p.182). In the start of the process I re-wrote every already-transcribed interview, read and reread them, each of them separately, together and then each line carefully. This phase was more or less the first stage of condensing the meanings of the three interviewees that figured in this research. I here saw the true meaning of self-understanding as I would limit my interpretations to how the interviewee would see them self (Kvale, 1983).

I through the whole process of analysis wanted to use the observational field notes as a reference to the interview transcripts to better uncover the meanings and the relevance of the three informants experience. In the last process of analysis, I utilized the theoretical framework already explained in the previous chapter. The theoretical analysis was the last level of the interpretations that I followed. At this level the interpretation went beyond the self-understanding and common sense of the interviewer, and the validity of the interpretations depended upon the general theory chosen (Kvale, 1983).

Trough this analysis process I have turned audio into verbatim and translated verbatim into English transcripts. I have worked my way trough these transcripts and then I have read through field notes from observation. Then again I went back to the interview transcripts and then from interview to observation and then digging into theory, going back to observation, then reading theory again and then back to field notes and interview transcript. By working like this I found new angles, new considerations and been able to highlight experiences that lead into to the three themes. Which has enabled me to reference these themes to theory. In addition through out the whole process my promoter has continuously asked both critical and guiding questions, forcing me to re-

read the material and confirming that my analysis actually represent the children's experiences and not my assumptions and pre-interpretations.

In this chapter I have given as much information about the way data was collected and how the process of analysis was conducted. We have seen that the pre-meeting gave room for trust and we got to know each other before the main data collection could start. The secondary source for data collection: Observations, is well suited to get heightened insight to the informants behaviors and actions in the PE sessions and modified participating observation gave a relaxed observation setting. Observation was used primarily to increase relevance of the question in the interview and to increase the information base for further analysis of the interviews. Interview is well suited for studying people's lived experiences and especially for those whom it might be easier for talk about their experiences. The interviews served as a terminal for a conversational relation and it gave room for deeper description of the phenomenon. Extract four of this chapter reflects around the ethical considerations and extract five explains how I have tried to validate the findings. In the last extract of this chapter have given an insight to the process of analysis and how I have struggled to uncover true meaning of experience through the use of highlighting and interpretation to better inform the theoretical analysis that has given room for the results presented below. I will now give you that presentation of the material through the use of themes.

## 6. Presentation of Material

In this chapter I have taken the experiences I encountered through interviews and observations and placed them into three different themes. These themes may stand alone to structure the experience of my informants, but they also address some of the same issues and perspectives within a broader context in life. The reader may therefore get the notion of reoccurring events and experiences throughout the different themes. Just as the four fundamentals explained earlier, these children's experiences may be differentiated and put into themes, to better explain their meaning. However they may never be separated in the lived world.

The three themes that emerged through the thematic data analysis related to their stories and the common experiences they had of PE. These three themes are: 'Structure', 'Physical Value/Valued Activities' and 'Heat of the moment'. 'Structure' relates to how PE is organized and structured by their different teachers and how they experience these structures. 'Physical Value/Valued Activities' relates to their experiences of which activities and physical traits that are valued by them selves, their teachers and peer. 'Heat of the moment' relates to what happens her and now.

Placing their experiences into themes has been the most difficult part of the whole process of working with this master thesis. It has been difficult because all of these children's experiences are unique and inseparable. Nevertheless, there is some communality to their experiences, though how they deal with these similar experiences differ.

### 6.1 Structure

A common experience all the informants encountered, involved the organizational skills of the teachers and the structure of their lessons and their way of leading their classes. For all of the children structure and planning (or lack of both) was an important part of their experience in PE. How the three informants *dealt* with the structure did differ. The first experience Kris shared with me concerned the lack of structure in the lessons and confusing information given by different teachers.

(...) often the teachers arrive very late. On my week schedule it says that I am going to have swimming. But then I am not supposed to have swimming. My schedule is wrong. (...) It has happened a lot of times (...). (Kris)

Kris has several PE teachers and he is actually not sure whom he has as a main teacher. According to Kris, his PE teachers often arrive late to class. When they arrive, it seems to him that they do not have a specific plan for the session. At his school they are supposed to have a week schedule for all subjects. In PE this plan is altered throughout the week. According to him this makes him lose track of what is going on and it makes it difficult for him to know what to do. These problems with having many different teachers in PE, whom change the plans often and give different information leads to him not being sure what to expect of the different PE sessions. "I like Tonje. She is organized, she tells us what we are supposed to and stuff". To him a teacher that pays attention, is organized and gives understandable messages are important factors for good experiences in PE.

During observation I noted that there was some confusion created by the teacher about the rules and "what they where supposed to do". During a basketball practice routine the teacher tried to organize Kris and his peers into groups. The teacher started setting them up with partners, but the teachers counting and paring of the teams did not end up equally numbered. So the teacher had to start over again. After using a lot of time organizing the teams, the teacher would explain the practice routine. The practice routine was not explained properly so when the children started the routine they did not know what to do. The teacher had to collect them again and then explain the routine one more time. When I asked him about this situation, he just shook his head and said: "Huff! (...) It turns into a lot of thinking for me (...)"

Meeting different situations that lead to "a lot of thinking," and having to adjust to different types of teachers and teaching styles, is something that Kris struggles with. Many times he feels the need to leave class and go and sit in the stairs in the hallway. Often he will get a headache and sometimes his teachers will provide painkillers. He goes and sits down because there is just too much going on and it makes it difficult for him to think straight. For Kris, the part of organization and structure is just as much about how the teacher pay attention to what he is actually doing and letting him and his



peers know what they are supposed to. He tells me that, in addition to Tonje, there is another teacher that he likes. “Clyde is very good in PE and...(…).The other teachers that actually are PE teachers, they walk around much more than he does. He just stands there and pays attention to what we are doing.” Clyde is a substitute teacher from the local primary school that sometimes comes over to teach Kris’s class.

A teacher that cares and pays attention to your actions is also important for the first girl I interviewed, Annie. She compares her teachers to her coaches. In her opinion, her coaches are more equipped to pay attention and give direct feedback to their skills and development. We may read that according to Annie, a caring teacher is just as important as having an organized teacher.

At practice the coach stands there and pays attention to you. The coach doesn’t wander around and look at other activities. He looks at you and helps you with what you are supposed to work on and he organizes what you should learn.  
(Annie)

Both Kris and Annie consider a teacher that pay attention and give direct feedback to your actions to be a good teacher. It is a teacher that offers good experiences. When the teachers’ does not have control/loose control or are not specific in his planning or explanation, they loose focus. Similar to Kris and Annie I noticed that also Eva were disrupted and confused by the lack of clarity around rules and the structure in PE sessions. Eva would deal with these situations in a similar fashion to Kris. She would, just like him, have a tendency to leave the gymnastic hall under certain circumstances or she would try to hide within the game by standing in the back or hiding physically behind other peers. As oppose to how Kris and Eva handled these situations of uncertainty, Annie would not go and sit down, she would end up in discussions or heated quarrels either with peers or her teacher. Similar to Kris, Annie experienced that in PE there is almost never a plan or a specific reason for the activities that they do. They simply just do different activities. These activities that they do does not feel very sport specific to her. They are not like the activities that she does after school. After school she practice with several teams, especially handball and American football. Annie prefers that rules used in PE are similar to rules that she is used to from after-school activities, or how she has previously learned the activity at school. So when there is a new teacher, or the teacher changes the rules, this may lead to her being confused

and not knowing which rules to follow. To Annie, PE is better when there are 'real' sport rules. PE is then more proper and she is more able to work out better when there are rules to follow.

It is no fun when there aren't any real rules. I hate that actually, when the referees do not follow the real rules. I need them to follow the rules. Usually I want the rules, then it is more real, you get to practice on them, you get better than just fooling around. (Annie)

Following sport rules and doing what one has previously learned were also important factors for participation for Eva. In Eva's class, there was often a problem that many children had their own ideas about how the different activities should be played and that the teachers did not set proper ground rules for the games in advance. This often led to confusion and irritation from the peers and it made Eva uncertain of what to do and she would also get a little frustrated.

It is like this, you know, the teacher will bring some activities. Then half of the class has different opinions on what the rules are. I think the teacher could just figure it out. So that we do not get a lot of strange rules, that is not really a part of the game (Eva)

For Eva, the teacher is the one who should define the rules of the different games and not the other children. Just like Annie, Eva believes that having a clear leader would help her and her peers to better understand how they should conduct themselves and how the games should be played. To her this would be a preferred way of organizing the lessons. "(...) it is okay to be told what we are supposed to do, so that there is no extra fuzz or any misunderstandings." Eva prefer that the teacher provide only *one* set of rules to follow, that counts for all, leaving no room for discussions.

Above I have presented how these children experience the structure given by their teachers. How these three children deal with these experiences of having different rules, unclear situation and unstructured lessons differs a lot. For Kris this leads to a lot of frustration. This again leads him to loose focus on what is going on and very often he decides to leave the classroom. Annie is a strong-headed woman that would start a quarrel over details in the regulations, as she knows: she is right and they are wrong. Her disposition to take control and start an argument was noticed during observation: at

the end of the session she argued about whether or not she had hit someone with the ball in dodge ball. According to her she hit target and to her there was no discussion about that. Eva on the other hand would try to “hide” from the ball in dodge ball or even leave the gymnastic hall during football.

## **6.2 *Physical Value/Valued Activities***

As we have seen in the previous theme, and as we will see later, Annie’s interest in sports and her knowledge about the different rules and regulations made her prone to getting involved in quarrels with other students and her teachers. These outbursts and frustrations did not really seem to affect her position in PE. Most of the time her interactions did not cause friction; in most cases she experienced that her knowledge about sports increased her recognition in the class. From both teachers and peers. In PE she often felt more included than in any other subject at the school. “(...) I do a lot of sports, so a lot of people want me to join. (...) There you are taken a little more in, other times (at school) I am more out” For Annie, PE is the place where she experience that she can really and be 100% herself. In PE she is accepted for her behaviors.

Being a part of the group at the school in general was not always the case for Annie; she often felt excluded by the others and sometimes she felt pushed out because of her diagnosis. However, because of her skills, physical strength and her knowledge about sports, she felt more accepted in the PE setting. For her, it is the roughness of these games that makes her enjoy them a lot. She feels that these activities are something she is good at. In PE she is able to show what she is capable of in sports. The reason Annie enjoys the physicality of PE becomes very clear when I ask her about her own thoughts on her abilities. She loves competing and winning.

I can lift more than my own body weight, I can take down more people than what others are able to and I am stronger than a girl is supposed to be. (...) I know more sports that a lot of others, I know different rules and I try a lot that others do not. I always try to learn something new. And I have a lot of winner instinct. If I am about to loose, I try to never quit. I will not quit before the other one does. (Annie)

Being accepted or not, and how PE may be experienced differently for someone that is not a strong participant in typical school sports, becomes very apparent when talking with the other girl, Eva. Eva tells me about how she experiences cooperative work. “If we have something handball related and everyone in the group is a handball player, then I don't really like cooperative work” (Eva).

Eva believes that the teacher should consider more different types of activities, instead of “the typical school stuff”. According to her these “typical school stuff” is namely masculine, muscular and technical dominant activities, like football, handball and dodge ball. These are activities where she experiences that she does not succeed. In Eva’s opinion, it would be nice to have more dance or outdoor activities: activities during which she can use and move her whole body in different ways, rather than just when kicking or throwing a ball in a team. Eva will often feel awkward playing ball sports. “Because I do not have any strength in my arms, that makes me feel like I look stupid. It is like, I cannot control my arms when I need to throw and stuff”.

When the class play ball she will use energy on not making a fool of herself, rather than actually participating in the games. It seems that, according to Eva, she used to participate less in PE than she does these days, except when there is some sort of ball game. This happens particularly during soccer games. During my observation, she left the room when the teacher started dividing the class into soccer teams. She did not play any soccer at all during my observation. She tells me that she finds it very hard to participate in these types of ball sports. And the reason why is because at school a large portions of her class play these sports regularly. “So that sets the bar pretty high for those of us that do not play a lot of ball. We get pushed down a bit.” So their skill level is higher and it does not leave room for trail and error for children whom are not previously thought in these games or play them regularly.

Eva has always liked being active and she enjoys using her whole body. Even though she does enjoy PE and being active, she is also a little frustrated with the fact that her PE teacher places more emphasis on activities and skills that she does not have, rough sports like handball and football, where competition is a major part of the experience. According to Eva there have always been a lot of ball games at her school, and it has not changed during the time that she has been part of the school. Her wish is that the

teacher would realize that there are other children at the school than handball-player and football players, children that do not enjoy ball games. All this ball play also affects her grade in a bad way. This leads to some frustration towards the subject and the teacher, as he neither offers different types activities nor gives value to them. “It bugs me a little, I feel like I only get a four (C) because of the ball stuff (...) it annoys me a little that I can get a six (A) in all the other subjects but PE.” To Eva, it feels frustrating that she will have the possibility to get high grades in all the other subjects at school, but she would never get a high grade in PE, because she does not know how to play soccer or handball.

Confidence in the games is important to Eva. Sometimes she will sit down and not join the class if they play soccer, other times she might do some stretching instead of playing with the rest of the class. This stands in contrast to her will to continue working when she does things that she enjoys or feels confident in. She tells me that when she feels confident, she will continue even though she gets tired. This feeling of discomfort and lack of confidence in many of the sports is a major reason for not participating in different activities for all of the interviewees. For Annie and Kris, dance is something that they do not feel confident in. For Eva, dance is the activity she wishes there was more of, as this is an activity that she know how to do.

For the only boy in the research, his positive connections to activities were often related to family and the interests that they had within his family. In his family, ice hockey and floor hockey are important sports. He also enjoys free diving, swimming and lifesaving in the pool. Kris likes this because he travels a lot with his family, and his father taught him to swim and do lifesaving when he was very young. He further tells me that he wished they could spend more time in the outdoors during PE. It is not that he does not like the gym; it is just the fact that he is an outdoor boy. He is often outside when he is at home, riding around on his bike or skiing. He values different sports that he knows from before and he wants to do more of these particular sports in PE.

Depending on the sport or the situation, the awareness of which skills and sports are more recognized was very apparent for the three interviewees. As mentioned earlier, this notion was especially apparent for the two girls I interviewed. Annie is strong, muscular and masculine in her appearance; she loves all kinds of team sports where she

may play with a ball. To her, it is the roughness of these games that makes her enjoy them a lot. She feels that these activities are something she is good at. Being taken in by her peers and respected for her sport skills is an important reason why Annie enjoys the PE lessons. Eva is the opposite; she has clear awareness of her slender body, which in her eyes is better for dancing than for any type of ball sport.

Knowledge of the games and feelings of success is a major incentive to participate for all of the interviewees. Activities that they value in PE were often connected to their own interests. Whether or not they felt good about an activity it was often related to something that they knew from before. How the teachers and peers valued their type of activities was also an important factor for how they experienced PE.

### **6.3 *The heat of the moment***

For all of the children interviewed, how they dealt with eager peers in competition mode in PE session would differ. It either made them more eager to participate or it made them hide and leave.

Throughout my observations, I noticed that Annie often ended up in discussions either with peers or her teacher. As I have mentioned earlier, it often revolved around the lack of clarity regarding the rules of the game. In addition, she also found her classmates to be very annoying when they did not contribute to the team that they were a part of. “In PE there are children that say ‘No, I do not want to do that!’ (...) It is boring when people do not care to do what we’re supposed to”. (Annie)

Being taken in by her peers is an important reason why Annie enjoys the PE lessons; her position in the class is a little higher than usual when people are eager and in a sort of competition mode. “There (in PE), different groups are more supportive, and you are taken in if you are good at sports. If you are not that good, people will leave you out.” She really enjoys it when peers cheer together and are eager at making a contribution to the team. The times that Annie does not enjoy PE is when peers make a fuss and do not behave properly according to the games and rules that are put up for the games and when teams rile up against each other. Eva, on the other hand does not like the competitive mode of the peers at all. To her, PE is best during warm up or when there are no

competitive activities. To her everything is fine, until everybody starts getting into the competition mode (or battle mode as she will call it). Eva enjoys it when things are not that serious; but when people start arguing about little details and riling the teams up against each other, she does not enjoy it. I ask her about this and why she does enjoy warm up and less serious activities

Because then we talk more before people get into their battle mode. (...) Like today everything was fine in the beginning and then people start to be like, trying to annoy the other team. It is no fun, because then the whole atmosphere is gone. (Eva)

When the children get into their “battle mode” (*competition mode*) Eva experiences a different kind of atmosphere that is more negative and not so friendly, because the children in the heat of the moment start to argue and engage in meaningless discussions. “Sometimes kids are stupid, or they say stupid things or start arguing with other kids for no obvious reason. Then I get really annoyed, because they waste the time for all of us.” This stands in contrast to Annie’s relationship to competition and giving everything that you got in the heat of the moment.

I really like dodge ball. I really enjoy it. (...) I get to use a lot of winner instinct during it and I get to move freely. I like it best when most, or everybody is having fun, when they all give all that they got. (Annie)

During my observation of Annie I was able to see her in action, playing danish dodge ball. In dodge ball her eagerness and roughness were easy to spot. She would never let a ball go; she would hunt for it constantly. There was one particular incident that I took special notice of: Annie, with the ball in her hands and with high speed, approached a girl. Annie jumped up in a star position and threw the ball, in what seemed to be as hard as possible, directly at the opponent; I could hear a big “ouch!” After this, Annie went directly towards a new ball that was lying on the floor, as she reached for it, another player threw a ball at her. She left the field with a sour grin on her face. Just a couple of seconds later her striker was tapped and she was let free. She shouted “All right!” and went directly for the ball, not stopping for a second. Annie’s relation to the game and her opponents seemed to be influenced by her competitiveness, as she had told me about in the interview.

Through my observation of Eva, I could see that she participated in a very different way from start of the lesson to the end of the lesson. The further we were into the session, the more Eva would disappear from the crowd. In the beginning of the class I could see her running with her friends, talking and laughing. As the PE session went on and more action was happening, I saw less and less of her. Eva considers herself to be more of an introvert when she does not feel comfortable and more of an extrovert when she is enjoying herself. When she enjoys what she is doing she feels more comfortable and will easily share and talk. When she is happy, she feels more extroverted, and it is easier for her to converse with others. She feels more social and able to play. For example, when she has dance in PE, she knows how to dance, she feels more confident and will therefore be more social and open. Almost halfway through the PE session, a volleyball field was divided in two for regular dodge ball. This was the first activity where combat mood could be detected. During the whole game, Eva would try to stay as far as possible away from the ball, almost hiding, never going for the ball nor putting herself on the line. This made it hard for the rival team to “see” her. She would stay for a long time on what could be recognized as her own spot, without moving. As the other team started to have players on each side, she would have to move more. Still, Eva was not noticed and nobody tried to throw the ball at her, neither did her teammates share the ball with her. Throughout the whole match she never needed to dodge the ball. It was only until she was one of the last players on her team, then finally someone tried a shot at her. The ball was thrown directly at her and she was not able to dodge it. The ball hit her fairly hard to the head. She walked slowly over to the other side (the caught side, where you need to hit an opponent to get free again). On the caught side, she would stand in the same spot during the rest of the game. She was never given the ball and she never tried to get the ball, so she never had the opportunity to free herself. She would stand on the same spot, leaning up against the bar wall, holding her arms. When the game was finished, she sat down and watched the soccer game from the sidelines for the rest of the session.

These two unique stories for these two girls gives us an indication as to how a similar game may be experienced in two complete different manners, depending on the participant’s skills, interest and comfort level. It might tell us that the atmosphere and the opportunities that they experience are decided by the skills that they have. It is like Annie said: “if you are good in sports, you are taken in, and if you are not that good,



people will leave you out”. Social relationships, being a part of the group and doing fun stuff without bullying others is important for all the participants. And the heat of the moment influences this in a large scale.

For Kris, not bullying others and doing fun stuff are important aspect of his PE experience. He gets involved in what he is doing and not what he is supposed to do. During one of the basketball exercises, Kris became more and more active and was ‘fooling’ around more. The teacher had put all in pairs of two. During the exercise, him and his friend would do what they wanted. They walked around bouncing the ball very high, they gave long passes over other peers and giving passes through their legs. They did not doing what the teacher had asked them to do. At one time his friend wanted the ball Kris was using, and Kris did not want to give it away. The peer ended up taking the ball from Kris, ripping it out of his hands. This led to Kris running after his friend, and as he got closer he threw a new ball that he was holding at the back of his friends head. Kris started to laugh a little; he held his hands up to his mouth, turned around and said “*sorry*”, while he was still laughing. The two of them would then exchange balls again and continue their play, like nothing had happened. So in the interview I ask him if there are any rules that are more difficult to follow than others: “Keeping hands and feet to yourself. A lot of children forget it. Do not bully others if they do not want it themselves, and no kicking and beating”.

So I asked him about that situation from observation earlier when he threw the ball at the back of his friend’s head. As he starts telling me about the situation he gets very eager and almost jumps out of his chair. For Kris, the heat of the moment is what makes him loose focus of the tasks that he is supposed to do and they lead him into situations that he finds funny.

We normally do stuff like that to each other, sometimes we hit each other hard and stuff. He is funny, he never cares, he never feels pain, sometimes he is hurt though but he never cries. I think I have never seen him cry. (...) He just laughs  
(Kris)

The heat of the moment affects these three children in different ways; Annie loves it and cannot get enough of peer cheering her on and when peers join in on the fearsome hunt for victory. For Eva, the competitions only leave room for harsh discussions and

unfriendly peers. To Kris, competitions and arguments fly by, he doesn't care. He is amused by unexpected happenings.

I have here provided an insight into the different experiences of my informants through structuring the interviews and observation into themes that fit the stories and anecdotes. Their experiences differ, but there is some communality to them. Their experiences in PE are related to the structure provided by their teachers. Their experiences are also related to how their teachers, peers and themselves value/disvalue certain physical traits and activities. Two of them would like that teacher's would incorporate and include more of different children's interests. Last, their experiences are also related to how they deal with situations in class in the heat of the moment. How they deal with unexpected situations, heat of the moment and discussions are very different for all of the three participants in this research. This presentation of the findings leads us into the final step: the theoretical discussion, limitations of the study and conclusive thoughts.

## 7. Theoretical discussion

In this particular master thesis the experiences of physical education was explored through interviewing and observation of three children with ADHD. The research was led by the research question “How do children with ADHD experience Physical Education?” It was found that the structure given by the teachers influenced their experience at many aspects and it often gave them a lot to think about. These three children’s’ experiences was also influenced by the activities offered by their teachers. The children recognized some activities as “typical school sports”. How they valued these activities and felt successful in the activities differed for the participant. How they dealt with the different experiences in PE was also detected. These findings came about through interviews and observations.

The results from the data collection and thematic presentation will now be discussed in regards to the theory on ‘ability’ (Evans, 2004). This theory serves as the theoretical framework for this master thesis. Using the three themes as a guide I have structured the discussion according to their experiences and how it relates to the theory. To better structure the discussion I have, just like Evans (2004) utilized Bourdieu’s sociological concepts of field and habitus. Looking at the results it appears relevant to structure and discuss these children’s experiences in regards to how children with ADHD (at large) are previously known to deal with learning processes, educational settings and social relations at schools (Rønhovde, 2004). It is relevant because they all struggle with the structure given by their teachers and they all struggle to improvise, understand and adjust to new situations when new messages and information is handed out. That is why this chapter is divided in two extracts. These extracts are: ‘Known practices’ and ‘adjusting to the field’.

If we are interested in improving the lot of more children in schools in the interest of social democratic ideals, then we needed to be as concerned with issues of ‘ability’ – how it is recognized, conceptualized, socially configured, nurtured and embodied in and through the practices of PE (Evans 2004, p.95)

In this chapter we see how the possession of the right or wrong abilities and embodiment has consequences for these three children in their PE experiences. Just like other research it was found that some of their abilities were recognized and others were

marginalized (Fitzgerald, 2005; Evans, 2004). Annie experiences that being strong and tough gave her an advantage in many of the games they play at school. Eva however experiences that being tender and feminine is a disadvantage. It is apparent that their experiences does not only differ according to which activities their teachers and other peers' value. Their experiences also differ according to how they see them selves, how their teachers recognize and value their physical capital and this influence to a certain degree their relationship with PE. All three children have different relations and positions in the field of PE. Which activities they know and value from before is an important factor to their experiences. They do experience much of the same structures, activities and educational habitus at their different schools. We have seen that the habitus of the field such as a teacher's expectations, values and beliefs about PE and PE students are powerful influences to these children's experiences and to the constitution of the field (Hay & Macdonald, 2010) Their different schools have the same habitus as their teachers emphasize rough masculine hegemonic activities, like: football, dodge ball and other ball sport activities and team sports, referred to as "typical school sports". We see this valuation and devaluation of certain activities and sports in many of the previous research papers published (Dowling, 2011; Bredahl, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2005; Evans 2004). Looking at the findings in this master thesis we see that all the children experience high levels of sporting competence are recognized as a standard for the field (Evans, 2004).

Below I have made a short summary of what I believe is some of the major influences to these three children's experiences in PE. This summary illustrates how Annie might have more physical capital and physical experience to accumulate and to exchange in to other assets in the field of PE, than the two other participants. The two others struggle more to accumulate and to exchange their embodiment and might therefore struggle to be recognized in the field. Eva's experiences of PE are often negative because of her feminine habitus and major interest in dance. Kris experience issues with focus and participation as he might have a heightened need for structure. He might lack the ability to improvise and it is possible that he has not developed the amount of motoric control that is expected at his age (Harvey et.al, 2014).

- 1) It seems like Annie possesses some of the right sporting 'ability'. According to how she experiences the field and the feedback she gets from her teacher, her

physical and social capital has a strong position within the Physical Education field. This doesn't seem surprising to her and she seems to enjoy this a lot. Especially as she might not possess the right social capital in the general field of education she. Through her actions she come forth as a hardheaded and active girl with strong opinions. It might seem as she possesses some of the traits that are typical for boys with ADHD. Her reactions and actions might therefore suit the cultural capital of PE. She is therefore able to accumulate capital, good grades and status within the field of PE because of her strong abilities within ball sports. She struggles more when the rules in PE are different than from her after school activities.

- 2) Eva possesses a feminine habitus, that is usually not valued in the field of PE. Her physical 'ability' might therefore not be as accepted as an exchangeable capital within the field. She experiences to have the right social capital in the educational setting in general, but because of her lack of a 'correct' physical capital she is not as able to accumulate other resources in PE. She often feels insecure about her embodiment and her reactions to certain situations resemble how girls with ADHD are presented in the literature. She believes that her teacher could have helped alter her negative experiences in PE by offering a wider selection and recognition of activities and to give less value to ball sports.
- 3) Kris struggles with the lack of guidelines and clear plans to follow. His experiences are at large related to the structures given by his teachers and the social relations in the field. It seems to be that his different teachers are the ones that impact his experience the most. His relation to the field seems to be less affected by his physical 'ability', as he does not reflect upon it. He seems to be very much connected to many of the typical traits one might assume while working with children and especially boys diagnosed with ADHD. His experiences in the field might meet challenges because of his apparent lack of convertible social capital rather than lack of physical capital. His 'ability' and progress might be diminished by his lack of participation and focus.

I will now present how their experiences relate to the theoretical framework.

## **7.1 Known practices**

The main point made by Evans is that habitus is formed and molded through socialization and education, and is influenced by categories of difference such as social class, gender, ethnicity and disability. These categories are differences that in the field of school physical education become important forms of differentiation, because the prevailing values in the field of PE reward certain forms of abilities and de-value others. (Standal, 2016 p.139)

Evans and Penny (2008) emphasize that the actions of teachers are rarely arbitrary nor are they accidental, and the same might be said to be true for the learners with whom I spoke. Their own understanding of their embodied capacity, their knowledge, experiences and their position in the field were in relation to the hegemonic understanding of 'ability'. They see PE as a place where a narrow set of sport competencies and sport performances in specific sports are more valued than other activities (Evans, 2004).

According to Bourdieu (Wilken, 2008), an individual will be judged on their ability to deploy the relevant habitus within a given field. Annie is the one informant that clearly enjoys PE the most, she plays a lot of handball and American football after school and she is used to the physical demands of the games offered by the teachers. Her teacher values her physical strength and sport skills accumulated from her after school activities. Annie values the games that they play at school. She is able to exchange her sport habitus into acceptance within the general educational field (Wilken, 2008, Evans 2004).

Her physical capital is easily exchanged into other sorts of social capital within the PE field, like respect and high grades (Fitzgerald, 2005). Though she sometimes may bring too much of her sports habitus acquired at after school activities into the field of PE, as we will see later in this chapter, and therefore end up in conflicts with teachers and peers. Even though and in contrast to the two other participants, Annie understands and possesses the right forms of physical capital. She is therefore better suited to understand and follow the habitus of the field in PE. It is clear that she is often able to deploy relevant behavior within the field of PE. Annie is able to deploy relevant habitus. She has 'the right' attitudes, values, motivations, predispositions, representations but also the right physical capital in terms of skills, techniques and understandings (Evans, p.101 2004). According to Evans (2004) the physical capital that the children might acquire

outside schools is very much a part of the reproduction of differences within the field and this reproduction of certain qualities is part of the inequality within the education.

Eva experience that her teacher does not recognize her physical capital as the right asset. She is therefore not able to accumulate her assets into high grades. According to Eva, she does not have the right bodily features to participate fully in the activities in PE. How Eva reflect on her embodiment in relations to peers and teachers and how she communicate with her body in interaction to the field of PE is similar to other studies I have read. According to Anne-Mette Bredahl (2013) PE is a field where ones capabilities and failures are extraordinary visible and the vulnerability of being seen might be stronger in PE than in many other subjects. In Fitzgerald (2005) study it was revealed a general feeling from all the participants in the study, that even though they enjoyed their *own* activities, a number of activities they played where perceived differently by the teachers and the activities where therefore perceived in an unequal manner by the other students. “For example, one pupil suggested the physical education teacher lacked any real desire or concern for him to progress in physical education because he did not participate in any ‘high status’ school teams” (Fitzgerald, 2005 p.47). In team sports like soccer and handball Eva experiences to be “put down” by some of her peers. She is not considered to be an important team player simply because she is not very good in these “typical school sports”. Often large parts of her peers know these games from before. Her peers have acquired their embodiment from organized after school activities, which make it even harder as they are much better than her and therefore know better what to do. Also Kris experiences this importance of relevant activities suited to his embodiment, but in a slightly different matter. He does not recognize that he lacks any ‘ability’. In PE he would just prefer to do more of the things he loves. He loves hockey. He often plays hockey with his dad and grandfather, his stepbrother also plays hockey and he would rather play hockey alone in PE, than to play another sport together with the other peers.

As we have seen through theory and the results teachers have the power to influence children’s attitudes and feelings towards a particular school subject (Fitzgerald, 2005). Kris and Eva experience that there is a lack of different types of activities in PE, and especially the activities that they know and want to play. By offering a narrow set of activities and valuing a narrow set of skills their teachers may not only convey a

message of devaluation of certain types of capital, they may also diminish the possibility to learn and develop new sets of skills and have consequences for pedagogical practices (Evans, 2004; Standal, 2016) These dispositions of being a part of the field and how it influences their experience become very apparent when looking at Annie and Eva and imagining them going to the same class. Eva tells me about how she experience cooperative work in PE. Eva usually enjoys cooperative work; she enjoys it *when* she is able to *contribute* to the group and to the activities. When she able to exchange her competence value, her ‘capital’, she feels more part of the group work and when she is able to contribute. In PE, she rarely gets a chance to contribute as most of the time they play games where she does not posses the ‘right’ physical capital (Evans, 2004). Annie experience on the other hand cooperative work very amusing. She finds it amusing because she is able to contribute and help others. “In gymnastics we help each other and stuff. Like when we did forward roll; we watch each other and give guidelines. I know this stuff, so then people will ask me how I do it. (...).”

In this extracct of the chapter have seen that ‘ability’ is not simply an execution of specific skill; ‘ability’ is the embodied capacities to perform movements valued by the field of PE (Wright and Burrows, 2006). All the informants experience that having clear rules and regulations gives them a better possibility to translate their own capital, both physical and social, into valuable assets. These children’s experiences in PE depend on their own interests and previously acquired knowledge and practices. Their experience also depends on the teachers’ valuation of certain activities. It is not only teachers that appreciate like-minded learners (Dowling, 2011), but these learners also appreciate “like-minded” teachers and “like-minded” peers. In the next extract of this chapter we will explore how they deal with narrow boarders of the field and how their experience is connected to how they are able to adjust to the field’s habitus. When teachers are structured, follow specific rules and known practices that the children are familiar with, they are more able to comprehend what is going on and they are then more likely to succeed. How they adjust to the habitus of the field is closely related to their individual ADHD traits.

## **7.2 Adjusting to the field**

We have seen that Bourdieu’s sociological thoughts are relevant for us to better explain and understand the deep-seated experience these three children have in PE. How they



are able to accumulate capital according to their habitus and the relation their habitus have in connection to the field of PE. Bourdieu have visualized that through our social lives, we have all embodied some implicit basic rules, cues and guidelines for social interactions (Wilken, 2008). What happens when we do not understand or catch these implicit rules and guidelines for social interactions within a given field? How the informant's understand and behave related to the field differ. Their relation to the field differs because they are different as individuals. But, they are also similar; they have some behavioral traits that cause them to misbehave, take breaks, remove themselves from situations and give up when they do not understand or when they are not understood. Children with ADHD might struggle to understand oral instructions (Engh, 2014) and their frustration when there are structures that they do not understand causes them to take actions that do not fit into what is expected of them as they do not have any physically visual traits of their diagnosis (Fitzgerald, 2005; Bredahl, 2013; Rønhovde, 2004; Engh, 2014). It is well known that children with ADHD might struggle with reaching their potential because of their struggles with concentration, vigilance, keeping quiet and controlling their impulses. They also have a tendency to stress out when something unexpected happens (Rønhovde, 2004). In the results we have seen that these children have the same tendencies to loose concentration and that they might stress out over small occurrences.

For most children the socialization process goes very natural, children receive and process impressions and integrate it to their own perceptions. For children with AD/HD this process is not so natural nor that easy to understand. It is not easy to find your place in a group of children/adolescents when you look the same but behave very differently and are not able to comprehend the socialization codex that is available (Rønhovde, 2004, p.37)

In any social field the ability to improvise and adjust to different situations is vital (Wilken, 2008). To Annie, new rules or different rules than what she is used to from organized sport makes her confused and angry. New rules or adjusting the rules in the heat of the game might be very difficult to her. It seems like her sports logic and sports habitus is deep seated in her embodiment. Her habitus might therefore conflict with the field of PE. She might not be able to understand that PE is something else and more than just different sports and it is difficult for a teacher to follow the exact rules of a specific sports and that some games have different rules from different teachers and traditions. That sometimes the games they play need to be adjusted too better meet a

large group of children, children that have different background and understandings of the activities that they play. She might not understand that PE is not only for her, for her own needs and for the sports she participates in (Engh, 2014). This notion sometimes leads Annie into heated discussions with her teacher. I witnessed some of her agitation at the end of a game of dodge ball. In the last five minutes of the PE session she had a dispute with her teacher about a certain rule. This was the fifth time during the observation that she had a quarrel over certain aspects of the different games they had played. This time she got so frustrated that she started shouting to the teacher and left the pitch. Leaving the pitch, shouting and being sort of aggressive might be seen as a “typical” reaction trait for a child with ADHD as they struggle with improvising and understanding new rules and regulations (Rønhovde, 2004; Engh, 2014). This gives her a sort of “double-trouble-situation” as she is sure that she knows the rules, but they have been altered for some reason or the teacher, by trade, is not a certified referee. She might not be able to comprehend that what is considered appropriate under certain circumstances in the sports world, is not appropriate in the field of PE.

Annie struggles to adjust to the new rules and the different situation. We have seen that she might possess such a strong hegemonic sport habitus from organized sports that it sometimes makes it difficult for her to adjust to the PE field (Wilken, 2008). She also experiences that in PE they sometimes do different activities that do not feel very sport specific to her. When they warm up in PE, they just run around with no obvious purpose, unlike the warm-up that takes place during her after school handball practice. At handball they have a specific routine that they follow. What she is used to, and rules that she understands from after school activities are not always the same in PE. Suddenly the sport habitus that she is used to and understands from after school activities is diminished to portray a different sort of valuable asset that she does not hold because she does not understand why they do some of the activities that they do. Annie views PE as a place where right and wrong is defined by rules given by the specific sports. To her, these rules should be clear to everybody else. She knows them, so why do not the others? She has little room for flexibility and situationally defined conduct. What is right for her should be right for the rest. But her outbursts and agitation does not impact her grades or her recognition from her teachers, because the different sports that have helped form her physical ‘ability’ is valued as such a strong convertible capital in the field of PE (Wilken, 2008; Evans, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2005).

Eva experience PE as something ‘good and better’ when her teacher decided rules and regulations to the specific activities that they do. To here it was often a problem in her PE sessions that many children had their own ideas on how the activities should be played. Her actions might be seen in connection to the valuation from her teacher and how comfortable she is with the situation. Eva tells me that sometimes she might leave when there are activities that she does not understand nor is able to contribute to. This happens when they play activities where she does not feel that she has the right physical capital, then she would rather go and sit down on the sidelines or do other types of individual activities like: sit-ups or stretching. During observation I saw her leave when her teacher started to make the field ready for soccer. To Eva it is very annoying that the teacher does not give more structure and clearer guidelines to the games that they play. It is difficult disagree with the fact that it is important for teachers and learners to know what is expected of them. A teacher that pays attention to the actions of the students and is clear on what rules they are supposed to follow is ideal. A clear introduction that incorporates all the different aspects of the games is vital if you want people to cooperate together, so they know what they are supposed to do. This is even more important working with children with ADHD (Engh, 2014).

To Kris new information and bad planning leads to a lot of stress and thinking, “what am I suppose to do really”? He tells me that when there is too much going on, he might leave the hall or go and sit down on the sideline. During a practice routine he started doing “funny things” with his friend instead of doing as told. The habitus of the field and the structure at the school are important factors for educational success and inclusion (Wilken, 2008). His reactions and struggles may form a gap between his habitus and the teacher’s habitus Kris is not able to undertake and generate values within the field, because he may struggle to adjust to the different situations and actions that happen during a lesson. He may also lack some of the motoric skills that are expected at his age level. In the ADHD literature mentioned above we have seen that boys with ADHD is generally on a “lower” level in motoric control and children with ADHD may struggle with body awareness (Harvey et.al, 2014; Rønhovde, 2004).

Children with ADHD may also lack the ability to focus and therefore end up with wandering around instead of doing what is expected of them (Rønhovde 2004, Engh 2014). Kris may therefore need a more organized and planned surrounding, so that he

can better focus on the specific tasks given. The teachers at his school may not be able to give him the structure that he needs. He might need clear guidelines, specific tasks and one-to-one communication to be able to pay attention and learn. Having three different teachers (and more) in PE that he needs to relate to confuses him. He is not able to pay attention to the tasks given to him as the three teachers all run their PE sessions differently. In these cases, his experiences in PE might be influenced by his lack of convertible capital. His lack of convertible capital is connected more to social relations, social skills, social capital and ability to pay attention, rather than physical skills and physical capital (Wilken, 2008).

All three children will have a tendency to leave or refuse to participate under certain circumstances. Only Annie will become aggressive and start heated discussion. The reason why they leave or refuse to do the task might though differ. According to Rønhovde (2004) messages like “‘To day we will do something new and exciting...’ or ‘this task is brand new for you...’ have caused children (with ADHD) to leave, become aggressive or refuse to do the task...” (p. 76). Eva on the other hand will refuse to do a task in a slightly different matter than Annie. Researches have found that girls with ADHD might deal with and express their issues with inattention differently than boys. It might seem like girls are less hyperactive and they internalize and are more insecure. This may lead them to some how disappear unintentionally from the environment and the situations they meet or they may be more orally active and more aggressive verbally than physically (Rønhovde, 2004). The two girls in this research meet these criteria’s at each end of the scale.

In this extract of the chapter we have seen similar traits with all the participants when it comes to the games that they play at school or when there are activities that they feel uncomfortable with or games that they have not learned from before. None of the learners enjoyed participating in activities that did not fit their previously acquired physical capital or sport habitus. As previously mentioned it is clear that the hegemonic influence of masculine sports in PE is a part of all the children’s experiences. The participants value these sports differently and the field’s habitus had different implications for all the learners. How they deal with these implications also differs a lot. Their experiences within the field are bound by the social rules that exist in the school setting, and it is not adjusted individually. Both Kris and Eva would leave the classroom

when they felt inadequate and unsuccessful. It seems clear that the games they play are bound by sport rules. To Kris and Eva their relations to the field are marginalized and their development might be reduced because of the narrow borders of their own habitus and the habitus of the physical educational field (Evans, 2004). We see evidence of “unproblematic assumptions either about motivation (...) or ‘talent’ for performance’ in the interest of (...) participation in organized sport” (Evans, 2004 p.95).

For all the children the structure between them and the teachers makes PE into an experience that gives them room to interact in ways that they understand and are able to relate to. For them, the social relations that these teachers offer might give room for educational development. Teachers that cares, whom pays attention to your actions and organize their classes well are important factors for all of the children. A caring teacher is just as important as having an organized teacher. Fitzgerald (2005) indicates that a strong relationship between teacher and pupils can contribute to a more positive experience and attitude towards participating in PE and learner’s motivation is strongly connected to teachers’ recognition of ‘ability’. Considering the notion that children with ADHD needs to be motivated more than other children (Rønhovde, 2004), we might understand better that these three children’s experiences are very much related to their relationship with their teacher. To have a strong leader, that pay attention to you and is clear on how the games are supposed to be played are important factors of good structure for all of these three children with ADHD.

### **7.2.1 Conclusive thoughts to theoretical discussion**

Throughout working with this master thesis, I have found that some sports and sporting abilities are more valued and accepted. All the children’s experiences and understandings of which abilities (without actually using the word abilities) were considered more valued than others were similar to all of the participants. How this was experienced through the structures given by the teachers and structures within the field was also very similar. They all had a narrow understanding of ‘ability’, and related the field more to sports rather than to education and learning.

It is not right to treat children with ADHD as one group with the same needs. We need to realize that they are all different and therefore they need to be met as individual personalities with individual traits and needs. (Engh, 2014 p.9)

These three children with ADHD experience PE according to their unique and individual personality. I believe that we as teachers and researchers need to come to terms with the fact that we need to value a larger form of ‘ability’ accordant to the differences within the contemporary world.

From a Norwegian perspective it is required that all teachers adapt their teaching according to the learners’ differences and needs (NOU, 2009). As these children ask for a broader view on ‘ability’ and physical active culture, the Norwegian Curriculum also seek to meet the differences by focusing on play, sports, dance and outdoor education (K06). I believe that if we want to be able to adapt our teaching in PE to better meet the differences in all. We need to be able to adapt our teaching by looking for ways to meet these differences through a more structured and well-planned PE practice (Standal, 2016). These children have the right to be different and get their educational development thereafter and they should be informed about the underlying reasons for why we learn.

Through this qualitative master thesis we have seen how the possession of the right or wrong abilities has consequences for three children and their PE experiences. They experience that some of their abilities were recognized and others were marginalized (Fitzgerald 2005, Evans 2004). Annie experiences that being strong and tough gave her an advantage in many of the games they play at school. Eva however experiences that being tender and feminine as a disadvantage. Kris wants less fuzz and less extra thinking. They all need a more planned and regulated PE situation. It is apparent that their experiences differ according to which activities their teachers offer and value and which activities they know and value from organized activities they join in on after school.

Their experiences differ according to how they see them selves. Their experiences differ according to how their teachers recognize and value their physical capital, this also influence their peer relationship. All three children have different relations and positions in the field of PE. They do experience much of the same structures and educational habitus at their different schools. Their schools emphasize what might be seen as rough masculine hegemonic activities, like: football, dodge ball and other ball sport activities and team sports, referred to as “typical school sports”. Looking at the findings in this

master thesis we see that these three children have a normative conception of ‘ability’: they all experience that high levels of sporting competence are recognized as a standard for the field (Evans 2004). They all ask for a more planned and justified structured educational atmosphere within the field. We have seen that their experiences differ because they are unique individuals. They are different, just like everybody else.

## 8. Limitations of the study

This research has explored and informed us on *how* three children with ADHD *experience* Physical Education. It seems like their experiences are widely connected to the teachers' valuation of certain abilities and how the teachers are able to construct structure. Their experiences are also connected to their personal and diagnostic traits. We have seen how their participation in PE is influenced by the way they react to activities and how they meet unexpected situations. As this master thesis is a qualitative study with few participants there is neither room to generalize the findings, the results, the discussion nor the conclusion of this study. This study may open up for the possibility to get a better understanding to how children with ADHD experience PE. To generalize these finding the data material is too small and the participants are too few. What I have found are based on a small selection of three children diagnosed with ADHD. The conclusions I have made should therefore not be seen as conclusions but more as a view of their experience from how I have learnt to know these children. This view is detected from what they have told me through interview and meetings, and what they have shown and presented to me through their actions during observations. It is not said that these experiences are the same for all children diagnosed with ADHD. Transferability is therefore the correct context the results, the discussion and the conclusive comments are to me understood.

These findings in this thesis could be used to expand teachers' insight into how children with ADHD experience PE. Teachers may see that even in a small group of children there are large differences in how they experience PE. Their experiences gives us an additional reminder to the quest of inclusion: that we need to treat all children as unique individuals and if we want to be able to educate children further, we need to structure our lessons to meet the differences within all. We should offer learners clear and easy access to the underlying idea of *why we learn what we learn*.

Though this research may help expand our knowledge and understanding of their experiences of participation and serve as a base for future studies, it also has its limitations. The sample size and variation of participants is a limiting factor of this particular study. It might be that this particular master thesis would have benefitted from a larger sample size, although the sample size of three participants follows Creswell's (2013) recommended sample size of three to ten participants. The gender



variation is also a limiting factor. As there were only three participants there might have been better to focus on only girls, or there should be added one more boy to the research. Nonetheless, the findings suggest a need for continued research in the field. For future research I recommend to look at a larger selection of participants. Maybe more homogenous group (eg: children at same age, same school, same interest, same gender) might inform us stronger and more accurate about specific experiences in PE.

We need more research that explores the experience of structure given by the teacher for children with ADHD. It might be interesting to take two groups of children with ADHD that have a tendency to experience PE differently (e.g.: a group that participate in organized ball sports after school and one group that follow dance lessons after school) and look for communalities of their experiences in PE. Another point could also be to undergo an action research with Annie and Eva and see how their experiences could help them to better understand the differences within the field of PE.

The limitations presented above might have been solved with more in-depth interviews or maybe even better: additional interviews. Having additional interviews might have helped to expand my own knowledge of the participants, how they reacted and also how I should have phrased my questions to better explore their experience. During two of the interviews conducted, I experienced the interviewees to be a little shy and reluctant to express freely their experiences. My first interview was with Annie, and Annie was talkative and not reluctant to elaborate on her experience. Annie was the first person I interviewed and by the way she responded it seemed to me that my questions and the material that I was able to collect through the chosen methods was adequate. My meeting with the two others changed this notion, but it was sort of “to late”. During the latter interviews I did not always get those spontaneous descriptions of experience as I had intended and wanted.

I believe that the most important factor to ensure stronger findings in this master thesis would have been additional observation and a stronger participant connected observations over a longer period of time. This would have given the study a stronger empirical foundation to build the theoretical discussions on and give more relevance in connecting the observations to the interviews.

## **8.1 Conclusive thoughts**

This master thesis illustrates that these three children with ADHD experience PE as something ‘good’ and something ‘bad’ in relation to their own interests and behaviors, and in relation to how their teachers emphasis on certain activities and how they plan and structure their lessons. As previously mentioned these children show us that they experience a normative conception of ‘ability’ related to the habitus of the field. The thesis has captured important themes in the everyday PE experiences of children aged 13-15 years. The findings presented in this thesis are built on meetings, observations, interviews and inevitably my first person interpretation. I have constantly tried to be open, honest and transparent of my own thoughts in my presentation of methodology, theory and in presentation of material. Throughout the thesis process, I have had an open communicative relationship with my thesis promoter and the participants.

It has sought to capture the immediate moment of their embodied experience. Though these findings may not be generalized alone, but they support previous findings that children’s experiences is influenced by the habitus of the field, where only some sports and sporting ‘ability’ is valued and accepted. I believe that these findings are of importance if our mission as teachers is to let children learn and develop accordant to the children’s own needs and ‘ability’. We have seen that how ‘ability’ is valued and recognized within the field of PE has consequences for these children’s experiences. Seeing that the social relationships in general are unpredictable (Wilken, 2008) and that children with ADHD struggle to improvise their way through life (Engh, 2015). We may consider it of utterly importance that PE teachers are able to provide a predictable educational process and we need to understand the underlying reasons for the behavior of children with ADHD. It may be Just like Fitzgerald (2005), I propose that teachers and researchers should “radically rethink about the activities and practices” (p. 55) organized within the discursive praxis in PE, in order to better educate our learners and give them experiences that give less emphasis on a narrow set of abilities, to better meet the differences in all.

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## Appendix 1 - Searching for participants

Hei,

Jeg søker deltakere til en masteroppgave ved Norges Idrettshøgskole. Oppgaven handler om hvordan unge opplever og erfarer kroppsøving. Jeg søker deltakere i alderen 12 – 15 år med ADHD, i Oslo og omegn. Dette prosjektet vil gi god informasjon til kommende lærere i kroppsøving og vil gi et rikt innblikk i skolehverdagen til elever med ADHD. Ingen deltakere vil kunne bli identifisert. Ønsker du mer informasjon, eller kjenner noen som kunne tenke seg å delta? Ta kontakt pr. E-mail [kjetiljv@student.nih.no](mailto:kjetiljv@student.nih.no).



## Appendix 2 – Information letter

### Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

#### *”Lived experiences in Physical Education – from the perspective of children with ADHD”*

Hei,

mitt navn er Kjetil Vaage, jeg holder fortiden på med en masteroppgave ved Norges Idrettshøgskole. Masteroppgaven er en del av det internasjonale masterprogrammet Erasmus Mondus Master in Adapted Physical Activity (EMMAPA), i samarbeid mellom Norges Idrettshøgskole og Det Katolske Universitet i Leuven, Belgia. Denne oppgaven ønsker å belyse et området i kroppøving som ikke har blitt tatt på alvor i forskning så langt: hva elever med ADHD selv tenker, uttrykker og føler rundt personlige erfaringer med kroppøving. Prosjektet ønsker å bidra til at elever med ADHD blir hørt. Deltakere vil bli trukket på bakgrunn av deres ADHD-diagnose, men diagnosen vil være et bakteppe for oppgaven. Det samles ikke inn medisinsk informasjon fordi det er ikke viktig i et pedagogisk/fenomenologisk prosjekt. Det er elevenes egne erfaringer som er viktig.

*Forskningsspørsmålet er: How do learners with ADHD experience Physical Education? (Hvordan erfarer elever med ADHD kroppøving?)*

#### **Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?**

Datainnsamlingen vil i hovedtrekk bestå av samtaler (intervju) og deltakende observasjon. Her skal eleven få mulighet til å snakke så fritt og så personlig som eleven/barnet selv ønsker. Det vil bli brukt lydopptak. Samspillet mellom masterstudenten og eleven vil være viktig for prosjektet. Samtalene og observasjonen vil foregå i løpet av en eller flere dager. Eleven vil bli observert i kroppøvingstimer og i friminutt. Slik vil prosjektet få et bedre bilde av eleven og de erfaringene eleven har. Eleven vil i ettertid få mulighet til å selv kommentere og gi tilbakemeldinger til masterstudenten. Ingen informasjon som eleven selv ikke ønsker å dele, vil bli delt. Om foreldrene ønsker kan de få se temaguiden før selve dagen(e) blir gjennomført. Det vil i tillegg bli gjort notater, egne refleksjoner av masterstudenten i etterkant og i løpet av dagen. Medelever vil ikke få vite årsaken til at eleven/barnet deltar på studiet, om eleven/barnet ikke selv ønsker det.

#### **Hva skjer med informasjonen om eleven?**

Eleven vil ikke ved noen omstendigheter kunne bli gjenkjent i masteroppgaven. Det er kun masterstudenten selv og veileder som vil ha tilgang til personopplysninger. Alle personopplysninger vil bli lagret adskilt fra øvrige data

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes: 31. Juni 2015. Alt av datamateriale vil bli slettet ved forskningsprosjektets slutt.

#### **Frivillig deltakelse**

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og eleven kan når som helst trekke sitt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom eleven ønsker å trekke seg, vil alle opplysninger om eleven bli anonymisert. Elevens/barnets deltakelse vil ikke få noen innvirkning på forholdet til lærere, medelever eller skolen generelt. Heller ikke om de ønsker å trekke seg fra studiet underveis.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Kjetil Vaage 98098985. [kjetil\\_vaage@hotmail.com](mailto:kjetil_vaage@hotmail.com)  
Øyvind F. Standal o.f.standal@nih.no

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Håper å få positiv respons fra dere, deres deltakelse er av stor verdi for dette prosjektet.

## Appendix 3 – NSD Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald I larfages gate 29  
N 500/ Bergen  
Norway  
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17  
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50  
nsd@nsd.uib.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Øyvind Førland Standal  
Seksjon for kroppøving og pedagogikk Norges idrettshøgskole  
Postboks 4042, Ullevål stadion  
0806 OSLO

Vår dato: 24.10.2014

Vår ref: 40393 / 3 / LT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 21.10.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>40393</i>	<i>Lived experiences in Physical Education – from the perspective of children with ADHD</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Norges idrettshøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Øyvind Førland Standal</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Kjetil J. Vaage</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.07.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson: Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Kjetil J. Vaage [kjetil\\_vaage@hotmail.com](mailto:kjetil_vaage@hotmail.com)

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

*Avdelingskontorer / District Offices*

*OSLO* NSD Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11 [nsd@uio.no](mailto:nsd@uio.no)  
*TRONDHEIM* NSD Norges teknisk naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47 73 59 19 07. [kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no](mailto:kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no)  
*TROMSØ* NSD SVI, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47 77 64 43 36. [nsdmaa@sviuit.no](mailto:nsdmaa@sviuit.no)

## Appendix 4 – Informed consent

### Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

How do learners with ADHD experience Physical Education? (Hvordan erfarer elever med ADHD kroppsøving?)

Dersom deres barn har lyst å være med på prosjektet, er det fint om du skriver under på den vedlagte samtykkeerklæringen og sender den til meg.

Vennlig hilsen Kjetil Vaage

Jeg har mottatt skriftlig informasjon og mitt barn er villig til å delta i studien.

-----  
(Signatur, dato, telefonnummer, eleven sitt navn)

**Kontaktinformasjon:**

Masterstudent

Kjetil Vaage 98098985. [kjetil\\_vaage@hotmail.com](mailto:kjetil_vaage@hotmail.com)

Veileder

Øyvind F. Standal o.f.standal@nih.no

## Appendix 5 – Information letter to classmates and parents

Given out to the teachers and students to one of the participants on solicitation from one of the schools

### Informasjon til medelever og foreldre om pågående prosjekt ved skolen

Hei,

mitt navn er Kjetil Vaage, jeg holder fortiden på med en masteroppgave ved Norges Idrettshøgskole.

**Masteroppgaven** er en del av det internasjonale masterprogrammet Erasmus Mondus Master in Adapted Physical Activity (EMMAPA). Denne oppgaven ønsker å belyse et området i kroppsøving som ikke har blitt tatt på alvor i forskning så langt.

**Datainnsamlingen** vil i hovedtrekk bestå av samtaler (intervjuer) og deltakende observasjon av eleven som deltar på studiet. Her skal eleven få mulighet til å snakke så fritt og så personlig som eleven/barnet selv ønsker. Lek og bevegelse vil være en stor del av opplevelsen for eleven. Samtalene og deltakende observasjonen vil foregå i løpet av én skoledag. Eleven vil bli observert i kroppsøvingstime. Slik vil prosjektet få et bedre bilde av eleven og de erfaringene eleven har.

**Medelever (ditt barn)** vil ikke bli direkte observert eller direkte tatt med i betraktningen av det som skjer i løpet av dagen. Samtaler mellom elev og medelever vil bli observert og de nedtegnelser som blir gjort vil i all hovedsak omhandle eleven som er med på prosjektet. Medelevene eller eleven selv vil ikke ved noen omstendigheter kunne bli gjenkjent i masteroppgaven. Personopplysninger av medelevene vil ikke bli skrevet ned.

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Kjetil Vaage 98098985. [kjetil\\_vaage@hotmail.com](mailto:kjetil_vaage@hotmail.com)  
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# Appendix 6 – interview guide, Norwegian Version

## Ustrukturert Intervjuguide

### 1. Før intervjuet:

- Presentere meg selv og prosjektet
- Vise frem båndopptakeren, si at med den så spiller jeg inn historiene, slik at jeg bedre vil huske hva de har sagt
- Fortelle at jeg skal spørre om ulike ting som handler om kroppsøvingsfaget. At det er fritt frem for dem å fortelle meg det de har lyst til. Ikke noe er feil alt de forteller er verdifullt
  - o Noen ganger kan det være at jeg vil spørre mer om spesielle opplevelser de forteller meg om. Det er viktig at eleven forstår at det ikke er farlig og at det ikke er fordi de har sagt noe feil. Men at jeg synes at det er spennende og ønsker å høre mer.
- Fortelle at de når som helst kan trekke seg fra intervjuet og at alt de forteller vil bli skrevet ned, men at ingen vil noen sinne få vite at det er de som har sagt det bortsett fra meg.
- At intervjuet vil ta rundt 45 min. (tell the time)
- Om de selv har noen spørsmål, eller noe de har lyst til å fortelle før vi begynner.
- Legge frem samtykkeerklæringen til foreldrene

### 2. Grunnregler

- ”Om du ikke forstår hva jeg sier, så er det viktig at du sier det til meg”. ”Du må også si ’jeg vet ikke’ når du ikke vet”. ”Dette er viktig fordi det du sier til meg er viktig for oss begge”.

- ”dersom jeg sier noe som er feil så må du si til meg: ’dette er feil’ og så fortelle meg hva som er riktig, hva du mener og tenker”.

Vise skolen

### 3. Bakgrunn for erfaringer i kroppsøving

#### 3.1 Før skolen

- familie/venner og aktivitet
- barneidrett, lek, aktivitet
- barnehage

#### 3.2 Fritiden

- driver de med noen aktiviteter utenom skolen
- organisert aktivitet/lek/idrett
- uorganisert aktivitet/lek/idrett
  - o her er det ikke nødvendig vis så viktig å vite om det er organisert eller ikke. Så lenge det er utenfor skole sammenheng

### **3.3 Skole aktivitet – med fokus på kroppsøving – temaer vi kanskje kommer innom, men ikke kommer til å gå utenfor.**

- Hvilken aktivitet de liker å gjøre på skolen
- Hva lærer de?
- Meningen med kroppsøving
- Innholdet i kroppsøvingsfaget
- Medelever
- Lærere
- Miljøet rundt og i timen, sosiale etc.
- Assistent
- Fasiliteter
- Aktiviteter
- Andre opplevelser av aktivitet
- Andre viktige ting
- Innflytelser
- Bestemmelser/struktur
- Medbestemmelse
- Ro
- Kontroll
- Bevegelser
- Fokusering
- Impulser
- I etterkant av kroppsøvingstimen, hva skjer da?
- Å følge med
- Sosiale relasjoner

#### **4. Pause**

#### **5. Oppfølgings spørsmål**

- Informanten kan fortelle mer om spesifikke opplevelser og komplimentere de områdene vi allerede har vært innom i tillegg til å få mulighet til å fortelle om ting de kanskje har tenkt på i mellom tiden.
- ”Tidligere fortalte du meg .... Fortell meg mer om dette.” Hvor, når, hvordan, hvem, hvilke, hvorfor...
- Er det noe mer jeg lurer på rundt informantens opplevelse av kroppsøvingsfaget.

# Appendix 7 – Interview guide, English version w/observation

Interviews and Observation – a case study design to a phenomenological research

## **1) Research Question:**

How do learners with ADHD experience Physical Education?

- I wonder how they experience physical education:
  - o How they experience doing physical activity
  - o How they experience play/games
  - o How they experience being in physical movement
  - o How they experience the environment
  - o How they experience the class
  - o How they experience the socialization
  - o How they experience being still and inactive
  - o How they experience being in focus
  - o How they experience being in control
  - o How they experience lack of control
  - o What do they experience after a PE class?
  - o What do they experience before a PE class?
  - o When are they not in control?
  - o When do they feel happy?
  - o When do they feel sad?
  - o When do they feel angry?
  - o What do they do then?
  - o How they interact in their environment
  - o What they enjoy about PE
  - o What they do not enjoy PE
  - o Why they enjoy/not enjoy PE
  - o What interactions are good
  - o What interactions are bad
  - o Why are they good/bad?
  - o What they think about PE
  - o Why they think this about PEGs
  - o How they express themselves in PE

## **2.1e) Ideas**

### **1. Experience of participating in PE**

- Interaction, being physical, socialization, belonging, good, bad, ability, games/play, physical activity, inactivity, focus, control

### **2. Experience of environment in PE**

- Class, group, the gymnastic hall, outdoors, equipment,

### **3. Their own reflections on their behavior in PE**

- Before, during, after, happy, sad, angry, control, good, bad, body

## 2.2 Questions

1. Experience of participating in PE	2. Experience of environment in PE	3. Their own reflections on their behavior in PE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will you tell me something you experienced in a physical education class?</li> <li>2. Why did you choose to tell me this?</li> <li>3. What are you thinking before a PE class?</li> <li>4. Is there anything that you want to tell me that we have not talked about earlier?</li> <li>5. Anything you want to tell your PE-teacher, that you do not want him to hear?</li> <li>6. What do you do in your weekends? Any activities?</li> <li>7. When you play, where do you want to be.</li> <li>8. Why?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you feel standing in the PE classroom?</li> <li>2. You showed me around at the school, are there any places you enjoy more than others?</li> <li>3. Who do you usually play with?</li> <li>4. Who do you usually hang with?</li> <li>5. What do you do when you are together?</li> <li>6. Do you also play together in PE? Why?</li> <li>7. How is your class?</li> <li>8. How is your class in PE? Are there any differences?</li> <li>9. What do you think about your teachers?</li> <li>10. Are there any you like in particular?</li> <li>11. What do you think about your PE teacher?</li> <li>12. Running all over, restricted?</li> <li>13.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will you tell me something you experienced in a physical education class?</li> <li>2. Was this a good or a bad experience?</li> <li>3. Why?</li> <li>4. How did you react?</li> <li>5. What did you think?</li> <li>6. How did you express your feelings?</li> <li>7. What goes on when you are in movement? What do you think, do you feel? What do you notice?</li> <li>8. What happens with you after your PE class?</li> <li>9. Do you want to have PE?</li> <li>10. Do you always show up to your PE class?</li> <li>11. What do you do then?</li> <li>12. If you could choose some activity, what would you choose?</li> <li>13. Do they let you choose?</li> <li>14. Do you like choosing?</li> <li>15. When are you having fun? When do you not have fun?</li> <li>16. When are you bored?</li> <li>17. What do you do then?</li> <li>18. Does this happen in your PE-class?</li> <li>19. Why?</li> </ol>



### **3) Clear understanding of the interview and observational setting:**

I would like to observe the children through two different days at school. Both days should have physical education in them. I would like to follow them and observe them during the day from morning of, in their general lessons both before and after PE. I would like to meet them at home or at another place before following them through the day at school. The meeting at a place where they feel safe is in my eyes a prerequisite for a good relationship and further cooperation. Here I would like the child to meet me, see me and also be able to show me some of his or hers personal interests. In addition to this I think it would be very useful if the child would take me on a tour at the school. In this way, the child can show me “his” school, instead of someone else, showing me “their” school. In this I mean that a child will have a different view of their environment and place, therefore the school might have a different meaning for the child, than for a teacher, even though the building is the same.

Before a PE class I will ask questions on how the child experience PE. E.g.: what he/she thinks about before class and what he/she looks forward to do in class. If he/she does not look forward to participate in this class, why is he/she and why not? I will try to be almost like a ghost and a sports reporter, asking how do you feel now? What is this experience like? Why is it like this? Here it is important to be able to take a step back when needed, giving the child some space and let him/her take control of the situation, leading me to what is the essence of their experience. From these observations I would like to sit down, when possible and ask the children questions about PE.

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## Appendix 8 – verbatim before translation

VT1. Ja, det er det at lærerne kommer veldig ofte for sent, og så på ukeplanen min så står det at jeg skulle ha svømming da. Men så skal jeg ikke ha svømming da, for det står feil på planen min, og da får ikke jeg ha svømming, så jeg må være med å hjelpe dem på svømmebanen istedenfor, det synes jeg er veldig dumt at det, man kan jo prøve å skrive riktig, det har skjedd mange ganger og sånn.

VT2. "(...) da blei jeg bare sånn: hva skal jeg gjøre?"

VT3. Huff, egentlig. Jeg blir veldig sliten av det. Det blir mye tenking og... det er forskjell på gymlærere (...)

VT4. Den som er mest strukturert er vel "Tonje". Hu er vi liksom vant til å ha. Men "Knut" og "Thomas", dem er sånn: "Hmmm, hva skal vi ha i dag" og... sånn hvis jeg spør hva vi skal ha på mandag, sånn at jeg skal huske hva jeg skal være med på torsdag, da sa "Knut" at jeg skulle ha med skøyter den ene dagen, og så sa "Thomas" noe annet den andre d... på tirsdagen. Så da blir jeg litt sånn: "Hmmm... hvem skal jeg stole på egentlig?". Det dem har sagt er at det jeg må ta med både inneklær, svømmeklær, uteklær, skøyter og hvis jeg skal ha ski så står det. Så du må liksom ha med deg det og det.

VT5. Det er ikke noe gøy når det ikke er ordentlige regler. Det hater jeg egentlig, når det ikke blir dømt etter ordentlige regler. (..) Jeg må ha at de følger reglene da. Oftest vil jeg ha med reglene, da blir det ordentlig og da får jeg trent på det og bli bedre på det og, enn at det liksom blir tullete og sånn da.

VT6. Det er så rart å varme opp i gym noen ganger. Jeg tenker at det er sånn rart. Hvis jeg skal være med på håndball, så er det alltid en sånn fast greie. Så da er det rart (i gymmen), når vi skal bare løpe, liksom gjøre det helt annerledes. Det blir sånn rar rutine.

VT7. Dagen startet med at man kunne bli tatt ut, selv om du holder ballen. Så sier læreren noe annet, det er bare ikke greit. Vi har alltid spilt det annerledes. Så nå på slutten, da ballen spratt tilbake og traff meg og så datt den i bakken, det er ikke engang en regel. Jeg likte ikke han læreren før og jeg liker han iallfall ikke nå. (taken from observation)

VT8. Hun var ikke over linjen før hun hadde skutt, det er faktisk mål! (taken from observation)

VT9. Det er sånn læreren ikke sant, de kommer med noen aktiviteter. Da har jo halvparten av klassen forskjellige meninger om hvordan reglene er. Da synes jeg lærerne godt kan finne ut av det selv. For da blir det sånn at rare greier kommer inn som egentlig ikke er med og sånn.

VT10. (...) det er liksom greit å få fortalt hva man skal gjøre, sånn at det ikke blir noe rot. Eller noen misforståelser

VT11. Jeg liker Tonje, hun har orden på ting, hun sier når vi har ting og sånn

VT12. Han kjenner jeg jo godt, for at det, han kjenner jo meg veldig godt, vi jobber jo mye sammen og sånn der. Han er veldig flink i gym og... (...)

han er hyggelig mot andre, han er liksom ikke sånn aktiv, han er mer aktiv enn de andre lærerne. De andre lærerne, som er gymlærere da, de går liksom rundt mer enn han. Han står liksom mer og følger med på hva vi gjør og. Han tar det nøye og tar kanskje mer pauser og sånn.

VT13. På treninger der har du en trener som står der og ser på deg. Trener går jo ikke rundt og ser på andre treninger. Han ser på det du gjør og hjelper deg det du skal lære og organiserer hva du skal lære.

VT14. (...) siden jeg driver med det meste av sport da, da er det jo gjerne at mange vil at jeg skal være der da. Der blir man tatt litt mer inn, føler jeg da. Noen ganger er jeg litt mer sånn der ut.

VT15. Hvis det er sånn at alle på gruppa driver med håndball og så skal vi drive med noe håndball-greier. Da synes jeg ikke det er så veldig gøy.

VT16. For jeg har ikke noe styrke i armene mine og det er sånn at jeg føler at jeg bare ser dum ut, for at jeg liksom ikke greier å gjøre noe, jeg har egentlig ikke styr over armene mine når det gjelder kaste og sånn

VT17. (...) Det setter standarden veldig høyt. Så det blir ofte, vi som ikke driver med ballspill blir trykket litt ned.

VT18. Det irriterer meg egentlig litt, for jeg føler at jeg bare har fått firere i gym, men det er på grunn av det ball greiene (...) men det irriterer meg litt at jeg kan få sekser i alle fag, men ikke i gym.

VT19. Ja, det er jo, alle har jo konkurranse et eller sted. Også på skolen er det jo også konkurranse instinkt da. Jeg vil jo prøve å få bedre enn de andre da, men det er det jo sjeldent at jeg får da, det eneste faget liksom, at jeg vet at jeg har bedre enn dem liksom er i gym, sånn som jeg har fått vite nå, så får jeg en femmer i gym da. Så det beste faget jeg kan da, er gym. Det er der jeg trives best. Det er der jeg vet at jeg er bedre enn de i klassen liksom

VT20. At jeg kan løfte mer enn min egen vekt, at jeg kan ta ned litt flere folk enn det andre kan og at jeg er litt mer sterke enn det jenter skal være og sånn. Og siden at jeg har drevet med sport, så kan jeg litt mer om sport og. Kan litt om flere idretter, kan litt forskjellige regler og (jeg) prøver ting, mange ikke har prøvd og. Så prøver jeg alltid å lære noe nytt da, for å bli bedre. Så har jeg jo veldig, veldig, veldig mye vinner instinkt. Holder jeg på å tape, så prøver jeg å gi enda mer liksom, og vil liksom ikke gi meg, før den andre gir seg.

VT21. Og så liker jeg ikke så godt å være på lag med folk som ikke kan idrettene liksom, de irriterer meg. Og liksom at dem skal ødelegge, eller det er jo gøy at dem prøver å være der og sånn, men hvis de sier "nei, det gidder jeg ikke" Det irriterer meg. At man ikke prøver, jeg hater liksom jenter som bare står der, ikke gidder, bare står og ser på,

VT22. At du liksom kan snakke med folk og ha... spille mot hverandre der, og være sosial, enn å sitte inne og være stille eller noe, at du må sitte og skrive og sånn, for da er du jo ikke sosial, der får du vært sosial liksom og får kontakt med de du ikke har så mye kontakt med. Får snakke med dem og lærer kanskje noe nytt som du ikke kunne om dem helt. Og så får man jo høre noen historier noen ganger, når du gjør ting, eller venter på lærerne og eller noe sånt da, da snakker vi om, også kan du finne nye ting da, mange nye ting om den personen som du egentlig har kjent lenge, men har aldri vist om da. Du lærer egentlig alltid noe nytt der. Noen ganger er jo folk mer sosiale der, enn de er på vanlig timer, der snakker du jo og du ender jo med å gå på lag med dem eller noe sånt, med volleyball eller noe sånt. Alle blir liksom tatt med, folk tar deg litt mer inn noen ganger, enn det de pleier å være. Det er alltid noen få grupper liksom, sånn der er en person, der er en person, der og der og der og sånn der, alle forskjellige grupper og der nede (hallen) så er de mer støttende da, for du blir tatt inn da, enn at alle blir tatt ut da, er du god i sport, så blir du fort tatt inn da, men er du mer dårlig, så da blir du fort tatt ut liksom

VT23. Altså det er liksom greit i begynnelsen, men så ser jeg at folk begynner å bli sånn, begynner å bli irriterte og skal gjøre ting for å irritere det andre laget og sånn. Det er ikke noe gøy, for da blir hele kjemien ødelagt egentlig.

VT24. Ofte sånn når vi driver med kanonball og sånn, fordi... eller dansing eller under oppvarming og sånn, for da prater jeg med de andre før alt skal bli så alvorlig og de blir sånn i kampmodus.

VT25. Noen ganger er det fordi andre folk er så dumme (smiler og ler litt). Eller sånn, sier dumme ting, eller begynner å krangle med andre folk for ingen ting. Da blir jeg irritert, fordi at det kaster bort tiden for oss andre. Eller hvis jeg er sånn sliten kanskje fra dagen før.

VT26. stikkball, da, det digger jeg, jeg synes det er gøy liksom og da får jeg sånn skikkelig vinnerinstinkt og da føler jeg at jeg får beveget meg mer liksom, må bare prøve å ikke belaste noe liksom. Jeg synes det er gøy, når de fleste har det gøy da. At alle har det morsomt og vi prøver teamwork og alt det der da, det synes jeg er gøy egentlig da, når alle gir alt.

VT27. Be de få folk til å slutte å plage andre.

VT28. Hender og føtter for seg sjøl. Det er det mange som glømmer. Ikke plage andre hvis dem ikke vil og ikke sparke, ikke slå.

VT29. Ja! (ler litt), vi pleier å gjøre det på hverandre. Ja! Av og til så slår vi litt hardt og sånn. Han er så morsom, han bryr seg ikke, han får aldri vondt (lyser litt opp når han sier det).

VT30. Nei, han bare ler

## Appendix 9 – Field notes from first meetings and observation

### Meeting with Annie aka GI. Jane

What I am curious about is whether or not I should bring in the fact that it is a girl and a boy. Many children will know that I observe these children. And through this way these children will be able to be recognized. To take away gender, is it possible, is it harming?

I wasn't sure how to approach the situation. What where we supposed to talk about? Will this work? Will we have enough to talk about? Will we be able to keep focus on the task?

I came into the house. TW was the one that opened the door. She seemed at first glance a little younger than what I expected. She showed me in to the kitchen where her father had some coffee ready. Everything seemed very normal and relaxed. The whole atmosphere was so good that I eased down. And we started to talk.

We talked about everything. It was a complete conversation of digressions. But it was good, it was what I wanted. We started up with a little talk about my master, and what the idea of the observation and interview that we were going to go through.

#### Key words

Open, honest, aggressive, visionary, love animals, committed, physically strong, mentally strong, will power, competitive, talkative and reflective.

The first words I wrote down, was aggressive, it was the first word that popped up in my mind. But it wasn't what struck me the most. Or maybe it is not the word that I wanted to be the first word to pop up in my mind. Because this girl is so much more. She has great ideas, she has strong dreams, she is committed to her self and to others. She is reflective, she is able to see her self, the way she is and the way she want to be. She is aware of her situation and she want to do her best.

She could tell me that situation could make her very frustrated and she could want to punish a person, but that she would never do it.

But what about her experience in PE? What do I know so far?

I am not sure what will be the next outcome and what I will learn from doing my observation. I just hope that I will be able to give enough attention to the details, to see the whole picture and take out the important incidents.

### Observation Annie aka GI. Jane

I decided to come early. I wanted everything to be in order. I felt that an important part of a neatly done observation is to be aware and at in calm state so to better be able to see the small parts and at the same time have some sort of overview, seeing the situations as part of a bigger picture. A clear view requires a clear mind.

I met up at the school around two hours in advance. I met up with the teachers, I had some time to talk with many teachers. They were all very curious, asking many questions about my work, whom I was going to question, and why. They would not quit until they got an answer they were satisfied with.

The school is very new, having a sort of open solution, where most of the "classrooms" were out in the open. So the classes were classes, but the rooms were for all. Old philosophy meeting new philosophy.

Before lunch I went to look up GI. Jane. I was asked to go to the open area and look for the room, with no name on it, that wasn't really a room. But more a open space shut with a new built sliding door, separating the space from rest of the environment. I was utterly confused. Where was I supposed to go? I asked some teachers, we slid the door open, with out knocking. I asked for Jane, she was busy. Sitting at the far back of the room with music on her ears (I forgot to ask her what type of music she listen to), doing a test in nature science. I told her quickly that I would meet here outside after the test and slid my self out again. I felt a little upset with storming in on her while she was doing a test. 5 minutes later I met Jane in the open environment. It did not seem that she cared that I had interrupted her test. We talked for a short while, she showed me around while smiling. She seemed to be in a good and calm mood. I was kind of expecting her to be more tense. She was showing an old dude around school with ease knowing that he was going to observe and ask questions about her person and her relations to PE. We agreed to meet up after next class so that we could walk together down to the sports hall.

After Jane's class in Arts and Craft she met up outside the teachers office. I remember that she had this smile upon her face when she commented that I was well dressed for the winter. The conversation flows easily, but I am a little conscious, not wanting to ask to much about PE, while all the other learners are running around. Finally I ask here, what she think of before PE, walking down to the sports hall.

All quotes during observation is freely after my memory:

"I sometimes think about not freaking out and stressing during the PE. One time I had a bad experience, where I got a sort of a fit. I was freaking out laying on the floor crying. They even gave me wrong medicine, since they did not know about my ADHD. So that also just made it worse". She told this story before. She told it the first time we met. She explained that it was before she had gotten her diagnosis and before going on medicine. She continues "It almost happened at this school as well. It was one time, a teacher told me that I could not listen to music. Even though the deal is that I can listen to music. I got very upset and stressed. I felt that I was going to have another fit, luckily I didn't. They always let me listen to music now".

"We going to be at the end of the hall. We can just meet there. I just have to change first".

I walk towards the door, where I meet a sign, telling me to put on blue plastic bags to cover my dirty shoes. I walk in. The hall is dark, but daylight is led through windows in the ceiling. I walk to the end of the hall, passing three courts. I found a chair, sat down and started to take notes of the talk from the walk down to the hall and notes about the environment.

The hall: It is a big and cold hall, with three courts surrounded by a soft running track. The three courts all have the typical setup, handball court, basketball court, tennis court, badminton court, volleyball court, etc. The light is turned on. It feels like that everything turns white, it is so bright. My eyes adjust and the feel of the light is more like ice sculpture light blue. I close the last button of my coat. I start hearing voices at the other end of the hall. I take little notice of it in the beginning. Then suddenly, there is something that is not correct. I can feel it. I walk quickly back to where I came from. I am met with over 150 children sitting in a half circle facing what must be one of the teachers. I found a place to sit down.

The whole group is divided in four different activities. The smallest group is basketball. Jane is part of basketball. She told me that it is because that both in handball and in football there are to many not knowing the rules. At football many of the boys

are also very small and annoying. "It is better to do basketball. There I can learn something new, getting better at something I am not so good at, and it will also be better because then I can play more with my boyfriend".

I see Jane, she is trying to get in contact with the teachers. And the teachers are trying to find one that can help her with taping her ankle. One of the teachers volunteer. I sit down next to them and start writing.

She needs the tape because she has twisted the ankle during play. She lays on her back on the floor with the right foot lifted towards the teacher sitting on the bench next to me. They talk together, Jane explains why she needs to wear the tape. That she is now ok, she only wears it for protection. She talks about her grade in PE. That she is able to do it well even though she sometimes is away with injury etc.

"I even got five in dance, even though I was there only once during that four session period". She says with a frown and "himler med øynene". The teacher says that she is a very good player, especially in handball where she has a nice and hard shoot. "You see, here today, almost all the learners are the best from their class, and everyone has chosen to be here".

Jane join the others in basketball. She lift here arms halfway and aim from her chest and shoot with out following through from a distance.

She handles the ball with ease while dribbling.

The warm up has started a while ago, but it seems that all are just playing around. There is no one there to help or correct their play.

Jane end up with shooting a lot and not a lot of running around.

She keeps a lot to here self. Not talking a lot to the others.

She do what the others are doing. Aim and shoot from a distance. There are not many girls in the group. It is a small group consisting of around 12 learners.

They team up in two different teams. They play at the short end of the court at only one basket. Sharing the whole court with the other children playing handball. Jane tells one of her teammates that one of the others are not on her team, but it seems like she is mistaken, she lift's her shoulders and continuous to play. She is all over the place, taking rebounds, passing the ball and shoots when she has the chance. She passes, blocks and receives. She is much smaller than the rest. But keeps a constant overview and controls the ball with ease. There are no teachers around. She starts suddenly to limp a little, but continuous to play. I get the feel that she has her shoulders a little high.

She gets a rebound, wants to shoot, see that she is at a bad position and gives a pass instead.

She plays it rough.

A teacher comes in and talks with a small group of basketball players. Jane walks around, not taking notice of the teacher.

A new game: shooting competition. All players in a line. Player A is first, and player B is second. A shoots, if A misses, B can shoot him out with a score. If A scores B turns to A and the player behind B turns to A.

Standing in line, Jane holds her right arm with her left. She gets the ball. She misses. She cries out "no!". Jane tries again and again. She is missing, but she does not look stressed. She shoots and scores. "Yes!"

A teacher comes in, he wants the small group of basketball players to move out of the court so that handball can play at the whole court during a match. The children playing basketball disagree about moving. And there is a lot back and forth, but it seems that the basketball group will continue playing at the same spot.

The game continues. Jane is out. She sits down and waits.

They play a new round – Jane misses a lot, but keeps in the game.

She has her hands in her pocket.

The rest of the groups move over to another basket. Jane stands put and plays alone at the original basket.

She keeps a distance and shoots with her back facing the basket.

She joins the other with moving from one "od" basket in the corner and back to the original basket at the shared court. She plays alone but also with the others. She talks a little with the others. At the "od" basket she always keeps a large distance and misses each time, throwing with one hand. It seems that the session is over, Jane continuous to shoot.

Jane disappears behind the drapes to another court. She comes back talking with a student using crouches. She walks him over to the changing room and leaves going back behind the drapes. Returns alone, walks into the changing room.

Observation is over.

### **First meeting Kris aka The Kid**

I came up to the house. The Kid was standing on the port together with a barking dog, his mother came out and greeted me. The cold surrounded us, I said hello and we walked in. The house was a part of a small "boligområde". It was a chained house with to floors. We sat down at the kitchen while The Kid made me some coffee, while the mother and me sat down. She was a friendly lady, not much older than me and she could talk. I noticed straight away.

The Kid joined us, I tried to ask him some questions. He would answer to some of them, but the mother, she would answer most of them. During the conversation we found out that The Kid was going to have Swimming in PE the day that I was supposed to come for observation. I decided to call the contact person, while I was there, to make sure and in that case find another suitable time. The contact person would tell me that The Kid had swimming and that the whole school was organizing for a new years prom in the PE-hall. So the best time would actually be the Thursday one week later. I was happy I got the information that I needed about the school and whether or not The Kid actually wanted to participate in the project. I figured that the best option would be, if I wanted to know a little more from The Kid's perspective, I had to wait until we met at school the week after.

The impression he gave me was shy and not talkative, I was worried about our meeting the upcoming week.

### **Observation Kris aka The Kid**

I arrived at school a little later than what I had planned, the road was horrible covered with ice and water. The whole experience got me in a little stressed mood. I tried to remove it on the way in the main door. I had never been to this school before. It was a red, small countryside school, kids was running around in the snow. I walked in the door and looked around. I saw a lady in a yellow reflex vest, I approached her. She was standing at a high desk, like the once they have in bars. I told her that I was at the school to do observation, and that I was supposed to meet the counselor at school. She could tell me that he was not here, and asked me when I was going to observe. I told her that I was here to meet The Kid. With her eyes, she pointed straight in front of her. The Kid had been sitting there all the time. I smiled "I did not see you there! How are you?" I said. We talked a little. I asked what he was doing today in PE and who todays teacher would be. The lady could tell me that today, today she would be the substitute teacher in PE, and that they where going to play basketball down in the hall. "Maybe you could show me around school?" I asked The Kid. He smiled a crooked smile, he got up and we moved towards the hall.

The gym hall was closed, so we went around the school for a short while. I noticed that The Kid is a little nervous, it makes me a little nervous as well. There is something unsaid in the air or a feeling of tension that is hard to describe. For me it is like a pain in my stomach. I have no idea how The Kid is experiencing it. I try to ask questions, they do get replies, but it is in very short sentences. He showed me around school, he walked in a slow tempo and continued to have the crooked smile on his face. He walked in a relaxed tempo and seemed almost cool with the situation, but there is something there, which makes this tension between us. I asked if he was nervous, he could tell me he was. It was difficult for me to get some conversation going. I think we both were a little too much out of our comfort zone. I hoped that it would change in the interview setting.

The bell rang and all the classes gathered in the canteen, The Kid was there. His friend asked the teacher, as she passed whether or not they could start walking down. She told them that they had to wait. I placed myself close to the teacher, but at the same time, held a distance. I noticed that The Kid seemed to be wanting to leave. He looked back at me, then looked at his friends, looked down and then started to walk towards the gym. The teacher hadn't stopped talking.

I arrived down in the gym, The Kid had already changed into sport clothes, he was playing with a basketball. I passed him and went to the other corner of the room, where there was a place for me to sit.

The room was the size of a basketball court, with high up wooden floors and wooden walls. It had a stage, made of wood and it had a different smell than what I would imagine. It did not smell of sweat and stinky feet, it had a fresh smell, the smell of wood. I estimated the room to be older than me. I sat down at the end of the stage and started to take my notes.

Basketball The teacher whistled and all went into the "ribbevegg", the teacher gives a "opp" and The Kid answers loud and clear. TK stands at the end of the line, at the other side of the hall from me. He holds his ball under his right shoulder while the teacher is talking, the other hand holds tight to the "ribbevegg", he leans into it slightly in a relaxed position. The teacher tells them, that they will do what they did on Monday. (TK wasn't there on Monday.)

Everybody runs around, TK at the other side of the court, away from me. He shoots at the basket, both hands at chest and a kick with his feet. Teacher stops the play. TK talks with a peer and laughs, does not seem to pay attention.

TK does what the teacher has told, he walks around and "dabs" the ball while he greets the once he meets. He keeps at the other side of the court, while he "dabs" the ball with two hands.

He stands alone for a while and starts to move with a "double dab" and greets a peer. He loses the ball.

There is a lot of noise, dab and talk

He keeps staying at the right corner, I am at the left corner at the other side.

He walks around in a slow pace. Tries to "dab" between the legs. He keeps the ball the second the teacher blows the whistle.

Birthday song. Now: higher tempo, switch ball with the one you meet. TK walks slowly around -> many other peers run. TK is over at my corner now, he walks around without shoes He dabs the ball very high

A peer wants TK's ball, it is a small ball, he takes it from TK, TK runs after and throws the ball at peer. The ball hits the peer's back head. TK laughs, holds his hands towards his mouth and says "sorry". He takes his left arm and holds it tight to the right arm. He exchanges ball with the peer and starts walking around again.

Passing through his legs. He "dabs" the ball often with both hands (DD).

New game: try to take away someone else's ball. TK starts kicking the balls away. DD, and takes someone's ball away.

Walks around

Two and two, choose. TK and the peer he hit with the ball goes together, from instructions of the teacher.

New game: throw the ball at the same time to each other.

They start out throwing the ball very high and far.

Underarm throw, keeps heading the ball. TK throws the ball, peer is not ready. TK takes the ball with his knee. Give a two hand pass.

The two of them start doing something on their own. They kick and head the ball. They keep a large distance, give few successful passes, use a smaller ball than others, one hand shot.

Whistle: all to the "ribbevegg". The teacher says she is impressed by the class, they all follow instructions and keep the ball when she whistles. (she is the sub of the day). TK leans to the "ribbevegg" and holds the ball still. The teacher and I are a little confused when she divides the class into groups, and the class is confused, peers ask where they are supposed to go and what now? TK keeps quiet, he just stands there with his arms crossed.

Two groups in two circles, to give passes in the circle, in a certain pattern. TK's first pass is to the wrong person, a person that is not in his pattern. Second pass is good. He stands just a little outside the circle.

He throws the ball hard and low. He lifts his hands to his mouth and turns a little away from the other, as a reaction to his throw.

He gets his own pattern after a while: he throws the ball with one hand. He gets the pass at the right side, leans a little and then throws the ball with the right hand. He is ready to get a new pass, the moment he has thrown his.

TK changes place. TK shouts "å bra!" Takes his hand and holds a little in his ear.

I notice that he often rubs his hands together, he stands often still, with his hands together or in his side.

Drinking break:

TK goes out, comes back with a bottle of water and sits down at the stage, on the right side. He drinks some water, sits alone, and smiles to a peer.

Game start: He is in green team, green team has to wait. He sits down at the stage with the other. The stage is full, and I feel a little uncomfortable.

They are supposed to do "planken" while waiting. TK and the rest, are not doing it. They do it for a while, wrong, and then they stop. They sit and talk.

Green team play:

TK keeps in the back, close to his own goal, at the right corner, in defense. He asks often for the ball, and does not get it very often. When he does get it, he does not move up, he throws the ball up.

He gets a pass, but pulls away. A player goes towards him, he pulls out of the way.

TK is taken out and a new player is in. He does not play for the rest of the time.

He stands quietly at the side of the field for the rest of the class

### **First meeting Eva aka The Girl**

I arrived at this large red house and rang the door bell. The mother opened the door and the girl came in from the right as I was taking off my shoes. The environment was so different from the other houses I visited, I think it must have been because

of the light. This was the last meeting that I had and we were already way out into February, so the sun sets later in the evening and the meeting was earlier in the day, than the two others. It was sun and not darkness surrounding the windows. I sat down at the kitchen table, the girl on my left and the mother to the right. I asked the girl if she knew what the project was about, she hesitated a bit, turned her face towards her mother and told me that she did not know more than what her mother had told her. When leaving my office that morning, I had been in a hurry, so I had forgotten the information sheet and the paper her mother was supposed to sign. So I asked if she had seen the one that I had sent to her mother. She hadn't seen it. Her mother got up and went to her office, she came back with the information sheet.

I asked the girl if she wanted to read it, or if I should read it for her. She wanted to read it herself. As she was reading, we, the other, her mother and me, sat around the table quietly.

As she got done reading, I tried to elaborate on the information and telling her that she could at any time back out from the project. I asked her if others in her class, knew that she had ADHD, she wasn't really sure if anybody did, but she did not mind if they knew.

The conversation went easy, the girl did not say much. I had the impression that she said what she thought was important or interesting to her. I did not have to ask too much of questions, but she still wouldn't be giving me large elaborating answers. We talked a little about her hobbies, she would answer to questions to what her hobbies were, but she could not elaborate to a certain extent why she actually enjoyed doing what she did, she just liked dancing and that was pretty much it. She had been dancing since she was a young girl and she did it because she liked it. She had the body for it she said, but she did not want to do it professional, it was more for the fun than to get really, really good.

This meeting was in many ways different than the others, as all my learned assumptions from talking with the two other about their situations at school, their academic abilities and the rules at the school was very different from this girl. She could tell me that she really did not like ball sports. It made her uncomfortable and she really did not enjoy it. It was apparent that the mother felt the same way. It was clear that they were a little frustrated with the activity situation and the emphasis that the teachers would put on certain activities and leaving other activities out of their total assessment grade. This girl's mother talked about it a lot.

In addition to the school we also talked about dance and what she loved about dancing, we both have the same dance guru in Michael Jackson (who doesn't have him as a guru when you love dance?) and the talk about this went very well. I felt that we had a nice connection and was very happy about that. I was looking forward to do the observation the following week.

### **Observation EVA aka The Girl**

I arrived early at the school. I found a parking lot and got in. The school was big and a little confusing. I had a hard time finding the office/reception desk. As I came into the reception/administration area, there was no one at the desk. A lady was speed walking past me, with a guy on her tail. She walked into the school nurse office, where she only stayed for a second. The guy made a joke about her being the new school nurse as she approached me and asked if I was looking for someone. I told her I was looking for the school counselor. "That's me!" she said with a smile. "Are you the physiotherapy student?" "Oh, you are the one that is coming for observations in The Girls class. Would you just give me a minute, so that I could help this guy out first?" She went away and I texted The Girl, telling her I was at the administration. The Girl came by, she had a friend with her. And I had a uneasy feeling about the situation. I felt suddenly that I was intruding into her space and daily living. We exchanged some words and then she left for lunch. I was still waiting for the counselor to be back. After about 15 minutes she came back to me. I told her a little about my project and asked if I could talk a little with the teacher. She was friendly and told me to walk with the other teacher standing next to her up to the teachers lunch area. I followed the teacher and he showed me the PE teacher sitting at the end of the lunchroom with ten other teachers sitting around the same table. I felt a little on ease. I approached him, he smiled and greeted me. That helped. He asked if I wanted to sit down and have my lunch in there. Looking around the room for a place for me to sit. There were about 50 teachers in the lunchroom, and I did not feel like sitting there. I told him, I did not have the time to pack lunch, so I wanted to go to the grocery store. I wish I had gone to meet The Girl.

I came back to the PE class, the class had already started, but they were sitting at the floor. It was a new hall, divided in two courts with a drape in between. There are one class at each court.

As the teacher gives introductions to what today's lesson is about The Girl sits quietly and listens to him.

They first starts running around freely in the room. The Girl runs around, keeping to the right corner of the room. She runs without shoes, she disappears from the hall. When she comes back she runs with the girl that I met her at the office with. She runs back and forth with ease while talking with girlfriends. They run three and three together, talking. She does not take up a lot of space nor attention. She wears black and grey, almost disappearing in the crowd. She runs without a break. (many other of the girls, stops a couple of times).

Stiv Heks. (Wicked Witch) (Stiv Heks is a typical Norwegian warm-up game. It is a warm-up where it is easy to disappear in the game and never get caught if you do not want to participate.)

The Girl runs around, and keeps away from the witch easily. She often pulls the sleeve of her sweater and runs a little on her toes, with out ever really running fast. She holds her hands together and she is constantly observing the witch, keeping a safe distance.

She often moves up in the right corner, where she will keep close to her friend from earlier.

The game is over and the whole class pulls out to the side.

She stands talking with some friends while the teacher gets the field ready.

As the teacher explains the route of the "hinderbane" she pays attention but keeps a little in the back.

It is only half and half of the class at the time doing the exercise "hinderbane".

The Girl is in the first group, I notice a smile. She does a double jump at the second "hinder" and forgets to skip.

She often fix-up her hair and holds the left arm over the right one. The two rounds go fast. And I am not able to get down a lot of observation notes.

Next round: The Girl runs around in a slow pace, she touches her hair a lot and does the "hinder" with controlled motions.

She skips the rope quickly and moves around carefully.

I experience her as a little passive.

She moves gently in the "ribbevegg". Her teacher gives her some feedback. She moves slowly towards the skipping ropes.

She does the "ribbevegg" identically to the way that the teacher showed her earlier on.

After four rounds she is not sweating not does she seem to be exhausted.

In the break she sits and talks with her friends. Suddenly she is not there.

At what is supposed to be the last round, her teacher comes up to me and tells me that The Girl has gone to the locker room.

She does not participate in what was supposed to be the last round.

The teacher switch court with the other class. Dodgeball:

The class is standing in a row. The Girl holds her hands together. The class is divided in two. She stands still at her spot, with a small "knekk" in her knees all in the back of the hall, she stand there all quietly and still.

The two groups are divided with a bench. It is "King Dodgeball". While the other team does not have any one on the other side (caught side), the girl will constantly stand at that side. She never runs for the ball, so that she is never "seen" by the other participants. She stands at her "own spot" for a very long time, with out moving. As the other team also starts to get hit and moves over to the other side (caught side), she moves more, but is still not noticed and nobody tries to hit her. She never needs to dodge the ball. She is one of the last on her team when someone tries to hit her with the ball. She is not able to dodge it and is hit fairly hard to the head (that is normally a free area), she walks slowly over to the otherside (the caught side). She stands at the same spot during the rest of the game, she is never given the ball, so that she has never the opportunity to get free and she never tries to grab the ball her self. She stands at the same sport, leaning up against the "ribbevegg", holding her arms.

When the game is over and they are about to start playing soccer, she goes and sit down at the side, up on the stage, away

from the rest of the crowd, she stays there until the class is dismissed.





