



Thesis writing

# Methods



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## EDUCATION EXAMPLE

### Example: methods section in a thesis (excerpts - part of general introduction)

The ethnographic work of Scraton and, to a certain extent, the classroom interaction studies of Giffin et al (1981: 1983) have the closest immediate links with the present study. Although Hargreaves (1986), Scraton and others have to some extent investigated physical education and sport as sites of regulation and (re)production, none of these studies has systematically addressed the part played by the linguistic choices of students and teachers in this process. This study fills that gap and in doing so provides a more substantial model of classroom interaction by which teachers may come to analyse and change their practices.

#### 1.3 Methodology

The study originated from a need to explain the differences in participation rates between boys and girls in physical activity. It was conceived as an ethnographic study working towards a 'grounded theory' that would emerge out of several cases studies of secondary schools. These schools were to be selected to cover the various combinations of female and male teachers, taking single-sex and mixed classes. It was intended that using the fieldwork tools of observation, open-ended interviewing and the analysis of curriculum and other relevant documents, certain trends would emerge to answer the original questions and to explain the differences in the experiences of boys and girls in relation to physical education and sport. As is the way with an ethnographic approach, a broad theoretical base may inform the focusing of the original investigation but it is through this investigation that further theoretical insights should emerge (Lincoln and Guber, 1985).

It soon became clear, however, that firstly, such a general study of the school ethos was not going to break any new ground, particularly as the Report from the Commonwealth funded project Girls, Physical Activity and Self-esteem (1986) had been published and secondly, that what was more revealing and yet unexplored was what was happening in the language students and teachers used with one another. Observations of lessons by male and female teachers suggested profound differences between the two that were difficult to explain using the tools of interaction a ...

Systemic functional linguistics requires a detailed and systematic analysis of text ...

*final paragraph of section introducing the research and identifying the gap to be filled*

*logically leads to a Methods section, showing how research was carried out*

*Methodology as section within general introduction to thesis, between identification of the topic and outline of following chapters*

