Exploring gender habits: A practical epistemology analysis of exergaming in school

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* Social mediation
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## Sample

Two groups of 15-year-old students (4 girls, 3 boys) playing exergames once a week for 90 minutes over a ten-week period in a large school located in a residential district in a medium-sized city in Sweden.

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Digitisation is an ongoing process in society as well as in physical education (PE) and research has identified digital technologies as a trend that influences the PE curriculum. A number of studies have explored the topic from different angles, although very few have empirically looked at the critical aspects of digitised PE in educational practice. This is particularly striking when it comes to issues of gender. Against this background, the aim of the paper is to explore gender habits in a digitised PE practice. A transactional approach, drawing on the work of the pragmatist feminist Shannon Sullivan, is used in the study. The data consists of video- and audio-recordings of ongoing video gaming organised by the PE teacher. A practical epistemology analysis is employed to explore the teenagers’ gender habits in depth. In the analysis, it is clear that the use of exergames in school reinforces traditional gender habits, rather than weakening them. This is particularly evident when the teenagers play in single sex groups. This is also the case when playing in mixed gender groups, although here some changes in gender habits can be identified. However, gender habits are not easily transformed and the findings support the argument that deliberate teaching is important when issues of gender are raised in practice.

# Outcome

"In this study, the picture of stable traditional gender structures is confirmed when exergames are used in an educational setting. When exploring digital tools like exergames, the study sheds light on how exergaming in school reinforces traditional gender habits, rather than disrupts them. Exergaming is thus about doing gender and reproducing certain gendered positions, rather than undoing gender.... Digital tools like exergames are far from value free... teachers cannot be easily replaced by digital technologies." (Authors, 1188-1189)