**Proposed symposium titled:** Phenomenology, embodiment and physical education

**Proposed symposium members:**
1. Dr Steven Stolz (La Trobe University, Australia) & Chair of symposium;
2. Dr Malcolm Thorburn (University of Edinburgh, UK);
3. Dr Jonas Holst (San Jorge University, Spain);
4. Dr Joris Vlieghe (University of Aberdeen, UK); &,
5. Discussant: Dr James MacAllister (University of Edinburgh, UK)

**Proposed symposium abstract:**
Since the rise of phenomenology in the Continental tradition in philosophy, physical education and sports pedagogy as a discipline area, or field has some ad hoc examples to call on that claim to use a phenomenological approach; however, from a philosophical point of view most of these accounts could be argued to be insufficient and unsatisfactory. Taking into consideration the tendency in physical education and sports pedagogy to objectify the body as a thing to study seems rather odd, and ignores what it means to have a worldly body (Körper) and be a lived-body (Leib) which reveals itself from within. As such, this symposium explores the conceptually rich space of phenomenology and embodiment in physical education and/or sport.

**Author:** Dr Malcolm Thorburn (University of Edinburgh, UK);

**Title:** Reconstructing Dewey: habit, embodiment and pedagogical engagement

**Abstract:** This critical paper uses selective education writings by John Dewey as the basis for considering how a strengths-based and personalised view of habit and embodiment could effectively thrive as part of an enhanced physical education/health and wellbeing (PE/HWB) focus in schools. To date, very few research connections have linked John Dewey’s educational thinking with the public health influences underpinning strengths-based thinking on PE/HWB, a situation compounded in some instances by considering there to be a separate body and mind (Dewey, 1928). Thus, the paper centres on Dewey’s belief that habits when allied to continuity and interaction could help children to integrate experiences in ways which enable them to constructively evaluate the contribution of PE/HWB to their education. For Dewey, habits are not mere repetitious events but more by way of acquired socially shaped predispositions which enable feeling and judgement to be shown in response to settings. By extension therefore psycho-physical concepts of habit learned through PE/HWB could be applied with a wider mental/moral dimension (Dewey, 1922/2012), as evident for example by continuous open-ended experiences where learners’ initiative and curiosity is used to reconstruct experiences in order to grow further. As experiences proliferate, learners’ thoughts and feelings can become part of a repertoire of flexible and suitably sensitised habits which reveal independent thought, critical inquiry, observation, experimentation, foresight, and sympathy for others. The paper concludes with specific example of how the connections between habit, embodiment and PE/HWB could be pedagogically strengthened (Thorburn, 2017).

**Bibliography**