

# **"Weighing in on the Body"**

WSPECW 2007 Conference

November 15-18

Asilomar Conference Center (<http://www.visitasilomar.com/>), Pacific Grove, California

## **KEYNOTE ABSTRACTS**

### **HEATHER SYKES**

Thursday Keynote

#### **"Fatkid Dodgeball": From the PE Hall of Shame to the National Dodgeball League'**

This session examines how fat phobia gets played out in physical education and in popular culture by examining the game of dodgeball. Based on interview with people who identify as 'fat' or 'overweight', dodgeball exemplifies the difficulties experienced by students who are 'fat' in physical education programs. The highly visible, gendered, and fat phobic context of dodgeball has long been recognized by the physical education profession resulting in the game being inducted into the Physical Education Hall of Shame in 1992; recently, however, recreational and professional dodgeball leagues have appeared across North America and there is an official band for the National Dodgeball League called 'Fatkid Dodgeball'. So, we may ask, why have physical educators regarded dodgeball as a problematic game? Can lessons learned from dodgeball help the physical education profession to understand and address fat phobia? Moreover, how are we to understand new forms of dodgeball that are appearing in popular culture as leagues, movies and music? This paper will offer some thoughts about the current moral panic about fatness by unpacking the social and psychic dynamics played out in that simple, little game of dodgeball.

Friday Interactive Session

#### **'Health-based and motion-based fat phobias in PE'**

In this session will discuss and reflect on two forms of fat phobia that occur in physical education. Using excerpts from interviews about physical education with people who self-identified as 'fat' or 'overweight' to illustrate, we will consider two forms of fat phobia that happens in physical education. The first is 'health-based' fat phobia that stems from medical discourses about the 'obesity epidemic'. The second is 'motion-based' fat phobia that arises from cultural anxieties about the movement of fat bodies and the movement of fat on bodies in games, dance and fitness activities. The session will be an opportunity to discuss how students experience and negotiate these two forms of fat phobia and reflect on our teaching and coaching practices.

### **LAUREN MORIMOTO:**

#### **"Epistemologically Yours": How Autoethnography Can Dismantle and Reconstruct "Knowledge" about Fatness**

As the news media reports about the increasing number of obese Americans, calls for action are generated from various corners such as the medical, physical education and political communities. Those clamouring for a solution rarely assess the assumptions about fatness - e.g. the media's framing of the obesity as a problem of individual responsibility. Nor do they ask, "In terms of fatness, how do we know what we know is right?" Through the use of autoethnography, I critically assess how my fatness positions me in the field of kinesiology as a student and teacher (and discuss what this reveals about the field). Finally, I demonstrate how autoethnography allows me to dismantle and create knowledge about fatness and fat bodies.