"Part of the solution"?: charities, corporate philanthropy and healthy lifestyles education in New Zealand primary schools

by

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Certificate of Authorship

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Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of corporations funding, devising and implementing healthy lifestyles education programmes in primary schools as ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity. Based on a critical ethnography of three primary schools in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, this thesis illuminates how an array of organisations and actors, including multinational corporations, government agencies, charities and schools, are assembled together through their combined ‘will to improve’ children’s (un)healthy bodies, thoughts and behaviours. This study explores how children, teachers, principals and external providers understand and experience these outsourced programmes and resources. It also discusses how the attempts to ‘teach’ children about health shapes children’s understanding of health, fatness, teachers, corporations and ‘healthy’ consumption of corporate products.

This thesis is a study of governmentality, where I examine the rationalities, technologies and subjects of government, not only the ‘official’ plans to govern, but how they are actually enacted in schools and how they are experienced. My evidence is gathered from a range of sources: observations within and outside of the classrooms; my own journal entries; research conversations with children, teachers, principals and external providers; building relationships with participants; and documentary evidence, such as annual reports, organisation websites, resources, media releases, and children’s school work. I employ the notion of assemblage as a key analytical framework to examine evidence and demonstrate how healthy lifestyles education programmes endeavour to govern schools, teachers and children towards certain ends.

My analysis of the corporatised healthy lifestyles education programmes reveals that the assemblage is messy and complex. It is constituted by an ensemble of elements that converge together to provide simple solutions to the ‘problem’ of children’s (fat) bodies and (un)healthy lifestyles. A number of these elements, such as the neoliberal political rationality, dominant discourses of health, fatness, individual choice and responsibility, multinational food corporations and regional charities, pedagogies of disgust, fear and silence, and technologies of consumption, outsourcing, privatisation, and corporatisation, have been identified and critiqued in governmentality studies of public health and public education. However, what my research reveals is some of the ways that disparate elements are brought together and
made to adhere. This includes practices of assemblage, such as anti-politics, re-assembling, rendering technical, forging alignments, resolving tensions, and managing contradictions.

Throughout the thesis I argue that analysing these practices of assemblage is integral to understanding how corporations and their ‘not-for-profit’ partners endeavour to govern children to become certain kinds of ‘healthy’ consumers. This is not to say the authorities were always successful. The students were often willing and able to contest and critique the corporate attempts to commercialise their educational space. However, I argue that healthy lifestyles education programmes act as a form of mis-education, one that constrains and constricts how teachers teach and what students learn about health, corporations and consumption. Finally, this thesis explores the possibilities for teachers and children to work together to employ counter-politics that ‘unsettle’ the assemblage.
Chapter One: Introduction

Curbing the childhood obesity epidemic requires sustained political commitment and the collaboration of many public and private stakeholders. (World Health Organization, 2015a, para. 3)

Childhood obesity is a serious public health issue with no simple answer. Any effort to address it needs to be comprehensive in scope, with active participation by all involved. This includes the government, food and beverage industry, civil society, entertainment and media companies, schools and parents. (International Food & Beverage Alliance, 2008, p. 1)

Corporations would not be involved in schools were it not for the promise of increased profits and market share. (Vander Schee, 2005, p. 20)

In New Zealand, childhood obesity is still ‘big’ news. Children’s fat bodies and their assumed cause, unhealthy lifestyle choices, continue to be positioned as crises that require immediate attention and intervention. A selection of headlines gleaned from the news website Stuff.co.nz over the past four years indicates some of the current concerns in New Zealand about children’s bodies and behaviours:

- Obesity epidemic at ‘crisis point’ (Heather, 2014)
- Pre-school checkups reveal extreme obesity (Torrie, 2013a)
- Study: Kids obese and short of nutrients (Joyce, 2012)
- Parents in dark on how fat kids are (Harvey, 2013)
- ‘Shocking’ obesity rate among kids (no author, 2014)
- Help on way for obese children (Saunders, 2012)
- Obesity battle ‘must start in childhood’ (Torrie, 2013b)
- Kiwi kids turning into telly tubbies (Duff, 2013)
- Push to reform children’s eating habits (Speer, 2013)
- NZ kids crippled by their weight (Duff & Day, 2014)
- Kiwi kids destined for shorter lives than parents (Chapman, 2013)

This is not a new crisis, nor is it unique to New Zealand. Across the globe, scholars, journalists, politicians and the public continue to be concerned with the childhood obesity epidemic, a phenomenon regularly described as a “ticking time-bomb” (Logue & Sattar, 2011, p. 174) that poses a threat to children’s lives, national economies, national security (see Let’s Move, n.d.), and even global climate change.
The notion of an obesity epidemic has been ‘sold’ to societies on multiple premises and taken-for-granted assumptions. Children are unacceptably fat. Children today are more likely to be obese as adults. Being fat is unhealthy. This generation of children will be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Fat children are the result of energy imbalances caused by the ‘scourge’ of modernity: increased screen time, sitting time, and consumption of ‘junk’ food (see also Gard & Wright, 2001, 2005). These assumptions have not, however, remained unchallenged. A number of authors have contested the idea of a childhood obesity crisis (see Evans, 2003; Gard, 2011; Gard & Wright, 2005), whilst others have argued that the global war on childhood obesity can and does have harmful consequences for many young people (e.g. Burrows, 2010; Burrows & Wright, 2004; Evans, Rich, Davies, & Allwood, 2008).

**Schools, corporations and the war against childhood obesity**

The moral and medical panics over obese ‘couch-potato kids’ have resulted in a “rapid proliferation of policies and interventions” (Pike, 2010, p. 82), many of which target children in schools (see Waters et al., 2011). Articles and editorials published in New Zealand mainstream media frequently position schools as both a cause of and solution to childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles:

- Make exercise at school mandatory: academics (Broughton, 2014a)
- School lunches less healthy – nutritionist (Law, 2010)
- Our children winning battle of the bulge (Parkinson, 2014)
- School’s out – and the junk food’s in (Todd, 2011a)
- Are school lunches harming our kids? (Broughton, 2014b)
- Free fruit for primary schools at risk (Williams, 2009)
- Children up to a healthy challenge (Butterfield, 2011)
- Kiwisport fund ‘not enough’ (NZPA, 2009)
- Professor aims to improve kids’ health (Penman, 2012)
- Healthy lifestyle as important a lesson as reading (Gordon, 2014)

Despite the perception that schools are an ‘obvious solution’ to childhood obesity (and numerous other social, emotional, health and economic ‘problems’), Gard and Vander Schee (2011, p. 84) caution that this perspective may be naïve and misguided as school-based interventions “have a long and virtually unbroken record of failure in
affecting children’s body weight.” Schools are not, however, the only organisations who are seen as a significant contributor to children’s fatness and unhealthy lifestyles.

Corporations, particularly those of the food and drink industry, regularly incur the wrath of anti-obesity campaigners, public health researchers, academics, nutritionists, journalists and the public. A number of popular books have been published on the topic of food and beverage corporations and their links to childhood obesity, including *Fast Food Nation* (Schlosser, 2005), *Food Politics* (Nestle, 2007) and *Fat Land* (Critser, 2003), as well as documentary films and television series, such as *Supersize Me* (Spurlock, 2004), *Food, Inc.* (Kenner, 2010), and more recently, *The Weight of the Nation* (Chaykin, 2012). Overall, these critiques of the food and drink industry (also described by critics as ‘Big Food’), are based on the idea that ‘fast food’ and ‘junk food’ companies, such as McDonald’s and The Coca-Cola Company, “do everything possible to persuade people to eat more - more food, more often, and in larger portions - no matter what it does to waistlines or well-being” (Nestle, n.d., para. 2). In a nutshell, there is a shared belief that the corporate quest for profits has resulted in increasingly unhealthy lifestyles and an epidemic of childhood obesity. Yet again, New Zealand news headlines demonstrate these concerns about corporate food, drink and marketing:

- Big Food the obesity problem (Morgan & Simmons, 2014)
- Junk food marketers draw ire (Gough, 2012)
- Ban on junk food gimmicks sought (Stewart, 2014)
- Call to restrict junk-food sale near schools (Todd, 2011b)
- Time to curb junk food marketing to kids (Swinburn & Martin, 2012)
- Sugary drinks are a health hazard (Fitchett, 2014)
- Unhealthy food adverts target kids – study (no author, 2014)
- ‘Big Food’ is a ‘big problem’ (O’Neil, 2014)

It is hardly surprising that the food and drink industry rejects and attempts to refute claims that their products and marketing are responsible for causing childhood obesity. Representatives and lobbyists for ‘Big Food’ in New Zealand, such as the Food Industry Group (FIG) and New Zealand Food and Grocery Council (FGC), are

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1 To avoid confusion, I use Nestlé to reference *Food Politics* author Marion Nestle, while I use Nestlé for the world’s largest food company.
vocal about the food industry’s relationship with childhood obesity. They regularly 
provide media releases and reports to ‘prove’ their ‘socially responsible’ and non-
obesity-causing activities, such as sponsoring sports events, reducing calorie content 
of products, and making promises to governments that they will stop selling sugary 
fizzy drinks to schools (e.g. Hodgson, 2006). The public is regularly informed that 
food and beverage companies’ marketing practices are already regulated (albeit self-
regulated) and do not need further regulation. Children’s health and eating are 
positioned as predominantly the parents’ responsibility, and those who bemoan the 
place of junk food and advertising in today’s society are viewed as “food police” 
(Farrar, 2014) who “have forgotten the joys of childhood” (Stewart, 2014, para. 14). 
Big Food continues to reinforce the idea that adults and children need to take 
“greater personal responsibility for food and drink intake, energy output and their 
long-term health” (Food Industry Group, 2012, p. 2).

So although the food and drink industry clearly states they are not part of the 
problem of childhood obesity or unhealthy lifestyles, I found it surprising that they 
now promote itself as part of the solution. In 2011, for example, the International 
Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA) (a formalised coalition between the CEO’s of 
multinational giants Nestlé, General Mills, Ferrero, Kellogg’s, Grupo Bimbo, Kraft 
Foods (now Mondelēz International), Mars, PepsiCo, The Coca-Cola Company, and 
Unilever)\(^2\) wrote to Dr Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health 
Organization (WHO):

\[
\hspace{1cm} \text{We all recognize that non-communicable diseases and childhood obesity are major public health problems that require multi-stakeholder solutions. As a member of the private sector, we firmly believe that the food industry has a role to play as part of the solution, and have committed our time, expertise and resources to do our part. (IFBA, 2011a, p. 1, my emphasis)}
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The phrase ‘part of the solution’ is now well-worn when it comes to the food and 
drink industry promoting their business, corporate citizenship, and official ‘position 
on obesity’ (see The Coca-Cola Company, 2012a, p. 2).

This re-positioning of corporations as obesity ‘solvers’ has not gone by 
entirely unnoticed. A number of authors have critiqued some of the promises, 
pledges, partnerships and corporate social responsibility programmes designed

\(^2\) In 2012 McDonald’s became a member of the IFBA. The IFBA has a number of ‘associate’ 
members also, such as the Grocery Manufacturer’s Association, The World Federation of Advertisers, 
and Food Industry Asia (FIA).
and/or enacted by the private sector in the name of being ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity (for examples, see Ginn, 2011; Hasham, 2011; Herrick, 2009; Koplan & Brownell, 2010; Molnar, 2005; O’Dowd, 2011; Simon, 2006). Of these critiques, few have examined how schools have been drawn into the corporate war on obesity. Of course, anyone who dares to challenge the sincerity of the food industry’s attempts to make children healthier is criticised by ‘Big Food’, its Chief Executive Officer’s (CEOs), spokespeople and lobbyists. For instance, Katherine Rich, CEO for the New Zealand Food and Grocery Council (n.d., para. 6), states that any claims that the food industry “is not interested in being part of the solution to the obesity epidemic … are made out of ignorance.” This tension between the ‘official’ intent of Big Food – to genuinely be part of the solution to childhood obesity – and my own supposedly ‘ignorant’ perception that corporations were being somewhat disingenuous, was a considerable motivation to further interrogate this phenomenon.

My interest in the ways schools and children were being targeted by corporations was sparked quite by accident. In 2010 I was conducting a visual methods research project with a class of children from a primary school in Auckland, New Zealand. On my first day in the school, a group of children were about to take photographs of their classmates ‘in action’ during one of their regular fitness lessons. I dutifully checked the cameras: batteries charged – check; camera works – check; memory card blank – no. There were a series of images stored on the camera that seemed out of place, images that initially shocked me. ‘What’s happening in these photos?’ I asked one of my nine-year-old participants. ‘Oh,’ she nonchalantly replied, ‘last week Ronald McDonald came to school to take us for fitness’. I immediately became curious about why McDonald’s wanted to teach children about fitness (and, as it turned out, about physical activity). A number of other questions also emerged. What other food and drink corporations were ‘in’ schools? What were they trying to teach children about fitness, fatness or health? Who else was involved?

After conducting a preliminary review of literature, it became clear to me that there was a scarcity of research investigating, evaluating or critiquing these school-based corporate ‘solutions’ to obesity. A number of aspects warranted closer examination. There was a global attempt by multinational food and drink corporations to ‘teach’ (or at least be seen to teach) children about health, with the expressed goal to not only make children live healthy lifestyles, but to also prevent childhood obesity. In 2012, for instance, The Coca-Cola Company (2012b, para. 3)
promoted that it had “more than 250 physical activity and nutrition education programs in more than 100 countries around the world” and set a goal to “sponsor at least one program in every country where we operate by the end of 2015”. Despite the enormity of the corporations’ claims, both in terms of the global scale of these anti-obesity interventions and their success in actually preventing obesity, there has been little critique or criticism in the media or in academic literature.

This particular ‘corporate assault’ on obesity, children’s lifestyles and education seemed to have passed by relatively unnoticed and unremarked on. For instance, in 2008 and 2010 approximately one-fifth of all primary school students in New Zealand (including home-schooled children) participated in McDonald’s My Greatest Feat pedometer programme (the reason why Ronald McDonald had been in the primary school I previously mentioned). Breakfast news and children’s television promoted it (see jacobrockify, 2011). McDonald’s promoted it in stores, in public, and online (see McDonald’s, 2008). Teachers promoted it to students and parents (see Prescott, 2008; Gilbert, 2010). And yet there was (and still has not been) a single news story, opinion piece, or journal article in New Zealand that questioned why McDonald’s wanted to ‘teach’ children in schools, what children were learning, or how McDonald’s has been ‘allowed’ into these schools. I found it astonishing that a corporation frequently criticised for worsening children’s ill-health could be effortlessly re-invented as both health promoters and health educators.

Further, I discovered that the food and drink industry’s new-found interest in schools and obesity was closely connected to their reconfigured policies on marketing to children. In 2009 the IFBA introduced their self-regulated Global Policy on Marketing and Advertising to Children (see IFBA, 2010, 2011b). Each IFBA member agreed to adopt

a global marketing policy to children which covers all of the countries around the world in which it operates. IFBA’s global marketing approach has been shown to effectively limit how and what IFBA companies advertise to children under 12 years. (IFBA, 2011a, p. 2, my emphasis)

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3 For added clarity, I have italicised the names of the specific programmes and resources implemented in schools, such as Life Education, Iron Brion, My Greatest Feat, and 5+ A Day. When the name of a programme is similar too, or the same as, the organisation devising, funding or conducting the programme or resource, the programme will remain italicised, and the name of the organisation will not. For example, the Life Education Trust produces Life Education resources, and the Iron Brion character performed at St Saviour’s School as part of the Iron Brion programme.
In addition to the *Global Policy on Marketing and Advertising to Children*, the IFBA members make national and regional self-regulated ‘pledges’ to reduce childhood obesity and to reduce marketing to children. In countries where no specific pledge is made, the IFBA states that the *Global Policy on Marketing and Advertising to Children* will still apply. This policy and the associated ‘pledges’ signal a new phase in marketing to children. On the surface this global policy is promoted as ‘limiting’ how and what these wealthy corporations can advertise to “children under 12 years” (even though UNICEF defines a child as someone 16 years of age and under). In fact, the Association of New Zealand Advertisers Inc (ANZA) (2014, p. 8) endorses the IFBA’s *Global Policy on Marketing and Advertising to Children* by stating it is “wrong to suggest that industry is not committed to responsible marketing”. However, there is one industry marketing promise that includes a noteworthy exception; an exception that seems to create further opportunities for the food and beverage industry to advertise to children:

> Members commit not to engage in product marketing communications to students in primary schools, except if requested by, or agreed with, the school administration for specific educational purposes. (IFBA, 2011b, para. 8, my emphasis)

With this in mind, I was interested in investigating these so-called *specific educational purposes* and the purpose they serve for corporations, schools, principals, teachers and students. This line of thinking produced a number of other questions that did not appear to have been raised or answered in mainstream media or academic writing. What were the reasons school ‘administrators’ requested corporations to engage in “product marketing communications to students in primary schools”? What forms did these communications take? Why did teachers or principals ‘employ’ McDonald’s and other private sector organisations to teach children in schools? What did children ‘learn”? How did corporations and schools ‘win’ from their relationship? How might they ‘lose”? And how have the very corporations and industry blamed for the ‘problem’ of childhood obesity now re-invented themselves as ‘part of the solution’.

There has been much scholarly and public criticism of the impact of corporations, junk food and advertising on children’s health. There is a plethora of

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4 The Association of New Zealand Advertisers Inc (ANZA) is the New Zealand advocacy group for the advertising and marketing industry (see www.anza.org.nz).
quantitative research on the ‘successes’ of anti-obesity interventions, both in schools and beyond. In stark contrast, there has been little debate on the ways in which corporations are using fears about fat bodies and unhealthy lifestyles to promote their brands and their products in schools. Critiques of how the corporate ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity is shaping schools and schooling, teachers and teaching, children and learning, are also scarce. With this ‘gap’ in mind, it was not my intent to examine the ‘effectiveness’ of these interventions in terms of how they may (or may not) have increased children’s consumption of healthy food and physical activity, reduced their body weight, or changed their lifestyles. Rather, I wanted to critically interrogate the ways in which the corporations, their partners, and adults and children in schools justified and understood the various programmes, and how these rationales acted in alignment - and in tension - with the ‘official’ rhetoric of corporations being ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity. My aim was to analyse how certain notions of health, obesity, childhood and education were drawn upon in the corporate anti-obesity/healthy lifestyles education programmes; how corporations (and other organisations) were perceived as being an acceptable ‘part of the solution’; how corporations used the war on childhood obesity to market their brand and products; and, how their ‘solutions’ were actually implemented (or not) in New Zealand primary schools.

In order to investigate this increasingly pervasive yet relatively unexplored phenomenon, I formulated three central research questions:

1. What elements make up the corporate ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity?

2. How are the different elements of healthy lifestyles education programmes brought together and made to ‘congeal’?

3. How do individuals and groups understand and experience the corporate ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity, and how are they shaped by them?

Towards a research approach

To answer these questions I needed a theoretical, analytical and methodological framework that enabled me to examine a range of evidence: the ‘official’ rhetoric of corporations (i.e. those espoused via their own websites and annual reports, the published and implemented school resources and programmes, the voices of corporate spokespeople and their partners in media releases) and evidence garnered
from talking to, listening to, and observing children, teachers, principals and external providers of the corporate programmes. To do this I employed a critical ethnographic approach. This approach allowed me to investigate what those with the ‘will to govern’ (Li, 2007a, 2007b) wanted to happen (i.e. fight obesity, change marketing practices, increase consumption), but also what actually happened when these governmental programmes met their intended targets in three primary schools: St Saviour’s School, Reynard Intermediate School and Dudley School (for ethical reasons, the names of all schools, children and adults are pseudonyms).

By gathering together a number of traditional ethnographic methods - spending time in schools, building relationships and conversing with participants, observing participants ‘in action’, journaling, and collecting documentary evidence - I was able to interact with members of three school communities and collect evidence about the everyday practices that occurred in these schools. At the same time, this approach also enabled me to pay close attention to place, space, context, and individual subjects; to understand the ‘realities’ of these schools, teachers and their students; and, to examine the knowledges, understandings and perspectives of those who were targeted by, and experienced, the corporate ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity.

I utilised Foucault’s (as well as post-Foucauldian scholars’) notion of governmentality as an integral aspect of my analysis. The reason for this was two-fold. First, I was interested in the Foucauldian notion of government as “the conduct of conduct ... a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Gordon, 1991, p. 2). I felt this concept would provide deeper understanding of the multiple ways in which the corporate-backed endeavour to make children less fat ‘conduits the conduct’ of children, as well as their teachers and principals. Indeed, my interest in this phenomenon began with a concern that these healthy lifestyles education programmes were not only an attempt by corporations to “shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through [children’s] choices, desires and aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles” (Dean, 2010, p. 20), but were also a business strategy to serve corporation’s financial interests; a strategy with unpredictable outcomes.

Given my burgeoning curiosity about the plethora of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations creating these so-called solutions to obesity, Foucault’s (1991a, p. 102) description of governmentality as an “ensemble” of knowledges, tactics,
practices, rationalities and institutions was a useful starting point. With this in mind I drew on the work of other governmentality scholars (e.g. Dean, 2010; Leahy, 2012; Li, 2007a; Rose, 2000) to employ the notion of assemblage, or governmental assemblage. Assemblage provided a key analytical framework to critically examine the phenomenon of school-based corporate solutions to obesity. It enabled me to explore ‘how’ institutions with seemingly different purposes and agendas (e.g. a fast-food company, a charitable health education provider, and a school) could be brought together, align interests and activities, and ‘stick together’. The notion of assemblage also allowed me to explore the relationships between multiple ‘other’ elements that were drawn into the broader governmental assemblage: rationalities such as neoliberalism, healthism and welfarism; discourses of health, obesity, fatness, education, charity and philanthropy; technologies of marketing, advertising and consumption; processes of commercialisation, privatisation and corporatisation; and actually enacted pedagogies and resources. Critically, through the lens of assemblage I was able to examine how these disparate elements connected with and shaped the targets of these governmental programmes – children, teachers and principals.

Thesis overview

Chapter Two provides a critical review of academic literature that has investigated or interrogated elements of my research topic. In this chapter I draw on literature to critically examine the ‘crises’ of childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles, and how corporations and other organisations position schools as appropriate sites to ‘solve’ childhood obesity. This includes an exploration of healthism and neoliberalism as rationalities that shape teaching and learning about health and obesity in schools, and also corporatise and privatise public education. I conclude by introducing the terms corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility, examining how corporate efforts to be seen to be healthy, responsible and educational may work to align the purposes of public education with the business interests of the private sector.

Chapter Three is a discussion of my analytical framework. It includes an overview of key theoretical ideas I have used from Foucault and post-Foucauldian scholars, with a focus on the notions of government, governmentality and assemblage.

Chapter Four begins with a rationale for a critical ethnographic approach and an overview of the three schools where I conducted my research. I then explain and discuss the critical ethnographic methods used. In Chapter Five I discuss how the
alleged ‘problem’ of childhood obesity has resulted in a number of authorities - corporations, schools, the state, and charities - working together to devise, implement and fund various school-based solutions. I also examine how these organisations are assembled together when they have disparate, even competing, interests. In Chapter Six I examine how the corporate and charitable attempts to teach children to be healthier is connected with broader educational reforms and the increasingly common practice of outsourcing. I also examine how outsourcing has helped to position classroom teachers as ‘inexpert’ teachers of health and physical education, whilst at the same time re-invented external providers of healthy lifestyle/anti-obesity programmes as ‘the experts’. Chapter Seven is a critical interrogation of the ways in which resources and pedagogies provided by corporations and charities are underpinned by neoliberal and individualistic notions of health, choice, lifestyle, and responsibility. Here I also illuminate how efforts to create individually responsible, ‘healthy lifestyle choosing’ children can be problematic. Chapter Eight explores the multiple ways in which healthy lifestyles education programmes are fused with technologies of consumption as a means to shape children as consumers of corporate brands and ‘healthy’ corporate products. Chapter Nine concludes this thesis with a discussion about how the concepts of governmentality and assemblage extend our understanding of the privatisation, corporatisation and commercialisation of education. It also offers insights into the phenomenon of corporations becoming ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity, the potential dangers it poses for teachers, children and public education, and the possibilities to ‘unsettle’ the assemblage.
Chapter Two: Review of literature

There has been considerable scholarly, public and political discussion about obesity and the obesity epidemic. This is especially true for childhood obesity, referred to as “one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century” (World Health Organization, 2015b, para. 1), a pandemic (Ben-Sefer, 2009), a “massive tsunami” (Hellmich, 2005, para. 6), and other phrases that characterise the status of childhood obesity as being “worse than global warming” (Gard, 2011, p. 14). In order to analyse the phenomenon of corporations (and their partners) positioning themselves as key players in the ‘war on childhood obesity’, I have gathered together and critically examined a range of literature that explores elements of healthy lifestyles education programmes in primary schools. This includes an interrogation of a number of assumptions about children’s fatness and health, such as: the notion that there is a crisis that needs an immediate solution; the claim that that solving childhood obesity is simply a matter of balancing ‘energy in’ with ‘energy out’; the idea that schools are appropriate or effective sites to prevent obesity; and that the field of health and physical education (HPE) has a key role to play in improving children’s bodies and lifestyles. I also draw on the work of scholars who question these taken-for-granted assumptions and share a concern that some of the individualistic, ‘healthist’ practices in schools may actually be ‘dangerous’ to children’s well-being. One other element critical to understanding the implementation of healthy lifestyles education programmes in schools is the role of neoliberalism in the global reform of public education. Here I pay particular attention to literature that explores the corporatisation and privatisation of education, including the outsourcing of HPE programmes to external providers. This includes an examination of a new type of strategic philanthropy in schools, one that endeavours to ‘solve’ a number of social problems, such as the ‘crises’ of childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles, whilst at the same time attempts to enhance the corporation’s brand image and bottom line.

Childhood obesity: a crisis?

Concerns about childhood obesity are abundant: the prevalence of overweight and obese children has reached epidemic levels and will continue to worsen (e.g. de Onis, Blössner, & Borghi, 2010); overweight and obese children are more likely to become
obese adults (Taylor, 2007); overweight and obese children are at increased risk of developing non-communicable diseases, including non-insulin dependent (Type II) diabetes and cardiovascular disease (World Health Organization, 2015b); and this generation of children “may face a shorter expected lifespan than their parents” (Partnership for a Healthier America, n.d., para. 1).

What has caused this so-called crisis? Childhood obesity is often described by government, academic, corporate and popular authors as the result of energy imbalance. This reflects a common belief that the rising prevalence of childhood obesity is the result of modern ‘unhealthy’ lifestyles (World Health Organization, 2015b), a combination of increasingly sedentary children and an overconsumption of ‘junk food’ – cheap, accessible, energy-dense, nutrient-poor food and drink produced and aggressively marketed by the food industry (see Nestle, 2007). A number of authors attribute childhood obesity to the ‘energy-out’ part of the equation, stating that children’s physical inactivity is a significant cause of children’s fatness and the obesity epidemic (e.g. Tremblay & Willms, 2003; Trost, Kerr, Ward, & Pate, 2001). Others focus on the ‘energy-in’ element, in particular the consumption of sugar-sweetened ‘fizzy’ drinks (see Ludwig, Peterson, & Gortmaker, 2001) and ‘fast food’ (e.g. Bowman, Gortmaker, Ebbeling, Pereira, & Ludwig, 2004). It must be pointed out also that these biomedical notions of energy-in versus energy-out as the cause of childhood obesity are often imbued with moralistic judgements. As New Zealand obesity researchers Schofield, Schofield, Dickson, and Croteau (2005, p. 30) argue: “There is evidence to suggest that the problem of overweight and obesity in New Zealand youth has as much to do with sloth as it does gluttony”. In other words, the ‘problem’ of childhood obesity is not only a global public health crisis, but also a moral panic (see Campos, Saguy, Ernesberger, Oliver, & Gassesser, 2006).

There are, however, a number of scholars who critique the idea of an obesity crisis and contest the notion that childhood obesity is merely a matter of making children move more and eat less (see Campos, 2005; Flegal, Graubard, Williamson, & Gail, 2005; Gard, 2011; Gard & Wright, 2005). Whilst I am not attempting to replace one set of obesity ‘truths’ with another, these critiques of childhood obesity are compelling because they recognise that “definitions of the problem of overweight and obesity as well as suggested interventions are not as simplistic, straightforward, or as ideologically neutral as they appear” (Vander Schee & Boyles, 2010, p. 170). For instance, there is a ‘truth’ shared by a number of politicians, journalists, teachers
and scholars that there is in fact a childhood obesity epidemic. Gard (2011, p. 66) challenges this assumption by providing evidence “that overweight and obesity prevalence amongst Western children had flattened and, in some cases, begun to decline even before the world-wide alarm about spiralling childhood obesity had been raised”. As Foucault (1980) argues, every society has its regime of truth that accepts particular discourses and allows them to function as true. The obesity epidemic - including its assumed causes and solutions - is one such regime of truth.

The regime of truth that physical activity (or ‘energy-out’) will significantly improve young people’s health and fatness has been challenged by a number of researchers (see Boreham & Riddoch, 2003; Harris, Kuramoto, Schulzer, & Retallack, 2009; Twisk, 2001; Welk, Eisenmann, & Dollman, 2006). This taken-for-granted assumption of the benefits of physical activity (especially in terms obesity and health) is dominant in education (Rich, Holroyd, & Evans, 2004). These physical activity solutions to childhood obesity reflect the “implicit belief … that exercise, through the mediating notion of fitness, leads to health, that exercise is essential to health, and that being fit and having a slender body are proof of health” (Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989, p. 426). Kirk and Colquhoun (1989) described this belief as the ‘exercise=fitness=health triplex’. Contrary to the ‘common-sense’ notion that making children more active will lead to less obesity and better health, Evans (2003, p. 97) reminds us that the links between children’s (fat) bodies, physical activity and health are “tenuous, complex and contradictory”.

Critiques of the idea of a childhood obesity epidemic are important to my research for two reasons. First, critical obesity research posits that childhood obesity cannot simplistically “be understood as an unproblematic biomedical category … but constitutes a socially constructed and contested ‘problem’” (Evans & Colls, 2009, p. 1053). In other words, a child’s fatness is more than a medical condition to be solved, but a complex phenomenon, shaped by interconnecting social, political, historical, economic and cultural dimensions and determinants. Second, I share the concern that when claims relating to childhood obesity “are treated as uncontestable truths, void of any ambiguities and uncertainties … and are uncritically welcomed as a kind of individual and cultural salvation” (Vander Schee & Boyles, 2010, p. 170), they are also ‘uncritically welcomed’ into schools. Subsequently, no matter whether one agrees with the critiques of childhood obesity in their entirety, by acknowledging that obesity’s causes, effects and solutions are complex and uncertain should at the
very least result in questioning what is happening to children in schools as the result of this war on obesity.

**Schools in the war against childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles**

Schools are frequently talked about as being ‘part of the cause’ of childhood obesity, providing poor quality school meals in the UK (see Pike, 2010), offering ‘competitive foods’ and beverages in US schools (Linn & Novostat, 2008; Molnar, 2005; Nestle, 2007; Vander Schee, 2005), selling sausages to fundraise for New Zealand schools (Richards, Darling, & Reeder, 2005), and providing inadequate physical education and physical activity (Crister, 2003; Hamlin, Ross, & Hong, 2002). At the same time, schools have been positioned as ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles (see McDermott, 2012). For example, Trost (2006, p. 183) states, schools “are uniquely situated to address the epidemic of obesity and sedentary behaviour plaguing our youth”.

There are, however, significant critiques of the idea that schools and school-based interventions (e.g. physical activity initiatives, healthy eating programmes, physical education lessons, anti-obesity schemes) are effective, or for that matter appropriate, sites for the war against childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles. Researchers have provided evidence that a number of school-based anti-obesity interventions have failed to make children significantly healthier, more active or less fat (e.g. Flegal, Tabak, & Ogden, 2006; Harris, Kuramoto, Schulzer, & Retallack, 2009; Waters et al., 2011). Gard and Vander Schee (2011, p. 84), for instance, contest the appropriateness of schools to fight obesity by demonstrating that school-based interventions “have a long and virtually unbroken record of failure in affecting children’s body weight”. Harris and colleagues (2009, p. 723) meta-analysis concludes that “school-based physical activity interventions did not improve BMI. Therefore, such interventions are unlikely to have a significant effect on the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity”. Likewise, following their systematic review of the effectiveness of thirty-eight school-based interventions that focused on changing physical activity (PA) levels, dietary intake, and weight outcomes, Brown and Summerbell (2008, p. 138) report that:

There is insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of dietary interventions to prevent obesity in school children or the relative effectiveness of diet vs. PA interventions. School-based interventions to increase PA and reduce sedentary behaviour may help children to
maintain a healthy weight but the results are inconsistent and short-term.

Despite the apparent failures of anti-obesity interventions designed, conducted and evaluated by obesity, nutrition and physical activity researchers, there remains the belief that teachers and HPE programmes play an important role. The “scientific basis” for this argument is that “it is intuitively sensible to promote an active lifestyle for children as a preventive health measure” even though in the same chapter Trost (2006, p. 165) admits that there is “relatively weak evidence linking childhood physical activity with long-term health outcomes”. Recently the American Medical Association agreed to support legislation that would require yearly instruction in all public schools (from grade 1 through 12) to teach students the causes, consequences and prevention of obesity (see Moyer, 2012). New Zealand researchers Hamlin, Ross and Hong (2002, p. 51) also argue that because New Zealand children are participating in less physical education in schools and choosing more sedentary activities it “seems inevitable that body weight will increase”. Gordon (2014, para. 6-10) agrees, arguing that:

It would seem sensible, when considering the implications of New Zealand’s growing lifestyle-related problems, to place a greater emphasis on [the health and physical education] learning area, especially in primary schools where many of our lifestyle habits are developed …. Quality education offers a major opportunity towards developing a healthy society. While the investment in health and physical education in primary schools will not have an immediate and measurable result, it will have a long term impact in the future.

The notion that physical education or health education is an appropriate or effective tool to improve children’s health is contested by a number of scholars (for detailed discussions on the relationship between schools, physical education, obesity and health, see Evans et al., 2008; Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014a; Gard, 2011; Gard & Wright, 2005; Kirk, 2006; Tinning, 2010; Wright & Harwood, 2009). A significant argument for challenging the use of HPE to address childhood obesity is that it poses a danger to children’s health and education. Evans (2003, p. 87), for example, warns that if claims regarding childhood obesity are uncritically implemented in schools it may negatively affect children’s health and “could damage the educational interests ... of children and young people”. Cale and Harris (2011, p. 1) report that a number of researchers “feel that the discourse surrounding obesity and some of the reports, messages, policies and measures being taken to tackle it are misleading, misguided
and could do more harm than good”. Burrows and Wright (2004, p. 91) also express unease that school-based anti-obesity practices can be problematic as “the identities constructed for children within contemporary panics around childhood obesity especially, are ‘dangerous’ ones”.

I do not claim that the failure of school-based interventions to prevent or reduce obesity means there should be no debate about the role of schools in improving children’s health. On the contrary, it is the uncertainty of the evidence which encourages me to engage in this research, to provide further critical examination and promote debate about what is happening to children in primary schools in the name of fighting childhood obesity. If childhood obesity critiques have any merit whatsoever, then it is imperative to ask critical questions relating to primary school-based anti-obesity interventions. Who has the most to gain and to lose from the current war on childhood obesity? How does the childhood obesity crisis create a space for exploitation – by corporations, academics, government agencies, charities, external providers, teachers and children? What are the consequences of these organisations and individuals implementing anti-obesity interventions in schools? With common-sense understandings of childhood obesity as a current crisis and schools as key sites for intervention, how have public, private and voluntary sector groups ‘cached in’ on the obesity epidemic? And what types of solutions are most commonly proposed?

Critiques of programmes to ‘improve’ the lifestyles, behaviours and bodies of children are particularly germane to the New Zealand context and *The New Zealand curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), an official curricula document that all state schools (which teach in English, rather than Māori) are required to teach. The HPE Essential Learning Area is supposed to be underpinned by a ‘critical’ curriculum, one that is holistic and encompasses physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional dimensions of health, well-being and movement (see Burrows, 2008). In addition, HPE, as articulated in *The New Zealand curriculum*, focuses on broader economic, ecological, social, cultural and political forces affecting the health and well-being of students, communities, and wider society, an attempt by the curriculum writers “to balance priorities between the extremes of individual and global (societal)

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5 Integrated schools (also known as state-integrated), private schools and partnership (or charter) schools do not have to use *The New Zealand curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007).
concerns” (Culpan, 1998, p. 5). This is, therefore, a learning area that encompasses both individualistic and collective notions of health and movement:

In health and physical education, the focus is on the well-being of students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health-related and movement contexts …. [students] are increasingly able to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to the wellbeing of those around them, of their communities, of their environments (including natural environments), and of the wider society. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22)

Although there are aspects of the curriculum that link students’ learning in HPE with improved personal or societal well-being, the emphasis of the curriculum is on learning. Through developing skills, knowledge and understanding in movement and health-related contexts, students are expected to: “develop their understanding of the factors that influence the health of individuals, groups and society”; “develop skills that enhance relationships”; “take critical action”; “learn to understand, appreciate and move their bodies”; and “understand the role and significance of physical activity for individuals and society” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23). It is important to point out here that nowhere in the curriculum does it state that students must demonstrate that their learning has led to actual ‘improvements’ in the health, well-being, physical activity, fitness or body weight of individuals, communities or society. However, as indicated above, there are still strong proponents both within and outside the HPE profession that HPE should or could make children less likely to be obese, live healthier lifestyles, and ‘enhance’ their (un)healthy thoughts, behaviours and bodies.

Healthism, public health and public education

One of the main reasons schools are viewed as key sites to fight childhood obesity is the historical association between public schools and public health imperatives (for detailed discussion, see Gard & Pluim, 2014). The alignment between the interests of public education and public health is not only historical, but demonstrated in contemporary contexts by “the ease and regularity with which the work of schools and teachers is assumed by others to be an instrument of public health policy” (Gard & Pluim, 2014, p. 5). Whatever the agenda of public health - to make young people less fat, more moral, use contraception or not use drugs - the “new public health” has resulted in “everyone” being required to improve their own and others’ lifestyles.
This ‘new’ version of public health has helped to re-define health as both an individual’s right and their responsibility. Crawford (1980), in his seminal article *Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life*, uses the term *healthism* to demonstrate the contradictions in individualistic understandings of health and public health promotion. He writes that healthism is:

> the preoccupation with personal health as a primary – often the primary – focus for the definition and achievement of well-being; a goal which is to be attained primarily through the modification of life styles … The etiology of disease may be seen as complex, but healthism treats individual behavior, attitudes, and emotions as the relevant symptoms needing attention. (Crawford, 1980, p. 368, italics in original)

A key tenet of healthism is that individuals not only could take more responsibility and care for their bodies, behaviours and health, but that everyone should. This is not to say that people who emphasise individual responsibility for health completely ignore broader determinants of (ill)health, such as the environment or politics, but they do attempt to re-place the responsibility for managing (un)healthy behaviours as lying “within the realm of individual choice” (Crawford, 1980, p. 368). In this way, healthism fosters a continued de-politicization and therefore undermining of the social effort to improve health and well-being …. healthism functions as dominant ideology, contributing to the protection of the social order from the examination, critique, and restructuring which would threaten those who benefit from the malaise, misery, and death of others. (p. 368-369)

Crawford (1980, p. 368) used the tobacco and food industries as examples of “those who benefit”. One of my concerns with the corporate efforts to ‘teach’ children about obesity and healthy lifestyles is the way that healthism may be deployed to protect the food and drink industry from critique, disguising the social forces and processes that “systematically encourage unhealthy behaviour, often for private advantage” (p. 368), and shift the responsibility and blame for ill-health onto individuals.

The dominance of individualistic understandings of health in health education and physical education policies and practices has been the subject of numerous critiques (see, for example, Colquhoun, 1990; Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014b; Gard & Wright, 2001; Hokowhitu, 2014; Johns, 2005; Kirk, 2006; Lupton, 1999; Wright & Burrows, 2004). Writing over twenty-five years ago, Kirk and Colquhoun (1989, p. 20)
drew on Crawford’s insights into healthism to argue that physical education teachers produced and consumed the ‘culture’ of healthism by positioning health-based physical education as a panacea to students’ unhealthy (i.e. sedentary, junk food consuming) lifestyles. In this way, teachers reproduced healthism by supporting “the moral imperative to be slender … to be fat implies loss of control, impulsiveness, self-indulgence, sloth - in short, moral failure” (Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989, p. 430).

There has been a proliferation of HPE programmes, pedagogies and practices that reinforce the ‘new public health’ by encouraging young people to obsessively monitor their bodies, manage risks, be seen to be healthy (by exercising, dieting and being thin) and be responsible (see Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014a). In addition, the imperatives of public health (e.g. the prevention of obesity, poor hygiene, bad posture, cardiovascular disease, drug use, teenage pregnancy, depression, suicide and much more) are constantly re-positioned as problems for public education to take responsibility for and solve. This “‘give it to schools’ reflex” (Gard & Pluim, 2014, p. 5) exhibited by public health organisations and actors may be well-meaning, but the impact it has on schools, teachers and education is rarely considered.

One impact of the intertwining of public health and public education is that the meaning of health education is muddied, especially when “we fail to differentiate between teaching about health and trying to make children ‘healthy’” (Gard & Leahy, 2009, p. 183). Even though healthism “may not completely dominate the ideologies and activities of the gamut of groups and individuals” involved in public health, public education, and hybridizations of the two (including health promotion), it is an ideology that “is present in all of them” (Crawford, 1980, p. 368). Crawford (1980, p. 368) also writes:

As an ideology which promotes heightened health awareness, along with personal control and change, [healthism] may prove beneficial for those who adopt a more health-promoting life style. But it may in the process also serve the illusion that we can as individuals control our existence, and that taking personal action to improve health will somehow satisfy the longing for a much more varied complex of needs.

Whilst a number of researchers continue to promote the idea that ‘teaching’ children to be individually responsible and make better choices is an appropriate and effective antidote to fat bodies and unhealthy lives (e.g. Trost, 2006; Grant & Bassin, 2007;
Gordon, 2014), the linking of health education and physical education with healthism is problematic. There are now “a number of groups who have something to gain from the notion that health is the ultimate responsibility of individuals” (Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989, p. 431), a mix of corporations, charities, public health agencies and schools who share an interest in teaching children about health and fatness. There is, therefore, a need to examine how healthism is (re)produced in their various programmes, educational resources and pedagogies, and how it may advantage certain individuals and groups, whilst disadvantaging others. The emphasis on individualism and self-responsibility is not just an integral aspect of healthism, but another influential ideology that has shaped both public health and public education: neoliberalism.

**Neoliberalism, corporatisation and privatisation**

Neoliberalism is a dominant and pervasive political rationality that problematises the welfare state and re-organises the rhetoric and programmes of government into alignment with notions of competitiveness, autonomy (of individuals and institutions), choice, enterprise, performance, standards and responsibility (for critiques of neoliberalism in public education, see Apple, 2006; Ball, 2012; Boyles, 2008; Giroux, 2001; Saltman, 2010). The rise of neoliberal reforms in public education “is just one manifestation of a global reworking of the economic, social, moral and political foundations of public service provision” (Ball, 2012, p. 15). The neoliberal strategy to increase corporate control and decision-making power over management, curriculum and teaching in schools has led to an array of reforms across the world (Gabbard, 2008), including public-private partnerships, educational management organisations, voucher schemes, performance pay, standardised testing, and charter schools. The ‘neoliberal turn’ in public education (as well as public health policy) has sought to limit the fiscal role of the state (although often alongside a greater regulatory role) and re-shape policy in line with free market principles via such processes as privatisation, out-sourcing, partnerships and commercialisation. Whilst advocates for the neoliberal reform of education argue that the private sector is more efficient and effective than the public sector (e.g. Green, 2005), its critics share a concern that neoliberalism has taken hold of education and “by changing the nature and role of the state, neoliberalism has called into question the very aims and purposes of public education” (Codd, 2008, p. 15).
Saltman (2011, p. 13) writes that neoliberalism redefines education as being for the “corporate good rather than the public good ... a new conflation of corporate profit with the social good” which erodes democracy and children’s position as citizens. Furthermore, Kohn (2002, p. 7) argues that “when business thinks about schools, its agenda is driven by what will maximise its profitability, not necessarily by what is in the best interests of students”. The meanings and purposes of schools, charities, governments, teachers and students have been influenced by a discourse of economism that conflates “the public and private purposes of schooling, treating schooling like a for-profit business ... an expression of neo-liberalism [that] reduces the purposes of schooling to economic ends” (Saltman, 2009, p. 58). In this way, education is positioned as another consumable good, “simply one more product like bread, cars and television” (Apple, 2006, p. 32); a public good that is now produced, marketed and ‘sold’ by the private sector, back to the public sector, for private advantage. According to Boyles (2008) and Saltman (2010) the responsibility of public education to promote critical citizenship has been ‘assaulted’ by corporations for the development of profit.

Tinning and Glasby (2002) and Lupton (1999) argue that the neoliberal imbued principles of the ‘new public health’ significantly shape curricula and pedagogical work done in health and physical education. Neoliberalism acts as part of the machinery to produce healthy citizens, where “everyone is being called upon to play their part” (Peterson & Lupton, 1996, p. ix) in being healthy, living healthy lifestyles, avoiding risks and being more responsible. Writing about the field of health education, Leahy (2012, p. 13) argues that “neo-liberalism dominates the official curricula assemblage of health education, past and present” resulting in health education curricula and resources that are “saturated through with neoliberalism, its rationalities and associated practices (p. 14).

Central to neoliberalism is the belief that the market should be used to redevelop all areas of society. Ball (2012, p. 66) argues that the promotion of “‘market-based solutions’ to ‘wicked’ social and educational problems ... fits within and fosters the neo-liberal imaginary”. A raft of ‘problems’ (including education, health, obesity and welfare) have been reimagined through neoliberalism’s ‘less state, more market’ mantra as opportunities for private sector organisations to solve – and profit from. One such ‘wicked’ problem to be urgently solved by the ‘neoliberal imaginary’ is childhood obesity. Organisations across all sectors of society have been
encouraged to collaborate and be ‘part of the solution’ (see World Health Organization, 2015b). It is in this way that schools and governments, charities and corporations, health education and physical education, teachers, principals and students, have been drawn into the ‘vortex’ of obesity solutions (Gard, 2011).

**Corporations and corporatisation**

Corporations play a key role in funding, devising, promoting and implementing anti-obesity programmes and healthy lifestyles interventions in schools. I use the term corporation to refer to private sector, for-profit organisations. The corporations I am interested in include publicly traded corporations (those that sell shares to generate capital), such as McDonald’s and Nestlé S.A.⁶ I am also interested in another type of corporation, a ‘closely-held’ business in which the company is owned by a group of people or companies but is not publicly traded. For instance, the New Zealand beverage company Frucor, and its parent company, Suntory Beverage & Food Limited, are both ‘closely-held’ and not publicly traded.

The work of corporations is already strongly evident in public education. As Ball’s (2007, 2012) research demonstrates, the private sector is increasingly involved in devising, producing and selling education services to school and public education authorities across the globe (see Ball, 2012). ‘Edu-business’ is now a multi-billion dollar industry that profits from selling a range of professional development, leadership, consultancy, management, IT, and policy services. Edu-business companies also devise and sell resources (e.g. on-line resources, software, textbooks, lesson plans), including health and physical education resources, to governments, universities, school districts, schools and teachers across the globe.

A number of scholars have interrogated the ways in which the private sector is ‘corporatising’ the field of public education (see for example, Boyles, 2000, 2005; Farahmandpur, 2009; Saltman, 2000, 2010; Saltman & Gabbard, 2011). Saltman (2010, p. 13) argues that “the corporatization of schools is part of the broader assault on public and critical education and the aspirations of a critical democracy”. He goes on to define the corporatisation of public education as meaning two things: “the privatization of public schools and the transformation of public schools on the model of the corporation” (Saltman, 2010, p. 13). However, this use of the term

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⁶ It is common in French-speaking countries, such as Switzerland, to use the acronym S.A. (*Société Anonyme*), loosely translated as ‘Anonymous Society’, which designates a certain type of corporation that employs civil law. It is similar to that of a plc (public limited company) in the UK.
corporatisation can be misleading as it suggests that the privatisation of public education fundamentally involves corporations. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, responsibility for children’s education in New Zealand is not shifting solely towards corporations, but a messy mix of registered charities, charitable trusts, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), not-for-profits, incorporated societies, lobby groups, industry groups, and corporations. For the sake of clarity, I will employ ‘corporatisation’ to describe those instances when a corporation (or group of corporations) is involved in the implementation of a government programme to fight childhood obesity or improve children’s health or education. In this way, corporatisation is a process by which a private sector company – a corporation - deliberately inserts their presence and business activities into the sphere of public education in an attempt to improve their bottom line. For instance, I use the phrase ‘corporatised resources’ to describe health education resources that feature specific corporate products (e.g. Frucor’s Just Juice), corporate philanthropy (e.g. Nestlé’s Be Healthy, Be Active programme), or a corporation-friendly perspective on health and how to achieve it (e.g. resources shaped by United Fresh New Zealand Incorporated and 5+ A Day Charitable Trust that aimed to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables). There are, however, other neoliberal influenced processes at play that attempt to re-align the aims and purpose of public education (and health and physical education) with the interests of corporations and the broader private sector.

**Privatisation in and of education**

Privatisation is a critical element of the neoliberalisation of public education, a process that, although inextricably interconnected with corporatisation, has distinct forms, functions and processes that require further explanation and analysis. There is an important reason to delineate between corporatisation and privatisation. Whilst corporatisation may be viewed as a somewhat “incidental or piecemeal involvement” (Evans & Davies, 2015, p. 2) of private corporations in public education (e.g. outsourcing of a single PE programme to an external provider), privatisation encapsulate the wide breadth of strategies and plans that have increased use of the private sector in the management, government, provision, funding, organisation and delivery of public services. As Ball (2007, p. 13) argues, privatisation is ‘shorthand’ for a range of processes: “It is more appropriate perhaps to think of ‘privatisations’.

There are a wide variety of types and forms involving different financial
arrangements and different relationships between funders, service providers and clients”. The privatisation of public education is a complex global phenomenon that has been debated and discussed by a number of academics, politicians and private-sector advocates. These include examinations of market-based reforms of public education systems (e.g. Adnett & Davies, 2002; Burch, 2009; Great Britain Department for Education and Employment, 2000; Green, 2005); school vouchers, charter schools and school ‘choice’ (e.g. Good & Braden, 2000; Witte, 2000); schoolhouse commercialism (Molnar, 2005; Stuart, 2006); and private sector influence on education policy (e.g. Ball, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012; Institute for Public Policy Research, 2001; O’Neil, 1996; O’Neil, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Walford, 2010).

Ball and Youdell (2007) argue that privatisation can be understood as being of two main types: endogenous and exogenous (although both have some similarities and cross-overs). Endogenous privatisation refers to privatisation in public education, where various practices, rationales and techniques of the private sector are imported into the public sphere (e.g. performance-related pay, new public management). Exogenous privatisation is the privatisation of public education, “the opening up of public education services to private sector participation on a for-profit basis and using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education” (Ball & Youdell, 2007, p. 13). In New Zealand this includes the outsourcing of payroll services to Novopay (or as the teachers in my research described it, “Novopain”), public-private partnerships to build and manage schools, and the controversial formation of charter or ‘partnership’ schools. Not all of these types of privatisation are obvious. Burch (2009) and Ball and Youdell (2007) argue that many forms of privatisation are now ‘hidden’ from schools, teachers and the public. Drawing on privatisation practices of competition, choice and performance management, Ball and Youdell (2007, p. 11) point out that these forms of “hidden privatization … carry ethical dangers and many examples of opportunistic and tactical behaviours are already apparent in schools and among parents within such systems”.

Despite the privatisation of education accelerating the involvement of private sector players in public education contexts across the globe, Ball, Thrupp, and Forsey (2010, p. 229) note that there is a relative dearth of sociological research that closely examines “the processes of privatization of state education and their effects on and in
schools”. This is certainly the case in New Zealand. O’Neill (2011, p. 27), for example, argues that there is a scarcity of research on the “actual privatisation” in and of education in New Zealand, what he describes as “the concrete effects of privatisation practices as they are occurring” (O’Neill, 2011, p. 30). A key element of my research is examining ‘concrete’, everyday examples of privatisation in New Zealand schools, both the ‘hidden’ and obvious processes by which corporations and charities have become acceptable players in the school-based war on obesity, and the ‘actual’ impact these forms of privatisation have on schools, teachers and children.

A lack of research on the processes and practices of privatisation is evident in the broader New Zealand education context, as well as in the fields of anti-obesity/healthy lifestyles education/HPE in schools. Acknowledging this research ‘gap’, in 2015 the editors of Sport, Education, and Society published a special issue: Neoliberalism, privatisation and the future of physical education, with the aim to “explore the implications across the globe of privatisation of provision of physical education (PE) and its variants” (Evans & Davies, 2015a, p. 1), including health education. In this issue a number of facets of privatisation are explored, critiqued and problematised. Evans and Davies (2015b, p. 18), for example, ‘connect the dots’ between the UK Government rhetoric on Academies, the privatisation of education and “PE Plc”, warning that:

it is important to note that what we are witnessing here is not just the incidental outsourcing of education and PE to private enterprise, or indeed ‘just’ increasing commercialisation of some of their internal/endogenous activities but also the privatisation of the governance, organisation, purposes and practices of education, of its structures, processes and cultures, via the marketisation of just about everything required to make schools work.

In other papers in this special issue, Macdonald (2015) examines the concept of ‘teacher-as-knowledge-broker’ and interactions with neoliberalism, whilst Gard (2015) argues that the increasing privatisation of HPE signifies a potentially significant shift in the role of the academic, including how HPE knowledge is produced and consumed. Penny, Petrie, and Fellows (2015) and Williams and Macdonald (2015) critically examine some of the practices, rationales, and processes by which teachers and principals recruit non-public sector organisations and agents to ‘teach’ health, PE, fitness, physical activity and sport. This is germane to my research, given that current ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity/children’s unhealthy
lifestyles encompass a plethora of programmes and resources outsourced to corporations and their partners.

Outsourcing is a practice that blurs the boundaries between privatisation in education and of education. When schools outsource services (e.g. teaching PE) to external providers, they do not only employ a business strategy of the private sector (based on neoliberal notions of choice and efficiency), but allow public education to be used as a tool for non-public organisations (i.e. voluntary, private, and philanthropic organisations) to strategically and financially ‘profit’ (for criticisms, see Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2008; Powell, 2013; Powell & Gard, 2014; Williams & Macdonald, 2015).

In terms of the outsourcing of HPE, Williams, Hay, and Macdonald (2011, p. 401) also note that the outsourcing of health and physical education “has been the focus of little empirical research and only occasional commentary”. This is also the case for New Zealand. As Petrie (2011, p. 14-15) notes, despite the “proliferation of outside providers offering to 'do' PE in primary schools”, something she argues has “escalated as concerns about children's 'fatness' have become more prevalent”, there continues to be a “paucity of research into the role of outside providers and the implications for PE”.

Petrie, Penny and Fellows (2014, p. 19) mapped the external provision of HPE in New Zealand, revealing “an abundance of players in the ‘HPE market’” to the extent that primary school teachers were “swamped with options from external providers of resources and programmes for ‘HPE’” (p. 25). Indeed, their research into the providers of HPE in New Zealand schools identified 124 “nationwide initiatives, resources and providers of programmes designed to ‘support’ the delivery of HPE curriculum” in New Zealand schools (Penny, Petrie, & Fellows, 2015, p. 49). These 124 programmes did not include smaller, local programmes and providers that were used in school settings. The proliferation of outsourcing of HPE to external providers has been demonstrated by Dyson, Gordon, and Cowan (2011, p. 9) who point to the “increasing trend in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australian schools … for the use of external out-sourcing and external providers to deliver what are perceived to be physical education activities.”

Whilst there is a developing evidence base that describes and/or examines the outsourcing of HPE, most research has focused on particular programmes (e.g. Macdonald et al., 2008) and principals, teachers and/or external providers (Whipp,
2011; Williams et al. 2011; Williams and Macdonald, 2015). There is, however, little in-depth research into “the lived sites of educational places and spaces” (Leahy, 2012, p. 75) where HPE is outsourced, and certainly no critical ethnographies that have examined the phenomenon of outsourcing. As Dyson et al. (2011, p. 14) also assert: “When considering physical education in primary schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand it is apparent that there is limited empirical evidence on what is occurring in schools in the name of physical education”. Furthermore, there is no significant research into the impact of outsourcing and privatisation on students. The privatisation literature, as it stands, appears to render children’s voices mostly silent.

**Corporate philanthropy and social responsibility**

In this thesis I use the phrase *corporate philanthropy* as an umbrella term to describe a range of business practices where corporations and private sector groups ‘give’ to schools, charities, and other public and voluntary sector organisations. These forms of giving are varied and numerous, ranging from donating money directly to a school, giving sponsorship funding to a charitable trust (e.g. Life Education Trust), or supporting other groups (with finances and/or personnel) in an attempt to shape health and education policy and practices. This is a type of “new philanthropy” (Ball, 2012, p. 66) in public education, although is referred to by various terms, such as “strategic philanthropy” (King, 2006, p. 4), venture philanthropy (see Saltman, 2010) and philanthrocapitalism (Edwards, 2008). It is a type of philanthropy intimately tied to the business interests of the corporation, where a specific issue (e.g. children’s health, childhood obesity) is used to:

- maximize the impact of giving and to align contributions with the company’s business goals and brand characteristics; the support of programs that target beneficiaries who are or could become customers; the integration of the company’s giving program with other departments such as marketing, public affairs, and government relations; the forming of partnerships with community groups, local governments, and other companies that share a common interest in a particular concern. (King, 2006, p. 8).

Corporate philanthropy is now frequently positioned as a “morally and economically viable means through which to respond to societal needs” (King, 2006, xxvii). This form of philanthropy in education is a kind of neoliberal “social capitalism” (Ball, 2012, p. 66) where ‘new philanthropists’ (including individuals, foundations and corporations) use business strategies to target social problems (e.g. education for the
poor, childhood obesity, malnutrition). It is a strategy that means wealthy corporations and industries are now assuming “socio-moral duties that were heretofore assigned to civil organizations, governmental entities and state agencies” (Shamir, 2008. p. 9). At the same time, these philanthropic organisations expect “clear and measurable impacts and outcomes from their ‘investments’ of time and money” (Ball, 2012, p. 70).

A number of education scholars are critical of the philanthropic gifting of resources, products and funds to schools by corporations (and corporate foundations) and argue that it is not altruism (see Saltman, 2010; Saltman & Gabbard, 2011). For corporations to build a philanthropic image, their socially responsible, educational and healthy programmes must be seen and be profitable. Writing over a decade ago, Kenway and Bullen (2001, p. 100) noted that “corporate public relations are increasingly designed to counteract poor reputations. Schools are a particularly good place for corporations to do this sort of ideological work and to establish a philanthropic image”. Attick (2008, p. 170) agrees, describing corporate philanthropy in schools as a “contrived philanthropy”, a strategy that attempts to divert public attention from less agreeable practices and shape consumers’ image of the corporation or industry as trusted, socially-responsible, and healthy (see also Boyles, 2008). Molnar (2005, p. 26) argues that the corporate involvement in public education is a strategy “to gain access to public school students and their families, and for corporations to profit from the ‘halo effect’ of associating with schools”. Corporate philanthropy is, therefore, part of an overall business strategy to look after the financial interests of shareholders, penetrate and retain their markets, and improve their bottom line (King, 2006).

Corporate social responsibility programmes have become a key element for corporations to achieve their philanthropic aims. Also described as corporate citizenship, sustainability or stakeholder management, corporate social responsibility has become a common activity in private sector organisations across the globe (see Huniche & Pedersen, 2006). Pedersen (2006, p. 7), for example, writes: “An infinite number of scholars and practitioners sing its praise in annual reports, conference papers, journal articles and magazines .... Corporate citizenship and related terms ... have swept across the world and become catchwords of the new millennium”. Vallentin and Murillo (2010, p. 152) suggest that it is not surprising governments are increasingly interested in corporate social responsibility, as there is an “emergence of
a new and seductive ‘truth’ about CSR [corporate social responsibility], namely that it is good for business and good for the economy”. However, in the extensive literature on corporate social responsibility, scholars disagree as to whether the benefits of corporate social responsibility are equally shared between stakeholders and shareholders.

Advocates for corporate social responsibility often promote it as a ‘win-win’ situation for all involved. The corporate reports/websites from Nestlé, the world’s largest food company, exemplify the notion that corporate social responsibility is good for shareholders and stakeholders alike. Nestlé asserts that their global corporate social responsibility programme Creating Shared Value “is not about philanthropy. It is about leveraging core activities and partnerships for the joint benefit of people in the countries where we operate and of our shareholders” (Nestlé Singapore, n.d., para. 6). Whilst corporate social responsibility is often viewed as “simply philanthropy by a different name, it can be defined broadly as the efforts corporations make above and beyond regulation to balance the needs of stakeholders with the need to make a profit” (Doane, 2005, p. 23). Porter and Kramer (2006) state that proponents of corporate social responsibility programmes tend to draw on similar rationales: sustainability (environmental and social), moral appeal (a duty to be ‘good citizens’), license to operate (permission from stakeholders to conduct business), and/or reputation (to improve brand, image, morale, and stock price).

Conversely, critics of corporate social responsibility, such as Bakan (2004) and Blanding (2010), view corporate social responsibility as a public relations strategy primarily to increase shareholder value through profits. Doane (2005, p. 25) agrees, adding that corporate social responsibility “simplifies some rather complex arguments and fails to acknowledge that ultimately, trade-offs must be made between the financial health of the company and ethical outcomes. And when they are made, profit undoubtedly wins over principles”. The profit-seeking motives for corporations to be strategically socially responsible are closely tied to their marketing strategies. As Blanding (2010, p. 136-137, emphasis in original) writes:

The danger of CSR initiatives is that they have become such a branding tool that they make it seem like the opposite is true – that companies are somehow investing in causes out of a motive of self-sacrifice, rather than partnering with causes for mutual benefit. And as branding has become the primary reason for CSR, the appearance of doing something can overshadow the benefits of doing it.
In other words, the *marketing* of corporate social responsibility activities is a strategy in itself. Corporations that do not promote their philanthropic/corporate social responsibility activities and ideologies risk losing their markets to competitors who ‘do’ corporate social responsibility ‘better’ (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). In this way, corporate social responsibility and advertising are “strategic complements” (Bazillier & Vauday, 2009, p. 1).

Saltman and Goodman (2011) argue that corporations insert itself into public education to conceal their negative effects on the environment and society. Companies such as Coca-Cola, Nestlé, and BP are marketed “as a ‘responsible corporate citizen’ supporting beleaguered schools with its corporate philanthropy” (Saltman & Goodman, 2011, p. 36). It is unsurprising that controversial issues (e.g. obesity, marketing) and somewhat ‘disreputable’ industries (e.g. fast food, soft drink, petrochemical, mining) are the most common corporate philanthropy/social responsibility programmes implemented in schools (Molnar, 2005). Corporate social responsibility also acts as a particularly useful form of “reputation insurance” (MacDonald, 2008, p. 71). As Kenway and Bullen (2001, p. 100) point out: “Not only do schools offer a way to establish and maintain a high public profile, but an opportunity for businesses with doubtful reputations or bad publicity to practice some reverse psychology.” For instance, in the context of concerns with environmental issues, ExxonMobil and BP produced educational resources about fossil fuels, mining and the combustion engine (for critical examinations of these corporate-produced resources see Norris, 2011; Saltman and Goodman, 2011). These types of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives are referred to by some authors as green-washing (for examples, see Bazillier & Vauday, 2009; MacDonald, 2008); a form of ‘disinformation’ about a corporation’s environmental practices “from organizations seeking to repair public reputations and further shape public images” (Laufer, 2003, p. 253).

Herrick (2009) points out that fighting obesity has become a key corporate social responsibility strategy for ‘Big Food’, where it is crucial for food and beverage corporations to *be seen* to be trying to reduce childhood obesity, remove their marketing of ‘junk’ food to children, and improve children’s health. Although the terms *fat-washing* or *health-washing* do not appear to be used by academic authors, they may be appropriate to describe some corporate attempts to deflect accusations they are part of the problem of childhood obesity. Some school-based anti-obesity
programmes funded and implemented by corporations may also be viewed as fat-washing or health-washing when they serve two functions: diverting public attention from ‘less agreeable’ practices (e.g. marketing of nutrient-poor food) and shaping consumers’ image of the corporation (e.g. as an altruistic, socially-responsible, health-promoting organisation).

The marketing of corporate philanthropy/corporate social responsibility programmes as solutions to obesity has been examined by a number of authors (e.g. Chen, Moore, Renaud, & Dubé, 2007; Herrick, 2009; Kraak, Kumanyika, & Story, 2009; Sacks et al., 2013). There have also been many studies on specific anti-obesity interventions that were funded, at least in part, by corporate sponsors/partners. Borys and colleagues (2012), for instance, investigated the EPODE7 project, a European anti-obesity programme led by the Epode International Network, and whose founding partners are The Coca-Cola Company and Nestlé (see www.epode-international-network.com). Sliwa and colleagues (2011) detailed a community health promotion approach – Children in Balance – a research initiative of Tufts University, with funding from the philanthropic foundations of PepsiCo and New Balance. However, these studies tend to focus on the given anti-obesity intervention’s (in)effectiveness in increasing children’s physical activity levels, nutrition knowledge, and decreasing levels of fatness. There continues to be a paucity of literature that critically analyses the impact of anti-obesity corporate philanthropy/corporate social responsibility on schools, how they may or may not shape ‘healthy’ programmes, resources, pedagogies in schools, and the effect they have on children.

‘Part of the solution’ to childhood obesity?

There are a number of researchers who share a concern that the increasing role of corporations and other private sector organisations in public education is problematic and potentially dangerous. The childhood obesity ‘crisis’ and its assumed causes - sloth and gluttony - have created a space for corporations to be seen to be ‘part of the solution’. These are the very corporations blamed for exacerbating the ‘problem’ of childhood obesity in the first place. Schools have been targeted as both a cause of and solution to obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles. The meaning and purpose

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7 EPODE is the Ensemble, prevenons l’obesite des enfant (Together let’s prevent obesity in children) anti-obesity programme in Europe.
of HPE and health itself has been re-aligned with the ideology of healthism, where notions of individualism, self-responsibility, corporeality and consumerism reign supreme.

These dominant discourses of health are interwoven with neoliberalism, a political rationality critiqued for embedding market logic in public education. Global neoliberal reforms have resulted in education being ‘big business’; a big opportunity for the private sector to profit. Public education is becoming increasingly corporatised, and ‘new’ privatisations in and of education continue to shift funding, delivery and ‘control’ of public education to private (and voluntary) sector organisations. These boundaries between public and private interests are continuing to blur as different forms of strategic philanthropy result in the ‘gifting’ of educational resources, programmes, and personnel to schools. However, as a number of scholars point out, these programmes are not about corporate altruism to ‘fix’ a problem, but representative of private sector motives to build brand loyalty, improve public relations, secure self-regulation, and above all else, profit. In the case of corporations funding, devising, shaping, sponsoring and implementing ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles in schools, little is known about how these programmes make their way into primary schools, or how the targets of these programmes – children and teachers – understand or experience them.
Chapter Three: Theoretical and analytical framework

The phenomenon of corporations implementing healthy lifestyles education programmes in primary schools is complex and multifaceted. Some elements appear to be closely connected (e.g. neoliberalism, privatisation and corporations), whilst others seem to be separate (e.g. health education and corporate products). In order to develop my understanding of these school-based ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles, I needed a theoretical and analytical framework that would allow me to explore, interrogate and critique individual elements, their intricate relationships with one another, and the assemblage as a whole. I wanted a framework that would help me to answer questions about these programmes that had not been answered: Who is funding, devising and carrying out these programmes? Why? How are they able to ‘get into’ schools and with what effect?

In the initial stages of my research I understood that the endeavour to make children healthier and less fat represented an attempt to shape children’s bodies, thoughts and actions with a particular goal in mind. I also knew that the theoretical and analytical ideas from ‘Foucault’s toolkit’ (Middleton, 1998) would support my analysis of corporations’ (and their partners’) attempts to govern children, schools, teachers and others. By ‘mashing up’ (Dean, 2010) concepts from Foucault and post-Foucauldian scholars, in particular the notions of government and governmentality, I propose an analytical framework that will enable me to interrogate how corporations and charities implement healthy lifestyles education programmes in New Zealand primary schools. This framework brings together a set of theoretical resources that connect my empirical research on school-based ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles with analytical themes, such as government, political rationalities, power, knowledge, technologies of government, discourse, truth and the subject. In addition, by drawing on the work of Li (2007a, 2007b), Dean (2010), Leahy (2012), and Miller and Rose (2008) I offer the Deleuzian concept of ‘assemblage’ (Deleuze, 1992; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) as an analytic tool through which to critically examine how diverse authorities, practices, bodies of knowledge and individuals converge to “act upon human conduct to direct it to certain ends” (Rose, 2000, p. 323); ends that may include solving obesity, educating about healthy lifestyles, or shaping consumers.
A study of governmentality

As a field, governmentality studies has been constructed from an array of conceptual tools initially generated from “Foucault’s own scattered comments on governmentality” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 10). Studies of governmentality attempt to traverse the empirical terrain of the rationalities, technologies, programmes and identities of regimes of government. However, it cannot be reduced to that empirical terrain because studying governmentality is also about the production of new concepts in the course of the study, or in the course of using other scholars’ study. The production of concepts multiples possibilities of analysis; concepts come back combined with those of others, in different empirical domains. (Dean, 2010, p. 13).

The conceptual and analytical tools provided by post-Foucauldian scholars such as Dean (2007, 2010), Rose (1999a, 2000, 2007), Miller (with Rose, 2008), Li (2007a, 2007b) and Leahy (2012) have been invaluable in assisting me traverse the ‘empirical terrain’ of the governmentality of childhood obesity. Like these scholars, I reflect on Foucault’s notion of governmentality by borrowing theoretical concepts and analytical approaches from different places. This, of course, is not a simple task, nor is it unproblematic. As Leahy (2012) suggests, the nature of the field of governmentality studies is rhizomatic and consists of multifarious threads and entanglements. What I provide here is not a definitive blueprint for ‘doing’ governmentality. Rather, I offer an overview of my endeavour to negotiate the rhizome of governmentality that will enable me to critically examine the attempts by corporations to ‘teach’ children about health, lifestyles and obesity.

Foucault’s government and governmentality

Foucault's original comments on governmentality were developed during his teaching courses at the Collège de France (as chair of The history of systems of thought), his 1977-1978 course Security, territory and population, and his 1978-1979 series of lectures The birth of biopolitics (Foucault, 2008). Foucault argued that from the middle of the 16th century to the conclusion of the 18th century the notion of government as a problem ‘exploded’ (see Foucault, 1991a). It was during this period that government as sovereign power began to be reconsidered as the “art of government” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 89). In February 1978, Foucault gave a lecture entitled Governmentality. He took the ‘problem of government’, particularly the
emergence of specific problems of the population, and made “an inventory of this question of government” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 87). Foucault (1991a, p. 87) asked key questions in relation to the problematisation of government: “How to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor”.

A central aspect of this relatively new ‘art of government’ is the development of fluid, yet subtle, interconnections and continuities between “the art of self-government, connected with morality; the art of properly governing a family, which belongs to economy; and, finally, the science of ruling the state, which concerns politics” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 91). Rather than conceiving modern government as an oppressive form of power enacted top-down by the state onto individuals, Foucault (1991a, p. 102) argued that government was undertaken by an “ensemble” of authorities, institutions and agents, using an array of technologies, tactics and bodies of knowledge, in an attempt to guide individuals’ conduct towards definite, albeit unpredictable ends (see also Dean, 2010) and “for the sake of their own interests” (Lupton, 1995, p. 9). Lupton (1995, p. 9) also points out,

While the state is important as part of the structure of power relations, so too are the myriad of institutions, sites, social groups and interconnections at the local level, whose concerns and activities may support, but often conflict with, the imperatives of the state. In other words, government is not merely an issue for the state, but emerges as a problem that can also be thought about and acted upon outside the realm of traditional juridical or sovereign sites. As a number of scholars working in the field of critical obesity studies have demonstrated, there is a large cluster of ‘authorities’ that interconnect in their attempts to govern individuals and populations. These include public health organisations (see Evans & Colls, 2009; Evans, Colls, & Hörschelmann, 2011), international governmental organisations (Halse, 2009), industry/lobby groups (Vander Schee, 2013), media (Burrows & Wright, 2007), families (Burrows, 2009; Fullager, 2009; Vander Schee, 2009), schools (e.g. Leahy, 2012; McDermott, 2012; Pike, 2010), and multinational and regional corporations (Powell, 2013; Powell & Gard, 2014). Agencies of government are, therefore, not restricted to formal state authorities (i.e. police, schools), but can also be from a range of for-profit (e.g. multinational corporations) and not-for-profit institutions (e.g. charitable trusts) on a local, national or even global scale.
Foucault’s notion of government is aligned closely with his conceptualisation of power, that power is not primarily repressive, nor can it be ‘possessed’ by individuals, groups or institutions (Sawicki, 1991). Instead, power is something that is exercised, productive and omnipresent, a capillary or web-like structure that is evident in everyday social practices, working its way through the entire social body through social interactions. In this way, government is not about oppression, regulation and control of individuals and populations in a strictly negative sense, but the ways in which government may also be productive and constitutive to the wealth and health of society. This is described eloquently by Foucault (2003a, p. 307) in the following quote:

If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.

Foucault’s analysis of government points to a shift away from more ‘ponderous’ forms of sovereign power to a new form of power that focuses on life – biopower. This is conceptualised by Foucault (1984a) as a productive form of power, an evolution of the power over life, consisting of two poles. The first pole is the “anatomo-politics of the human body”, where the body is made visible as a docile machine for efficiency and economy (Foucault, 1984a, p. 139, italics in original). This technique of power centres on the individual body (see also Foucault, 2003b). The second pole focuses on the ‘species body’ and its biological processes: sex, birth, death, health, longevity and everything in between. The supervision of these life processes is made possible by regulations and interventions: a “bio-politics of the population” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 139, italics in original). Biopolitics and biopower are enabled by the implementation of a variety of technologies that attempt to discipline individual bodies and regulate populations (Foucault, 1984a). For instance, the governmentality of obesity is often achieved through biopedagogies, a cluster of technologies of government that coerce individuals to increasingly self-monitor and develop their knowledge about obesity risks and the ways they can avoid them (see Wright, 2009).
Through the concept of biopower, particularly the biopolitical mode, we witness the emergence of population as not only a governable field, but what Foucault (1991a, p. 100) refers to as “the ultimate end” of government:

In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc .... it is the population itself on which government will act either directly through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly through techniques that will make possible, without full awareness of the people .... this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population: the birth of a new art, or at any rate of a range of absolutely new tactics and techniques.

According to Foucault (1982, p. 785) this ‘new art’ of modern government is a kind of “double bind” of political power that simultaneously works to both individualise and totalise. It is a particular way of meeting specific ends of government by acting in premeditated ways on the thoughts, actions and social relations of individuals within a population (Rose, 1999a). In other words, in contemporary societies it is not feasible to govern the population by forcing or coercing each and every individual to think and act in a particular way. This transformation of the exercise of power from ponderous sovereign power to ‘productive’ power that centres on populations – indeed life itself – is connected to the emergence of liberalism. I do not refer to liberalism here as an ideology that endeavours to limit ‘excessive’ state power and governmental activities, but rather the means by which the capacities of individuals and populations are directed through bio-politics and disciplinary power. In this respect, liberalism is an approach to modern government that articulates “a democratized form of sovereignty, and its notion of responsible and autonomous juridical and political subjects, with a bio-politics” (Dean, 2010, p. 267). It is an art of government and a political rationality that depends on the ‘liberty’ of individuals (who are part of a population), especially when it comes to the shaping of individual liberty in order to align with governmental interests (see Burchell, 1991). As Foucault (1982, p. 790) explains, modern government depends on the element of freedom, as “power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free.”

The productive nature of power is made clear by the proliferation of discourses, technologies and tactics that circulate and attempt to shape our own and others’ conduct (Harwood, 2009). It is an exercise of power that is not obviously
violent, nor does it rely on consent, but on “a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions” (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). It is, as Miller and Rose (2008, p. 16) succinctly state, “government at a distance”. Foucault (1982, p. 798) adds:

Perhaps the equivocal nature of the term ‘conduct’; is one of the best aids for coming to terms with the specificity of power relations. For to ‘conduct’ is at the same time to ‘lead’ others (according to mechanisms of coercion which are, to varying degrees, strict) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities.

Government, in this sense, involves “the conduct of conduct” (Gordon, 1991, p. 2), actions that attempt to shape the conduct others. Leslie Sawyer, translator of Foucault’s (1982, p. 789) The subject and power, notes that Foucault plays “on the double meaning in French of the verb conduire, ‘to lead’ or ‘to drive,’ and se conduire, ‘to behave’ or ‘to conduct oneself’; whence la conduite, ‘conduct’ or ‘behavior’”. When conduct is thought of as the verb ‘to conduct’ - to guide or direct others’ actions - the suggestion is that there is a technique to do this (Dean, 2010).

Dean (2010, p. 19) also draws attention to the use of the verb when referring to ‘conducting oneself’, to demonstrate that governmentality does not just encapsulate “how we exercise authority over others, or how we govern abstract entities such as state and populations, but also how we govern ourselves”.

The deliberate endeavour to shape ‘the conduct of conduct’ to specific ends is strongly moral. Those who try to govern presume that there ‘exists’ some type of ideal or normal body, behaviour and/or thoughts which one should strive to achieve. Furthermore, these same actors and institutions with the ‘will to govern’ (Li, 2007b) also presume that it is possible to structure things so that individuals will do as they are ‘supposed’ to (Scott, 1995). According to Rose (2000, p. 323), government is dependent upon the “unease generated by a normative judgement of what we are and could become” (and what we ‘should’ become). For instance, there are numerous practices in schools that have emerged from widespread concerns - a ‘moral panic’ - over the threat of a childhood obesity epidemic (see Gard, 2011; Wright, 2009).

These practices in schools involve a plethora of players who attempt to regulate, normalise and shape certain ‘healthy’ behaviours (e.g. eating fruit and avoiding junk food), thoughts (e.g. decision-making and will-power), and bodies (especially non-obese bodies). The morality of modern government is further established when individuals understand themselves as being responsible for their own conduct: their own self-care, self-regulation, and self-problematisation (Dean, 2010).
The ‘will to improve’ (Li, 2007b) the welfare of individuals and populations calls for the application of a particular way of thinking about government. Miller and Rose (1990) refer to this as the ‘mentalities of government’. Foucault coined the neologism governmentality to demonstrate this linking together of ‘gouverner’ (governing) and ‘mentalité (modes of thought). In his 1978 Governmentality lecture at the Collège de France, Foucault (1991a, p. 102-103) stated that governmentality meant three things:

The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.

The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other hand, in the development of a whole complex of savoirs.

The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becoming ‘governmentalized’.

A key aspect of governmentality is how we reason or think about particular problems and practices of government: rationalities of government. The ways in which we think about government are inextricably tied to knowledge, power, truth and discourse, as well as the technical means by which conduct is conducted. This point is critical. Governmentality is the joining of calculations and tactics within an ensemble of analyses, reflections, institutions and procedures (Foucault, 1991a). An analytics of governmentality requires a disentangling of the ways in which our thoughts, actions and self have converged and intertwined with rationalities and technologies of government. Indeed, the notion of governmentality represents Foucault’s understanding that it is not possible to examine technologies of government without an analysis of the political rationalities that underpin them.

Rationalities of government

Rationalities of government are modes of thought which buttress the programmatic aims of government: to govern populations towards deliberate ends.
Governmentality, however, is not simply the way in which the exercise of power is ‘rationalised’. Those who assemble various elements to govern do so without necessarily ascribing them to a grand ‘rational’ governmental plan or political rationality. Some programmes of government may come with sophisticated rationalisations, however, the disparate elements from which they are drawn rarely, if ever, consist of a single rationality or essence (Li, 2007a). Indeed, one limitation of studies of governmentality is the frequent alignment of a complex, multi-faceted ‘problem’ of government (e.g. education reform) with a singular way of thinking (e.g. neoliberalism) (for discussions see Brady, 2011; Li, 2007a). When examining practices of modern government, care is needed to ensure an analysis of explicit, specific rationalities rather than always drawing on more general rationalisations (Foucault, 1982).

One way to analyse the specific rationalities of governmental interventions is to examine key elements within the assemblage of rationalities - the multiple ‘styles’ of thinking about government. There are a number of significant dimensions that constitute political rationalities (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999b). For example, rationalities are articulated with an intrinsically moral form or agenda, such as individual responsibility or justice. They are based upon ‘regimes of truth’ regarding conduct, such as those who are authorised to speak truths and how truths are spoken (see Rose, 1999b). Rationalities embody a particular conception of the persons or objects to be governed, such as the neoliberal notion of the responsible self. Rationalities are discursive. They are “made thinkable” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 59) through idioms and rhetoric, such as those which describe children in terms of being ‘healthy weight’, ‘unhealthy weight’, ‘obese’, and ‘consumers’ of ‘healthy lifestyles’ (see Pike, 2010). In terms of this last point, Miller and Rose (2008, p. 30) argue that it is possible to differentiate political rationalities within an assemblage by paying close attention to the ‘discursive character’ of governmentality:

For it is out of such linguistic elements that rationalities of government such as welfarism or neo-liberalism are elaborated as assemblages of philosophical doctrines, notions of social and human realties, theories of power, conceptions of policy and versions of justice, and much else. And it is from these assemblages that ways of specifying appropriate bases for the organization and mobilization of social life are articulated.
Indeed, Walters and Haahr (2005, p. 7) argue that it is inconceivable to consider studies of governmentality without an analysis of discourse, as governmentality illuminates the ways discourses are made visible, material, calculable, and pliable. By considering rationalities as an assemblage of discourses, moralities and knowledges, I aim to illuminate the types of rationalities that re-shape ‘truths’ about obesity, health, corporations, education and government. My analysis includes an interrogation of who gets to define these truths, as well as how the conditions for the (re)production and (re)distribution of truths is created and sustained by those who govern (Rose, 1999b).

**Technologies of government**

My analytics of governmentality also considers how political rationalities fuse with technologies of government. For instance, in Leahy’s (2012) examination of health education she notes that the neoliberal political rationality works to ‘congeal’ with technologies (as well as discourses) and enable health education to enact the goals of government. The rationalities that underpin any problem of government are not merely represented in ‘thought’ or ‘discourse’ alone; they must be rendered thinkable (Miller & Rose, 2008) and technical (Li, 2007). As Foucault (1984b) suggests, technologies of government are a pragmatic rationality shaped by a conscious aim. In other words, technologies of government are *how* government is ‘done’ and how rationalities are actualised (Inda, 2005). It is through the convergence and congealing of rationalities and technologies that government (and those who govern) attempts to achieve its ends. My analytics of governmentality does not, therefore, focus solely on the political rationalities that underpin healthy lifestyles education programmes in schools, but also the “humble and mundane mechanisms” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 32) which make government possible. An integral aspect of this form of analysis is the examination of the complex and multifarious ways in which rationalities and technologies converge and cohere.

Technologies of government are also assemblages of elements that represent both the *programmatic* and *technical* means by which government works to transform political rationalities into ‘reality’ (Miller & Rose, 2008). They endeavour to shape, control, regulate and reorganise the governmental assemblage and the subject with specific ends in mind. As Rose, O’Malley and Valverde (2006, p. 101) state: “Every practice for the conduct of conduct involves authorities, aspirations, programmatic thinking, the invention or redeployment of techniques and
technologies.” In the war on childhood obesity, for example, there are numerous programmes put forward by government initiatives, corporate reports, think tanks, and various charities, academics, and educators to deal with the ‘problem’ (Coveney, 2006). These programmatic forms of government also need to be thought about as technical instruments and devices, themselves an assemblage of tools, apparatuses, people and resources that make it possible for authorities to shape the conduct of individuals and populations at multiple sites (Miller & Rose, 2008).

The use of Body Mass Index (BMI) monitoring of children is one example of technologies of government ‘in action’, where the programmatic and technical means to govern subjects are fused together. Evans and Colls’ (2009) analysis of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) in the United Kingdom demonstrates that BMI is programmatic as it explicitly attempts to govern children to be less fat - at both an individual and population level. Furthermore, the NCMP uses a variety of technical means to achieve its specific ends: the BMI classification system; reporting to parents; collecting statistics; monitoring populations; creating obesity ‘maps’; identifying ‘obese’ and ‘at risk’ communities; and (not) telling children their BMI measurements. BMI monitoring, as a technology of government, attempts to govern children’s bodies and behaviours by laying “claim to a certain knowledge of the sphere or problem to be addressed” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 62), such as knowledge of the relationship between BMI and health.

A number of scholars, however, are critical of the dominant approach to governmentality studies in which government is reduced to its rationalities and ‘humble and mundane’ technologies (for examples of these criticisms, see Brady, 2011; Li, 2007a, 2007c; McKee, 2009; O’Malley, 2009; Stenson, 2005). One frequently mentioned criticism is the tendency for scholars to focus on the ‘blueprints’ for government - the various governmental interventions, rationalisations, policies, papers, legislations, regulations, and rhetoric on how individuals and populations should live. This focus on ‘official’ governmental plans results in blinkered examinations of technologies and mentalities of government, with little or no attention paid to the actual practices and experiences of those who govern and are governed (see O’Malley, 2009). For example, in governmentality studies of health education there has been a scarcity of research “that considered governmentality in motion in the lived sites of educational places and spaces .... let alone considered how attempts to govern were being played out in schools” (Leahy,
It was therefore critical that my research encompassed both the plans of government (such as those articulated by corporations to teach children to live healthy lifestyles) and how this ‘played out’ in three New Zealand primary schools.

The disconnection between governmentalities and actual practices, subjects and sites is particularly evident in “discursive governmentality” approaches (Stenson, 2005, p. 266). This is not to say that discourse and language are unimportant elements of governmentality. Governmental practices, such as healthy lifestyles education programmes - their educational resources and pedagogies - are ‘materialisations’ of discourse and inextricably interconnected with ‘regimes of truth’ and the conduct of conduct (Rose 1999a). Nonetheless, an over-emphasis on discourse, often through a focus on ‘official pronouncements’ of government (e.g. policy, curriculum), results in the concrete, material practices of government in “actually existing sites and spaces” (Brady, 2011, p. 266) being largely ignored. In addition, when governmentality scholars focus their attention on the governors, they assume a top-down perspective of power that is totalising, a perspective that also precludes individual agency (Li, 2007a). This is a conception of power that Foucault himself critiqued (O’Malley, 2009).

An outcome of discursive governmentality studies is a disassociation between rationalities of government, official technologies of government, and the ‘actual’ social relations, practices, subjects, and spaces (see Brady, 2011). Although joining rationalities and technologies is an integral aspect of governmentality studies, it is dangerous to assume that governmental endeavours to ‘conduct the conduct’ of individuals and populations have their intended effects. Assemblages of rationalities and technologies, along with other elements (i.e. subjects, institutions, experts) can be unpredictable, disorganised, incoherent, and incomplete. There may be inconsistencies, tensions, even contradictions, between the rationalities, rhetoric, practices and ‘realities’ of government (Flint, 2002). Interrogating these inconsistencies will form a considerable part of my analysis.

One defence against accusations that governmentality studies ignore the complex and often contradictory ‘empirical actualities’ is that governmentality was never proposed as a “total sociology” to provide a lens through which to see how government ‘actually’ worked (O’Malley, 2009, p. 63). Rose (1999b), for instance, asserts that the study of modern government should not begin with the questions of ‘what happened?’ or ‘why did this happen?’, but rather what governmental
authorities and agencies intended to happen. Foucault himself did not specifically research the effects of governmental interventions on their intended targets, such as the ‘real lives’ of prisoners (see Li, 2007c). He did, nevertheless, acknowledge that programmes of government are resisted, rationales of government are ignored, and the actual “living reality” of both the governors and the governed are a “witches’ brew” in comparison to the proposed simplistic, straightforward programmes of government (Foucault, 1991b, p. 254). Like Li (2007c), I also reject the idea that an examination of rationalities of government and proposed techniques of government can be wholly separated from the messy, often unintended, practices of government. The effects of governmental interventions (including the experiences of subjects) need to be contextualised in relation to the multifarious elements in which government is assembled. Questions of ‘what are the effects of these governmental programmes?’ must be asked. Although programmes of government may indeed shape the thoughts and actions of individuals and populations ‘at a distance’, they may not necessarily do so as anticipated (Li, 2007c). Indeed, Cobb (2007) notes that the focus on discourse in studies of governmentality results in a failure to capture young people’s reconstruction of, and resistance to, the rationalities and technologies of government that target them.

A crucial aim for my research project is, therefore, to not just examine the broad elements of the governmental ‘ensemble’ in isolation, but to illuminate the messiness of modern government. This includes an analysis of the assortment of power relations that are fragmented, dispersed and exercised through an array of institutions, as well as the contradictions and tensions between the macro plans to govern and the micro level of power that is experienced by the subject. Given that the formation of the subject is a central concern of Foucault, it is surprising that governmentality scholars are inclined to focus on the rationalities and technologies of government at the expense of the unpredictable and paradoxical ways in which the subjects of government are imagined, shaped, conducted and produced.

**Imagining and shaping subjects**

One of Foucault’s (1982, p. 777) key objectives was “to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects”. He used the term *subjectivation* to describe the process by which individuals are made into subjects, where an individual is “subject to someone else by control and dependence,
and tied to his own identity by conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 781). Intrinsic to the operation of modern government are the efforts to shape and ‘enhance’ individual subjectivity.

The self is an integral element of governmentality. Self-government, or ‘practices of the self’ (Dean, 2010), are integrated with more or less explicit modes of external government conducted by a range of authorities (Lupton, 1995). Governmentality acts as the point of ‘contact’ where technologies of power and technologies of the self intermingle (Burchell, 1996). Government is thus inextricably interconnected with the “government of subjectivity” (Rose, 1999a, p. 218).

My analysis of government must therefore include an analysis of technologies of the self: those tactics which determine conduct by allowing “individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being” (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). For instance, there is an array of anti-obesity practices - technologies of government - by which children’s (and families) bodies, thoughts and ‘being’ are shaped. Surveillance of lunchboxes, measuring and monitoring BMIs, fitness testing, learning food pyramids, exercising, keeping food diaries, setting goals, reading food labels, wearing pedometers, amongst others, all act as technologies to ‘teach’ children and their families ‘how to live’ (Burrows, 2008). Critically, they also attempt to align an individual’s ‘choice’ to self-regulate, self-problematise, self-care, self-monitor, self-confess and self-govern with macro political-economic objectives, such as increasing children’s consumption, autonomy and desire to be more responsible (see also Rose, 1999a).

Rose (1999a, p. 11) describes the production of subjectivities as a “government of the soul”, achieved through technologies promulgated by ‘experts’, reliant “upon our recognition of ourselves as ideally and potentially certain sorts of person, the unease generated by a normative judgement of what we are and could become”. There are both normative and moral elements to the ‘rational’ attempt to deliberately direct, shape, regulate and control the conduct of individuals and populations (Dean, 2010). In the case of obesity intervention, for instance, those who attempt to govern presume that there ‘exists’ some type of ideal or normal body (e.g. thin, healthy), thoughts (e.g. self-control), or behaviour (e.g. exercise, healthy consumption), which one should strive to achieve.
A number of authors have noted that deliberate attempts by schools, researchers and public health institutions to control children’s (fat) bodies, (lazy) behaviours and (unhealthy) thoughts are connected to moral and normative judgements and ideals (for examples, see Gard & Wright, 2005; Gard & Pluim, 2014). Indeed, children themselves are governed to view their own and other’s bodies and behaviours in terms of what is ‘good’, ideal, moral and normal (see Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2013). It is worth pointing out here that technologies of the self are “not only the ways in which individuals regulate their own conduct, but all of the ways in which individuals come to know themselves and are persuaded to speak the truth about themselves” (Pike, 2010, p. 61). This is not to imply that technologies of the self are necessarily repressive and negative. They represent more than merely practices of the self; they characterise critical self-awareness as a practice of freedom (Markula, 2003). An important aspect of my analytics is exploring the ways in which children or adults who are proponents and/or targets of governmental programmes are involved in practices of compromise, accommodation, resistance, or even refusal (Li, 2007c). What do these children and adults actually do? How do they attempt to (re)shape their own subjectivities, and why?

Although Foucault’s notion of the subject focuses on the formation of individual human subjects, the formation of subjects does not only apply to individuals, but also collectivities (see Weidner, 2010). This includes institutions and organisations, such as corporations, charities, communities, countries, non-governmental organisations, supranational organisations and schools. Therefore, an important dimension of governmentality and my own analytical framework is “the forms of individual and collective identity through which governing operates and which specific practices and programmes of government try to form” (Dean, 2010, p. 42). Here I will ask the question, how are the collective subjectivities of corporations, charities and other organisations (re)invented by their connection to schools and children, and (re)produced by being ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles?

To analyse the success of government is to examine the practices, rationalities and technologies that cultivate particular subjectivities for certain ends. Through my analysis I ask: How do governmentalties produce particular subjects and subjectivities as ‘natural’ and ‘necessary’? (Brady, 2011). What types of subjects do corporations and charities both imagine and attempt to develop? What forms of
conduct are expected? How are children made into (un)healthy consumers? How do corporations become ‘socially responsible’, even charitable subjects? How do the subjects who participate in governmental interventions interpret the various practices of government? And how do children and adults ‘know themselves’ through various qualities (e.g. being virtuous), status (e.g. being an active consumer) and capacities (e.g. able to make healthy choices)? To help answer these questions and others, I offer an analytics of governmentality that is underpinned by the notion that school-based healthy lifestyles education programmes are a governmental assemblage.

**Assemblages: Problematisations and practices**

Returning to Foucault’s (1991a) first definition of governmentality, he described it as comprising an ensemble of knowledges, tactics, practices, rationalities and institutions that attempt to regulate individuals and populations. I found this concept of the ensemble a useful starting point for my analytics of governmentality (see also Leahy, 2012; Weidner, 2010). The word ‘ensemble’ relates to Foucault’s (1980a, p. 194-195, italics in original) notion of a dispositif or apparatus, which he describes as

firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus [dispositif] is precisely the nature of the connections that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. Thirdly, I understand by the term ‘apparatus’ [dispositif] a sort of—shall we say—formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need.

This ensemble of heterogeneous elements is discussed by Deleuze (1992) and Guattari (with Deleuze, 1987) as agencement or ‘assemblage’. Following Leahy (2012), Li (2007a), Rose (2000), Miller and Rose (2008) and Dean (2010), I draw on the notion of ‘assemblage’ as a key analytical tool through which to explore healthy lifestyles education programmes in schools.

An integral aspect of the assemblage is problematisation, the practices by which someone considers the conduct of individuals, collectivities or populations to be problematic. As Miller and Rose (2008, p. 14, italics in original) argue:

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8 ‘Assemblage’ is sometimes used synonymously with dispositif (e.g. Weidner, 2010). Conversely, a number of authors argue that there are important distinctions (for discussions, see Deleuze, 1988; Legg, 2011).
it makes sense to start by asking how this rendering of things problematic occurred. The term ‘problematizing’ [is] a useful way of designating this as a process, for it removed the self-evidence of the term ‘problems’. It suggests that ‘problems’ are not pre-given, lying there waiting to be revealed. They have to be constructed and made visible, and this construction of a field of problems is a complex and often slow process. Issues and concerns have to be made to appear problematic, often in different ways, in different sites, and by different agents.

When focusing on the governmentality of childhood obesity, a key starting point is to examine how a number of ‘problems’ have been constructed. Key questions that need to be asked include: How have childhood obesity, health and physical education, teachers, schools, corporations, families, food, lifestyles, and children themselves, been ‘made’ a problem? (see for examples, Burrows, 2008; Coveney, 2006; Evans et al., 2008; Gard, 2011; Gard & Wright, 2005; Leahy, 2009). How are subjects – children, teachers, external providers, charities, corporations – linked to each problem? What governmental interventions are introduced to ‘fix’ these problems, especially ‘problem’ children?

By considering problematisation as a crucial component of the assemblage, I interrogate how childhood obesity (and obese children) has been constructed as a problem, and how governmental interventions work to assemble some seemingly unrelated issues (e.g. health education, corporate social responsibility and marketing) and unlikely bedfellows (e.g. soft drink companies, charities, pokie trusts and health educators). Furthermore, by examining how problems become defined as problems, we can also begin to understand how problematisation is more than just an element of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage, but a practice that helps to bring elements together. As discussed previously, one limitation of governmentality studies is the emphasis on the plans to govern. To address this criticism, I offer an analytics of assemblage that pays much closer attention to the practices of assemblage - ‘how’ elements of the assemblage may or may not be made to ‘cohere’ (see Li, 2007a).

In this way, the term ‘assemblage’ needs to be thought of, and examined, as both a noun and a verb. As a noun it may be conceptualised as an already formed cluster of practices, organisations, discourses, rationalities, regulations and moralities. For instance, Burrows (2009) describes how families are assembled as

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9 ‘Pokie trusts’ are charitable trusts that own and supply ‘pokie’ machines (also known as poker or electronic gaming machines) to pubs, clubs and bars and use a percentage of their income to deliver ‘grants’ to a variety of community, education, and charity organisations.
(un)healthy subjects when multiple elements join together: neoliberalism, obesity discourse, biopedagogies, obesity interventions, public health organisations, scientific knowledge, experts, policies, physical activity guidelines, and reality TV weight-loss shows. Viewing assemblage also as a verb - ‘to assemble’ - encourages a richer, more in-depth examination of how these various elements are brought together to direct conduct towards a deliberate end. My analysis of the corporate and charitable solutions to obesity/unhealthy lifestyles will, therefore, examine more than just the practices that have occurred in schools at specific points in time (e.g. a Life Education lesson with a Year One class) or the resources produced by private sector players and their partners. Rather, I will examine how these practices or policies converge with numerous, often disparate, elements. My analysis will ask: How do critical elements of the assemblage ‘congeal’? How do discourses of obesity and healthy lifestyles, ‘official’ corporate resources, the goals of private/public/voluntary sector organisations, rationalities of neoliberalism and welfarism, pedagogies of risk, and state policies assemble in an amalgamated attempt to prevent childhood obesity? How are children, adults, schools and corporations as subjects positioned within, and shaped by, this complex governmental assemblage? Crucially, this will comprise an analysis of the practices that “draw heterogeneous elements together, forge connections between them and sustain these connections in the face of tension” (Li, 2007a, p. 264).

Li’s (2007a) critical examination of community forestry management in Canada offers six practices of assemblage, practices that I will draw on throughout my analysis. The first practice is that of forging alignments, “the work of linking together the objectives of the various parties to an assemblage, both those who aspire to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be conducted” (p. 265). Here I will need to ask how the objectives of corporations, charities, and schools have become aligned with one another. The second practice of assemblage is termed rendering technical. This involves “extracting from the messiness of the social world, with all the processes that run through it, a set of relations that can be formulated as a diagram in which problem (a) plus intervention (b) will produce (c), a beneficial result” (p. 265). How is childhood obesity, as a problem, rendered technical by school-based ‘solutions’? Authorizing knowledge is the third of Li’s assembling practices, where there is a “requisite body of knowledge; confirming enabling assumptions; containing critiques” (p. 265). How do corporate resources reproduce
‘authorised’, expert knowledge on obesity and education? The fourth practice involves managing failures and contradictions, “presenting failure as the outcome of rectifiable deficiencies; smoothing out contradictions so that they seem superficial rather than fundamental; devising compromises” (p. 265). In other words, how are any failures of governmental programmes (e.g. to make children healthier, less obese, more active, or better educated) presented? Anti-politics is a crucial practice of assemblage, where political questions are re-posed “as matters of technique; closing down debate about how and what to govern and the distributive effects of particular arrangements by reference to expertise; encouraging citizens to engage in debate while limiting the agenda” (p. 265). How do corporations or teachers or children ‘pose’ the problem of obesity, its solutions, and the effects of these various governmental interventions? Finally, Li describes re-assembling as a key practice for “grafting on new elements and reworking old ones; deploying existing discourses to new ends; transposing the meanings of key terms” (p. 265). How are discourses of health re-assembled, re-worked, re-formed, and re-placed through the various educational ‘solutions’ to obesity?

By employing the notion of assemblage we are also able to see that government is not the sole preserve of an oppressive, overarching monolithic state. It involves the interweaving of rationalities, technologies, subjectivities, discourses, truths and knowledges, albeit conceived by a number of organisations and individuals with the will to constrain, configure and direct subjects’ thoughts, habits, aspirations and beliefs. In the case of school-based anti-obesity/healthy lifestyles education programmes, a multiplicity of transnational, multinational and regional corporations, state government departments, public health organisations, academics, nutrition advocates, elite sports institutions, state-owned enterprises, charitable trusts, international governmental organisations, industry groups, national sporting organisations and teachers are assembled together in the attempt to regulate the lives of children and adults ‘at a distance’. An analytics of governmentality must therefore include an examination of the relations of power between the governors and the governed. What defines these power relations is that they tend to not act directly on others, but “upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or those which may arise in the present or the future” (Foucault, 1982, p. 789).

One of the main challenges in analysing the governmental assemblage is untangling the assemblage, finding the elements that constitute it, then following
those elements (which are often entangled with other assemblages) (Leahy, 2012). The task of differentiating the multiple components of the assemblage is complex, especially considering that “the economic, political, institutional, social, linguistic, semiotic, representational, discursive, subjective and affective are all potentially implicated in the assemblage, and so all are potentially significant” (Youdell, 2011, p. 45-46). Following Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of the rhizome, Li (2007a, p. 265) suggests that “elements are drawn together at a particular conjuncture only to disperse or realign, and the shape shifts according to the terrain and the angle of vision.” By framing the governmental assemblage as a rhizome I aim to explore the emergence and surfacing of the assemblage and the multitude of elements that compose it. To do this requires a critical examination of the ways in which knowledges, processes, practices, problems, discourses, technologies, truths, power relations and rationalities are assembled into established types of organisations and practices.

**Assembling a theoretical and analytical framework**

In this chapter I have delved into Foucault’s ‘toolkit’ and the field of governmentality studies to conceptualise government as both a form of power and a practice that endeavours to ‘conduct the conducts’ of individuals and populations. I described three key themes of governmentality: rationalities, technologies, and the subject. The first, rationalities of government, involves how we think about problems and practices of government. However, rationalities cannot remain in ‘thought’ alone. They are actualised through their connections with technologies of government. These technologies are both the programmatic and technical means by which government is ‘done’. My analytics of governmentality thus also involves an examination of how the various ways rationalities and technologies of government are ‘fused’ with each other, as well as how they converge with the third theme: the subject. This entails an interrogation of how healthy lifestyles education programmes may or may not (re)shape individual and collective ‘bodies and souls’ (Rose, 1999a) for specific purposes.

I expanded on this analytics by introducing the concept of assemblage as a key analytical device to assist me in exploring the governing of children’s bodies and behaviours. One important aspect of the assemblage is the practice of problematisation. This is the complex process by which various ‘things’ (e.g. obesity,
lifestyles, health, education, children) are made visible by individuals and organisations as being problematic, needing to be solved by a variety of authorities, at multiple sites, in multifarious ways. Furthermore, I conceptualise assemblage as both a noun and a verb. By doing this I am able to explore the corporate and charitable solutions to obesity and unhealthy lifestyles as an ‘already formed’ ensemble of disparate elements. I am also able to pay close consideration to the various practices of assemblage and the circumstances which allow these heterogeneous elements of the assemblage to ‘congeal’. I will interrogate how diverse knowledges, technologies, discourses, tactics, practices, rationalities, strategies, experts, programmes, regulations and authorities are assembled to govern children and adults ‘at a distance’ towards predictable ends, yet with potentially unpredictable consequences. By disentangling and re-assembling the elements of this messy governmental assemblage, I aim to illuminate how contemporary government is not only imagined, but ‘actually’ enacted.
Chapter Four: A critical ethnography

On a particularly warm Wednesday afternoon in late October, I sat on the concrete netball courts outside St Saviour’s School; an area that also doubled as the school car park. The Year Six and Seven students from Ms Ellie’s class had begun their ActivePost Small Sticks hockey lesson with their coach Andrea and were being instructed on how they needed to hold their hockey sticks. Some students listened intently. Others were busy swinging their sticks as hard as they could, as though they were teeing off in a game of golf. I winced as Mary, one of the Year Six girls, narrowly missed being struck in the head by one of the boy’s wayward swings. I looked back down to read over some of the ActivePost Small Sticks resources and promotional material, when I noticed that the providers and funders of this programme – New Zealand Post and Hockey New Zealand – had made a somewhat curious claim. In an outline of what ActivePost Small Sticks aimed to achieve, one of the benefits was that the programme included “the teacher being trained” (New Zealand Post, 2012, para. 4) in hockey coaching. I looked around and noticed that Ms Ellie was not being trained. In fact, Ms Ellie, was nowhere to be seen. I scribbled down in my research journal: “No evidence of [teacher being trained] occurring, especially when a reliever is being used to cover the teachers while [children] are at hockey – so [teachers] could be doing planning for next year” (Journal entry, 24th October, 2012). This event was not the only one like it. Over the course of my research there were multiple occasions when what actually happened in schools contradicted the ‘official’ plans; when the rhetoric of the external provider did not appear to match children’s or teachers’ experiences; when claims made by a corporation about their genuine attempt to improve children’s health acted in tension with their desire to profit.

To help me understand these tensions and contradictions, I needed a research approach that allowed me critically examine two broad areas: the rhetoric, rationales and proposed technologies of those with governmental ambitions; and what actually happened when the authorities and their plans to govern met their intended targets. I used a critical ethnographic research approach to gather and analyse evidence within and across multiple school sites, as well as to compare and contrast the disparate ways in which ‘healthy lifestyles education’ programmes were experienced, understood, and, in some instance, resisted by teachers and adults.
Why an ethnographic approach?

My examination of the various ‘solutions’ to obesity and unhealthy lifestyles and their ‘effects’ in schools involved a duo of analytics: the governmentality of these interventions (i.e. the sets of practices that constituted the ‘plans’ to govern) and how these rationales and technologies ‘actually’ connected with disparate institutions, authorities, discourses, knowledges and subjects. In order to critically examine governmental programmes in primary schools I attempted to make the hidden visible by disentangling and problematising certain relations of power, illuminating the fragmented, contradictory and ‘fragile’ nature of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage. However, it was not my aim to merely scrutinise what those with the ‘will to govern’ (Li, 2007a) wanted to happen – a common criticism of governmentality studies. I was interested in what happened when specific governmentalities met their intended targets. Although Rose (1999b) argues that studies of mentalities of rule should remain separate from ‘sociologies of rule’, I agree with Brady’s (2011, p. 267) assertion that when these two types of studies are combined they provide critical insights into how governmental programmes are “produced, lived and contested” (see also Li, 2007c). It is in these ways that I viewed my research as a critical project, an endeavour to critique the workings of seemingly independent institutions (i.e. corporations, charities, governments and schools) and ‘unmask’ the exercise of power within and across them (see Chomsky & Foucault, 2006).

Given that governmentalities “represent particular responses, to particular problems, at particular times” (McKee, 2009, p. 5), a critical ethnographic approach enabled me to pay attention to time, place, context, and the subject when investigating the ‘actual effects’ of the governmental assemblage. This is not to suggest that governmental programmes are determinative; there is always a divide between the aim of government and its realisation (Li, 2007c). What I aimed to do was examine how governmental programmes ‘change things’ - the fragmented ways in which the failure of, and resistance to, government forms new technologies and tactics.

Whilst searching for a ‘critical ethnography/governmentality studies’ method to emulate, I realised there was not one particular path or system to trace. The various analytical apparatuses developed in governmentality studies are malleable, adaptable and open (Rose et al., 2006). I therefore embraced a cluster of
ethnographic methods - a combination of spending time in schools, conversing with participants, observing participants ‘in action’, and collecting documentary evidence – in order to research the assemblage of governmental strategies, mentalities, technologies, practices, subjects, and their ‘actual effects’. For me to be able to understand the ‘social realities’ of schools it was necessary to access the “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 82) of those who were targeted by, and had actually experienced, the governmental interventions to make children healthier. The combination of Foucauldian theoretical ‘tools’ with ethnographic methods was particularly constructive as it enabled me to collect evidence of what authorities wanted to happen in schools, as well as the everyday ‘humble and mundane’ practices that happened in schools. However, before I describe my critical ethnographic research approach, I will introduce the three primary schools which agreed to participate in my research. By doing this I will demonstrate some of the differences between these three schools, such as their size, location, socio-economic status, and main ethnic groups, and a number of commonalities, in particular their use of externally provided healthy lifestyles education programmes.

Three primary schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand

The research data I draw on in this thesis comes from my time in three schools between the period of July and December 2012: St Saviour’s School, Dudley School, and Reynard Intermediate School. The schools were purposefully selected on the basis that they had previously implemented what I originally defined in my research proposal as ‘corporate related obesity programmes in schools’ (or ‘corporate obesity solutions’) and intended utilising the same or similar programmes during the academic year. Initially, this purposeful selection proved to be problematic. I was informed by several teachers and principals that they ‘didn’t use anything like that’. However, when I named some of the programmes that were devised, funded or implemented by a corporation in the name of fighting obesity, such as Life Education or McDonald’s My Greatest Feat, each of the teachers and/or principals informed me that they had recently used these programmes and intended to use them again. All child, teacher, principal and external provider participants were also selected through a purposeful sampling technique to provide in-depth cases (Patton, 2002). This form of sampling enabled me to observe, talk with and build relationships with particular people involved in implementing, experiencing and/or resisting the programmes,
rather than random individuals (see St. Pierre, 2006). For instance, one of the reasons I selected Miss Knight from Reynard Intermediate School was because I had previously attended a workshop in which she promoted Nestlé’s *Be Healthy, Be Active* resource. By using a diverse sample of participants (e.g. beginning and experienced teachers, high and low decile schools, different programmes and external providers), I was able to collect a range of opinions, ideas, and experiences.

Before I began my research I received ethics approval from Charles Sturt University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (CSU HREC). I approached each principal with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form (CF) inviting them to participate in my research. Following the principal’s permission, the principals discussed my research project with their teaching staff and invited teachers to participate. At Dudley School, three teachers demonstrated interest in participating, two teachers at St Saviour’s School, and one teacher at Reynard Intermediate School. Following the teacher’s consent, *all* children in each class were asked to be participants. The children and parents received separate CF and PIS, with the PIS and CF for the children written at a level appropriate to their year group and understanding of English. For parents who spoke English as an additional language, a modified PIS and CF were provided. For children’s consent to be achieved, both the child and parent/caregiver had to give consent. External providers who were selected as participants and invited to be part of the research also received a PIS and CF. It was made clear to all participants that participating in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from it at any stage. I chose pseudonyms for the names of all schools, children and adults.

**St Saviour’s School**

St. Saviour’s School is a Catholic primary school in Auckland, New Zealand. Located in suburban Auckland, St Saviour’s is a co-educational Catholic school with approximately 140 students and is a ‘full primary school’. A full primary school enrolls students from New Entrants to Year Eight (five to thirteen years of age), whereas a ‘standard’ primary school only enrolls children from New Entrants to Year Six (five to eleven years of age). St Saviour’s was categorised as a decile two school,

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10 A school’s decile rating is indicative of the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities (Ministry of Education, 2015). St Saviour’s School, for instance, as a decile two school is in the 20% of schools with the highest proportion of children from low socio-economic communities. The indicator is based on Census data for households with school-aged children in each schools ‘zone’ or catchment area.
and received total annual funding of NZD$770,000, equating to just over NZD$4800 per student. Of the 140 students, 77% of the students identified as Pasifika, including Tongan (38%), Samoan (35%), Cook Island Māori (2%), Fijian (1%) and other Pacific (1%). Additional ethnic groups included Asian (6%), Māori (5%), Pākehā/New Zealand European (5%), Indian (2%), and ‘Other’ (5%). The principal was Mrs Sergeant, a Pākehā woman. Out of the six classroom teachers, five were female and one was male. All of the full-time teaching and administrative staff were Pākehā, with the exception of one British teacher. As a Catholic school it is classed as an ‘Integrated School’, so although the school receives the same funding as state schools, the buildings and land are privately owned (by the Catholic church) and the school is able to charge compulsory ‘attendance dues’ to families. St Saviour’s School uses The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) alongside “religious instructions and observances, [exercising] the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ” (see www.chchceo.org.nz).

During the latter half of 2012 I spent time with two classes whose teachers agreed to participate in the research. Room E was a mixed Year Six/Seven class (aged ten to twelve) with 23 students (fourteen with permission) taught by Ms Ellie, a teacher of twenty years’ experience. Room B was a mixed Year One/Two class (aged five to six) with twenty students (eight with permission), taught by Miss Black, a ‘beginning teacher’ (in her first year of teaching). As ‘generalist’ classroom teachers, both Miss Black and Ms Ellie were responsible for teaching all eight Essential Learning Areas of The New Zealand curriculum: English, mathematics, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, science, social sciences, and technology. The research evidence I draw on in this study comes from the twenty-one full days I spent in both these classes (one day a week for two terms), as well as time spent before school, morning tea time, lunchtime and after school (in the playground, school grounds and staffroom) - approximately 150 hours in total. The specific programmes that had either previously been used or were implemented over the course of my time in the school were: Life Education, Iron Brion, Get Set Go,

11 Total funding = Operational funding + teacher salaries. I have not given the exact amount of total funding as this would identify the school.
12 Pasifika is a common term in Aotearoa/New Zealand for immigrants from Pacific Islands.
13 In New Zealand, Pākehā is a common Māori word to describe immigrants to Aotearoa/New Zealand of European decent.
14 State schools in New Zealand are not allowed to charge any compulsory fees, and can only request for voluntary donations.
**ActivePost Small Sticks Hockey, ASB Football in Schools, moveMprove, Fruit in Schools and 5+ A Day.**

**Dudley School**

Dudley Primary School is a state, co-educational, full primary school with just over 400 students. It is located in a small rural community approximately one hour’s drive from Auckland CBD. The majority of students lived either in the local village or on a ‘lifestyle’ farm, and 63% of students identified as Pākehā/New Zealand European. The next largest ethnic group was Māori (20%), followed by ‘Asian’ (10%), Pasifika (3%), and ‘Other’ (3%). It was a decile eight school and received slightly over NZD$1,800,000 of total funding per year, at just under NZD$4200 per student (an amount bemoaned by the principal, Mr Woodward, as inadequate in comparison with the funding given to low decile schools). As a state school, Dudley School implements *The New Zealand curriculum*. Three teachers and their classes took part in this research: Mrs Constansa, a teacher with thirteen years teaching experience in New Zealand and overseas who taught Room Two - a class of twenty-four Year One students (eight with permission); Mrs Donna, a teacher with “over twenty years” New Zealand teaching experience who taught Room Five – a class of sixteen Year Two students (six with permission); and, Mr Spurlock: the only male teacher in the school, who was responsible for teaching Room seventeen - a combined Year Seven/Eight class with twenty-nine students (eighteen with permission). All three teachers were responsible for teaching all eight Essential Learning Areas of *The New Zealand curriculum*. The data I draw on is from sixteen full days (112 hours) I spent at Dudley School, with the majority of the mornings spent observing and conversing with Mrs Constansa and the students of Room Two. I spent a shorter amount of time with the six students from Room Five, whilst most afternoons were with Room Seventeen. The specific programmes that had either previously been used or were implemented over the course of my time in the school were: *Life Education, moveMprove, Yummy Apples Sticker Promotion, My Greatest Feat*, and *MILO cricket*.

**Reynard Intermediate School**

Reynard Intermediate School caters for Year Seven and Year Eight students only (eleven to thirteen years of age). In New Zealand, intermediate schools are classified
as primary schools. I asked Reynard Intermediate School to participate in the research after another school withdrew from the study two days before research was to commence. This led to a long delay whilst I attempted to find another school suitable to participate and gain consent from principals, teachers, parents and young people. By the time ethical consent had been received (thirteen of twenty-nine students) I was only able to spend six days with the students and teachers to collect evidence. Furthermore, the school policy was for all students to be ‘mixed’ into different classes at the start of Year Eight, meaning I was unable to ‘follow’ the class again at the beginning of 2013. Hence, my time at Reynard Intermediate was brief, although my conversations with Miss Knight and the students provided useful evidence about the different healthy lifestyles education programmes they had experienced: Life Education, Yummy Apples Sticker Promotion, My Greatest Feat, MILO™ cricket, and Be Healthy, Be Active.

Reynard Intermediate School is situated in suburban Auckland. It is a decile nine school that received just below NZD$4000 per student, and just over NZD$3,100,000 total funding from the Ministry of Education per annum. The principal was Mrs Ross. There were over 780 students (including twenty-two international, fee-paying students) and thirty-five full-time classroom teachers and senior managers (twenty female, fifteen male). The largest number of students that identified as belonging to one ethnic group was Pākehā (44%). The next largest ethnic group was Chinese (20%), Korean (6%), British (5%), Indian (5%), African (3%), South East Asian (2%), Māori (2%), Filipino (2%), Sri Lankan (1%), ‘other European’ (5%), ‘other Asian’ (2%) and ‘Other’ (3%). Reynard Intermediate School utilises The New Zealand curriculum. Three teachers agreed to participate in the research – all connected to the same Year Seven class – Room Fourteen. They were: Mrs Peterson - the classroom teacher; Miss Hendrix, a student teacher on exchange from the United States; and, Miss Knight, a specialist ‘sports teacher’ with school-wide responsibilities for leading sports and the health and physical education learning area.

A critical ethnographic research approach
Ethnography is a qualitative research technique that is used to elicit participants’ perspectives in an attempt to understand their world, where the researcher participates by “watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions-in
fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research” (Spradley, 1979, p. 1). It is a type of qualitative social research that privileges context and engagement with participants in their everyday relations (Falzon, 2009). My approach to research and my collection of evidence in these three schools shared a number of features with traditional ethnographies. I was encouraged by the potential of ethnography to allow me to have close interaction with students, teachers and others in their school lives (Walters, 2007).

Fitzpatrick’s (2010, 2013) critical ethnography of Kikorangi High School (also in Auckland) provided a useful starting place for assembling my own research approach. I was drawn towards her use of critical ethnographic methods to explore and critique health and physical education, an approach that Fitzpatrick (2010, p. 21) noted was somewhat rare compared with traditional ethnographic accounts of schools, and “almost unheard of” in the field of health and physical education research. Her research did not just focus on health and physical education practices in a New Zealand school, but enabled her “to provide a deep and nuanced account of [her] experiences with students ... in order to attend directly to the ongoing, complex and shifting workings of power in schools today”. As a critical ethnographer, she attended to both the micro and macro relationships of power that framed and shaped culture, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, teaching, bodies, identities, and young people’s lives within a school context. This approach aligned with Foucault’s recognition of the importance of ‘micro’ level techniques of power: “the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals” (Foucault, 1980b, p. 39). As I stated earlier, one of the aims of my research was to interrogate the micro level practices that congealed with macro influences, particularly political rationalities and technologies of government. A number of scholars have critically examined the phenomenon of corporatised resources and programmes in schools (for examples, see Boyles, 2005a; Mandel, Bialous, & Glantz, 2006; Molnar, 2005; Norris, 2011; Stuart, 2006; Tannock, 2010). However, few have employed either a conventional or critical ethnographic approach.

Although I used a range of familiar ethnographic methods (e.g. observations, research conversations, documentary evidence) to provide thick accounts of “ethnographic moments” (Fitzpatrick, 2010, p. 32) across three sites, I hesitate to describe my research as a ‘traditional’ or ‘conventional’ ethnography for three reasons. First, traditional ethnographies generally take place in one setting. Whilst I
was interested in the ways in which the various school-based ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles were assembled, understood and experienced within a particular site and context, I was also cognisant of the criticism that traditional ethnographies attempted to ‘silo’ complex social phenomena within a single site (for discussions, see Falzon, 2009; Marcus, 1995). As my analysis was underpinned by the concept of governmental assemblage, I understood that there was a messy mix of institutions, political rationalities, tactics, subjects and programmes that could not be neatly contained and explained in only one school space. By choosing a multi-site ethnographic approach, it allowed me as an ethnographic researcher to examine and sometimes compare the types of relationships that were formed between the macro (e.g. government policy) and specific micro, localised sites, subjects, relationships and situations. Collecting and analysing evidence both within and across each site (see Merriam, 1998) provided the potential for a more comprehensive interpretation and “better theorizing” than a single-site ethnography (Stake, 1988, p. 437). This method proved fruitful when I contrasted and compared a particular programme or resource that had been implemented in more than one school. For instance, both Dudley School and St Saviour’s School used the moveMprove programme, but in quite dissimilar ways, with different rationales, effects and experiences. By employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach, I was able to move spatially (between classrooms and schools), methodologically (between different forms of evidence collection) and conceptually (between different analytical and theoretical devices) (see also Falzon, 2009).

The quantity of time I was able to spend in each school was my second source of ‘hesitation’ in defining my research as a traditional ethnography. A conventional ethnography is usually conducted for a long duration, where the ethnographer participates “in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time” (Hammersely & Atkinson, 1995, p. 1). There are, however, no hard or fast rules on precisely how long an ‘extended period of time’ is. Jeffrey and Troman (2004), for instance, suggest twelve months is a suitable length, while Falzon (2009) argues that conventional ethnographies typically take place for several months or more. Although I conducted my research over a six month period, I was not in each school, every day. Instead, I utilised a “selective intermittent time mode” approach (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004, p. 540), where I was present at each of the three schools for at least one day a week, and arranged with the school to conduct research on additional days.
when there were specific, relevant events (such as staff meetings or school trips) or programmes (e.g. a *Life Education* lesson).

Finally, my methodological approach is distinct from conventional ethnographies through my endeavour for this to be a *critical* project. This has, in part, been influenced by my engagement with Foucault, the adaptable and malleable analytical tools developed by governmentality scholars, and a “certain ethos of investigation” (Rose et al., 2006, p. 101; see also Foucault, 1982). My understanding and use of the term ‘critical ethnography’ reflects this ethos and Foucault’s notion of ‘critique’: “the right to question truth as truth operates through power and to question power as it operates through truth” (Madison, 2005, p. 6). Indeed, my interest in critically examining the role of corporations ‘teaching’ children about health and obesity began with a concern that corporate programmes represented the profit-seeking mentality of powerful corporations and may work to reproduce certain bodies of knowledge and discursive practices. The reason why a critical ethnographic approach was necessary to investigate this phenomenon was the desire to search for possibilities to confront and dispute the *status quo*: the place and power afforded to dominant institutions (e.g. multi-national corporations and schools), regimes of truth, and the practices that attempt to shape choices, identities and communities (Madison, 2005).

One aspect of my critical ethnographic approach that I needed to be aware of was my position as a researcher within the school settings as a research site. As Madison (2005, p. 8) argues, *positionality* is a critical consideration for any ethnographic project “because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects.” I was therefore cognisant that there was no such thing as a “disinterested academic” (Marker, 2009, p. 39). My position as a researcher, my choice of methods, analysis and research questions were influenced by my beliefs and biases. Indeed, the topic and direction of my research was significantly informed by my own ‘left-leaning’ concerns about the negative influence of corporations and marketing in modern society, a perspective informed by authors such as Naomi Klein (‘No Logo’), Eric Schlosser (‘Fast Food Nation’), Noam Chomsky (‘Manufacturing Consent’), Joel Bakan (‘The Corporation’), and Joseph Stiglitz (‘Globalization and its Discontents’). My beliefs about childhood obesity also substantially shaped my research project. I was not interested in preventing obesity in children, but rather was
curious as to how obesity and fatness is socially constructed in terms of health and morality. Like a number of other authors in the field of critical obesity studies (e.g. Gard, 2011; Gard & Wright, 2005; Wright & Harwood, 2009), I shared a concern that the school-based ‘war on obesity’ was based on uncertain evidence and could do more harm than good for students’ bodies, identities and lives. My beliefs about the place of obesity interventions in schools and the place of corporations in public education undoubtedly played a critical role in shaping the direction of my research. I was also aware that my role as an ‘interested academic’ shaped how I conducted my research (the questions I asked, the voices I heard, the participants I talked to), how I interpreted, analysed and ‘wrote up’ evidence, and how participants acted and responded (e.g. orally, visually, bodily). For example, whilst at St Saviour’s School I received a Christmas card from Ms Ellie’s class. Aside from a number of warm, kind, hand-written notes from the Year Six/Seven children, it contained the following text:

Dear Darren

A huge thanks for all the care and support you have shown the staff and children. It’s been great having such a positive male role model in the class and school. The research has made us more aware of media/economic/big business issues. We will miss having you around but I’m sure that we’ll see you next year.

Merry Christmas
Ms Ellie

It was not the explicit intent of my research to make Ms Ellie’s and her students’ “more aware of media/economic/big business issues”. Nor was it my aim to shape their opinions or understandings of corporations and their solutions to childhood obesity. However, it was a timely reminder that if or when participants gained new awareness of my research ‘problem’ (such as the influence of corporations), participants’ narratives, thoughts and behaviours may also change and further re-shape the research. In another example from my research at St Saviour’s School, by engaging in frequent informal conversations with Ms Ellie, Miss Black and principal Mrs Sergeant, they became aware of some of my concerns with the role of external providers in primary schools, particularly those closely tied to the private sector. We also had a number of discussions, sometimes rather heated, about the causes of obesity and the role of parents, schools and children themselves in being responsible
for children’s fatness. These conversations had a tangible and concrete effect on my research. There were numerous times when Ms Ellie, Miss Black and Mrs Sergeant (and other staff members for that matter) would seek me out to discuss a news story about childhood obesity or McDonald’s, or would engage in a discussion with me (usually in the staffroom at morning tea time) about the quality (or lack thereof) of a particular programme. They also provided me with useful evidence I would not have had access to, such as when Ms Ellie forwarded emails to me that contained promotional materials for a new corporate-sponsored resource. When it was time for me to conduct formal (i.e. recorded) research conversations, the conversations we had were detailed, focused, rich and in-depth. They were built on a foundation of ‘shared’ knowledge and understanding, although this is not to suggest that these knowledges and understandings were always, if ever, agreed upon. My position as a researcher was, therefore, not just a source of bias, but also a position of responsibility. By recognising my own biases and how this impacted on my research and my participants, I remained acutely aware that I was in a position of power that required constant reflection and ethical decision-making.

Being reflexive of my positionality and subjectivity was critical for my “understanding of, and respect for, those under study” (Willis, 2000, p. 113). This was by no means a simplistic task. As a Pākehā/New Zealand European male from a middle class background conducting research with Māori and Pasifika children, particularly in a low socio-economic suburb of Auckland, I was cognisant of my own privilege and prejudices. These were privileges and prejudices that I had negotiated since I was a primary school student. My mother taught in the same Auckland primary school for almost thirty years, one that consisted of predominantly Pasifika and Māori children. I would frequently spend time at this school (usually when I was sick). At first I was unsure about being the only palagi (a Samoan term to describe a non-Samoan of European descent) at the school; their lives, clothing, bodies, and languages were foreign to me. However, as I played with, read with, and occasionally raced against, my new-found friends, I became far more aware of our commonalities rather than our differences. With the help of my friends and my mother, I grew up with not only an understanding of Pasifika people and communities, but an awareness of my own and others’ privileges. These were also experiences that opened my eyes to prejudice, stereotyping and racism. Throughout my teenage years, I became aware that not everyone ‘liked’ or understood Māori and
Pasifika people. They were used as the punchlines for racist jokes, the blame for all crime, and the target for abuse and harassment. These experiences were the beginnings to my own understanding of, and motivation to improve justice, fairness and equity for others that were not as privileged as I was.

Reflecting on my privileges, power and biases also forced me to consider how my position as a researcher influenced my own understanding and interpretation of the participants’ voices. I was aware that as a critical ethnographer I needed to listen to voices that were both in agreement and in tension with my personal beliefs, “even if what we hear is not to our liking” (Thomas, 1993, p. 62). For instance, although I thought that external providers were not the best people to be teaching HPE in schools, the teachers, children and principals tended to disagree. Exploring this difference of opinion, debating the pros and cons of external providers, and justifying our positions, acted as a means for me to hear disparate voices and perspectives, and help me see external providers through the teachers and children’s eyes.

**Voice, research conversations and respectful relationships**

My research approach elicited children and adults’ ‘voices’ in order to gain an insight into the ‘really-lived worlds’ of each child and adult I spoke with and listened to. I collected, analysed and reflected on participants’ voices through a number of methods, including conducting all formal research conversations (approximately seventy hours of recorded research conversations), informal research conversations (i.e. random, spontaneous, unplanned dialogue, sometimes recorded in my research journal), as well as observations of interactions between participants.

In this section I begin by identifying some of the limitations of traditional interview techniques and propose that the use of research conversations, combined with the construction of respectful and trusting relationships, has the potential to disrupt power imbalances and social hierarchies. I then delve into some of the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the research conversation methods, describing and justifying how, when and where they were conducted, who participated, and what questions were asked. Here I argue that the use of the ‘auto-drive’ (Clark, 1999) method of group conversation was a particularly useful means to counteract problems of power and encourage the students to ‘drive’ the conversations in ways that met their interests, wants, needs, and knowledges. I also examine how informal research conversations provided insight into children’s and adult’s understanding of health, obesity,
corporations, charities and their lives. Finally, I explore the ‘slipperiness’ of voice, discussing the notion that voices are socially constructed and that the voices of my participants shaped, and were shaped by, my research.

Even though interviewing is recognised as an effective research tool to understand the experience of others from their perspective (see Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002), interviews also have limitations. One is the propensity for children and young people to feel that they are expected to have the ‘right’ answers to questions they have had little or no time to consider (see Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Formal one-to-one interviews and focus group formats, common research methods, can also impose “an interrogative, threatening, and uncomfortable atmosphere on participants” (Fitzpatrick, 2010, p. 84). This may have been the case for Sonny, a five-year-old Māori boy at St Saviour’s who I included in three research conversations, yet did not speak a single word.

By acknowledging the problem of power and power imbalances between interviewer and interviewee, I used what Fitzpatrick (2010) labelled research conversations (see also Fine & Weis, 2003, for a discussion about ‘extraordinary conversations’). According to Fitzpatrick (2010, p. 86), this was a practice that allowed students a freedom to express and explore issues of power and equity:

I also felt that conversations held greater potential for building relationships and reciprocal trust, and might allow a less formal and more natural environment for students to express their ideas .... Unlike interviews and focus groups, however, conversations are produced through two or more people talking, not one asking questions and others answering.

Before I embarked on any recorded research conversations, my first task was to develop my relationships with the children and adults in each of the schools. Forming respectful, mutual and sustainable relationships provided an important foundation for research, especially when there was a difference in the cultural backgrounds of myself and participants (see also Fitzpatrick, 2010). To help construct these relationships I asked the children and teachers to call me ‘Darren’ rather than ‘Mr Powell’ or ‘Sir’. At St Saviour’s School, for instance, I played rugby with the older children at lunchtime, helped children with their school work during class time, slid down slides with the younger students, assisted teachers with administrative tasks, sat down and ate lunch with students and teachers, hung out in the staff-room, and regularly talked with teachers and principals about education,
corporations, charities, and life in general. Saying ‘Hi’, smiling and chatting also seemed to build trust and reciprocal relationships with the students, as did speaking candidly when asked personal questions like ‘why are you in our classroom?’ or ‘are you married?’ Certainly in the context of St Saviour’s School, it only took a short amount of time for children to get to ‘know’ me, and I rapidly felt less like a researcher/stranger and more like a ‘friend’, a ‘colleague’ and occasionally a ‘big kid’ (although in saying that, a number of the students were bigger than me).

There were times when my trustworthiness was tested, indeed jeopardised. Occasionally I slipped into ‘teacher mode’ (e.g. when two Year One boys fought over the same colouring pencil and I told them to stop), which reminded me of the danger of children seeing me as ‘another teacher’. This was a difficult tightrope to walk. The younger students (Year One and Two, aged five to seven years) seemed to immediately see me and treat me as though I was a teacher or teacher-aide. I spent much time in and out of the classroom sharpening their pencils, unfreezing computers, helping them count or read or write, tying their shoe laces, opening packets of potato chips, or sending them to the office to have grazed knees tended to. It was impossible to re-invent myself as anything other than some sort of teacher/authority figure for these children, just as it would have been impossible to remain distant and detached as an invisible fly-on-the-wall (not that I intended or tried to be).

In contrast, the older students knew I was not a ‘real’ teacher. In the early stages of my research I had the distinct impression that some students were testing my trustworthiness and my ‘neutral’ position by deliberately ‘playing up’ to see if I would ‘growl them’ or report their behaviour to teachers. On the relatively rare occasions when students swore, fought, spat, littered, or just weren’t doing what they were supposed to, I tried to bite my tongue and remain impartial (which, as an experienced primary school teacher, was not always easy to do). I felt as though being seen in a disciplinary or ‘teacher’ role would endanger my credibility as a ‘non-teacher’.

On reflection, these moments were essential for me to build shared, trusting relationships with the participants – children and adults alike. For example, during one of my first research conversations at St Saviour’s School, a twelve-year-old Samoan girl called Natia checked that the research conversations were confidential. During that conversation she swore in Tongan (her second language, English was her
third), complained about another teacher in the school, and told me how other students had been mean to her. The next week I invited Natia back for another conversation. As I walked with her from the classroom to the staffroom (the location of the research conversations) she smiled at me and said ‘You didn’t tell Miss [Ms Ellie] I swore aye?!’ I replied with honesty: ‘No’. Then she said: “You didn’t tell those other girls I talked about them aye?!” Again, I replied ‘No’. She just raised her eyebrows in a way that implied ‘Ok’, and we moved on. Over the next few months we had several in-depth conversations about her schooling, her family and her life. If I had failed her ‘test’ of my trust, or had never built a reciprocal relationship with her at all, our conversations may not have been all that useful or meaningful for my research.

In terms of building relationships with the adults in the school, one important factor was that the teachers saw me interacting with their students in a friendly, positive and professional way. At the same time, I endeavoured to be as helpful and useful as possible in the classroom, rather than a hindrance or a judgemental ‘fly’ on the wall. I wanted to be - and be seen - as not just a ‘taker, but also a ‘giver’. As the teachers began to know me, some included me more in class discussions and asked for my opinion on certain topics, whilst others asked me to work with individuals or groups of students. I certainly felt that building open and ongoing relationships with children and adults helped to build a foundation for ‘respectful research’ and for richer research moments.

Another aspect of building positive relationships with participants was to allow the children and teachers to decide on the time and place of each conversation, in order to minimise inconvenience, disruption, and loss of ‘learning time’ (which not all students showed concern about). The time of each research conversation was decided in collaboration with both the students and their teacher. Each was conducted in a place that was convenient and quiet - also negotiated with students and teachers. At Reynard Intermediate School the research conversations took place on barbecue tables outside the classroom. At Dudley School I used the library and outdoor tables. At St Saviour’s School I conducted the conversations in the staffroom.

The research conversations were semi-structured, allowing for changes of topic so I could respond more naturally and spontaneously to the participants’ responses (Kvale, 1996). Before each research conversation I devised either a single
theme (e.g. students’ experience of Life Education) or multiple themes to be covered (e.g. health, obesity, McDonald’s, corporate sponsorship). I used an interview guide that helped me ‘build a conversation’ (Patton, 2002) around participants’ understanding and experiences of the programmes and resources devised, funded and/or implemented by corporations and charities. The types of questions I used were based on Patton’s (1990) model of formulating questions, including: behaviour or experience questions - ‘What happened in your Life Education lesson?’; opinion questions - ‘Why do you think Frucor sponsors Life Education?’; value questions - ‘What do you believe is the value of having these coaches come and teach your class?’; feeling questions - ‘How do you feel about external providers teaching your students in health and physical education?’; and, knowledge questions - ‘What is obesity?’ I always kept with me, and often used, a general interview guide with a wide range of questions and topics that were informed by my research questions and literature review. However, for each research conversation I adapted the interview guide to focus the questions towards programmes that had recently been used or were just about to be implemented in the school, such as a scheduled moveMprove session. The interview guides were regularly adjusted to meet the interests and experiences of the specific participants. For instance, the majority of the Year One and Two students at St Saviour’s School spoke English as an additional language, so I spent time re-wording my questions so the children would have a greater chance of understanding what I was asking them. In some classes I had regular groups with whom I would conduct conversations - the same four or five children - so would frame my theme or questions around issues we had previously talked about. This was useful as a way to avoid repetition of topics and questions, and to build on the students’ knowledge and experiences. On the occasions when there were no recent instances of healthy lifestyles education programmes to discuss, research conversations were directed towards other relevant topics, such as children’s experiences of HPE, their understanding of corporate sponsorship, or ideas about health, lifestyles, eating, poverty, or obesity.

The majority of the research conversations with children were in groups (between two to six children). One limitation of the group conversation was the potential for imbalanced power relationships between participants, where a single student or a small group of students would dominate the discussion (for a discussion, see Fontana & Frey, 1994). I noticed this in some groups, particularly those that had
two different year groups (e.g. Ms Ellie’s combined Year Six/Seven class at St Saviour’s), where the older students tended to dominate and direct the conversation. To try to negate this effect I conducted research conversations with groups of children from the same year level and peer groups. In addition, I noticed that the older students’ conversations were influenced by the relationships and dynamics between boys and girls. This was especially evident when discussions turned to issues around fatness, bodies and eating, where I felt that some children were possibly not as open or forthcoming as they might have been in ‘single-gender’ research conversations. For this reason, most (but not all) of the research conversations with the older students took place in single-gender arrangements. Even in single-gender, single-year group conversations, there were still a number of instances where certain participants ‘took over’ conversations, whilst other students, like Sonny, did not participate at all.

Social hierarchies and power imbalances were not only present between the participants themselves, but also seemed to be present between me as researcher and the participants. This was obvious in my initial research conversations, where students tended to wait for me to ask a question, provide me with a short answer (or look at each other to see who was ‘brave enough’ to give a response), and then wait for the next question. One way I tried to address this power imbalance (in addition to building trusting relationships and adapting the interview guides) was encouraging the participants to ‘steer’ the conversations towards experiences, understandings and interests that they were more familiar with and knowledgeable about. Using this ‘auto-drive’ (Clark, 1999) technique, the research conversation was ‘driven’ by the participants. I felt that this technique allowed participants to guide the topic of conversation towards their own interests and knowledges, as well as set the pace, linguistic level, and tone of the conversation. This was especially important for those conversations with children whose home-spoken language was not English. In some cases, children spoke (or swore) in another language, which was then immediately translated back to me by the speaker or a peer. Encouraging students to steer the conversation and explain their own ‘really-lived worlds’ enabled the children to be ‘experts’ and provided rich ethnographic moments (Clark-Ibáñez, 2008). For instance, I spoke with three Year Seven boys at Dudley School - Eton, James and Brian - about a cricket lesson that was sponsored by MILO. At one stage I asked
“Why do you think MILO people would want to teach you cricket?”, to which they responded:

**Eton:** Because they say that MILO is the ‘official drink of play’-

**James:** Isn’t that Powerade?

**Eton:** No, that’s MILO. In their ad, ‘Kids need blah blah blah amount a day’.

**Darren:** So is it the ‘official drink of play’?

**Eton:** Yes.

**Brian:** Yes.

**Darren:** What does that mean?

**Eton:** I think they’re just encouraging that MILO is like an energy drink, but it’s also a hot chocolate. And, it’s not like coffee, it doesn’t keep you awake, but it’s MILO.

**Darren:** Is MILO a healthy drink?

**Brian:** No.

**Eton:** No, it’s made out of cocoa.

**James:** Cocoa is healthy!

**Eton:** Is it?

**James:** Yeah … ish.

**Eton:** Not when you put sugar through it, the milk in it is, hot water in it- 

**James:** -not with sugar, but just plain disgusting cocoa is healthy.

**Eton:** Maybe the water is healthy.

Even though at times I interjected to find out more about these boys’ understanding of MILO as an (un)healthy product, it was Eton, Brian and James who steered much of the conversation. Their response to my initial question, ‘Why do you think MILO people would want to teach you cricket?’, was certainly not simple, logical or straightforward, but revealed some interesting complexities and ideas, such as their knowledge of MILO’s ‘official drink of play’ marketing slogan, their understanding (and disagreement) of the healthiness of certain ingredients, and their thoughts about fatness.

In addition to the group research conversations with children, I also conducted one-to-one research conversations with teachers, principals and external providers. Some children were also purposively selected for one-to-one research conversations when it became evident that they had specific, in-depth knowledge, ideas, opinions and/or experiences that were relevant to my research. The aim of these one-to-one conversations was to develop a deeper understanding of participants and their understanding of the various healthy lifestyles education programmes they had implemented/resisted/experienced (as well as other related issues). It was also
used as a technique that allowed participants to talk and share in a more private and personal setting. This latter point proved to be important when ‘connecting’ participants’ experiences and understanding of issues, programmes, resources, organisations and people to their ‘actually-existing lives’ outside of the school context. This was certainly the case in my one-to-one conversation with Natia - a student who was criticised by adults and children alike for her fatness and for bringing big bags of potato chips to school. When I talked to Natia about family and food, she informed me that her family of seven (mother, father and five children) had recently been evicted from their ‘state house’ (one provided and funded by the government through the welfare system). This conversation helped to provide evidence that being healthy and eating healthy was not a matter of ‘free choice’. Natia’s so-called choices were restricted by her home life, her parents’ income and broader socio-economic factors, such as housing policy, welfare and poverty.

There were also a number of group and one-to-one conversations that were ‘informal’ (i.e. not recorded by digital voice recorder) and unstructured (i.e. without a prepared interview guide or questions). For instance, I regularly ate lunch with the students and had discussions and debates about: what they had (or did not have) in their lunch box; which foods were healthy, ‘junk’, yummy, yucky, expensive or cheap; or why boys didn’t eat ‘Dora the Explorer’ yoghurt. By encouraging children and adults to talk about various topics from their own frame of reference, this informal approach provided greater depth of evidence (May, 2011). This type of malleable (and perhaps less intimidating) approach to research conversations was a crucial aspect of my data collection and analysis, encouraging me to regularly reflect on and contextualise my everyday experiences of listening to the voices of students and adults in the playground, staff room and classroom.

Throughout my research I was aware that the concept of voice is “slippery, shifting, knowable, unknowable, certain, uncertain, audible, inaudible, and certainly unstable” (Mazzei, 2009, p. 45). In this way, I did not try to present participants’ voices to the reader as a simple articulation of the ‘truth’ or a reflection of the ‘real’ meaning of an experience (see Mazzei & Jackson, 2009). Voice, like an observation

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15 During one lunchtime at Dudley School I was told by the five-year-old children in Mrs Constansa’s class that only girls ate ‘Dora the Explorer’ yoghurt and only boys ate ‘Diego’ (Dora’s cousin) yoghurt. I tested this ‘norm’ by bringing ‘Dora’ yoghurt to school and eating it in front of the children. Some of the boys looked at me oddly, some with wry smiles, whereas the girls laughed hysterically. Two girls even tried to physically stop me from eating ‘the girls’ yoghurt. I had never before considered that children’s food could be so gendered.
or piece of documentary evidence, must not be conflated with pure, clear, ‘concrete’
evidence; voices are socially constructed, discursively formed, and constantly
negotiated, re-shaped and re-assembled. The voices in my research were, therefore,
shaped by my presence as a researcher and my own research agenda, as well as
through hierarchical power relationships between myself and the students, and the
students themselves. The participants I chose (or was able to choose) to listen to, the
questions I asked (or did not ask), the lines of conversations I chose to explore or
ignore, how I listened to and interpreted participant’s voices, and the voices I
accepted as ‘true’, all shaped the representation of voices in my research. For
example, take the following conversation with a group of Year Seven boys at St
Saviour’s School:

Darren: Why do you think that a company would want you to be
healthy or keep healthy?
DJ: To be strong.
Mark: To stay fit and stay healthy.
Hone: Because they care for us.
DJ & Mark: (laugh)
Carlos: So we can live a longer life and buy more of their
products.
Darren: So you think part of it is-
Afakasi: -to get more money.
DJ: Yeah, to get more money!
Darren: How do you think they get more money from doing
these sort of programmes?
Afakasi: They put a vivid image in children’s heads so they can
go home and tell their parents about the company.

The students’ identification of ‘money’ as a prime motivation for a company’s
involvement in children’s health and education connected to my own interest in this
idea that “corporations would not be involved in schools were it not for the promise
of increased profits and market share” (Vander Schee, 2005, p. 20). This connection
between our beliefs helped to focus our conversation on this particular ‘money’
aspect. Although this research conversation allowed me to elicit some rich evidence
of the ways children understood these programmes, at the same time our group’s
dismissal of Hone’s view that corporations “care for us” meant that his voice was, to
some degree, silenced.

Following this conversation above, I reflected on how conversations could act
to ‘gag’ certain voices and I became more critical of how I conducted my
conversations. I attempted to elicit and listen to voices other than those that were
easy to categorise and respond to, such as those voices that obviously related to my research questions or which were in agreement with my own view of the corporate ‘part of the solution’ to obesity. I drew on Mitchell’s (2009, p. 78) advice for researchers to listen “to the voices of participants with ‘soft ears’ – or ears that are malleable and opened to subtle understandings and interpretations” and sought those voices that escaped easy classification.

This approach proved fruitful on a number of occasions, both in terms of developing positive relationships with participants and hearing ‘new’ voices, ideas, understandings and experiences. One such instance was during a conversation with Vaha, a Year One Tongan girl in Miss Black’s class at St Saviour’s School. She told me that the reason she did moveMprove was so she could teach children to do gymnastics when she was older. Although this comment did not immediately make sense to me, rather than assuming she wanted to be a gymnastics coach and moving on to a different topic, I let the conversation ‘run’ and gave Vaha space and time to explain what she meant. She did not want to be a gymnastics coach. Vaha had heard the term ‘life-long’ being used during the moveMprove session and thought this meant that the gymnastic skills she was learning were to be used later in life (i.e. when she was an adult). By being patient and trying to listen to a voice that I did not, in the first instance, understand, I gained further insight into a participant’s understanding of a healthy lifestyles education programme – a child’s voice that may have gone unheard.

**School time: Observations and journals**

At the beginning of my research I was mindful that trying to see, record and capture ‘everything’ that occurred in each school was an ineffective, somewhat pointless, and wholly impossible exercise. With this in mind I chose to use ‘selective observations’ (see Murtagh, 2007) in which I focused on specific healthy lifestyles education programmes that were sponsored, funded, designed and/or implemented with the financial assistance of the private sector. However, this approach proved to be challenging. The vast majority of, if not the entire school day, had little to do with the corporatised ‘solutions’ to obesity or unhealthy lifestyles. At times I felt frustrated that useful ethnographic moments would never occur, or that my time would be better spent in another class or another school where something ‘relevant’ might be happening. However, these ‘dead spots’ were valuable. They provided
insights into how classroom teachers taught, and how students learned, in a range of subjects, often showcasing the teacher’s pedagogical expertise. They illuminated the importance of the classroom teacher-student relationship, in particular the ways in which teachers used their knowledge of their students’ wants, needs and lives to teach and care for their students. And it gave me time and space to observe, talk to, form relationships with, and discover more about the students and teachers who were participating in my research.

On occasions I watched, listened and jotted notes from the ‘outside’ (e.g. from the side-line of the netball court, or the periphery of the classroom), recording details about the environment, behaviours, activities and dialogue between participants. However, as I grew more comfortable with and felt more accepted by the students and their teachers, I evolved from an unfamiliar ‘man-in-the-corner’ observer to ‘Darren the researcher’. For instance, Ms Ellie often invited me to participate in class discussions or group work. Sometimes she asked for my ‘professional’ input (Ms Ellie knew that I conducted professional development workshops for teachers), whilst at other times I played, brainstormed or talked as though I was another student. This is not to suggest that I made a conscious decision to ‘go native’ (Punch, 2005) and take on a specific role as a student or teacher or helper, as though embarking on a more traditional ethnographic role of ‘participant observer’. My presence - whether as a researcher or a ‘native’ - was always going to influence how participants thought, acted, talked and behaved. As Fitzpatrick (2010, p. 93) noted in her research: “There is no doubt that the classes would’ve been very different if I wasn’t there.” However, any attempt to act as though I was a teacher or a five-year-old child (even if I wore the school uniform) would have been ineffectual, if not counter-productive. My role in the school was as a researcher and I felt it was important that participants knew that I was there to conduct research. I wanted to know more about them, their lives and their experiences. I wanted them to engage with me and my research interests in a genuine way. All of the children and adults knew who I was and why I was there; acting otherwise felt counter-intuitive and unethical, as though I was trying to obtain data by covert and deceptive means.

Throughout my time in schools I used what some ethnographers refer to as journaling to take notes of my ‘observations’. Instead of attempting to be a ‘fly-on-the-wall’ researcher, one that would be neutral and detached from my observations, I took on a number of active ‘roles’ during the day and took journal notes either during
or afterwards. I engaged in numerous, spontaneous ‘everyday’ conversations in a variety of contexts, took students out of class for research conversations, and used journaling as a means to reflect on my thoughts, experiences, interactions and emotions. The decision whether, or how, to participate in any one lesson or experience was rarely predetermined, but dependent on the context - the school, teacher, students, a specific lesson, or the general ‘mood’ of the class. Often my decision to participate, observe or take journal notes was in response to spur-of-the-moment events; those unstructured and unplanned moments that were common in a busy classroom with up to thirty children. For example, one day at Dudley School I was watching the Year One children participate in a moveMprove lesson. I noticed that one of the students, Alice, was trying to jump and hold onto a horizontal bar. For what seemed an eternity she leaped and failed to catch the bar - at least half a dozen times. After each jump she looked over to the two moveMprove coaches - Kylie and Jeremy - then tried again. And failed again. I found myself facing an ethical and methodological dilemma as to what to do (or not do) in this situation, when I felt that a student needed assistance. In this particular moment I slipped into teacher/teacher-aide mode, helping Alice to jump and reach the bar, before discussing with her other ways she could do it more independently (such as climbing up the support beam first). Unlike the wildlife filmmaker who sits detached, either unable or unwilling to intervene when a baby elephant is stuck in mud, lions closing in, I felt it would be unethical for me to ignore children (and teachers for that matter) who needed help.

There were a number of other situations during my research where children struggled with certain tasks or were unaware what they were supposed to be doing. In most situations I assisted in the most appropriate way I could. These also proved to be productive research moments as it gave me one-to-one time with participants who expressed joy, confusion, boredom, frustration, and even pleasure from these experiences. It facilitated the building of rapport and trusting relationships. It also emotionally connected me to my research - both my topic and the participants - as demonstrated in the following journal entry about a moveMprove lesson:

I think it would almost kill Jeremy to move any faster, to smile, to talk, to interact, or to act like someone who wants to be there. For a ‘qualified movement specialist’ who is trained in this programme he shows very little willingness to be involved. Currently he is watching [Kylie] take a group activity while he is lying on a mat. (Journal entry, 6th November, 2012)
I usually made entries in my journal immediately after or a short time after specific moments occurred, rather than recording them in ‘real time’ (i.e. as they happened). One reason for this was, at times, my notebook and pen seemed to form a barrier between the participants and myself. I recall one situation when I was sitting at a desk with three Year Seven girls at Dudley School, when they began to complain (in hushed tones) that their teacher never listened to them. As soon as I picked up my pen (to make a note about teacher-student relationships), all three girls stopped talking and looked at me - in fact, looked at my pen and journal - anticipating what I was about to write about them. Noticing their apprehension, I placed the pen on the desk and engaged in conversation about their relationship with their teacher. It was one of a number of situations in which talking with participants was far more rewarding (both in terms of research evidence and building relationships with participants) than writing about them. It was also an example of how participants may at times have felt as though they were being monitored, surveilled, judged or even criticised, and perhaps more likely to change their words, thoughts, actions, and opinions to what they thought I wanted to see or hear or think.

My observations and journal entries were valuable as they encouraged me to reflect on the processes by which I gathered evidence. They allowed me to be more reflexive and self-aware as a researcher, to consider my relationship with participants and school contexts, and to connect me personally and affectively to my evidence, research questions, and analytics. Whilst I did not attempt to use observations and journaling as a means to capture ‘everything’ in the staffroom, playground or classroom, it allowed me to consider how different rationalities, authorities, and technologies of government ‘fused’ with actual subjects. These journal entries also helped me reflect on the ways in which governmental programmes were not just imagined, but enacted in actual spaces, sites and points in time.

**Documentary evidence**

I collected documentary evidence from a variety of sources with a dual purpose in mind. I wanted to analyse documents as a tangible materialisation of technologies of government, organised within and by certain discourses, and to examine how documents were understood and experienced by adults and children in schools. The documents I collected were not neutral objects or artefacts that reflected ‘reality’, but were an expression of power relations and the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that helped construct them (May, 2011). They provided evidence
of the discursive nature of governmentality, particularly how rationalities of government were “made thinkable” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 59) through language. For instance, I noticed and collected a number of documents that contained a range of idioms, rhetoric and ‘truths’ that were underpinned by dominant obesity discourses and reproduced by terms like ‘healthy body weight’, ‘informed choices’, ‘individual responsibility’ and ‘healthy lifestyles’.

In some instances I collected documentary evidence on an ad hoc and opportunistic basis, such as students’ work, a teacher’s instruction written on the whiteboard, a copy of a school newsletter, and a Life Education ‘information letter to parents’ left lying in a rubbish bin. At other times I was more deliberate and purposeful in collecting documentary evidence. I conducted numerous internet searches, delving into documents produced by corporations and charities, such as annual reports, Education Review Office reports, educational resources, media releases, news articles, blogs and other websites created by schools, charities, foundations, media, and government departments. I looked at school policies, library books, children’s PowerPoint presentations, school resources, student workbooks, and government documents. Written documents also included my own journal entries and transcripts of research conversations.

My collection of documentary evidence did not, however, rely solely on written texts. Another valuable source of evidence was photographic images and video recordings. Although I personally did not take any photographs or video in the schools, there were a number of images and films that were accessible within the school space and outside it. For instance, all three schools had websites with photographs and short videos, whilst students and teachers regularly used digital cameras in class. A number of the corporations and other organisations that sponsored, devised, funded and/or implemented the various healthy lifestyles education programmes used on-line photographs and videos to promote their resources, brand and products (see, for example, jacobrockify, 2011; www.lifeeducation.org.nz)

Collecting documents formed a significant part of my journaling. I frequently reflected on the rhetoric of the corporations and their partners, particularly the instances when their claims (e.g. to fight obesity, to educate, to help children make

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16 The Education Review Office (ERO) is a government department which reviews, evaluates and reports on the education of children in schools and early childhood services across New Zealand (see www.ero.govt.nz).
informed choices, to not use scare tactics) appeared to contradict what I was seeing and hearing when these programmes were enacted and experienced. The documents were also regularly used to stimulate research conversations. For instance, the website for the *Yummy Apple Sticker Promotion* (The Yummy Apple Fruit Company, n.d., para. 2, italics in original) contained the following testimonial:

> Wynton Rufer, famous New Zealand football player and representative for the Healthy Eating, Healthy Living campaign says, ‘I couldn’t think of a better way to be encouraging our kids to be actively healthier Kiwis. Eating Yummy apples and getting free sportswear in return is an awesome campaign to be proactively supporting.’

I was intrigued by this quotation, mainly the idea that Rufer “couldn’t think of a better way” to encourage New Zealand children to be healthier. I used this statement as a starting point for several research conversations and asked children what they thought of this quotation (often with responses of laughter and bemusement), and elicited their thoughts on what would be a ‘better way’ to improve children’s health. Gathering documentary evidence alongside other ethnographic methods (i.e. journaling, research conversations, observations) proved to be especially rewarding. They assisted me in collecting rich evidence and helped me reflect on and analyse how these ‘official’ documents (themselves an assemblage of rationalities, technologies and discourses) were ‘actually’ enacted, understood and experienced by the children, teachers, principals and external providers who used them.

**Analysing and ‘writing up’**

I approached the analysis and writing up of my data by trying to do two things; to disentangle and analyse individual elements of the assemblage, and to search for discursive connections, tensions, contradictions, relay points and fractures. Before I set foot in the primary schools I had already read a variety of documentary evidence and had begun to note some key elements of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage, such as discourses of individualism and technologies of consumption. This process of collecting and analysing evidence continued as I spent time in the primary schools. As I conducted multiple research conversations with children and adults, observed lessons and other moments in the school day, wrote in my journal, and accessed more documentary evidence, I repeatedly gained new evidence to analyse and reflect on. This was not only useful in terms of the quantity of data I was
able to analyse, but provided me with constant opportunities to reflect on my evidence, often pointing to new sources of information (including participants, resources and programmes), new lines of questioning, and unseen elements and connection in the healthy lifestyles education assemblage.

Once I was in the schools and had conducted initial research conversations, I began my process of analysis by repeatedly listening to my research conversations, transcribing the conversations, then ‘free-associating’ (Alldred & Burman, 2005) with the text (i.e. searching for a variety of discourses, perspectives, topics and relationships). I then separated the dialogue into distinct sections within a table (still in chronological order) according to a specific topic or idea. Beside each section of dialogue I recorded my own thoughts about what this conversation meant in the context of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage. For example, I recorded this conversation with Mrs Donna from Dudley School:

**Darren:** What are your thoughts or ideas about childhood obesity and New Zealand?

**Mrs Donna:** My first thought is that the children are spending too much time indoors, rather than outdoors. I mean I know with my own kids even, I wouldn’t let them go out the gate … our property wasn’t big enough for riding bikes, skateboards and rollerskates … so I just feel that with even my own children they spent more time in the house, rather than outside. So … I think the lower decile schools have the issue of like, getting the kids to sports on the weekends, because heaps of parents don’t have cars, so I think that is one of the biggest issues. So it’s probably down to the schools to get [the children to do] as much exercise as possible.

Next to this section of research conversation I made the following notes: “Obesity and inactivity in NZ”; “Low decile schools”; “Role of schools to exercise kids”. By making these types of notes for all my research conversations I began to notice similar themes emerging such as: discourses of obesity and inactivity; the notion of choice; children’s resistance; tactics of sponsorship, commercialism and free gifting; and the positioning of external providers as experts. Before I began my research conversations I expected some of these themes to appear (e.g. dominant discourses of obesity). However, other themes were unexpected, such as children’s resistance to corporate messages about health.
After transcribing and attaching topics/ideas/labels to the conversations, I then copied sections of the transcripts and grouped all relevant participant responses under different headings, such as: ‘Sponsorship’; ‘Experts’; ‘National Standards’; ‘Healthy lifestyles’; ‘Neoliberalism’; ‘Charity’; ‘Resistance’; and ‘Obesity’. A number of the sections of dialogue crossed over multiple topics. It was obvious from early on in my analysis that the healthy lifestyles education assemblage was complex, multi-faceted, and messy. Despite the messiness, this somewhat *ad hoc* approach helped me to analyse some of the commonalities and differences between the rationales, understandings and experiences expressed by the participants. Through this process I was also able to consider the ‘silences’ (Power, 1996), those discourses that were not defined, described or discussed by participants. For instance, there were multiple occasions when I felt that teachers and external providers could (or should) have talked to children about notions of obesity or fatness, but remained silent. During a *Life Education* lesson at Dudley School, for example, a Year One boy called out to the Life Education teacher that sugar “makes you fat”. However, the teacher ignored his comment and instead chose to talk about “germs that poo on your teeth”. Although healthy lifestyles education programmes were promoted by corporations and understood by the adults in schools as ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity, there was an apparent unwillingness to explicitly talk to children about obesity or fatness. The discourses of obesity that underpinned teaching and learning in the three schools were just as much about the ‘unsaid’ as the ‘said’.

It was not just individual elements of the assemblage that I was interested in analysing. By drawing on the notion of assemblage, I began to investigate the complex ways in which these elements were brought together and made to stick; those elements that worked as a ‘congealing agent’. To do this I looked and listened for specific examples of tensions, contradictions and contestations, as well as the times where elements were discursively connected to the assemblage. This, of course, was not only achieved through my analysis of research conversations, but my observations and reflections of everyday life in schools, as well as through reading documentary evidence. For instance, in a section called ‘Why the movement approach?’, the writers of *moveMprove’s Educator’s guide* (GymSports New Zealand, n.d.-a, para. 4-5) made a number of educational claims, such as that the coaches utilise “a learner-centred approach”, “flexible delivery models”, and would “adapt equipment to suit the activity … and to continually challenge children”. Yet
when I observed the *moveMprove* programme being taught by two different gymnastics clubs and four different coaches in two different contexts - St Saviour’s School and Dudley School - I was struck by the inconsistencies between the ‘official rhetoric’ of GymSports New Zealand, the pedagogies and practices experienced by the children, and the perceptions of teachers and principals. For example, despite the claims of flexible, adaptable, challenging activities, a number of the students thought the activities were too easy (such as seven year-old Anita at Dudley School who said they were “all easy”), and some students appeared to be bored, often ending up doing their own activities. Yet when I asked Antia’s teacher, Mrs Donna, what she thought about the *moveMprove* session, she described it as not only “great”, but thought “it was better for the children” to be taught by externally provided coaches, rather than their classroom teacher. This was just one of a number of instances where I observed tensions and contradictions, and the ways in which these tensions and contradictions were resolved and managed.

How I finally structured this thesis was influenced by the way I analysed and ‘wrote up’ my findings. The intent of my thesis was to lead the reader through a logical progression of ideas. The ‘story’ of healthy lifestyles education programmes begins by introducing the main ‘characters’: corporations, charities, external providers, schools, and people. I then provide a contextual backdrop to teachers and teaching in New Zealand primary schools, including the way the assemblage has been shaped and socio-political factors have constrained how, what and why teachers teach (or do not teach). Next I analyse the actual healthy lifestyles education programmes: the resources, workbooks, and pedagogical approaches that were employed in schools, and how these were understood by principals, teachers and children. I finish with a focus on the ways children negotiated, understood, resisted or accepted the corporate attempts to shape them as consumers, and the possibilities for a more critical version of education in New Zealand primary schools.

In the early stages of my analysis and writing I was influenced by my theoretical framework of the assemblage. However, as I analysed the evidence and wrote my discussion, it became apparent that the assemblage was not only complex in terms of the multiple elements that constituted it, but of the multiple practices that were interrelated in its formation. I needed to develop a deeper understanding of how organisations with diverse interests, were able to successfully ‘congeal’ and how healthy lifestyles education programmes were not only rendered imaginable, but do-
able in schools. Originally Chapter Five was entirely based on Li’s (2007a) practice of assemblage, forging alignments. However, I felt this narrow focus on a single practice would not help the reader (or myself) help understand two key, interrelated aspects of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage: who was involved in the funding, creation and implementation of these ‘educational’ programmes, and how disparate (not)for-profit organisations aligned their alleged interest in making children healthier/less fat. I therefore changed the structure of the thesis, making my first ‘findings’ chapter (‘Chapter Five: Assembling governmental authorities’) broader, utilising a range of practices of assemblage that would alert the reader to the ways in which a variety of public, private and voluntary sector players were able to converge and ‘congeal’.

As I looked at the ways schools were drawn into the assemblage I noticed a number of practices that relied on classroom teachers. Following a closer analysis of my research conversations, observations and journal notes, in which I specifically examined the ways in which teachers and external providers were talked about and positioned, it was evident that teachers were a group whose conduct appeared to be governed by a range of ‘authorities’ (e.g. corporations, charities, sports organisations). I then decided to use my analysis of the role of classroom teachers in the assemblage as the key theme for this next chapter (‘Chapter Six: Assembling the inexpert, outsourcing teacher’), providing a discussion of the forces and constraints that worked to bring teachers and external providers into the healthy lifestyles education assemblage.

The final two ‘discussion’ chapters of my thesis were more difficult to structure and order. I had a number of themes that I wanted to explore, such as: ‘problematic pedagogies’ (e.g. use of fear and disgust); the nexus of education-entertainment-advertising; forms of commercialisation (e.g. branding, sponsorship, marketing, product placement); discourses of charity, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility; the notion of informed choice; the influence of the private sector on the content of the resources; how the children understood obesity, healthy lifestyles, marketing and corporate philanthropy. Initially I planned to write five short chapters that would encompass all of those themes: ‘Assembling the corporate curriculum’; ‘Assembling pedagogies’; ‘Assembling the healthy, socially responsible corporation’; ‘Assembling education, entertainment and infomercials’; and ‘Assembling the unhealthy child-citizen-consumer’. However, as I attempted to
divide my evidence and analysis into the different chapters, I struggled to disentangle elements from one another. The connections between themes/conversations/ideas/discourses/experiences were too strong and complex to separate ‘cleanly’. For instance, trying to split the intent of the corporatised resources from the pedagogies used would have meant that a number of obvious tensions between the plans to govern and ‘actual’ government would have been lost. My endeavour to analyse both the discursive and the realist governmentality of the healthy lifestyles education programmes meant that I needed to combine my analysis of the resources and pedagogies, which formed my focus for ‘Chapter Seven: Assembling curricula and pedagogies’. I looked for tensions, contradictions, successes and failures in teaching children about health, and juxtaposed the ‘official’ intent of the programmes with the pedagogies employed, as well as how the participants ‘actually’ experienced them. It was this type of analysis and writing that illuminated how the ‘will to govern’ was rarely translated into programmes of government with entirely predictable ends.

In my first attempt at writing Chapter Seven I included an analysis of the commercial aspects of these resources and pedagogies, in particular technologies of consumption that endeavoured to shape children as consumers. However, as I read and re-read the healthy lifestyles education resources, the corporations’ and charities’ rationales, my own journal entries and research conversation transcripts, I was conscious that this needed to be analysed, discussed and written about separately as ‘Chapter Eight: Assembling the (un)healthy child-consumer’. The reason for this was three-fold. First, I wanted to make the children’s voices audible and their ability to contest corporate motives and corporate ideas about health visible. This was important to do because I noted in a number of resources, research conversations and lessons that adults and organisations positioned children as naïve, unable to comprehend complex notions of health or marketing, just needing to learn and regurgitate the ‘facts’ about health and ‘right’ choices they needed to make. I wanted to provide clear evidence that challenged the notion of the naïve child-consumer. Second, there were several significant technologies of government that were employed to re-shape children as uncritical corporate consumers and multiple examples of each of these technologies in action. My aim was therefore to illuminate the extent to which corporations and their partners were trying to govern children as consumers, and the ways in which children were able (or unable) to resist. Third, I
had begun my analysis and writing up (in Chapter Five) with a discussion about how corporations were forging alignments as an attempt to be seen to be healthy, caring and philanthropic. It seemed appropriate to finish my writing with an examination of the ways in which corporations tried to achieve this, but were not always successful.

**Assembling a critical ethnography**

In this chapter I provided an explanation for the critical ethnographic approach I undertook to examine the phenomenon of corporations and charities implementing educational ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles in primary schools. As a critical study of government, the aim of my research was to provide insight into how the healthy lifestyles education assemblage represented the plans to govern, as well as what happened when these plans met their intended targets. This, of course, required an interrogation of multiple elements within the messy assemblage, not just rationalities, technologies, and subjectivities, but a complex array of institutions, discourses, agents, knowledges, truths, relations of power, and the ‘humble and mundane’ practices in schools. As a critical project it was my endeavour to question the assemblage, to challenge the status quo, to confront the idea that the corporate and charitable solutions to obesity were unproblematic and ‘harmless’.

By using a critical ethnographic approach I tried to better understand children’s and adults’ experiences, emotions, and knowledge of their subjectively-lived lives. It also made it possible for me to reconsider how the governmentality of childhood obesity ‘fused’ with real subjects - both collective and individual - and how these governmental programmes were not merely imagined by those with the ‘will to govern’, but were actually enacted, experienced, understood and felt by children and adults in primary schools.
Chapter Five: Assembling governmental authorities

Obesity is a serious and complex global health problem that requires the collective efforts of everyone – individuals; academia; professional societies; communities; businesses and governments – to solve. And that includes The Coca-Cola Company. (The Coca-Cola Company, 2012a, p. 2)

In the global war against childhood obesity ‘everyone’ has been called upon to be part of the solution. A shared ‘interest’ in the shared ‘problem’ of childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles has helped to forge alignments between corporations, schools, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sporting organisations, ‘pokie’ trusts, charities, charitable trusts and a mishmash of other for-profit and ‘not-for-profit’ organisations. However, further investigations of healthy lifestyles education programmes are needed in order to explore both the ways in which authorities with the ‘will to govern’ have been brought together.

What follows is an interrogation of how partnerships and sponsorships are used as a key technology of government; a tactic to assemble the ambitions of corporations, charities, the state, and schools, and translate this collective ‘will to improve’ children’s bodies and behaviours into programmes that are implemented in schools. However, given that a number of these organisations have contradictory aims and values, the healthy lifestyles education assemblage is frequently placed under tension. This is perhaps most evident when the commercial interests of the private sector contradict the health and education interests of schools, teachers and principals. With this in mind, I draw on evidence gathered from my ethnographic research to demonstrate how the various ‘solutions’ to children’s fatness and unhealthy lifestyles are promoted by a number of key players as forms of philanthropy, social responsibility and charity, yet are closely connected to broader business strategies such as public relations, marketing and branding. The assemblage of disparate players is complex and requires critical examination in order to understand how organisations employ technologies of government to re-invent themselves as ‘obesity fighting’, as well as healthy, educational and altruistic.
Shared interests in being ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity

In most societies, the political, social, cultural and economic agenda for children to be shaped into certain types of citizens cannot be achieved by a single sector or institution alone. As Rose (2000, p. 323) argues, government can only be achieved “through the actions of a whole range of other authorities, and through complex technologies, if they are to be able to intervene upon the conduct of persons.” The war on childhood obesity is a good example of this ‘multiple-authority’ approach to government. A “panoply of players” (Coveney, 2008, p. 208) has been recruited to ‘fix’ this urgent public health imperative, including children, teachers, principals, external providers, politicians, lobbyists, parents, corporate employees, celebrities, government officials, corporations, industry groups, government departments, corporate foundations, sporting bodies, charitable trusts, and advocacy groups.

Bringing together these disparate organisations and actors and maintaining the connections between them is by no means a simple task. As Li (2007a, p. 268) notes, the “will to govern” acts as both “a point of convergence and fracture”. One practice of assemblage that works to attract various parties to one another and resolve any tensions that occur is forging alignments: “the work of linking together the objectives of the various parties to an assemblage, both those who aspire to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be conducted” (Li, 2007a, p. 265). Alignments are forged in order to unite the interests of different sectors (public, private, voluntary or ‘third sector’), as well as institutions within and across these sectors, and individual subjects. As Miller and Rose (2008, p. 34) note, for the multiple parties to align they must first convince each other “that their interests are consonant, that each can solve their difficulties or achieve their ends by joining forces or working along the same lines.” This is a practice of assemblage that does not occur in isolation, but interweaves and interconnects with other practices of assemblage, such as containing critiques, managing contradictions and problematisation (for a discussion, see Li, 2007a). Drawing on the work of Li (2007a, 2007b) and Miller and Rose (2008), I argue that there are four key components of ‘shared interests’ that make it possible for alignments to be forged between institutions with different, sometimes competing, aims: a shared interest based on an ‘urgent need’ to fix a problem (e.g. obesity, public relations); a shared interest in and agreement on who requires governing (e.g. children); a shared interest in solving the problem (for example, using healthy lifestyles education programmes);
and, a shared interest in certain thoughts, actions and bodies that need to be governed (e.g. children’s choices of consumption).

At a macro level we can see how alignments have been made through a shared interest in the ‘urgent need’ to fight childhood obesity. The World Health Organization (2015a, para. 3-5, my emphasis), for instance, argues it is “essential” for people and institutions to share an interest and play a role in fighting childhood obesity:

Curbing the childhood obesity epidemic requires sustained political commitment and the collaboration of many public and private stakeholders. Governments, International Partners, Civil Society, NGO's and the Private Sector have vital roles to play in shaping healthy environments and making healthier diet options for children and adolescents affordable, and easily accessible. It is therefore WHO's objective to mobilize these partners and engage them in implementing the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. WHO supports the designation, the implementation, the monitoring and the leadership of actions. A multisectoral approach is essential for sustained progress: it mobilizes the combined energy, resources and expertise of all global stakeholders involved.

The World Health Organization has now ‘mobilized’ multiple stakeholders across all sectors of society to engage, collaborate and partner with one another in the global war against childhood obesity.

One stakeholder that has mobilized its resources, energy and ‘expertise’ in diet, physical activity, health and obesity with particular vigour is the food and beverage industry. This is perhaps not surprising given that World Health Organization has singled out this industry (as well as sporting-goods manufacturers) to play a greater role in promoting physical activity and healthy diets, to develop and implement physical activity programmes for children, and to review their marketing practices (see World Health Organization, 2015c, 2015d). However, corporations and other supporters of Big Food (e.g. advertisers, food industry groups, lobbyists) have not only aligned their obesity goals with the public health aspirations of the World Health Organization (and national governments), but formed collaborative relationships with each other. This is a startling move. Corporations who have been and continue to be fierce competitors in the market-place (for example, the ‘Cola Wars’ between PepsiCo and The Coca-Cola Company) have now taken a public and political stance to work together to help solve childhood obesity. This illuminates a practice of assemblage that Li (2007a) describes as anti-politics. Rather than
challenging the idea that the private sector has any role to play in improving children’s diet, physical activity or obesity levels, the food and beverage industry has shaped the assemblage by closing down the debate about the food and beverage industry being solely responsible for obesity. Discussions about possible political actions, including regulatory and legislative actions to reduce obesity (e.g. stricter controls on marketing to children) are subdued. The responsibility for children’s health, eating and fatness is being transformed from an issue that corporations (and governments) could take responsibility for, to a problem that ‘everyone’ must take an interest in solving (see also Ken, 2014).

The strategies of the International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA) are a good example of how food and beverage competitors have become ‘co-operators’. In December 2008, the IFBA member companies signalled their shared interest in the problem of childhood obesity. The CEO’s wrote and signed a letter to Dr Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, in which they outlined their Global Commitment to Responsible Marketing and Advertising to Children:

Childhood obesity is a serious public health issue with no simple answer. Any effort to address it needs to be comprehensive in scope, with active participation by all involved. This includes the government, food and beverage industry, civil society, entertainment and media companies, schools and parents. (International Food & Beverage Alliance, 2008, p. 1, my emphasis)

All sectors of society have been called upon to be ‘involved’, including schools. To ensure that the connections between these corporations and other private sector players remain secure, the members of the IFBA ensure that their shared problem(s) also have a shared solution. In March 2011, the IFBA signalled their desire to solve childhood obesity, or at least be seen to be playing a part, by once again writing to Dr Chan and reiterating their commitment to the World Health Organization:

NCDs [non-communicable diseases] and childhood obesity are major public health problems that require multi-stakeholder solutions. As a member of the private sector, we firmly believe that the food industry has a role to play as part of the solution. (International Food & Beverage Alliance, 2011a, p. 1, my emphasis)

The private sector’s interest in ‘solving’ childhood obesity is commonly connected to the notion it is not just their responsibility, but everyone’s. In other words, by positioning themselves as ‘part of the solution’ - a phrase oft-repeated by the food
and beverage industry - they also attempt to draw other individuals and organisations into the assemblage. For instance, in 2012 The Coca-Cola Company (2012a, p. 2) released a document entitled ‘Our Position on Obesity’ in which they also positioned “the collective efforts of everyone” as necessary to solve obesity. In the same way, IFBA’s newest member, McDonald’s, maintained that they could not solve the problem of obesity without others taking a shared interest:

There continues to be concern about obesity rates and related risks to human well-being among consumers, governments, NGOs, and health and nutrition experts. We take these issues seriously and are working to do what we can to positively influence the situation. We know we cannot address this problem alone, but we are committed to being part of the solution. (McDonald’s, 2013, my emphasis)

However, it is not solely the food and drink industry and its multinational corporations who have expressed an interest in fighting childhood obesity in schools. In the New Zealand context there are a range of ‘for profit’ and ‘not-for-profit’ organisations (see Table 1) that have formed relationships with each other through their shared interest in children’s fatness and health. The term ‘not-for-profit’ (also ‘non-profit’) should be understood with a degree of caution. Although these organisations are often seen as part of the voluntary sector (or ‘third sector’) and referred to as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), they are not necessarily autonomous entities, separate from and unconnected to the state or for-profit organisations.

It is also relevant to note that the private sector and other players rarely promoted these programmes to primary schools as obesity prevention strategies (i.e. those with the expressed intent of reducing obesity in the children they targeted). Instead, they were promoted as healthy lifestyles education programmes that would make children consume more fruit, eat less ‘junk’ food, play more sport, and be more active. The broad notion of improving children’s (un)healthy lifestyles was connected to an array of physical activity programmes, health education resources, physical education lessons, sports coaching sessions and forms of fundraising in a way that was understood by corporations, charities, external providers, teachers and children alike as also solving the ‘problem’ of childhood obesity.
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Programme | For-profit organisation | State institution | ‘Not-for-profit’ organisation
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ActivePost Small Sticks | • Ford | • NZ Post/ActivePost | • Hockey New Zealand • New Zealand Community Trust
| • Fuji-Xerox | | |
ASB Football in Schools | • ASB | | • New Zealand Football • Auckland Football Federation
| • McDonald’s | | |
| • Persil | | |
| • Volkswagon | | |
| • Nike | | |
Get Set Go | • HTC Sportsworld | • NZ Post/ActivePost | • Athletics New Zealand • Physical Education New Zealand • Sport Auckland

Table 1. Programmes experienced by children at three New Zealand schools

Problematising childhood obesity was a significant element of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage that united the interests and activities of multiple organisations. Get Set Go was one example of a programme that connected different organisations together by the idea that there were dual crises of childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles that needed immediate attention. These were crises that could be solved through a particular intervention, in this instance, a fundamental movement skills programme. Get Set Go was promoted in a national newspaper by the headline: “Initiatives to help our kids with alarming obesity stats” (Thornton, 2011, p. B2). The article began with journalist Thornton aligning his own concerns about the obesity ‘crisis’ with concerns raised by state-owned corporation and main sponsor/partner/funder of Get Set Go, New Zealand Post: “Almost a third of Kiwi kids are considered overweight or obese, compared with only 10% in 1977. NZ Post has launched ActivePost to address this problem” (ActivePost is the corporate social responsibility/community wellness programme of New Zealand Post). These concerns about children’s fatness were reinforced by the “expert” enlisted by New Zealand Post to “help shape the programme”: Mike Hall-Taylor, the CEO of private sports consultancy firm HTC Sportsworld.17 In the article, Hall-Taylor said he was surprised by New Zealand’s obesity statistics, arguing that

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17 According to the HTC Sportsworld website (www.htcsportsworld.com) they are “global consultants in sport’, with expertise in sponsorship management, brand development and licensing, and strategic consultancy. Hall-Taylor’s interests are listed as business strategy, development, investments, marketing, and sponsorship. Nowhere on the website is there mention of HTC Sportsworld’s experience or interest in obesity, education, or schools. Neither Get Set Go nor ActivePost are promoted on the website as clients or partners.
although New Zealand adults were active in sport and recreation activities, “there are clearly some issues amongst kids”:

**Thornton:** Why do you think the problem of obesity is a problem here?

**Hall-Taylor:** It’s a problem in every developed nation, and is primarily a factor of over-nutrition and under-exercising. It’s a complex issue ... but the *ActivePost* programme can try to help get kids, and adults, more active.

Hall-Taylor did not only connect the “complex” “problem of obesity” with unhealthy lifestyles, what he described as “over-nutrition and under-exercising”, but positioned the *ActivePost* initiative as being part of the solution. In other words, he represents a position on obesity and lifestyles that enables his company to connect with New Zealand Post, Athletics New Zealand and the *Get Set Go* programme. Similarly, the main partner to New Zealand Post - national sports organisation Athletics New Zealand - drew on “recent studies” about children’s physical activity and fatness to make the link between fundamental movement skills and obesity and to justify their involvement this programme:

Research highlights that children in early childhood and early primary school are not mastering the fundamental movement skills. (Sanders & Kidman, 1998). This has very serious implications ... Research also shows that New Zealand children appear to be following the global trends of increasingly being more overweight and suffering obesity problems (Ministry of Health 2003). Changes in lifestyle and technology are all contributing factors of these trends, leading to a negative impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our children, and affecting the capability for enjoyable participation and lifelong interest in sport and an active lifestyle. (Athletics New Zealand, 2013, p. 6)

The research that Athletics New Zealand (and New Zealand Post) refers to in the quote above does not demonstrate any empirical connections between children’s fundamental movement skills and fatness, or physical activity and fatness, or fundamental movement skills and health. Instead, it employs tenuous connections between obesity, lifestyle, sport, skills and health. Through the juxtaposition of multiple crises – overweight and obesity, fundamental movement skills, lifestyle and technology, health and wellbeing, lifelong sports participation and lifelong active lifestyles – the various partners/parties rationalise their support for the *Get Set Go* programme as an appropriate solution.
Other organisations and individuals, such as teachers, coaches, families, children and CEOs are also drawn into the Get Set Go assemblage by the rationale of crises. In the introduction to the Get Set Go [sic] teachers resource, the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Post Group, Brian Roche, signalled how the twin problems of childhood obesity and children’s lifestyles could be solved when different parties share an interest in his company’s solution:

Children today have access to a wider range of activities and entertainment options than any previous generation. Unfortunately many of those options are sedentary, and there are worldwide growing trends in childhood obesity and reduced physical fitness .... With the support of teachers, coaches and families, Get Set Go has the potential to instil an environment where children can experience success, develop skills and learn positive attitudes towards sport and recreation .... By partnering with Athletics New Zealand and Regional Sports Trusts, New Zealand Post can help young people to develop a love of sport and recreation that leads to lifelong participation. (Athletics New Zealand, 2012, p. 2, my emphasis)

The assumption that schools were an appropriate ‘environment’ for this particular ‘solution’ to children’s problematic bodies and behaviours, meant that teachers (and the externally provided Get Set Go coaches) were seen as fitting agents to teach sports skills and positive attitudes, aspects that the authorities apparently assumed would lead children to lifelong physical activity and less obese children.

**Partnerships: shared interests and shared solutions**

Within the regime of practices that constitute obesity and healthy lifestyles education programmes in primary schools, corporations are forming partnerships with multiple authorities and actors at ‘epidemic’ proportions. Indeed, Huxham and Vangen (2000, p. 303) describe the explosion of multi-sector partnerships in contemporary societies as “partnershipitis”. Partnerships are visible across a range of sites and spaces of government. In the realm of public health, for instance, King (2006, p. 8) argues that corporations have created “partnerships with community groups, local governments, and other companies that share a common interest in a particular concern”, including breast cancer and childhood obesity. Global reforms of public education (what a number of teachers in my research described as the GERM – the Global Education Reform Movement) have also been facilitated by the proliferation of multi-sector partnerships, such as public-private partnerships (see Ball, 2007).
An epidemic of anti-obesity/healthy lifestyles education programme partnerships is evident in New Zealand (see Table 1), as well as primary schools across the globe (for discussion and examples, see Hawkes & Buse, 2011; Kraak & Story, 2010; Powell & Gard, 2014). In the three primary schools in which I conducted research, there were almost fifty different partner organisations (also described as sponsors) who were directly involved in the implementation of only twelve programmes and resources. Of these, twenty-five were private sector companies, four state-funded agencies, and eighteen ‘not-for-profit’ organisations (although as I will examine later in this chapter, it was not always easy or even possible to demarcate the difference between public, private, and ‘not-for-profit’). There were also numerous other organisations that were indirectly connected to these programmes, as ‘partners of the partners’ or ‘funders of the funders’. For example, the Millennium Institute of Sport & Health (now AUT Millennium) was one of the partners that made Nestlé’s Be Healthy, Be Active possible. This was a charitable, sport science organisation funded by the New Zealand Government, philanthropic donors (both individual philanthropists and charitable trusts), AUT University, High Performance Sport New Zealand (a government-funded organisation), as well as Nestlé New Zealand, Speedo and ActivePost. In another instance, Sport Auckland was the external provider which implemented the Get Set Go scheme at St Saviour’s School. Sport Auckland is a Regional Sports Trust who received funding from Sport New Zealand (a government-funded organisation), two district health boards (public health organisations), the Auckland Council, a website, a charitable trust, Procure (a primary healthcare organisation), and two private companies – South Auckland Motors and Orix.

The Life Education programme is another good example of multiple organisation, cross-sector ‘partnershipitis’ in action. The Life Education Trust - a charitable organisation that runs the programme nationwide - has a number of ‘national sponsors’: two ‘pokie trusts’ - The Lion Foundation and Pub Charity; two product brands - Just Juice (owned by Frucor) and Macleans (owned by GlaxoSmithKline); and five private sector corporations - ANZ (bank), AWF Group (temporary labour supplier), Konica Minolta (printing supplies), Mainfreight (freight), and The Warehouse (household items). Furthermore, Life Education is implemented through regional trusts that have additional regional partners/sponsors.
At Dudley School, for instance, Life Education was administered by a regional trust which partnered with an additional four large New Zealand-based corporations, four charitable trusts (all four were pokie trusts funded by proceeds from gaming machines), one non-gaming philanthropic trust, and a local ‘Z’ service station (formerly branded as Shell).

International public health institutions now position multi-sector partnerships as an integral aspect of the global war on obesity. The World Health Organization, for example, explicitly calls for the involvement of private sector partners for both regional obesity prevention strategies and international endeavours (see World Health Organization, 2010). The food and drink industry has been particularly motivated to align their interests with those of international public health organisations and policy-makers. For instance, the IFBA (2013, p. 1) pledged their support of the World Health Assembly’s Global Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases by stating: “We believe – and experience has shown that multisectoral actions represent one of the most cost-effective means to address public health challenges”. In the following quote, Janet Voûte, Global Head of Public Affairs for Nestlé S.A., demonstrates how Big Food embraces and publicly supports public health policies and multi-sector partnerships:

Childhood obesity is a complex problem driven by multiple social, economic and environmental factors ... If we are to tackle this major public health issue effectively we need a multi-sector response and Nestlé firmly believes industry has a vital role to play in this. We are convinced the best way to leverage our capabilities and expertise is by working in partnership with other organisations to help promote healthy nutrition and physical activity through community-based programmes. (Nestlé, 2012a, para. 7-9)

The desire of multi-national corporations like Nestlé to engage in multi-sector ‘responses’ to the childhood obesity ‘problem’ means that a number of other organisations are drawn into ‘their’ global and local solutions. For example, Nestlé’s (2014a, para. 1-3) Healthy Kids Global Programme, to “help children achieve and maintain a healthy body weight … [is] based on multi-partnership approaches [working] with more than 250 partners worldwide, including national and local governments, NGOs, nutrition health institutes and sport federations.” The New

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18 I have withheld the names of this particular regional Life Education Trust and its partners in order to maintain the anonymity of participants.
Zealand division of Nestlé also forms partnerships in order to devise and implement their *Be Healthy, Be Active* initiative:

Nestlé New Zealand has funded the new *Be Healthy, Be Active* programme as part of the Nestlé Global Healthy Kids Programme [sic]. The materials that make up *Be Healthy, Be Active* have been developed in conjunction with Nestlé New Zealand’s partners, the Millennium Institute of Sport and Health and the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation. The content of the programme is not commercial in nature. We hope that teachers and students will enjoy *Be Healthy, Be Active* and that New Zealand as a whole will benefit from the programme, creating a happier, healthier nation. (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, para. 3-4, italics in original)

As evident in this quote, Nestlé clearly positions itself as a key player in the war on obesity. By forming partnerships with numerous other ‘players’ to fight childhood obesity and make children (in fact, a whole country) healthier, for-profit organisations such as Nestlé are able to align their interests – financial, philanthropic, public relations, health, educational – with other organisations and individuals who shared similar interests. However, these same organisations also have conflicting, even opposing, interests and desired outcomes. Alleviating the tensions that occur when for-profit, not-for-profit, and ‘for-charity’ organisations partner with one another is critical for keeping the assemblage intact and achieving the governmental aims of disparate organisations. This is particularly true when multi-sector partners wish to work in schools.

**Schools, teachers and corporations join together to fight obesity**

Like corporations, charities and government agencies, schools too demonstrate an interest in children’s fatness and unhealthy lifestyles. This is not surprising given that schools have, for a long time, been encouraged or instructed to solve various moral and public health crises (see Gard & Pluim, 2014). New Zealand schools are no exception and are frequently lambasted for their contributions to a so-called ‘obesegenic’ environment, such as selling pies to children, restricting physical activity experiences, or providing inadequate health and physical education lessons (for examples, see Gordon, 2014; Grant & Bassim, 2007; Taylor, 2007). For instance, in a research conversation with *Life Education* teacher Marion, she criticised a school [not in my study] for selling ‘junk’ food to the kids, which she linked to the children being fat and immobile:
I can’t believe [what] some tuck shops are still selling! Seriously? Are you kidding? Have you seen the size of your children? It’s really sad when you sit in these classrooms, and you tell the children to sit down, and the children have to turn around to go on all fours before they can sit down on their bottom.

Like the other parties to the broad healthy lifestyles education assemblage, the teachers and principals in my study drew on crisis discourses of obesity, inactivity and poor nutrition to argue that their school needed to do ‘something’ to be part of the solution to children’s fatness and unhealthy lifestyles. For example, at St Saviour’s School, Year Six/Seven classroom teacher Ms Ellie told me that they had an “obesity problem” at their school. This view was echoed by the principal, Mrs Sergeant, who asked me for ideas on how to stop students eating potato chips at school. Miss Black, a first year teacher with a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation, shared her views about childhood obesity:

I think that [the] childhood obesity problem is such a massive problem and is so multifaceted I suppose that it would be interesting to know if [these programmes] have much of an effect. I tend to think that [they] probably wouldn’t have much of an effect … I think that whole childhood obesity problem is an entire society problem that goes far beyond schools.

Although Miss Black recognised that obesity was not something that could be solved by schools alone, at the same time she hoped that the programmes her students participated in – for example, Get Set Go, Life Education, moveMprove - would make some difference; that “doing something” was at least “better than nothing”.

Employing crisis discourses and available ‘solutions’ was a critical part of being able to build and maintain relationships between corporations, not-for-profits, CEO’s, schools, principals and teachers, and was especially successful when the proposed ‘part of the solution’ to obesity was perceived or promoted as both healthy and educational. The discourses of education and health formed relay points – points of connection between parties – and became a key strategy for the private sector to connect their interests (for example, in solving obesity, improving brand image and their bottom line) with the educational interests of schools. For instance, in 2012 the stated aim of the Nestlé Healthy Kids Global Programme was:

to raise nutrition, health and wellness awareness of school-age children around the world, we intend to implement the scheme in all countries where we operate ... We believe that regular physical
activity and establishing healthy eating habits help children achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. *Education is therefore a powerful tool* for ensuring that children understand the value of nutrition and physical activity, and continue leading healthy lives as they get older. (Nestlé, 2012b, para. 1-3, my emphasis)

Similarly, a number of organisations ‘connect the dots’ between themselves, children’s education and children’s health. The Life Education Trust (2011a, p. 1, my emphasis), for instance, state that its ‘mission’ is: “To help give the young people of New Zealand, through positive health based education, the knowledge and skills to raise their awareness and to live a fulfilling and healthy life”. Food industry representatives United Fresh New Zealand Inc. (n.d.-a, para. 2, my emphasis) claim that its *Fruit in Schools* programme, “is providing both health and education benefits and United Fresh strengthens these benefits by providing curriculum linked resources through the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust”. *Iron Brion* was also promoted by the New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau (n.d., p. 1, my emphasis) in a comparable way:

> As you know, a healthy eating programme is critical to the well-being of school-aged children. This resource kit provides you with activities to help promote healthy eating to your class, in particular the importance of iron in their daily lives….The New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau firmly supports educating young Kiwis about healthy eating and the role beef and lamb play in a healthy lifestyle. We see both the Iron Brion Show and the Teacher Resource Kit as our contribution to the well-being of school-aged children, both now and in the future.

Technologies of advertising and marketing, or what Miller and Rose (1997) refer to as *technologies of consumption*, open up opportunities for private sector players to combine their ‘part of the solution’ to obesity with broader business strategies that aim to increase public relations, consumption and profit. The quote above provides an example of how a marketing company representing for-profit organisations (i.e. Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd, as well as the processors and retailers of New Zealand beef and lamb) attempted to ‘sell’ beef and lamb to children, teachers and their families by promoting their resource and edutainment ‘roadshow’ as a healthy lifestyles education programme.

The process of forming connections between concepts of health, education, obesity and marketing is not always smooth. The relay points are made fragile when the *commercial* purpose of a programme, especially one that employs obvious
marketing and advertising strategies, appears to contradict and compete with the
school’s role as a site for education. For instance, Ms Ellie disagreed with Beef +
Lamb New Zealand’s claim that their mascot, Iron Brion, “captivates, entertains and
informs” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 2). Ms Ellie told
me that when Iron Brion and Beef + Lamb New Zealand-branded employees gave
her students free hamburgers and other prizes:

**Ms Ellie:** I thought it was really ridiculous, but you know what, the
kids absolutely loved it! And the intermediates [Year
Seven and Eight students], who I thought would be lippy
and disrespectful by not listening and fidgeting, were
actually fantastic. And that was about the free food at the
end.

**Darren:** What was ridiculous?

**Ms Ellie:** They just leapt about did stupid jokes and ran into the
crowd and got the kids to do silly things and gave away
prizes and you know, low level humour I guess.

**Darren:** So would you describe it as an educational programme?

**Ms Ellie:** No.

**Darren:** How would you describe it?

**Ms Ellie:** Um, it was definitely promotional.

Far from being ‘duped’ into believing that the *Iron Brion BBQ Roadshow* was
primarily an educational endeavour, Ms Ellie recognised that Iron Brion and ‘his’
free hamburgers were aimed at improving public relations, the brand image of the
industry, and their profit margins. This was a technology of government she
described as:

unfortunately, a sign of the times ... a form of marketing that you have
to filter very carefully for yourself, and for the children, the purpose
behind it …. [it’s] just a marketing thing that would be a tax incentive
for them really! And they look like they are doing great things for the
community, so it sort of ticks their ethical box around the board and I
know that lots of companies, it’s quite trendy to have an ethical side to
your business and really there is a thin veil of disguise of what’s
actually, really going on.

However, rather than Ms Ellie’s cynicism towards this form of “definitely
promotional”, non-educational, tax-friendly, marketing placing so much stress on the
relay point between commercialism, education, and health that it fractured, tensions
were resolved by Ms Ellie convincing herself that she needed to just “filter” the
“purpose behind” these programmes. The term ‘resolved’ does not necessarily mean
a definite, certain or indeed permanent *solving* of a given tension, but can also be a
means to deal with a tension in a temporary sense. For instance, Ms Ellie’s ‘filter’ resulted in the desire of Beef + Lamb New Zealand - to promote their product to children – to trickle through; the interests of an industry group were re-positioned as being relatively unimportant compared to children’s and teacher’s ‘need’ to receive free food, entertainment, and ‘health education’. However, this is not to suggest that Ms Ellie’s momentary ‘acceptance’ of Iron Brion completely disintegrated all tensions. Her personal objections to the Iron Brion BBQ Roadshow, and her concern about and resistance to other forms of ‘disguised’ marketing to children remained.

The ability or willingness to critically interrogate the multiple purposes of a programme or resource (i.e. its profit-seeking, promotional, public relations, or branding purposes) was neither simple nor straightforward for the teachers or principals. For example, I asked Mrs Donna, a Year Two teacher at Dudley School, how she felt about corporations sponsoring and implementing school-based programmes like Life Education. She responded:

To tell you the honest truth, things like that just don’t worry me. I tend to throw a blind eye to a lot of things .... I’ve never worried about things like that. As long as someone is sponsoring them that’s all that matters. And they’re not using it as advertising to the kids, so I guess it doesn’t matter. To tell the honest truth I had no idea who sponsored them because to me I don’t care. It’s about the education of the children that counts. It’s always about the children being first, so I don’t have a problem with it - although the gambling thing gets me, but because that’s a different kettle of fish.

Even though Mrs Donna gave her students Macleans-branded gift-bags (with Macleans-branded toothpaste, toothbrush, stickers, colouring-in pages and links to a Macleans website and Smartphone app), and sent her students home with letters that carried healthy eating advice from Just Juice, Mrs Donna did not consider these as a form of “advertising to the kids” and instead “threw a blind eye” to the corporate influence on educational resources and programmes. In the end, Mrs Donna justified her idea that she did not “care” about corporate sponsorship by enlisting the idea that the only thing that “counts” was the education of her students.

The ‘doing it for the good of the children’ discourse was frequently used as a rationale for bringing the programmes into schools. It acted as a means to ‘trump’ all other concerns, especially concerns about the educative value (or lack thereof) of obviously promotional programmes like Iron Brion, or clearly commercial strategies such as giving free products to children. For example, in the following quote, Mr
Woodward, principal at Dudley School, acknowledges that the corporate interest in providing healthy lifestyles education programmes and resources to schools are likely to have some degree of commercial intent. However, from his perspective the bottom line is their benefit for the students:

Obviously [corporations are] going to make dough out of [school-based programmes] too, but if that’s their prime purpose, well, we will see through it and wouldn’t have them anyway. If it’s only just for them, um, but if it’s beneficial for kids, that’s what it’s got to be about, you know. Simple as that.

In this quote, Mr Woodward justifies his inclusion of corporate programmes in his school by assembling together two discourses: that his school’s use of these programmes was ‘beneficial for kids’ and that his staff would ‘see’ – and be able to filter out – those programmes or companies whose “prime purpose” was to “make dough”. However, as the earlier conversation with Mrs Donna demonstrated (as well as the fact that Mr Woodward had allowed McDonald’s into his school to give out McDonald’s-branded hats and balls), it was difficult to tell what the “prime purpose” of the programmes was, especially when they were promoted as being ‘all about’ the health and education of students. The profit-seeking interests of organisations were rarely, if ever, perceived by the adults to be the “prime purpose” of corporations’ desires to ‘teach’ children and schools.

Another significant tension that made the assemblage susceptible to fracture was when an ‘unhealthy’ corporation or product partnered with or sponsored a ‘healthy’ educational activity. However, this tension was frequently alleviated when corporations, charities, and schools deemed it appropriate to endorse ‘healthy’ (or at least healthier) corporate products within a healthy lifestyles education programme. For example, Miss Black at St Saviour’s School said: “I HATE fast food companies sponsoring anything to do with health, sports, fitness. Hate it. Any fast food is ridiculous. It’s totally contradicting ... and they are so sneaky as well”. She described corporations like Nike or Adidas as aligning better with the goals of a health education programme than McDonald’s or Coca-Cola: “at least it has some alignment, you know”. Although I pointed out to Miss Black that even though *Life Education* was sponsored by Just Juice, a product made by Frucor, the same company which made Pepsi and ‘V’ energy drinks, she replied, “but still, it’s not something that’s unhealthy, so it’s fine”. Like Mr Woodward, for Miss Black the perceived ‘healthiness’ of the ‘sponsor’ - a branded fruit juice beverage - appeared to
obscure the ‘less healthy’ products of a corporation, and the profit-seeking, public relations enhancing interests of the company that provided funding and ‘nutritional advice’ to the programme.

A so-called healthy (or even just ‘more healthy’) product acted not only as a buffer between the corporation, its public reputation, its products and its programmes, but also as a way of connecting these elements. For example, I told Miss Black how Adidas were organising ‘fun runs’ to help schools raise money in Australia, to which she replied:

**Miss Black:** That’s good. Even Powerade - although I have issues with Powerade as well (laughs), anything, anything [other than McDonald’s], that would be more aligned-

**Darren:** -so would Powerade, Gatorade be a-

**Miss Black:** -that would be fine. I don’t like the fact that people can think that Powerade is just a general juice drink that you would have if you are doing like half an hour or an hour of exercise and that’s a good thing. Yeah. It’s just a drink that you have instead of orange juice. I don’t like that they have made it come across [to] have that image. It’s sneaky. Yeah, but it would be surely be better than McDonald’s.

Miss Black’s comments demonstrated how teachers and external providers seemed to find themselves having to do one of two things: either choosing the lesser of two ‘evils’ (such as Powerade or Coca-Cola, Just Juice or Pepsi, McDonald’s or New Zealand Beef + Lamb), or not having any sponsor - or healthy lifestyles education programme - at all. A third option – planning and teaching health and/or physical education without a sponsor or external provider – appeared, for the most part, to not be an option at all.

Partnerships, sponsorships and ‘healthy’ branding work as technologies of government to encourage teachers and principals to ‘consume’ corporatised solutions to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. For instance, I asked Dudley School principal Mr Woodward if he would consider having a corporation like The Coca-Cola Company come to his school to deliver a health or physical education programme. He replied:

**No,** we won’t do that … we wouldn’t want to be sponsored by Rothmans [cigarettes] which rugby used to be and athletics used to be a few years ago. But now tobacco companies don’t really do that. But we wouldn’t, I wouldn’t want McDonald’s sponsoring [school
activities] really. Needs to be something that we can have moralistic views about.

Even though Mr Woodward stated clearly that he could not ‘morally’ use any activities that were sponsored by McDonald’s or Coca-Cola (which he compared to a ‘Big Tobacco’ company) he regularly allowed, indeed extolled the virtues of, *Life Education* (funded by beverage corporation Frucor, pharmaceutical corporation GlaxoSmithKline, two pokie trusts, and others) into his school to ‘teach’ his students about health - and about corporate products. The fact that it was not Frucor or these other organisations and industries physically delivering *Life Education* appeared to help divert Mr Woodward’s attention from who was funding and shaping what was being taught to his students. I am not suggesting that Mr Woodward is a hypocrite. Rather, the nature of these ‘partnerships’ appears to obscure and ameliorate concerns that people might have. That is, the relationships work as a ‘congealing agent’ or glue.

*Life Education* teacher Marion recognised the tensions that arose when a soft-drink/fruit juice/energy drink company ‘helped’ *Life Education*:

I am a bit of a fan of Frucor, even though juice is high in sugar - they do have a technology field there that tries to reduce these things like Just Juice Splash for example ... So, [Frucor] have a research team. They’ve also given us cards and we’ve developed cards together as a resource for schools for when we are doing health and things like that. It’s based around nutrients, so they are very keen to help assist, even though they also sell other products (laughs) that we try and discourage ... Otherwise, any way that we can raise profile of both organisations to work together to build stronger communities is always important.

Although we cannot be sure what Marion’s private thoughts about this programme and partnership are, it does appear from this quote that she has arrived at a kind of compromise by “smoothing out contradictions so that they seem superficial rather than fundamental” (Li, 2007a, p. 265). The problem of high sugar drinks, those that *Life Education* aim to “discourage”, is alleviated by the notion that their expert “technology field” and “research team” are trying “to reduce these things”.

In addition, the interests of Frucor and *Life Education* are aligned through the notions of partnership and social responsibility, working “together to build stronger communities”. Potential points of fracture are transformed into a nexus of strength,
as both organisations’ ‘profiles are raised’ and both organisations are able to achieve their goals. As Marion argued:

So you know, we [Life Education] want to lift our profile and if we can do that and look good at the same time, do it in the positive way – I know it’s all part of marketing, all part of business ... depending on the ethos and interest of the company if there is a perfect fit, if there’s a particular target that aligns with the business ... they get promotion and I think ‘yay, happy to promote! Let’s get scratched backs!’

Marion as an individual, and the Life Education Trust as an organisation, value their ability to ‘get into bed’ with corporate partners. However, Marion’s use of the phrase “perfect fit” masks some of the imperfections that exist when relationships are formed between two fundamentally dissimilar organisations. Tensions arise when there is a need to ‘scratch each other’s backs’, especially when one of the partners may have more to gain or more to lose. When I asked for her thoughts about promoting sponsors branded products during Life Education lessons, she replied:

It’s part of the promotion – that’s what pays us. And I’m happy to do it if we can work it in and it’s not too much of a stretch .... [It’s] a good opportunity to get the sponsor’s product in without actually having to go out of my way to promote it. But yeah, definitely happy to promote. It’s not always the favourite part of the job, but pays the bills. Better with than without.

Marion also rationalised the commercialism within the Life Education programme by describing the corporate sponsorship as “better with than without”; that promoting Just Juice, Macleans toothpaste and H2Go bottles of water to children was less damaging than the alternative - not receiving sponsorship money. After all, Marion appeared to perceive the relationship as a ‘win-win’ situation. Both Frucor and Life Education profit (i.e. in terms of money, public relations, brand image, and ability to ‘get into’ schools) from their relationship by raising each other’s “profiles”, being seen to “work together to build stronger communities”, and ensuring they are visible in schools and communities as providers of health, education, and healthy products.

In charity we ‘trust’: Re-assembling the philanthropic subject
Charity, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility were critical elements of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage. The ‘philanthropic’ aims of authorities and individuals, including schools, teachers, charities, external providers and corporations, acted in two broad, yet interconnected ways. The first was that
philanthropy, in its broadest sense, acted as a congealing agent. Organisations and actors were assembled together through their combined ‘will’ to be altruistic, a governmental ambition which helped to create, fund, shape and implement school-based programmes and educational resources. The second was that notions of philanthropy helped to re-assemble and re-invent the various authorities, particularly those representing the private sector, so that they were seen to be altruistic, rather than self-interested, profiteering, or even unhealthy.

A significant technology used by the private sector to graft discourses of philanthropy onto the broader ‘anti-obesity’ assemblage was corporate social responsibility. As Herrick (2009) argues, in the context of the obesity crisis the food and drink industry has used corporate social responsibility as a business strategy to secure brand value and brand loyalty, to shift the blame for obesity from food and drink to physical activity, and enabled the food and drink industry to take on some of the responsibility for preventing obesity. In the New Zealand context we see multiple for-profit organisations drawing on discourses of ‘social responsibility’ and ‘community’ to ensure their governmental programmes to ‘fight obesity’ are actualised in schools, and promoted to politicians and the public. For example, McDonald’s My Greatest Feat pedometer/physical activity initiative was made possible through its ‘Community’ focus, one strand of their overall corporate responsibility programme. As McDonald’s promoted on its website: “We believe we’ve got a responsibility to give back to our local communities. Every year we help set up and support sporting, educational, charitable and environmental programmes designed to help a wide range of people and communities” (see McDonald’s Restaurants (NZ) Limited, 2014, para. 1).

New Zealand Post funds a number of physical activity programmes in schools, such as ActivePost Small Sticks Hockey and Get Set Go, through ActivePost, a community wellness programme created as part of New Zealand Post’s corporate responsibility strategy. Nestlé New Zealand’s Be Healthy, Be Active is part of Nestlé S.A.’s Healthy Kids Global Programme, which is just one of Nestlé’s many global corporate social responsibility programmes implemented under the banner of Creating Shared Value (see www.nestle.co.nz). Life Education teacher Marion also told me about a promotion where she, other ‘Life Educators’ and ‘Harold the Giraffe’ made promotional appearances at local ‘Z’ petrol stations as part of Z’s ‘Good in the Hood’ corporate social responsibility programme. Frucor’s (2014,
‘investment’ in Life Education is part of its ‘social responsibility’ activities, a division of its broader ‘community’ programme: “As a company and as a team, we like to help others out whenever we can.” Frucor’s relationship with Life Education was publicised in a business-led New Zealand corporate social responsibility report, Do gooder and gooder: How doing good is good for business. In this report Frucor states that its “investment” in Life Education was based on its concern “at the growing level of obesity and inactivity amongst NZ children” (Robin Hood Foundation, n.d., p. 12).

A number of scholars argue that a corporation’s desire to be philanthropic, socially responsible and ‘do good’ in the community, acts in tension with the corporation’s need to profit (for discussions, see Ball, 2012; Saltman, 2010). This tension is resolved, to a degree, by the fact that corporations are able to use their social responsibility/philanthropy programmes as a way to simultaneously improve their image and increase profit (see Boyles, 2000, 2005b, 2008; Molnar, Boninger, Wilkinson, & Fogarty, 2008). As Niels Christiansen, Vice-President of Public Affairs for Nestlé, stated, “we treat corporate social responsibility as a part of our overall brand strategy” (Christiansen, 2007, p. 40). The interest corporations such as Nestlé have in being socially responsible is not ‘pure’ altruism, but intimately tied to building their brand image and business:

There may not be one single definition of Corporate Social Responsibility that fits all companies and industries, but for a consumer goods company, building strong brands is the basis of a successful business, and how the public feels about a company relates directly to our brand equity. For this reason, consumer goods companies must build CSR into basic business strategy, as it is integral to the consumer perception necessary to build successful brands and long-term business. (Christiansen, 2007, p. 35)

The impact of these socially responsible branding activities on profit are thought to be maximised when they include schools. As the former president of Coca-Cola Enterprises stated, “the school system is where you build brand loyalty” (cited in Molnar, 2005, p. 55).

The brand benefits of corporate social responsibility were made clearly visible in McDonald’s implementation of the My Greatest Feat initiative in 2008 and 2010. Although the stated aim of the programme was to get “children active, having fun, learning and involved” as “part of McDonald’s ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of New Zealand children” (McDonald’s, 2008, para. 1), the success of My 110
Greatest Feat was not measured by children’s physical activity or BMIs, but the corporation’s increased ‘brand trust scores’. From a marketing perspective, this was seen to be the ‘greatest feat’ of all, given it was at a time where McDonald’s were being blamed for childhood obesity. As Tribal DDB, one of the advertising companies responsible for marketing My Greatest Feat, argued in the following quote:

McDonald’s had been the whipping boy for everything big and bad about America and fast food. Brand trust scores were in decline. Correcting that would be no small feat. In 2008, McDonald’s was a major Olympic Games sponsor. In New Zealand, it wanted to get kids active and engaged with the Olympics. The result was My Greatest Feat – a schools pedometer programme. A truly integrated effort involving DDB, Rapp, Tribal DDB and Mango which snowballed into the biggest physical activity programme ever undertaken in New Zealand…. Children took 3 billion steps. That’s around the moon and back twice. And McDonald’s brand trust scores took a giant leap seeing increases up to 50%. (Tribal DDB, 2009, para. 1-5)

By using its own corporate social responsibility programme in conjunction with a partnership between at least three advertising agencies, the New Zealand Olympic Committee, and a number of Olympic athletes, McDonald’s was able to graft its business strategies onto the healthy lifestyles education assemblage. Crucially, this also helped to re-create the fast food giant as not only trustworthy, but good for children’s health!

McDonalds has battled with a negative press for a long time because of the association between fast food and health issues, in particular obesity …. Determined to overcome this negativity, McDonalds wanted to use its sponsorship of the 2008 Olympics to get maximum involvement to generate a more positive company image …. The McDonald’s brand trust score took a positive leap in ranking, far exceeding the target of +5%. The response to the statement ‘McDonalds is a company I can trust’ was up 33% despite a static score for three years previously. ‘Encourages active balanced lifestyles’ and ‘Has food I feel good about children eating,’ were both answered more positively by 50% and 33% respectively. (International Post Corporation, n.d., p. 1-2)

Indeed, some of the children I spoke to, although sceptical about the motivation behind McDonald’s use of a physical activity programme (see Chapter Eight for more detail), did see McDonald’s as somewhat caring and healthy. At Reynard Intermediate School I had a conversation with Year Seven boys Leroy and Sam
about *My Greatest Feat*, and asked them if they thought McDonald’s cared about children’s health. Sam replied: “I think McDonald’s probably does care a bit … they have like Weight Watchers meals, so it shows they kind of care for health. But then again they mainly deal fast food …”

McDonald’s improved brand image extended outside the image of their food. Schools and external providers of healthy lifestyles education programmes also seemed more likely to accept McDonald’s programmes/resources/funding/gifts/sponsorship when they were seen as socially responsible or charitable, and when philanthropy was seen as the ‘prime purpose’, rather than profit. For instance, even though *Life Education* teacher Marion was highly critical of McDonald’s - its impact on children’s health, its “blimmin golden arches” being too close to schools, and their use of ‘subliminal’ advertising - she would not rule out the possibility of working for or with McDonald’s in the future:

**Darren:** Would there be any corporations that you wouldn’t want to work for or wouldn’t want? Say if McDonald’s-

**Marion:** The government. We need more reliable funds than the government … Charity is much more reliable. Um… McDonald’s would be a hard one. I don’t know that we would rule [McDonald’s] out - no. I know Ronald McDonald House hasn’t ruled [them] out. At the end of the day funds is funds.

The “fissiparous affiliations” (Rose, 1999b, p. 51) - those likely to cause division - were resolved by the ‘charitable’ acts of giving and receiving. This is a resolution that helps to settle a significant tension - the possibility of McDonald’s providing health education in schools – by re-focusing on the potential benefits, rather than the pitfalls. In this sense, the assemblage was strengthened by its connections to discourses of charity. Charity acted as a ‘congealing agent’ that brought organisations with disparate interests closer together. It also helped to re-shape a multinational fast-food restaurant company into something new; a philanthropic, healthy, and caring corporation.

Private sector institutions were also able to re-invent themselves as altruistic and trustworthy by deliberately blending, if not dissolving, traditional demarcations between for-profit, ‘not-for-profit’, public, and voluntary sector organisations. This was certainly the case when the private sector helped to create or control charities or charitable trusts. The development of relationships between United Fresh New Zealand Inc. (hereinafter United Fresh) and 5+ A Day Charitable Trust (and its 5+ A
Day programme) is a good example of how the blurring of boundaries helped to re-invent private sector players so they could achieve their governmental ambitions. United Fresh (2015) promotes itself as a non-profit organisation. Undermining United Fresh’s non-profit status is that its aim is to support, promote and “work together for the good of the entire [fresh produce] industry” in New Zealand (United Fresh, 2014a, p. 2). It is almost entirely funded by ‘donations’ from its corporate members, which include the likes of The Yummy Fruit Company Limited (who also promote an incentive scheme in primary schools), Turners and Growers, Dole Asia, and New Zealand’s two supermarket chains, Countdown and Foodstuffs New Zealand Limited. In short, ‘non-profit’ United Fresh is funded by a number of wealthy multinational, national and regional for-profit corporations. In its advertising to corporate members (that pay up to NZD$6,000 plus GST to be members of United Fresh and to use the 5+ A Day logo, see United Fresh, 2014b), part of United Fresh’s core business is interacting with stakeholders, including government (i.e. Ministry of Health), industry, non-governmental organisations (such as The Heart Foundation), public health agencies, media, the public and international organisations. As United Fresh (2014a, p. 3) confidently tells its current and future members: “We are in touch with every group that impacts your bottom line”.

Schools are one group that is considered to have an ‘impact’ on corporate members’ profit, and thus are targeted by the fruit and vegetable industry. In fact, United Fresh (2014a, p. 2) state that their Fruit in Schools contracts (a programme with the explicit purpose of providing free fruit to children in low decile schools) will help members achieve “market access” to schools and government. United Fresh (2014a, p. 2) describes the benefits of their 5+ A Day programme to its (current and future) members as follows:

In 2007, United Fresh set up The 5+ A Day Charitable Trust with New Zealand’s children as its beneficiaries. The Trust focuses on increasing consumption through education, communication, partnerships, marketing, promotion and sponsorship. We see here how the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust is designed as a vehicle to bring together children, schools, and business. It is also a charity that uses business strategies - partnerships, sponsorships, promotion, marketing - as technologies of consumption. Children are positioned as ‘beneficiaries’ of 5+ A Day’s and United Fresh’s charitable giving (presumably by learning that they needed to eat more fruit.
and vegetables), masking the profit-seeking intent of the industry to shape children as consumers.

A significant reason that these two ‘not-for-profit’ organisations are so well-aligned was not just that 5+ A Day was created by United Fresh, but that it was governed and managed by United Fresh. At the time of writing, every one of the executive officers of the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust were also members of United Fresh’s executive committee or management (see www.charities.govt.nz; United Fresh New Zealand Inc, n.d.-b). This included Paula Dudley, the General Manager of United Fresh, also the General Manager of 5+ A Day. By ‘breaching and blending’ the divisions between for-profit and not-for-profit, educational and charitable “motives” (Ball, 2012, p. 71), the interests of the fruit and vegetable industry in New Zealand are obscured. For example, when I suggested that charities were influenced by corporate funding, Miss Black observed: “I mean The Heart Foundation and 5+ A Day are non-profit organisations aren’t they? So that’s different.” The ‘difference’ is that when boundaries between private and ‘charitable’ organisations are not just blurred, but dissolved, it makes it difficult to know “what not-for-profit means” (Ball, 2012, p. 89) and impossible to tell where business ends and charity begins. An entire ‘for-profit’ industry has been re-assembled as philanthropic, educational and healthy.

‘Pokie trusts’: Charitable giving or gambling with health?
It was certainly not the stated intention or interest of all parties involved in the creation, implementation or funding of school-based programmes to actually be ‘part of the solution’ to obesity or unhealthy lifestyles. Some organisations, such as ‘pokie trusts’ (also known as gaming trusts, gambling trusts, gaming machine societies), were inadvertently drawn into the assemblage by the broader policy environment, a number of regulatory controls developed by the state, and the combined desires of organisations to govern others.

Every year pokie trusts deliver tens of millions of dollars of ‘grants’ to a variety of community, education, and charity organisations (see www.lionfoundation.org.nz). A number of educational programmes to teach children to live healthier lifestyles also receive pokie funding. For example, The Lion Foundation grants funds to the Life Education Trust and to GymSports New Zealand for the moveMprove programme. Pub Charity and The Southern Trust also help to
fund the *Life Education* programme. In 2012 *ActivePost Small Sticks Hockey* received funding from the New Zealand Community Trust (see New Zealand Community Trust, 2012).

Pokie trusts are legally-defined not-for-profit “organisations that own and operate gaming machines and make grants to non-profit community organisations” (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014a, para. 8). These trusts are *corporate societies*\(^{19}\) that have the status of a charitable trust (as defined by the Charitable Trusts Act 1957) and “must distribute all money generated by pokie machines to *authorised purposes*, except for money paid out as prizes, operating expenses for venues and the trusts themselves, and taxes and levies paid to the government” (Problem Gambling Foundation, 2014, p. 2, my emphasis). Although the trusts own the pokie machines, they have a legislated and regulated obligation to pay a certain percentage (at time of writing, 37.12%) of expenditure back to ‘the community’ (for a description of how the ‘pokie trust machine’ works, see Problem Gambling Foundation, 2014). This money does not have to, nor does it always, end up back in the same community from where it was taken from (see Auckland Council, 2014).

Under Section 4 of the Gambling Act 2003, there are four authorised purposes for pokie trusts to raise funds:

- a charitable purpose;
- a non-commercial purpose that is beneficial to the whole or a section of the community;
- promoting, controlling, and conducting race meetings under the *Racing Act 2003*, including the payment of stakes;
- Classes 1-3 gambling can also raise money for an electioneering purpose (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014b, para. 2).

However, the ‘authorised purpose’ for a pokie trust is different from a charitable purpose. Although the purpose *can* be for charity, it does not *have* to be. In New Zealand legislation, charity is defined as:

> helping people in need in the community. Typical recipients of charitable grants are the needy, for example, poor, sick, disabled or elderly people. Grants to further public health, religion and education may also be charitable. (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014b, para. 4)

\(^{19}\) Under the Gambling Act 2003, a corporate society is a society that is incorporated as a board under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957.
Pokie trusts exploit shortfalls in government funding to schools and other organisations that aim to promote health (e.g. Life Education Trust) or education (e.g. GymSports New Zealand) by promoting themselves and their grants as charitable. Pub Charity, for instance, is not a registered charity under the Charities Act 2005. However, what does (or does not) count as charity is frequently contested and a number of organisations and their ‘charitable’ programmes do not always fall neatly within the law that stipulates “nobody should make a direct commercial profit from any authorised purpose grant” (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014b, para. 2).

The pokie trusts were seen by adults and children in the three schools as providing funding for schools and ‘other’ charities, as well as being charitable themselves. Pokie trusts were able to be re-invented when the trusts (and the recipients of the grants) successfully grafted discourses of charitable giving (or grants) and ‘doing good’ onto the assemblage. For instance, on its website, The Lion Foundation (2015, para. 1-2) states:

The Lion Foundation is one of New Zealand's oldest and most respected Charitable Trusts. Since 1988 we have returned over $750 million back to the community, supporting thousands of good causes all around New Zealand … In fact, there are few Kiwis whose lives have not been touched by a Lion Foundation grant.

Even though the pokie trusts are required by law to give a percentage of their gaming machine profits back to the community, they advertise these grants (as well as themselves as an organisation and industry) as being selfless. In Epperson’s (2013, p. 90) critique of the gambling industry in New Zealand, she writes:

The gambling industry in New Zealand, especially pokie machines, has also had some clever advertising successes in associating gambling with charity. The industry has a statutory obligation to return some of the money lost in pokie machines to the public, and they have seized this as an opportunity to link themselves vehemently to the notion of philanthropy.

The charitable ‘gifts’ made available by pokie trusts act as a key technology for organisations to achieve their governmental ambitions, especially those wanting to ‘get into schools’ to shape what teachers teach and what children learn. For instance, the Life Education Trust is promoted on The Lion Foundation (n.d., para. 1) website as an important grant recipient:
Visiting 200,000 primary and intermediate school aged children is a massive undertaking, but it's achieved every year by the Life Education Trust and its 41 mobile classrooms spread the length of the country. The Trust delivers health-based education to give young people the knowledge and skills to live a fulfilling and healthy life. Funding from The Lion Foundation ensures the Trust's national office is adequately resourced and able to provide all teaching resources and support free of charge to its individual regional community trusts that run the mobile classrooms nationwide.

This quote illustrates how the pokie funds granted to a charity end up supporting the implementation of a healthy lifestyles education programme to children in schools. Peter Cox, Chief Executive of the Life Education Trust is quoted on The Lion Foundation’s (n.d., para. 2) website as stating:

This Lion Foundation funding removes the administrative and resourcing headaches that our regional trusts would otherwise face, allowing them to focus on what matters - delivering life changing programmes to the country’s children.

Indeed, the charitable funding from pokie trusts like The Lion Foundation appears to be a necessity for charities like the Life Education Trust. Pokies funding was perceived by external providers like Marion as a secure source of money that ensured the operation, if not survival of the charity, sporting body, or healthy lifestyles education programme. Funding from gambling is therefore a significant technology that helps organisations realise their plans to govern others.

I noted a source of tension that occurred when schools and other ‘healthy lifestyles education’ organisations (such as Life Education Trust) or programmes (such as moveMprove) accepted and used grants from pokie trusts. When I brought up the topic of pokie machines and gaming trusts in research conversations, children, teachers and principals frequently lambasted the gaming industry and their machines for their detrimental impact on the health and well-being of families and local communities. This was certainly the case at St Saviour’s School. Mary, an eleven-year-old Samoan student in Ms Ellie’s class told me that her aunty and uncle were addicted to pokies and had to leave their children (Mary’s cousins) to live with Mary and her family because they could not support them anymore. Mary’s classmate and good friend Amy, an eleven-year-old Pākehā girl, also described how her mother had been an alcoholic and pokie addict since Amy was only one year of age. On a number of occasions Amy’s mother had spent lengthy periods away from her family while in “rehab”. At St Saviour’s, Ms Ellie and Mrs Sergeant were highly critical of
pokies and talked vehemently about their opposition to receiving grants from pokie trusts. Despite this, Ms Ellie and Mrs Sergeant regularly utilised programmes and resources that were either directly or indirectly the result of pokie trust grants. My prompting about pokie trust grants revealed their knowledge of the relationships between gambling, marketing, philanthropy, health and education, which was clearly a source of tension. As indicated in the following exchange between Mrs Sergeant and myself, these tensions were resolved by designating her own opposition as trivial (a “pathetic little tantrum”) and not worth denying her students the opportunity to participate in moveMprove:

**Mrs Sergeant:** We’ve had parents in the past who have had problems with gambling – I can’t cope with [pokie trusts]. It’s tricky because I don’t go to them for money - I just go to the ASB [bank] and places like that - because I just loathe and detest those pokies with an absolute vengeance to be honest.

**Darren:** The majority of the programmes, like moveMprove, are funded through-

**Mrs Sergeant:** -I know, I know. And that’s okay as long as I don’t have to deal directly with them. And it’s a tiny little, pathetic little tantrum that I’m throwing. I would never ever say to move and improve [sic] that you’re not coming in here because you’ve got pokie money, because what am I’m doing? I’m satisfying some ridiculous little tantrum that I’m having, and then compromising all our little children who need to have the basics of athletics. And they’re not overtly influencing children through those programmes, unlike the Ronald McDonald thing [My Greatest Fear] - which is quite insidious. (Mrs Sergeant’s emphasis)

Even though the pokie industry and their ever-present gaming/gambling machines were seen by children and adults alike as inherently harmful, the funding of school-based programmes was portrayed as fundamentally harmless. This potentially significant tension in the assemblage was resolved by discourses of charity being attached to the assemblage in a way that acted as a buffer between the interests of pokie trusts (charitable or otherwise) and the potential danger they posed for children and their families. It was a form of charity that also enabled the practice of antipolitics to work (Li, 2007a). Political questions about the (un)ethical place of pokies in society (and pokie money in schools) were re-posed as matters of technique; as an issue of the best place or programme to spend the money, rather than whether the
money should be taken from the community in the first place, or from trusts at all. The potential for debate that would challenge the legitimacy of the pokie industry and the inequalities it perpetuated was closed down. Possible resistance was translated into possible acceptance – and possible funding. The notion that schools needed to provide children, particularly children ‘in need’, with ‘charity’ was an important element that helped to convince principals and teachers to allow multiple ‘charitable’ and ‘philanthropic’ organisations and programmes into their schools.

Grafting discourses of charity onto the healthy lifestyles education assemblage was not ‘done’ by charities, pokie trusts, industry groups and corporations by forcing funding, sponsorship or programmes onto naïve or unsuspecting teachers and principals in primary schools. Multiple technologies of consumption were employed in the healthy lifestyles education programmes and resources to encourage children to ‘consume’ products (for further discussion, see Chapter Eight). These technologies were also employed to ‘conduct the conducts’ of teachers, principals and external providers. The ‘gate-keepers’ of children’s learning were apparently convinced to endorse an array of products, brand images, and (not)for-profit players based on their understanding that the children needed these free gifts, whether it was free food or free healthy lifestyles education. Teachers and principals were mobilized, both by themselves and others, to become more than ‘just’ educators, but also ‘consumers’ and ‘givers’ of charity and philanthropy.

Re-assembling authorities and their ‘philanthropic’ solutions
The school-based solutions to childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles were made possible through a number of policies, partnerships, sponsorships, pieces of legislation, charitable donations, philanthropic gifts, and corporate social responsibility programmes that encouraged corporations, charities, industry groups, state agencies, pokie trusts and schools to ‘work together’. Given the disparate, even opposing interests, within this messy mix of authorities and actors, clear tensions arose, especially when an industry or company with a reputation problem (such as the pokie industry or McDonald’s) aligned themselves with schools and notions of health. These tensions were often resolved through the notion that these cross sector relationships and resultant ‘health’ programmes were essentially a ‘win-win’ situation for everybody involved, especially ‘for the kids’.
Corporations (and their products) were able to be seen as healthy, caring, philanthropic and socially responsible whilst also improving their brand image and bottom line. Charities received much needed funding to continue to implement their various health/education programmes in schools. Industries, such as the pokie industry and the fruit and vegetable industry, re-invented their business strategies as charity. The state continued its ‘hand’s off’ approach to funding solutions to ‘wicked’ social problems, such as obesity and poverty (see Levin, Cashore, Bernstein, & Auld, 2012, for a discussion on wicked problems). And schools, teachers and principals were ‘gifted’ a plethora of free resources and programmes that would help inform children about obesity and (un)healthy lifestyles, as well as ‘teach’ children about the ‘philanthropic’ and ‘healthy’ organisations that made these programmes possible.

These new relationships between schools, charities and the private sector were not benign. They helped to re-assemble organisations and individuals to be seen as philanthropic and charitable, as well as healthy and educational. They masked private sector players’ less altruistic interests: branding, public relations strategies, avoidance of stricter regulations and legislation, and of course, profit. They transferred the responsibility of government to provide funding for children, teachers and schools to the food and drink industry, the gambling industry and the charity ‘industry’. As I explore in the following chapter, public-private-voluntary partnerships in the name of ‘healthy lifestyles education’ also worked to shape the thoughts, actions and subjectivities of those actually teaching children about health.
Chapter Six: Assembling the inexpert, outsourcing teacher

Schools are a natural breeding ground for unstructured play and New Zealand Football is aiming to capitalise on this by providing parents, teachers and players with the expertise and tools to get the ball rolling. (New Zealand Football, n.d., p. 1)

I found the extra skills and strategies that the experts taught the children were done so much better than I could have done it.

- Year One Teacher

Analysing the individual organisations, actors and other elements of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage provides us with a deeper understanding of how disparate parties have aligned their interests in fighting obesity. However, there also needs to be a closer examination of the practices that bring these elements together and make them ‘stick’; practices of assemblage, such as resolving tensions, rendering technical, anti-politics, and managing failures. This chapter describes how healthy lifestyles education programmes are constituted by paying close attention to the means by which outsourcing these programmes to external providers has been re-imagined by teachers and principals as natural and necessary - a ‘perfect’ practice. It is a practice, however, that results in some unpredictable outcomes that could be considered ‘dangerous’ for classroom teachers and students alike. I aim to shed light on how different organisations and actors attempt to ‘improve’ children’s bodies and behaviours through shaping teachers’ desires, routines, and beliefs about health and physical education (HPE). My focus here is on how the assemblage of two complementary subjects - the inexpert classroom teacher and the expert external provider - governed teachers and principals, encouraging externally provided ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity and children’s unhealthy lifestyles to be implemented in schools. To do this I look at elements of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage that are integral to the government of primary schools teachers and the ‘teaching’ of HPE: discourses of sport and healthy lifestyles; technologies of privatisation and outsourcing; government policies and funding; specific school-based programmes and resources; and the shaping of (in)expert subjectivities.

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20 This testimonial from a Year One teacher at Upper Hutt Primary is promoted in the ‘Life-long movement patterns’ section of moveMprove’s Educator’s guide (GymSports New Zealand, n.d.-a, para. 3).
The ‘problem’ of inexpert classroom teachers

To be able to introduce a specific governmental intervention, such as a corporate and/or charitable solution to obesity, a specific situation or moment in which conduct is conceived as a ‘problem’ must first be identified (Miller & Rose, 2008). A common theme that emerged from my research was that classroom teachers’ conduct was problematised by teachers, principals and external providers, specifically in terms of a lack of ‘expertise’ to be able to teach their own students. This perceived problem of inexpert classroom teachers was not related to their teaching in a broad sense (i.e. their knowledge, skills and dispositions to successfully plan, teach and assess English or maths, give appropriate pastoral care, or demonstrate leadership), but rather their inexpertise to teach HPE. Teachers and external providers frequently talked about generalist classroom teachers in deficit terms, in particular their inability to ‘teach’ sports (e.g. hockey, athletics, gymnastics) and technical sports skills (e.g. performing a forward roll, hitting a hockey ball, sprinting), as well as ‘facts’ about health.

In contrast, external providers were positioned and promoted (by themselves and others) as HPE ‘experts’. St Saviour’s School classroom teacher Miss Black, for example, stated that a key benefit of using external providers was that “there’s definitely a level of expertise that comes with [outside] teachers”. The external providers certainly understood that they were the HPE ‘experts’ and teachers were not. For example, ActivePost Small Sticks coach and representative hockey player Andrea stated that the reason teachers used her, alongside other external providers, was for “that specialist and expert knowledge”. Similarly, Jonie, the Get Set Go facilitator from Sport Auckland, thought she was recruited into schools because the teachers and principals “thought that I was like, maybe, I was really good in that area [of PE]. So I am important, because I am a professional in that area.” Whilst the external providers of Get Set Go and ActivePost Small Sticks were seen as ‘professionals’ and ‘experts’ in particular sports, they were not necessarily experts in the type of HPE articulated in The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), nor were they qualified or registered teachers. Instead, notions of (in)expertise were underpinned by dominant discourses of PE that conflated the practice of teaching PE with coaching sports skills.

It was common for teachers, principals and external providers to talk about the physical education (PE) component of HPE in a way that privileged the technical
elements of sport, principally being able to ‘teach’ children to perform sports-related ‘skills’ (e.g. dribbling a hockey ball, doing a forward roll, kicking a ball). For instance, during a research conversation, St Saviour’s School Year Two teacher Miss Black told me that “moveMprove was great because [the coaches] knew exactly which skills they wanted [the children] to learn and they focused on that”. In a research conversation with Mr Spurlock, Year Seven and Eight classroom teacher at Dudley School with school-wide responsibilities for PE, he too drew on a narrow view of PE as simply teaching and learning ‘skills’:

I see PE, in the end, more about teaching skills. And you can teach the same skill in Year Seven and Eight to a kid in Year Two or Three. I mean, it just depends on how much they take it on board - dumb it down a bit more for Year Two and Three.

A number of the programmes brought into these schools focused on developing skills associated with a particular sport. The ASB Football in Schools programme stated that all “learning takes place using the sport of football”, whilst the ActivePost Small Sticks programme entirely focused on hockey skills such as dribbling, passing and shooting a hockey ball with a hockey stick. Get Set Go and moveMprove were described by the external providers and in promotional materials as ‘fundamental movement skills’ programmes. These were not so much focused on a specific sport, but centred on children being taught sports-related skills. For instance, the Get Set Go programme (a partnership between ActivePost and Athletics New Zealand) did not claim to coach specific athletics events (e.g. long jump, shot put), but focused on “teaching children basic sports skills” (Athletics New Zealand, 2012). These ‘fundamental’ skills ranged from balancing on one foot to sprinting, from throwing overhand to developing spatial awareness. The developers of moveMprove seemed at pains to explicitly state that it was “developed as a foundation skills programme, not a gymnastic programme” (GymSports New Zealand, 2006, my emphasis). However, every moveMprove session I observed at St Saviour’s School and Dudley School included numerous traditional gymnastics movements, such as forward rolls, jumping over a vault and swinging on a horizontal bar. During my time at these two schools, moveMprove was most commonly referred to by teachers and students alike as ‘Gymnastics’, sometimes called “move and improve” (which Mrs Sergeant thought was an athletics programme), and on very rare occasions was called
moveMprove. I never heard moveMprove or Get Set Go described by the adults or children as a ‘fundamental’ or ‘foundation’ skills programme.

Whether or not the children were taught sport-specific skills or “fundamental movement skills”, a critical point is that the programmes were taught by the expert external providers as part of the school’s curricula PE programme. During my six months at St Saviour’s School every PE lesson for Ms Ellie’s and Miss Black’s classes were programmes provided by external providers: moveMprove, Get Set Go, ASB Football in Schools and ActivePost Small Sticks. Every programme was conducted during curriculum time, as opposed to before school, during lunchtime, or after school as extra-curricular activities. And all four programmes were both promoted and perceived as being ‘PE’. For example, the brochure advertising the ASB Football in Schools initiative stated:

The football literacy programme entails 2 x 5 week blocks of football curriculum delivered in school time as part of a typical physical education class …. We believe that the ASB Football in Schools programme and our football expertise, partnered with your schools (sic) educational prowess, will increase the opportunity for our children to have more meaningful learning experiences. (New Zealand Football, n.d. my emphasis)

The discursive connection between sport and PE meant that the instructors/coaches of ActivePost Small Sticks, moveMprove, Get Set Go and ASB Football in Schools were positioned by the teachers, principals and themselves as experts in hockey, football, athletics or fundamental movement skills, and as experts in PE. Conversely, the classroom teachers positioned themselves as inexperts because they did not think they had the necessary knowledge or skills to teach PE (as sport) in relation to the specialist ‘expert’ football/gymnastic/Sport Auckland/hockey coaches. There is a critical contradiction here that did not seem to be picked up by teachers or external providers. The teachers brought in external providers because they were inexpert in coaching sports skills. However, the external providers did not claim to be teaching sports skills. Rather, they were providing PE or fundamental movement skills. In other words, the external providers were not ‘officially’ offering what the teachers said they needed – experts to teach sports skills.

moveMprove promoted the idea that they were the experts and teachers were not by publishing in the ‘Life-long movement patterns’ section of their Educator’s
guide (GymSports New Zealand, n.d.-a, para. 3) the following testimonial from a Year One teacher:

I found the extra skills and strategies that the experts taught the children were done so much better than I could have done it. E.g., how they handled the children who were scared to do forward rolls, or ensuring safe rolls/landings.

At Dudley School I had a research conversation with Mrs Donna in her classroom, where she described the benefits of using the local gymnastics coaches. She too compared the ‘experts’ to her own abilities and confidence:

I think it was better for the children because they had someone actually promoting the warm-up side of it first - getting them to use their body parts and stretch before they went into the activity. When we do it it’s straight into the activity and we rotate around, whereas with this one they rotate around but they don’t get to every activity. I think that was great. And it was less stress on us. Because we often, I often, worry about teaching them the right move, whether they’re going to hurt themselves. And some of the equipment they have, we don’t have, so we can’t get them to do things like the ‘lift and holding themselves’ [horizontal bar activity] you know? I think that was really good. It was much better than us. (my emphasis)

Ms Ellie, the classroom teacher for Year Six/Seven and the school-wide leader of PE at St Saviour’s School, informed me that the advantage of using external providers for PE was that the outsourced external provider were better at teaching specific sports and sports skills:

Well, we have an expert to teach. It’s a focus on that particular sport, and they can break down the skills probably better than [the teacher] …. And a lot of the teachers don’t have the skills nowadays, or the time to prepare what they should do, like in the old days they used to.

Ms Ellie’s understanding of the “better” outsourced expert was intimately connected to the idea that the coaches were better at teaching a “particular sport”, even though the same external providers claimed they were not teaching particular sports, but broader ‘movement skills’. The dominant discourse of PE as sport, as well as her own perceptions of the inexpert classroom teacher - those who lacked the skill, time, or motivation to “break down” specific sports skills for their students - meant that coaches like Andrea were invaluable to the classroom teachers and their curricula PE programmes, especially as “teachers don’t know anything about hockey”.

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ActivePost Small Sticks coach Andrea agreed with Ms Ellie. She thought that teachers were specialists in maths and literacy, but lacked the ‘expert’ knowledge of hockey to be able to teach hockey and the confidence to teach PE in general. I asked Andrea why teachers utilised external providers like herself. She replied:

It’s more for expertise … I know this sounds bad but [teachers are] afraid to teach or get it wrong or to get that expert information … Like the teachers could easily do what I do, but for me I can sort of tweak it, you know? I know the ins and outs of hockey. And it’s fun for them to just sit back and watch … Especially because with primary teaching, a lot of them specialise in maths and English … that’s why a lot of them leave [the classes during hockey lessons], because they don’t feel comfortable with physical education, you know. It is hard.

Andrea, Ms Ellie and a number of other teachers and external providers seemed to be oblivious to significant ‘slippage’ in the terminology used to describe PE/sport, teaching/coaching, expertise/specialists. Teachers and external providers alike re-assembled PE to meet their own interests and needs. The external providers and their partners grafted discourses of ‘PE’ and ‘fundamental movement skills’ onto the assemblage, helping to mask self-interests, such as promoting ‘their’ sport. At the same time, by re-assembling curricula PE (a form of PE informed by The New Zealand curriculum) to align with sport and the aims of sporting authorities (e.g. GymSports New Zealand, Athletics New Zealand, Sport Auckland, New Zealand Football), these organisations were able to have their presence in schools endorsed by teachers and principals. In doing so, the practice of outsourcing PE teaching to the ‘experts’ was legitimised and normalised.

The teachers I interviewed re-worked ‘old’ discourses construing PE as primarily about “sports” and “sports skills” (Ms Ellie) back into the healthy lifestyles education assemblage in ways that helped divert attention from the fact that they were not willing or able to teach PE, an Essential Learning Area of the curriculum. By re-assembling the field of PE, schools were able to effectively ‘hand over’ the teaching of this curriculum area to outside ‘experts’ with little or no knowledge of The New Zealand curriculum, its stated ‘effective pedagogies’, or the students they were teaching. The re-assemblage that made outsourcing seem ideal and necessary was also made possible by policies and funding that helped to realise the ambitions of teachers, schools, external providers and the state.
The Kiwisportification of primary school PE

The Kiwisport initiative was a significant technology of government that reproduced the ‘PE as sport’ discourse and made it possible, if not inevitable, for teachers to outsource their PE programmes to ‘experts’. In both ‘full primary schools’, St Saviour’s and Dudley, Kiwisport-funded organisations and their outsourced coaches/instructors dominated the provision of ‘PE’ learning experiences. A newsletter was even sent to the parents of students at St Saviour’s School that read: “This year we are on the Kiwisport contract where expert coaches come and teach our children skills”. Notions of expertise, outsourcing, Kiwisport, and PE as coaching sports skills were neatly assembled together and promoted as a normal, if not valuable, teaching practice.

Kiwisport, an $82 million\(^{21}\) initiative launched in August 2009 by Prime Minister John Key (2009, para. 27), is a government funded programme to “increase the opportunities for young Kiwis to get involved in sport. The Government wants to see more Kiwi kids participating in sport so that they get the health and lifestyle benefits of better physical fitness”. The main three aims of Kiwisport were clearly laid out by the Ministry of Education (n.d., para. 2):

- To increase the number of school-aged children participating in organised sport
- Increase the availability and accessibility of sport opportunities for all school-aged children.
- Support children in developing skills that will enable them to participate effectively in sport.

To achieve these aims the National-led coalition government developed a new policy and funding regime for schools to access a range of sport-related coaching programmes. The funding of Kiwisport – and the subsequent outsourcing of primary school PE to Kiwisport providers – was achieved through two means. First, primary schools were able to apply for their share of $24 million of ‘Direct Funding’ allocated to primary schools, to a maximum of $13.11 per student per year. This funding is provided through the Ministry of Education (although the money is provided by the Ministers of Health, Education, and Sport & Recreation) and is

\(^{21}\) Currency is in New Zealand dollars, unless stated otherwise.
allocated through the school’s operational grant payment.\textsuperscript{22} According to Key (2009, para. 21):

As outlined in pre-election commitments, direct funding means schools will have the flexibility and the freedom to apply the money to address their specific needs to help ensure more children play sport. The reporting requirements for this funding will not be onerous and bureaucratic, but will hold schools to account that they are using the funds to promote sport. Schools will account for the new funding as part of their annual reporting to the Ministry of Education.

As demonstrated in the above quote, the ‘official’ rationale for Kiwisport funding is underpinned by key neoliberal canons: the autonomy of primary schools; ‘small government’ accountability; and freedom of choice. It is a funding regime which claims efficiency through its alleged lack of “onerous” bureaucracy, but at the same time stresses the importance of accountability for the self-governing school. Dudley School principal Mr Woodward contradicted Key’s claim that Kiwisport funding was easy and efficient, telling me in a research conversation that he had to submit a lot of paperwork “to justify how Kiwisport was done”. While rhetorically schools are given “the flexibility and freedom” to “decide how to best use this funding to encourage more children into organised sport” (Key, 2009, para. 28), their decisions are constrained by a number of rules and provisions. For example, transport does not receive Kiwisport funding, although Mr Woodward told me that he managed to use his Kiwisport funds to pay for the buses that took his students to a local gymnastics club, adding that the Kiwisport funders “don’t need to know that!”

Schools are also required to spend their money on the ‘right’ providers (those authorised by Regional Sports Trusts, such as Sport Auckland) in a way that achieves the specific aims of Kiwisport. In other words, teachers are not able to use the Kiwisport funding to meet the learning needs of their students in terms of meeting the learning outcomes and achievement objectives of PE as defined in The New Zealand curriculum. As the policy states, schools can only use “the money to address their specific needs to help ensure more children play sport” (Key, 2009, para. 21). Yet again, principals, politicians, the Prime Minister and teachers agreed that these

\textsuperscript{22} According to the Ministry of Education (2014, para. 1-2): “Operational funding is the money a board of trustees receives from the Government to implement the goals of the school’s charter, and for the running of the school. Operational funding does not include funding for the salaries of entitlement teachers, property, or large capital items. These are paid for separately.”
Kiwisport programmes were about getting students to play sport. The external providers, however, continued to claim that they were more than that. They wanted to be seen as educators – physical educators.

The other way that Kiwisport is funded is through the $37 million ‘Regional Partnership Fund’. The seventeen Regional Sports Trusts (such as Sport Auckland) across New Zealand receive a bulk fund based on the number of children in their region. Each Regional Sports Trust is then responsible and accountable for administering and allocating the contestable funds to projects that they believe will help attain the goals of Kiwisport (although the final ‘signing off’ of funds is made by Sport New Zealand). Between 2010 and 2012 Sport Auckland distributed $2,359,000.00 to community sports organisations and their programmes via its Regional Partnership Fund (Sport Auckland, n.d.). These programmes included a number of healthy lifestyles education/fundamental movement skill programmes that were implemented as curricula PE in primary schools. moveMprove at St Saviour’s School was made possible through Tri Star Gymnastics (a local gymnastics club) receiving $71,250 of Kiwisport funding from Round One and another $66,528 from Round Two. Auckland Football was allocated $52,500 to help implement the ASB Football in School’s programme. Auckland Hockey was awarded $65,635 to bring the ActivePost Small Sticks programme into primary schools (Sport Auckland, 2012).

In short, clubs and sports organisations received funding via Sport Auckland, then brought their coaches into the primary schools to lead a given programme.

Kiwisport played a vital role in the assemblage by acting as a technology of government that enabled government to ‘work’ in schools across New Zealand. The state provided funding and access to organisations that schools were financially ‘encouraged’ to outsource their PE programmes to. However, by governing teachers and schools to use these external experts and programmes, Kiwisport also acted as a discursive connection between sport and PE, resulting in a ‘Kiwisportification’ of PE in New Zealand primary schools.

The dominant discourse of ‘PE is the same as coaching sports skills’ was reproduced because all of the Kiwisport funded programmes - moveMprove, ASB Football in School, ActivePost Small Sticks, Get Set Go - took place in curricula PE time. In addition, these four programmes were funded, devised and implemented by sporting organisations and their sports coaches: GymSports New Zealand, Tri-Star Gymnastics Club and Counties Gymnastics Club; New Zealand Football and
Auckland Football Federation New Zealand; Hockey New Zealand and Auckland Hockey; Athletics New Zealand and Sport Auckland. The principals, teachers and children I talked to described and understood these outsourced programmes as ‘sport’. The children were regularly taught to develop their performance of specific hockey, athletics, gymnastics and/or football skills. Yet the Kiwisport-funded providers repeatedly drew on the language of PE and fundamental movement skills (such as running, throwing and jumping), rather than specific sports or sports skills. Ultimately, these externally provided programmes and associated resources were devised by sports organisations whose funding was dependent upon achieving the goals of Kiwisport, not the aims and vision of The New Zealand curriculum. However, they were also programmes that were understood as having a role to play in making children healthier, more active, and less fat.

**Learning sports skills will lead to healthy, active lifestyles**

Although the overwhelming emphasis in Kiwisport and the programmes associated with it was on developing children’s sporting ability and participation, this was discursively associated in policy and programme documentation and in the talk of the teachers, principals, children and external providers I interviewed with obesity and healthy lifestyles. I was frequently told by the adults in my research that playing sport and learning sports skills would lead to children being active, getting fitter, living healthy lifestyles and being less fat – both now and for the rest of their lives.

A number of external providers and their corporate partners described the Kiwisport funded and externally provided programmes as though they were some kind of ‘gateway drug’, a form of physical activity that would ‘push’ them into a lifelong physical activity habit and prevent obesity. For example, the rationale for the ASB Football in Schools programme was underpinned by taken-for-granted assumptions that “kiwi kids” have serious problems with obesity, physical inactivity, fitness, confidence, and socialisation; problems that would be solved through learning how to play football:

With physical activity levels among kids on the slide, and obesity on the rise, it is critical to get kiwi kids back on track. The benefits of physical activity through sports such as football are that children have better physical fitness, are given the chance to be part of a team, and development of physical skills can lead to greater self-confidence and self-esteem. The latter can flow on to other aspects of their life
and have a positive impact on their relationships with peers. (Hutt City Council, n.d., para. 3)

The moveMprove programme also assembled together various ideas that children’s movement skills were problematic and needed ‘fixing’, stating that: New Zealand children were deficient in their movement skills; moveMprove would improve children’s skills; developing these skills would make children healthier (“stay well”) and more active, “enjoying physical activity for life” (GymSports New Zealand, n.d.-b, p. 2). GymSports New Zealand (2006, para. 6, my emphasis) justified their programme on the idea that:

kiwi kids between the ages of 3 and 10 years are lacking important movement skills required for participation in sport, recreation and lifelong health and well-being. Therefore, moveMprove has been developed as a foundation skills programme, not a gymnastic programme. It provides children with the opportunity to experience and participate in movement that will assist development in skills required to play all type of sports and recreational activities.

To strengthen the connections between these ‘truths’, GymSports New Zealand use their ‘Educator’s guide’ (provided free to teachers) to claim that “children who do not master fundamental movement patterns” (those that children who participate in moveMprove are required to rehearse) “often reject participation in physical activity as part of their lifestyle”, whilst those “children who have well developed fundamental movement patterns “are likely to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle” (GymSports New Zealand, n.d.-a). In fact, GymSports New Zealand (n.d.-b, p. 2) claims that “an expected result [of moveMprove] is that children will be healthier, happier, with improved academic abilities”. No further information is provided on how moveMprove will achieve these expectations.

The GymSports New Zealand’s rhetoric renders the multi-faceted dimensions of children’s health, well-being, lifestyles, sport participation, physical activity, skills, movement, education and futures as anti-political (see Li, 2007a). Political questions around the complex determinants of children’s health, such as the impact that poverty had on the ‘lifestyles’ of students at St Saviour’s School, are re-posed as matters of technique. The ‘problems’ of fatness, inactivity and ill-health are re-imagined as being ‘solvable’ and ‘improvable’ through children participating in a series of six, forty-five minute sessions. moveMprove is not the only programme to make these claims and connections.
Get Set Go is marketed as “a new and exciting initiative to help our Kiwi Kids develop the skills they need so that they can choose and enjoy being more active through play and sport” (Athletics New Zealand, 2012, p. i). It is rationalised as a programme that focuses on developing children’s fundamental movement skills, because these children “have been shown to have greater participation levels in physical activity experiences, both throughout later schooling and in adult life” (Athletics New Zealand, 2012, p. 5). To ‘connect the dots’ between the development of fundamental movement skills and “physical health and well-being benefits”, the teacher’s manual draws on the Ministry of Education’s “guidelines for sustainable physical activity in school communities”. In the introduction to the Get Set Go resource (Athletics New Zealand, 2012), Brian Roche, Chief Executive of New Zealand Post, justifies his organisation’s partnership with this programme by stating that learning fundamental movement skills,

...can help young people to develop a love of sport and recreation that leads to lifelong participation. To achieve this, young people must learn fundamental movement skills ... We owe it to our children to help them grow into healthy and confident adults – Get Set Go will help them achieve that.

Roche’s conviction that children need these programmes, and that learning sports/fundamental movement skills at school will lead to children being healthier, fitter, thinner and more active was echoed by teachers, principals and external providers. For example, I asked Andrea, who had coached ActivePost Small Sticks and other Kiwisport-funded programmes in primary schools, if she thought these programmes had a part to play in fighting childhood obesity:

Oh yeah, seriously. Physical activity full stop will keep [children] away from obesity … look now (points out the window at the children on the courts) - they are playing hockey out there. They are running around, and just like, being active and things like that … I think that running around is the best way of fighting obesity. That and food. I agree that Kiwisport is helping 'cause you are introducing [sports] to them, like Year Ones, at such a young age.

In another example, Sport Auckland employee and Get Set Go facilitator Jonie described how she, along with the primary school teachers she worked with, felt the need for children to be taught fundamental movement skills to address the sedentary, protected nature of contemporary children’s lives; children Jonie described as “wrapped in cotton wool” and “a lot lazier” than previous generations:
Jonie: So that’s why I keep saying to [teachers] how important it is to teach these fundamentals, because it’s not a natural progression [for children] as much as what it would have been 30 years ago.

Darren: What do you think the link is between learning fundamental movement skills and encouraging the children to be more active or making more active choices?

Jonie: What is the link?

Darren: Yeah, how do you think Get Set Go encourages children to be more active?

Jonie: Well, we always discuss the sessions about ‘where can you practice your activities?’ and ‘instead of when you go to the toilets today, instead of running to the toilet, or walking, why don’t you skip or do this or try different things?’ Trying to make sure there is a home link … I guess those fundamentals there are easily taught. Like, it’s not like ‘we are going to play cricket, we have to play cricket in this place’. It’s incorporating [fundamental movement skills] into everyday life.

Jonie and Andrea, as well as a number of other teachers and principals, were apparently mobilised to implement these healthy lifestyles education programmes by the ‘truth’ that they would lead to children living healthier lifestyles, being more active, and less likely to be fat. This is one part of the re-assembling of HPE - attaching dominant obesity and physical (in)activity discourses to the healthy lifestyles education assemblage. This also demonstrates a practice of assemblage that Li (2007a) describes as rendering technical; an over-simplistic set of relations which asserts that the problem (in this case, inexpert teachers and unhealthy children) + intervention (external providers and their ‘PE’ programmes and resources) = beneficial result (sporty, healthy, non-obese children).

St Saviour’s beginning teacher, Miss Black, also held out some hope that her students’ health and physical activity would benefit from the Kiwisport-funded ‘PE’ programmes:

Darren: These different programmes - especially Get Set Go, moveMprove, Kiwisport, Small Sticks hockey - do you think that they will have or have had an effect on the children’s health or physical activity?

Miss Black: I think so. I mean, they are so little and you know, there’s a lot to happen between now and adulthood. I mean, you just never know. I’d like to think yes, it has a positive effect (laughs). That’s what I’d like to think! It’s helping them to have positive attitudes.
towards physical activity and you know, surely them doing something rather than not doing any physical activity, surely that’s got to be beneficial? Surely it’s going to help? I do think so (laughs). But who knows, I have haven’t done any research on it (laughs).

Even though Miss Black held on to her belief that these programmes would “surely” help her students be healthy and physically active, both for now and in the future, there was an element of doubt. This hesitation was based on her knowledge that “there’s a lot to happen between now and adulthood”; that there were other influences on children’s ability to be (in)active than just externally provided ‘sports’ programmes.

Despite their scepticism of the alleged ‘health’ benefits of these sports-related programmes for their students, teachers continued to tell me that these various programmes and resources were a valuable part of their students’ education. The programmes were valued because of the combined strength of the ‘PE as sports’ and ‘sports will lead to healthier lifestyles’ discourses, where the best people to ‘teach’ children were the ‘expert’ sports coaches. However, the shaping of the teachers’ investments in these programmes was not achieved through the mere presence of external providers, but through government policies that made the funding of external providers and their programmes possible.

The role of National Standards

The teachers in my research were not necessarily cultural or political ‘dupes’ who were unwilling or unable to engage in, understand or resist the politics of educational reform. A common topic of conversation in the staffrooms at all three schools (aside from food, dieting and children’s behaviour) was the politics of education, in particular the impact of what teachers referred to as the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM). At St Saviour’s School, for instance, circular placards reading “Fight the GERM” were displayed on the wall of the staffroom - signs that New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) teachers’ union had distributed to members during meetings, debates and protests about the reform of education within New Zealand (see www.standupforkids.org.nz).

There were a number of so-called ‘GERM’ reforms that particularly raised teachers’ and principals’ ire: the prospect of performance pay for ‘expert’ teachers and principals in the ‘Investing in Educational Success’ scheme; increased class
sizes; the botched outsourcing of payroll services to Australian company Novopay; school closures and mergers following the Canterbury earthquake; public-private partnerships for the construction, maintenance and management of school buildings; league tables that compared and ranked primary schools against each other; and the controversial legislation that allows the introduction of charter or ‘partnership’ schools. However, the reform that by far received the most criticism and condemnation by the teachers and principals was the introduction of National Standards for literacy and maths.

National Standards is a key neoliberal reform of education in New Zealand, designed to ‘raise achievement’ by giving “teachers, children, parents, families and whānau [extended family group] a clear idea of where children are at in reading, writing and maths, and what they have to do next in their learning” (Ministry of Education, 2010). Following the passing of the Education (National Standards) Amendment Act 2008, all public (i.e. state) primary and intermediate (and some secondary) schools are now required to assess all children in years 1 to 8 (aged 5 to 13) as being ‘at’, ‘above’, ‘below’ or ‘well below’ benchmarked standards in reading, writing and maths. Schools are also required to report each child’s progress in reading, writing and maths at least twice a year to parents and to the Ministry of Education. National Standards have been used in schools since 2010 and results have been publicly available since 2012, including the publication of a school league table by news website Stuff.

Rather than seeing the implementation of this new assessment and reporting regime as advantageous to teaching and learning, teachers and principals viewed National Standards as burdensome, restrictive, unnecessary, and producing a renewed emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics at the expense of other areas of the curriculum. For instance, when I talked to Mr Woodward, the principal of Dudley School, about why HPE seemed to be a curriculum area targeted by external providers, he replied:

I mean if you listen to the government, the Ministry, [we] would only be doing reading, writing and maths. Nothing else matters. So physed doesn’t matter, art doesn’t matter, technology doesn’t matter. It’s just those three. If they’d left it as it was, and they

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23 Independent schools (i.e. private schools), integrated schools (i.e. Catholic, Montessori, Anglican and Presbyterian schools of ‘special character), and partnership (i.e. charter) schools are not required to report National Standards to the Ministry of Education or parents. There are only a few state schools that have refused to provide National Standards data to the Ministry of Education.
concentrated on getting kids to school and eating properly and getting here … instead of trying to change everything. National Standards – stupid, the crap [the Ministry of Education] are doing.

The prioritisation of teaching in literacy and mathematics was described as the main reason why HPE and ‘other’ Essential Learning Areas (i.e. the arts, social sciences, languages, technology, and science) were relegated to the status of “don’t matter” subjects. Mrs Donna, for instance, said that although she loved “playing games and that …. PE is not my first priority. My first priority is maths and literacy.”

The prioritisation of actual in-class teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics was not the only factor that restricted teachers’ ability or motivation to teach HPE. Teachers and principals recognised that the National Standards policy impacted teachers’ workloads which needed to reflect the new priorities, whether they agreed with National Standards or not. As Ms Ellie explained:

> Everything is on the backburner other than reading, writing or maths. And the sad thing is … the arts curriculum is where our children are really successful and you can actually teach reading and writing through those areas, but the money has dried up. We did an African dance thing - we got some funding and the learning out of that was amazing - but all of a sudden there’s no money for that. There’s only money … to get to that [National] Standard, and to pull into line schools that don’t conform really … and it’s definitely a huge issue, because we want whole citizens. We want the kids to live the Key Competencies and unfortunately it’s only going one way.

As Ministry of Education and school funding concentrated on reading, writing and mathematics, more time was required for teachers to plan, teach, assess, and think about these three areas. Consequently, as less money was spent on HPE and other non-National Standard subjects, the time to focus on those areas also diminished. Life Education teacher Marion also noted that National Standards and the de-prioritization of HPE meant that some schools were choosing not to make use of the Life Education programme:

> One big thing at the moment that’s coming through is the National Standards. So [schools] are struggling to meet the National Standards and therefore are choosing to look at Life Ed as a sort of extra thing, rather than getting the most value out of it.

It was made clear by teachers, principals and external providers alike that the emphasis on National Standards had a negative impact on children, both in terms of their learning in those non-priority subjects, as well as a loss of rich and varied
learning experiences in general. The curriculum had been narrowed and teaching intensified.

A shift in teaching priorities meant that teachers were less willing to give time to plan and teach HPE, and less able to access professional development opportunities. For instance, Ms Ellie told me that teachers used external providers in HPE because “a lot of the teachers don’t have the skills nowadays, or the time to prepare what they should do, like in the old days they used to … because of the constraints of the curriculum and the National Standards”. When I asked Ms Ellie to explain this link between National Standards and a lack of skills to teach HPE, she responded that there was

definitely not enough training in health and PE and not a lot of experts that come in [for professional development]. I mean we have the e-learning person come in for the digital classroom and we definitely have a lot of Ministry [of Education] input in [reading, writing and maths]. I guess the money’s been directed into other areas because of that. Yeah, it is a concern.

As Ms Ellie pointed out, it was more than just the introduction of National Standards and attached professional support, funding and resources that forced teachers to place more emphasis on these learning areas. The government acted in a deliberate way to de-prioritise HPE and ‘other’ subjects by removing all funding and advisory support for primary school teachers in these subjects (see Patterson, 2010).

The professional (under)development of teachers

Prior to the introduction of National Standards, all state schools across New Zealand were able to access a Ministry of Education advisory service - School Support Services (SSS) - which provided experienced, specialist subject advisors in all curriculum areas, including HPE. These advisors assisted schools and staff for an extended length of time and provided a variety of services, such as developing school-specific planning, assessment, policies, mentoring, resources and appropriate pedagogies. In August 2009 (the same month that the $82 million Kiwisport initiative was announced), schools ‘learnt’ that this professional development support service was to be cut in all areas except literacy and mathematics.²⁴

²⁴ At first, schools were not informed directly by the Ministry of Education about these cuts to professional development. Rather, the Ministry of Education published these reforms on their website, which was then picked up by different media sources and a teachers’ union, who then raised schools’ awareness.
The prioritisation of reading, writing and maths in the National-led government’s education reforms coincided with the implementation of professional development policies that would de-skill and de-professionalise teachers. It also occurred at the same time as new funding mechanisms were made available to schools so they could outsource their teaching to external ‘experts’. This facilitated the process of teachers and principals positioning Kiwisport coaches as experts in ‘teaching’ PE, and Life Education teachers like Marion (as well as the police officers who took the DARE and Keeping Ourselves Safe programmes) as experts in their fields of health education. The withdrawal of funding and ‘expert’ support to develop the teachers’ professional capabilities to teach HPE and effectively acted as a critical technology of government within the broader HPE assemblage.

The teachers also pointed to the inadequacy of their initial teacher education to prepare them for teaching HPE in a primary school. For example, beginning teacher Miss Black was unimpressed with the “limited” preparation to teach HPE she received during her post-graduate diploma at the University of Auckland:

We had one week for PE and health combined, so that was, we must have had five two hour sessions, something like that for health and PE, which was a bit of a joke really! We had to write some ridiculous essay on what is health and PE - a wordy, unpractical assignment that to me is not teaching me the skills to be able to be successful in teaching PE and health, at all. I think that had I not done a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation as my undergraduate degree I would be a lot less equipped to actually teach PE and health …. if I didn’t have that background knowledge and experience, PE wouldn’t be something that I would want to teach or like to teach. It would be something I would avoid, I think. Which it’s not. I like teaching PE (laughs).

Although Miss Black ‘liked’ teaching PE, held an undergraduate degree in sport, and a post-graduate qualification in primary school teaching, she still felt that it was best to use outside sport coaches (who were not qualified teachers) to teach her students PE. These coaches included Sport Auckland’s Jonie who had completed the same undergraduate degree as Miss Black, but had no teacher education qualification.

Teachers at Dudley School had differing ideas as to how much professional development (PD) they had received and with what effect. Mrs Donna was sure that she had participated in “heaps” of professional development for HPE over the past seven years, but could not recall who conducted these professional development opportunities, or what the content was. When I specifically asked Mrs Donna about
her professional development for health education, she responded that the Life Education “bus” came to Dudley School “and we usually get them at the end of the year, for like a week and they teach the kids health and that … We haven’t actually had any actual PD on it, so, but I think you don’t need any PD on things like that”.

Mrs Donna’s colleague, Mrs Constansa, said she could not recall having participated in any professional development for health education or physical education. I asked her if this was a problem, to which she smiled and replied: “Nothing’s changed in the past ten years, has it?” Mr Spurlock, the leader of PE at Dudley School, recalled participating in four professional development experiences. Three of these were sport-specific coaching courses: one run by a private company (for tennis), and two provided by a Regional Sports Trust (cricket and rugby). The other ‘professional development’ experience, in Mr Spurlock’s view, was for health education:

I haven’t done many health courses …. It’s been a bit strange. I suppose the Life Ed woman [Marion] came in – she [took] a staff meeting. I suppose you could call that PD. Um, it doesn’t really spring to mind for health. And I suppose that could be part of the reason why health isn’t done a lot at [Dudley School], because you just don’t have the expertise, or the PD on it, to get that expertise.

I shared with Mr Spurlock my concern that most of these external providers, whether teaching students or providing professional development, were not qualified or experienced teachers and therefore may not have the required ‘expert’ knowledge to teach the New Zealand curriculum (for a similar discussion, see Petrie, Penny & Fallow, 2014). However, Mr Spurlock appeared to be unconcerned:

I haven’t opened my curriculum document to PE and health for a long time. I think you know, um, [PE] is more based on modified games and we teach specific skills. I couldn’t tell you how that linked in with an achievement objective and the curriculum though. I couldn’t tell you what one of the achievement objectives for Level Four is at the moment. I see PE, in the end, more about teaching skills. And you can teach the same skill in Year Seven and Eight to a kid in Year Two or Three. I mean, it just depends on how much they take it on board - dumb it down a bit more for Year Two and Three. For health, yeah, um, again I have no idea what achievement objectives there are …. I was living overseas when the new curriculum documents came through so when I started teaching back here again I had to ring the Ministry [of Education] and say ‘can I have a new curriculum document please, because I have no idea what it is’. And I got one, had a browse through and that’s about it … its sitting up there (points to a top shelf).
Within the assemblage, the intimate and unproblematic linking of PE with coaching sports skills meant that Mr Spurlock and his colleagues did not feel the need to seek PE professional development opportunities that drew on holistic, child-centred, developmentally-appropriate, socio-critical versions of PE as advocated in the New Zealand curriculum. Instead, they either sought training in coaching sports (as did Mr Spurlock), or more commonly, were convinced that outsourcing their PE teaching would also ‘teach the teachers’. In other words, the outsourcing of PE lessons to external providers was rationalised as being the ‘normal’ way for children to learn sports skills and/or be healthier and a means for teachers to develop their professional capacity to teach PE. In this way, the boundaries between outsourcing PE and outsourcing professional development were increasingly blurred, often becoming one-and-the-same. This blurring was less evident for the field of health education, but only because teaching health education, outsourcing health education, and being developed professionally in health education, were positioned by teachers as being unimportant – certainly in comparison with all other Essential Learning Areas.

Seeing the outsourcing of HPE as a form of professional development was not ‘imagined’ by the teachers. The external providers and their corporate and/or charitable partners/sponsors promoted the idea that the external providers (e.g. a local gymnastics coach, Regional Sports Trust employee) are also expert providers of professional development for the inexpert classroom teachers. For instance, the ASB Football in Schools (New Zealand Football, n.d., p. 1, my emphasis) programme assembled together taken-for-granted notions of ‘PE as sport’, ‘sport leading to healthy, active lifestyles’, the external ‘expert’ sports coach, and the ‘inexpert’ classroom teacher, with technologies of outsourcing and professional development:

The concept of the football literacy programme is to help teachers deliver football as part of physical education .... In simple terms it provides teachers with the tools to build competence and confidence to bring football, the world’s most popular game, alive during class time.

When your school adopts the ASB Football in Schools programme you will receive educational resources, consisting of session plans and associated global and specific learning intentions, Let’s Play activity cards and human resources to train and mentor staff/volunteers facilitated by one of our seven regional federations.
Schools are a natural breeding ground for unstructured play and New Zealand Football is aiming to capitalise on this by providing parents, teachers and players with the expertise and tools to get the ball rolling.

The ASB Football in Schools approach offers our children new opportunities to get active through football. At the same time it presents volunteer parents and teachers with the tools to create and deliver simple programmes that will encourage their children to become more active in the school setting.

Again, the complex ‘problem’ of inexpert teachers was ‘solved’ by rendering the problem technical. Outsourcing a ‘simple’, corporate-funded football programme was assumed to have a “beneficial result”: ‘trained’ and ‘mentored’ teachers (and children) who would become football and physical education ‘experts’.

A number of outsourced HPE programmes claim to provide professional development opportunities for classroom teachers. For example, New Zealand Post (2012, para. 4) promotes the benefits of its ActivePost Small Sticks programme as including “the teacher being trained, a minimum of four coaching session (sic) in school time with an accredited coach, a resource kit for schools to use after the programme is finished”. The moveMprove programme ‘expects’ and ‘encourages’ teachers “to be present during the session to work alongside the coaches and to assist the children with the activities” - an opportunity for teachers to “develop and further their understanding of movement learning” (GymSports New Zealand, 2006, para. 11). Get Set Go also offers “teacher & coach professional development” (New Zealand Post, n.d., para. 3) with the aim to “support teachers, coaches and parents in the assessment, planning and development of foundation skills”, as well as “to increase teachers, coaches and parents understanding of the critical importance of fundamental movement skills, play and positive movement experiences for children” (Athletics New Zealand, n.d., p. 4). At St Saviour’s School this support and professional development took the form of an after-school staffroom session, led by Jonie and one other Sport Auckland employee, for the benefit of Miss Black and the Year One teacher. Then, for each Get Set Go session Jonie led the lesson with Miss Black’s students, with the aim of increasing Miss Black’s involvement in each lesson as the sessions went on “so at least once in the term you try and get the teacher to deliver a session with some of the kids” (Jonie). I asked Jonie how teachers responded to taking ‘control’ of their own classes for Get Set Go:
Jonie: We found some teachers didn’t like to plan and do a session, and would say ‘I don’t want to do it’. And I’d go: ‘Well you have to, like, how are you going to be able to teach a session when we leave?’

Darren: Why do you think that is? Why do you think some teachers-

Jonie: -I don’t know. I think workloads [are] a huge thing for them, and a lot of the schools I worked in last year - workloads and other priorities - it’s huge. But the programme isn’t about someone just coming and delivering it … I think that’s what [teachers] kind of don’t understand fully when they get involved. And we say ‘look, I want you to take a game next week. You have to come up with a game and in a couple of weeks’ time, I want you to do a whole session’. And that’s when, maybe their confidence, their time management, planning, being creative … it might be hard.

During a research conversation at St Saviour’s School, ActivePost Small Sticks coach Andrea told me that:

I have had teachers who have walked off. They’ve just dropped their class off and then walked off and they are like ‘Oh yeah, here you go, thanks’. And then some teachers get involved completely where they play. And then some just watch and observe. I just think the ones who dropped them off are completely useless (laughs). The ones who observe, they can learn something from it … and some have asked for the actual [resource] sheets …. But some just like see it as an hour off. So I don’t mind, you know I’ve taught [in schools before], so I don’t mind having a class myself, but I do mind for [the students] that their teacher’s looking lazy and just goes have a cup of tea. [The teachers are] not learning anything.

Despite the various claims made by teachers, principals, external providers and outside organisations that these programmes would enable teachers to learn from the experts, it was clearly evident that not all teachers were willing or able to be fully supported in their professional development. And even those teachers who ‘watched and learned’ from the expert-led lessons (the ever-present pedagogy of the external provider) still preferred using an external organisation and their affiliated coaches to ‘teach’ HPE for them.

‘I think it’s perfect’: Resolving tensions and managing failures

How teachers, principals and external providers were persuaded that the outsourcing of ‘HPE’ to external providers was a good practice - if not best practice - was not achieved through the teachers’ indifference to the value of PE, or by being “useless”
or “lazy”, or being ‘duped’ into outsourcing PE programmes and resources by for-profit corporations and their ‘not-for-profit’ counterparts. It was achieved through the complex and messy assemblage of a range of elements - an assemblage that contained a number of fragile relay points susceptible to fracture. To keep the assemblage secure and make the government of children and teachers ‘work’, the brittle connections between notions of inexpertise, Kiwisport, National Standards, professional (under)development, outsourcing, and discourses of healthy lifestyles, PE and sport, were made more robust by those with governmental ambitions. This necessitated a relentless resolving of tensions and careful management of both successes and failures by various organisations and actors. To understand how the assemblage ‘worked’ therefore required an interrogation of how these tensions were resolved, how the failure of these governmental programmes to provide expert HPE or PD was transformed into a success, and how teachers’ critiques of (or resistance to) the healthy lifestyles education programmes were contained.

As outlined earlier, the outsourced ‘HPE’ programmes were promoted by the external providers as beneficial to students’ learning and teachers’ teaching. However, what the external providers ‘promised’ in terms of professional development for teachers, what I observed in the schools, and how these teachers understood and experienced these HPE-PD sessions contained a number of tensions, failures and contradictions that threatened the security and stability of the assemblage. *ActivePost Small Sticks*, for example, was promoted as a programme that would ‘train’ the teacher through the four hockey sessions that the children received. However, the four sessions I observed at St Saviour’s School contained no formal ‘training’ with the teachers and neither Ms Ellie nor Miss Black utilised the “resource kit for schools to use after the programme is finished” (New Zealand Post, 2012, para. 5). Despite the apparent failure of the programme to provide the ‘training’ it promised, and its failure to support or enthuse the teachers to continue coaching hockey to their students, Ms Ellie managed this failure by arguing that there were,

*lots of things that I got out of [ActivePost Small Sticks] by watching that can actually transfer to lots of other sports. Like [Andrea] played ‘Rob the nest’, which is like a Kiwidex thing and I’ve played it with tennis balls and for a warm-up and with running. And you can see now how you can transfer that to other sports. So there is some professional development. (my emphasis)*
This particular pedagogy for teacher professional development – learning “by watching” from the sideline – frequently resolved the tension between what might be considered ‘quality’ or ‘effective’ professional development in other curriculum areas and what was provided (or claimed to be provided) by external organisations. When I asked Mrs Donna how she felt about these outside authorities taking her students for HPE, she replied:

Doesn’t worry me one bit. Because I’m watching them and learning too, because I always take on board what they are doing and sometimes it’s nice [to have providers] who are focused on one thing. I mean as school teachers we’ve got to focus on reading, writing, maths, health, PE, science, and it’s like sometimes our brains are brain-dead, and you do get into a rut and teach the same thing again and again and again. And then you see someone else with another idea and you think ‘that’s so cool’. (my emphasis)

There was a notable contradiction that teachers perceived the externally provided programmes as a professional development opportunity, yet once the external providers had left the school, the same teachers continued to prefer - and rely on - external experts to teach PE for them. One way teachers managed this particular contradiction was by describing the outsourcing of HPE as professional development, and that by watching the experts teach their students they had been ‘inspired’ to use a game or activity or lesson in the future. By successfully managing this contradiction the assemblage was maintained, as teachers were either unwilling or unable to reject the programmes. As indicated by Mrs Donna’s comment below that outsourcing to external providers is perfect, they provide a service which would otherwise not have been offered to her class. When I asked Mrs Donna how she felt about using external providers to teach her students, she replied:

I think it’s perfect. I personally think it should happen more often …. PE – it’s not my sort of passion. If I can miss out PE I will miss out PE! (laughs). Because me, I am art. I love to do art. I would sacrifice PE to do art … if someone is coming in [for PE] I would say ‘yes’. I can go out, I can watch, I can learn from it. I will probably use it again. But I don’t have to think about ‘Oh my god, what I going to do with the kids for PE today? What game am I going to do that I haven’t done?’ Or ‘how am I going to teach them that without getting stressed out because they are not listening?’ (my emphasis)

Mrs Donna’s belief that outsourcing PE to the experts was a “perfect” practice successfully masked the failure of these programmes to develop her skills,
confidence or expertise to teach her own students a core curriculum area. Teachers were implicated in resolving tensions and managing contradictions. The consequences were that the healthy lifestyles education programmes and providers prevailed, the absence of professional development was explained away and mitigated as an issue, and the failure of the programmes to deliver HPE in line with the national curriculum was made invisible.

In a number of lessons I observed in the three schools, both those conducted by teachers in the classroom and external providers in the gym or on the sports field, there was another clear tension. The practices and pedagogies offered by various external providers often contrasted with what teachers and principals discussed or demonstrated as ‘best practice’ in teaching ‘other’ (non-HPE) subject areas (particularly priority subjects like literacy and mathematics). This contrast was made especially visible in the situations where classroom teachers drew on their knowledge of students (e.g. students’ learning needs, (dis)abilities, levels of confidence, family situations, lives) to plan and deliver learning experiences, whilst the external providers sometimes struggled in lessons due to their lack of knowledge of the children they were teaching. The failure of the external providers to know the students in their class was not just problematic, but at times, ‘dangerous’. For example, in St Saviour’s Year Six/Seven students’ second ActivePost Small Sticks session, Andrea instructed the students to dribble hockey balls around cones placed inside a ten by ten metre square. If their hockey ball touched one of the ‘mines’ (cones) their leg would be “blown off” and they would have to hop on one leg and dribble for the rest of the game. One of the students looked rather befuddled at this rule - he only had one leg.

The external providers’ reliance on pre-planned, pre-packaged resources and lessons also demonstrated the assumption that there was no need for the external providers to know the students. The consequences of this were evident one day at St Saviour’s School. Ms Ellie’s Year Six/Seven class and Miss Black’s Year One/Two students participated in separate, yet almost identical moveMprove sessions. This was just one of a number of externally provided lessons where a ‘one-size-fits-all’ strategy failed to meet the wide-ranging needs of the children, not only in terms of educational needs, but also their physical, emotional, language, spiritual, social, cultural and behavioural needs.
The external providers did not have an in-depth understanding of the children’s abilities, skills, interests or knowledge. There were a number of moments I observed in moveMprove when individual students were unable to perform the ‘right’ skill in the ‘right’ way (for example, six-year-old Asatasi at St Saviour’s School could not bunny-hop over the bench). At other times, children thought moveMprove was “easy” (Chardonnay, seven years old) and “boring” (Anita, seven years old).

Following one moveMprove session at Dudley School, I had a research conversation with two of Mrs Donna’s students, Anita and Chardonnay, at an outdoor table beside their classroom:

**Darren:** Where there any [moveMprove] activities that were too easy?

**Chardonnay:** All of them were easy!

**Darren:** What about you Anita, were they all easy as well?

**Anita:** All easy.

**Darren:** Would you want for some of [the activities] to be a little bit harder?

**Anita:** Yeah!

**Chardonnay:** Make it more challenging. I like things challenging.

**Darren:** Me too.

**Anita:** Me too.

**Darren:** How could you make things more challenging?

**Anita:** Handstands without the wall.

**Chardonnay:** I would put monkey bars up [higher so] people [would not] use any stairs and make it really hard.

Whether moveMprove was too easy or too hard, students’ experiences contradicted claims made in the ‘Why the movement pattern approach?’ section of the Educator’s guide (GymSports New Zealand’s, n.d.-a, para. 4-5) that the programme promoted “a learner-centred approach” through “flexible delivery models”, where the expert coaches would “add variety and to continually challenge children” by “adapt[ing] equipment to suit the activity”.

Tensions in the assemblage were also evident when the outside experts failed to provide quality learning experiences. Teachers and principals resolved this tension through the belief that it was better for the students to be taught by someone with a ‘new face’ and a ‘new voice’, rather than ‘just’ the classroom teacher. The discourse of the ‘fresh’ external provider giving children a break from their ‘stale’ classroom teachers allowed the teachers and principals to ignore the limitations of outsourcing. Miss Black explained:
I think it’s good for the kids to have a break from the classroom teacher. Because the same person all the time - it’s good for consistency and they need that - but also I think it is really beneficial to have someone fresh. It adds a bit of interest, so they’re not just listening to the same voice all the time, the same person all the time. And you know, other teachers bring other skills as well and teach things in different ways. It gets the kids, sometimes I guess, out of their comfort zone.

This quote provides an example of how a teacher manages the tension between quality teaching and the (in)expertise of the external provider. As Miss Black stated, children needed to have a ‘consistent’ classroom teacher, but also needed a new teacher with a new voice. Both principals I talked with recognised this significant tension: bringing in external providers when they already employed qualified and experienced primary school teachers. When I talked with Mr Woodward inside his office at Dudley School, he also explained the advantage of bringing in external providers in terms of the appeal of novelty: “another option for kids apart from the teacher - the same teacher all the time”. However, as he said this he paused and added: “Although we have great staff, great teachers. But I think it’s an outside agency that gives a lift to the programme”. Mrs Sergeant, principal of St Saviour’s, also asserted:

I mean it’s like when you listen to any old, crap record going on and on and on, you know? You just switch off. I think teachers here bend over backwards to make sure what they’re presenting to children is engaging and you know, hugely grabbing and effective. But having someone come in is brilliant! Because it’s a new face, and a new voice and a new approach. And we can’t beat variety! Come on, it’s brilliant! Kids love it! …. I think part of it is having somebody different telling them these things rather than just their teacher …. it’s just a change, and they’re not having them all the time, and it’s something to look forward to … they like variety, they need it.

Mr Woodward and Mrs Sergeant clearly valued their “great”, “engaging” and “effective” educators. However, it seemed as though these teachers’ faces, voices and approaches were still no match for external sports coaches who did not know the students, were not experienced, qualified or registered teachers, appeared to have limited knowledge and understanding of the New Zealand curriculum, and implemented ‘one-size-fits-all’ programmes that were not tailored to the students’ needs.
Although the idea that external providers gave students quality learning experiences that the classroom teacher could not was ubiquitous, some teachers, principals and students recognised moments when external providers failed to meet the specific needs of students. However, these failures were glossed over as insignificant. For instance, Ms Ellie told me:

Even the one sport that didn’t have great coaches, the children still loved it. I guess it’s a different voice that’s harping on to them. They make them quite fun activities, especially with the Kiwisport sports.

Similarly, Mrs Sergeant noted that not all coaches had the appropriate pedagogical knowledge and experience to successfully teach her students:

I think the only disadvantage, and its minor, and it doesn’t happen very often because mostly the people who come in, they know their stuff, that’s the only thing they focus on, they generally have the weight of a big organisation behind them, occasionally say for Sport Auckland we may get a new coach who’s a little bit nervous about the children or maybe doesn’t quite understand how they learn best - and that takes a long time to know that! So, on occasion that happens, but the advantages hugely outweigh the disadvantages.

Although there were obvious points of tension and moments of failure that made the assemblage vulnerable to rupture, these were presented “as the outcome of rectifiable deficiencies” (Li, 2007a, p. 265). The failure of outsourced coaches/teachers to adequately understand how children “learn best”, was passed off as a superficial, “minor” “disadvantage”. For Mrs Sergeant, the advantages of external providers – a “new face, and a new voice and a new approach” - outweighed the disadvantages; disadvantages which included external providers not differentiating a lesson to meet the varied needs of her students, not knowing students’ names, whether or not they spoke English, or only had one leg.

My point here is not to criticise individual external providers for failing to teach curriculum-based HPE with ‘effective pedagogies’, nor is it to ‘bash’ teachers or principals for a lack of resistance or criticality when dealing with external providers. Rather, my intent is to problematise the ways - and the ease - by which tensions in the assemblage were resolved. Although maintaining connections between elements is a difficult and complex task, the ‘triumph of “the neoliberal imaginary”’ (Ball, 2012, p. 2) was well-illustrated by the fact that teachers relied on
external providers to teach HPE to their students, and even re-imagined the outsourcing of HPE as natural, normal, and in the words of Mrs Donna, “perfect”.

**De-valuing and de-professionalising teachers**

Teachers were, by and large, seen by students as lacking the appropriate content and pedagogical knowledge *in comparison to* the expert sport coaches and health education providers. During a research conversation with Reynard Intermediate School students in the final month of their academic year, I asked them if Miss Knight (school-wide leader of HPE) or Mrs Pederson (their classroom teacher) had ever taught them about health:

- **Brodie:** We were supposed to - with Miss Knight.
- **Niamh:** But we didn’t do it.
- **Baljit:** Part of having Miss Knight was for health and sport, but we haven’t talked about the health side yet.
- **Darren:** Would you want your teachers to do more health education?
- **All:** (laugh)
- **Emma:** No. (laughs)
- **Brodie:** Not really.
- **Darren:** Is there anyone who would want Miss Knight or Mrs Pederson? (long pause) Why not?
- **Emma:** First of all, what they know is probably just information, and they may be wrong. And it’s just not that interesting to know.

Aside from three sessions with *Life Education*, this group of Year Seven girls had not been taught “the health side yet” by their classroom teacher or the HPE specialist for an entire year. And they did not perceive this as a problem. There was a sense that they did not see the value of health education as a learning area (one deemed ‘essential’ in the curriculum). As Emma said, “it’s just not that interesting to know”. Furthermore, the students did not perceive any value in either Miss Knight or Mrs Pederson trying to teach them about health. When I asked these girls why the school brought in a teacher (and a puppet) from outside the school to teach them about health, Emma replied: “Because they probably just do it all the time, so they probably know more”. The expertise, knowledge and experience of the *Life Education* teacher and Harold the Giraffe seemed to outdo that of their experienced Reynard Intermediate School teachers.
At Dudley School I had a one-to-one research conversation with Caitlyn, a five-year-old Pākehā girl, about her classroom teacher - Mrs Constansa. Caitlyn described Mrs Constansa as a “fun” teacher, who also “picks me up [from school] every day”. I asked Caitlyn if Mrs Constansa ever taught her about health. She replied, “only when we had Life Education books”. I then asked Caitlyn:

**Darren:** Why do you think they bring the Life Education van into school … and have Harold come in, instead of Mrs Constansa teaching you?

**Caitlyn:** She probably doesn’t know that stuff.

It was a similar case at St Saviour’s School when I had a research conversation in the staffroom with a group of Year Seven boys. I asked them why so many external providers taught them health and PE, “but not your class teacher”:

**Carlos:** Because they’re more professional. That’s what they do. That’s what they’re there for. It’s their job and they know more about it.

**Afakasi:** I think it’s because they’re professionals.

**Darren:** What do you mean ‘they’re professionals’?

**DJ:** I think they come and teach us because they know a lot more information than the teachers. Also because-

It was at this point that DJ noticed that Miss Black was in the staffroom (doing reading assessments with a Year One student). He whispered to Afakasi, who responded, “You can say it aloud”. DJ looked at Miss Black, then back to Afakasi and said “Nah”. Miss Black kindly interjected: “You guys can say whatever you like”. DJ picked up my digital voice recorder and whispered something into it. Then he leaned back over to Afakasi, cupped his hands around Afakasi’s ear and whispered again. Afakasi then passed ‘the whisper’ on around the group until it reached the final student, Hone. Hone looked at me, and forgetting he was supposed to whisper the message, said aloud: “He thinks that teachers are lazy!”. This was the same message that DJ had whispered into the voice recorder. So I asked DJ what he meant by “teachers are lazy”, to which he responded:

sometimes they just don’t bother. Like on Fridays in Term Two and Term One we’re meant to have sports, but Miss (Ms Ellie) said, that we need to stay inside and do our work. Sometimes they’re lazy ’cos they just need to do their work – they’ve got a lot of stuff to do.
While DJ recognised that teachers like Ms Ellie were under pressure and had “a lot of stuff to do”, by outsourcing HPE to external experts these same teachers, who worked for long hours and repeatedly went out of their way to meet the personal and learning needs of their students, were re-imagined by these students as ‘lazy’ and lacking the appropriate knowledge and professionalism to be able teach HPE effectively, or even to be able to teach HPE at all. For the relationship between teachers and the students, this is an unpredictable and ‘dangerous’ outcome.

Re-assembling the (in)expert teacher
Teachers’ inexpertise, their perceived inabilities to teach PE, coach sports, or teach children about health, was constituted as a problem by teachers, principals, external providers, charities and corporations alike. This problem was then conveniently fused to a simple, readily available solution: outsourcing to the experts. Through the ‘will to improve’ teachers and the teaching of HPE, a space opened up that was quickly colonised by ‘expert’ sport coaches and health educators funded by a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. These ‘solutions’, however, excluded fundamental political questions about how government policies (as well as the activities of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations) have worked to de-professionalise, de-skill, de-resource and de-value classroom teachers to the extent that they prefer to outsource their teaching to non-teachers. For schools, the critical problem of the inexpert teacher was transformed into a superfluous, non-political and technical problem of choosing an external provider to teach their students. Fundamental questions relating to the construction of the inexpert classroom teacher, such as ‘why am I not the expert?’ remained unasked and unanswered. These technologies and tactics by which teachers and teaching were governed were contingent on a number of diverse elements congealing in ways that were not considered by the ‘governed’ to be overly or overtly coercive, top-down, ponderous or repressive. Indeed, in the case of outsourcing, it was perceived as beneficial and even ‘empowering’ to schools, principals, teachers and children alike.

Any explicit programme of intervention, such as outsourced HPE programmes, are shaped by a ‘will to improve’, but are not necessarily “the product of a singular intention or will” (Li, 2007c, p. 6). Certainly, the common practice of outsourcing HPE was not the result of one corporate ‘intention’ or a single governmental policy to outsource HPE teaching. There was a rather messy ensemble
of elements: discourses of PE as sport and HPE that would lead to healthy lifestyles; government policies that increased funding to sports organisations and removed funding for teacher professional development; as well as neoliberal reforms of the broader education field, such as National Standards. These elements converged and cohered with discourses of (in)expertise in a way that constrained and even removed the potential ‘choices’ that teachers and principals could make. This was an assemblage that acted to restrict teachers thinking about HPE and their ability to ‘act’ in what would previously have been considered a ‘normal’ way: to teach HPE to their own students. On the surface, schools were ‘given’ the freedom to choose how they spent their operational grants, how they ‘brought in’ professional development for teachers, and who they employed to teach HPE. Yet in the end there was one only conceivable choice: the “perfect” practice of outsourcing teaching to the experts.

By defining both the problem (inexpert teachers; non-sporty, inactive, unhealthy, potentially obese children) and the solution (external providers), a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations and actors were able to redraw and redefine the boundaries of the HPE field. The purpose of HPE, what quality teaching looks like, and who is fit to teach HPE, was re-assembled in ways that aligned with these external organisation’s own expertise, interests and governmental ambitions. I am not arguing that all corporations, state agencies, charities and sporting organisations have a hidden agenda to de-professionalise, de-skill and de-value classroom teachers. However, as I will explore in the next chapter, there are a number of instances when these external organisations attempt to use their programmes, partnerships and ‘expert’ status to contain socio-political challenges and govern others towards largely selfish ends. The outsourced, privatised and philanthropised resources and pedagogies are essential technologies to achieve this.
Chapter Seven: Assembling resources and pedagogies

We all want to be healthy and live full and balanced lives. Kiwis have never been busier or been faced with as many choices of what to eat, what activities to engage in, and what values to use to guide their actions. Helping children to understand these choices and providing them with the knowledge and skills to make good decisions has become increasingly important. (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 1)

Health as a responsibility, rather than a right, repositions subjects as at fault if they are deemed to be unhealthy, particularly if they had the information about how to achieve health. (As if it were that formulaic.) (LeBesco, 2011, p. 156)

My research into the healthy lifestyles education programme assemblage aimed to interrogate how governmental programmes connected with real subjects and how they were not merely imagined by those with the ‘will to govern’, but were actually enacted, experienced, understood and felt by children and adults in primary schools. Two interconnected elements integral to this aspect of my analysis are the resources funded, devised, produced and distributed by corporations, charities and other partners (e.g. Life Education workbooks, Nestlé’s interactive web games) and the pedagogies employed by teachers, corporate mascots, external providers and others to ‘teach’ children to be healthier and less fat.

In order to critically examine these elements I looked at how resources and pedagogies have been loosely connected to The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) in ways that appear to serve the best interests of corporations and charities. This includes an in-depth analysis of aspects of the resources and pedagogies that coincide with the kinds of neoliberal ideas about health and conduct that have considerable currency both politically and popularly: an emphasis on ‘informing’ students about ‘good’ lifestyle choices; illustrating the ‘bad’ consequences for those who do not heed the healthy advice; and attempting to re-place the responsibility and blame for children’s health and fatness onto children themselves.

Re-assembling the ‘official’ curriculum

The various healthy lifestyles education resources produced by corporations and charities often drew on The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007)
and/or Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999). Indeed, a resource’s link to the official national curriculum appeared to be a point worth marketing to schools. The front covers of 5+ A Day resources, for instance, state that the 5+ A Day programme is “aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum” (5+ A Day Charitable Trust, 2009, 2011). In the foreword to Nestlé New Zealand’s (2011, para. 2) Be Healthy, Be Active teachers’ guide, teachers are informed that all of the resources are “aligned with the objectives of the Health and Physical Education learning area of The New Zealand Curriculum”. The first line of the introduction to the Life Education Trust’s (2011a, p. 4) ‘Teacher’s resource’ reads: “Life Education is a health resource programme for schools that fits in closely with the New Zealand Curriculum and in particular the learning areas of Health and Physical Education”. The introduction to Iron Brion’s Gold Hunt resource kit also asserts it helps students “work towards learning outcomes from the Health and Physical Education Curriculum” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 1).

The ASB Football in Schools brochure provides a specific example of how organisations draw on the language of the ‘official’ New Zealand curriculum to further their own interests. The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23) states that in physical education:

> the focus is on movement and its contribution to the development of individuals and communities. By learning in, through, and about movement, students gain an understanding that movement is integral to human expression and that it contributes to people’s pleasure and enhance their lives.

The ASB Football in Schools promotional material copies this statement and with no reference to The New Zealand curriculum advertises that:

> The focus is on football and its contribution to the development of individuals and communities. By learning in, through, and about football, students gain an understanding that football can be a vehicle to physical activity as an integral component to human expression and that it can contribute to people’s pleasure and enhance their lives. (New Zealand Football, n.d.)

The HPE curriculum has obviously been re-worked by the writers of this resource as a vehicle to promote football. This ‘football literacy’ programme was re-invented as a physical education programme by purloining the national curriculum document.
addition, the intent of *The New Zealand curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23) to encourage teachers to make sure learning “takes place as [children] engage in play, games, sport, exercise recreation, adventure, and expressive movement in diverse physical and social environments” is reduced and narrowed by *ASB Football in Schools* (New Zealand Football, n.d., p. 1) to learning that “takes place using the sport of football.”

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe in detail the aims, ambitions and objectives of *The New Zealand curriculum* and HPE as an Essential Area of Learning within the national curriculum, Culpan (2005, p. 5) states that “embedded into the curriculum’s philosophy is the strong thread of a socio-critical stance that promotes a critical pedagogy” (see also Culpan, 2000; Stohart & Culpan, 2012). Culpan and Bruce (2007, p. 4) also write:

The new curriculum sought to redress the dominant focus on the scientisation of movement and its corresponding emphasis on individualism which was philosophically woven into the previous national curriculum statement. As a result of this redress, a socio-critical stance of the type favouring critical pedagogy was promoted in this new context.

For instance, health education (as a subject area distinct from, but related to, physical education) is described in *The New Zealand curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23) as an area where:

students develop their understanding of the factors that influence the health of individuals, groups and society: lifestyle, economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental factors … Students use these skills and understandings to take critical action to promote personal, interpersonal, and societal well-being.

This critical stance, however, acts in tension with other aspects of *The New Zealand curriculum*, particularly those aiming to reflect and achieve the state’s neoliberal economic imperatives (see Culpan & Bruce, 2007). The tension between neoliberal and socio-critical forms of health education is frequently reproduced throughout the HPE curriculum. For example, in the section “Why study health and physical education?” the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22) states:

Through learning and by accepting challenges in health-related and movement contexts, students reflect on the nature of well-being and how to promote it. As they develop resilience and a sense of personal
and social responsibility, they are increasingly able to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to the well-being of those around them, of their communities, of their environments (including natural environments), and of the wider society.

The acknowledgement of broader determinants of health, and the promotion of collective responsibility and critical action to promote health and well-being of others and the community, acts in tension with the neoliberal agenda to reinforce individualistic notions of health, the role of individual choice and personal responsibility.

In the resources and workbooks produced by corporations, charities and their partners, HPE and the objectives of a socio-critical curriculum are frequently re-imagined to meet the neoliberal ‘purpose’ of creating autonomous, self-responsible, free-choosing individuals. A noticeable method employed to re-craft the official curriculum is an unabashed focus on the personal and individualistic elements of the curriculum at the expense of collective notions of health promotion, including critical action. For instance, in Life Education’s ‘Harold’s Picnic’ unit for Year One and Two, only two out of the possible eleven HPE achievement objectives for Level One are acknowledged. Both are from the ‘Personal health and physical development’ strand of The New Zealand curriculum. Based on these two achievement objectives, Life Education (Life Education Trust, 2011b, p. 1) states that it is developing four learning intentions, for students to:

1. understand that we need different foods for health and energy (1A1)
2. understand that we eat different foods all through the day (1A1)
3. find some body parts that our food goes through to help give us energy (1A1)
4. name the things that our bodies need to keep healthy and happy (1A1, 1A4)

In a similar way, the equivalent Life Education unit for Year Seven and Eight students - ‘Warrant of Fitness’ (Life Education Trust, 2011c) - is supposed to be underpinned by the national curriculum concept of ‘Health promotion’. In The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22) this is defined as “a process that helps to develop and maintain supportive physical and emotional environments

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25 The achievement objective A1 is: “Personal growth and development - Describe feelings and ask questions about their health, growth, development, and personal needs and wants”, whilst A4 is ‘Personal identity’, in which students are expected to: “Describe themselves in relation to a range of contexts” (Ministry of Education, 2007).
and that involves students in personal and collective action.” Yet in the *Life Education* document, the definition of this underlying concept is re-worked to state that health promotion is about “developing the *personal skills* that empower them to take action to *improve [children’s] own well-being*” (Life Education Trust, 2011c, p. 2, my emphasis). In other words, the national curriculum and its emphasis on collective and critical action is re-crafted by *Life Education* to focus on personal and individualistic elements of health. Efforts to re-assemble HPE to align with the broad aims of neoliberalism were especially evident through the ever-present connection between education and the notions of ‘lifestyles’ and ‘choice’.

**Being informed about ‘healthy lifestyle choices’**

Corporations and charities position the education of children as an almost certain route for children to live healthier lives. Nestlé’s *Healthy Kids Global Programme* for instance, is based on the idea that “the promotion of greater awareness, improved knowledge and effective practice of healthy eating and regular physical activity” (Nestlé New Zealand, n.d.-a, para. 2) is an appropriate and effective way to ameliorate childhood obesity and improve children’s lives:

> We believe that regular physical activity and establishing healthy eating habits help children achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. Education is therefore a powerful tool for ensuring that children understand the value of nutrition and physical activity, and continue leading healthy lives as they get older.

The outsourced healthy lifestyles education resources, along with their suggested pedagogies, tend to be based on the rationale that ‘giving’ children knowledge about fatness, physical activity and food will make children have healthier ‘habits’ and healthier body weights for life. Nestlé New Zealand’s (2011, p. 14) *Be Healthy, Be Active* resource, for instance, states its aim is “to support students to develop healthy eating habits that contribute towards maintaining a healthy body weight.” To be able to successfully ‘improve’ children’s (un)healthy habits requires more than just teaching children about health *per se*. The emphasis of the resources (and the pedagogies employed to achieve the aims of the resources) is on increasing children’s knowledge and awareness of what *choices* they should make.

The notion of *informed choice* is a dominant feature of these healthy lifestyles education resources. The *Iron Brion* programme (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 5, my emphasis) promotes the idea that “the food choices
made by individuals and families affect all aspects of their life. Food and nutrition education enables students to make informed choices about food and the choices that will contribute to their own well-being”. Likewise, the 5+ A Day (2011, p. 2, my emphasis) programme states its intention to teach students “to engage in a range of learning experiences which encourage children to make informed choices for healthy lifestyle practices”. The Life Education Trust promotes itself as “a charity that provides children with the knowledge to make informed choices about their health” (see www.lifeeducation.org.nz). The writers of the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 5) state that they “hope that all the things you have learned will help you make some excellent choices for your growing body”. Students are also told how important being ‘informed’ is to be able to make the right (i.e. healthy) choices: “To make great choices we need to be informed. When we are thinking about food choices, we need to be informed about what is in the food we eat” (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 15). Mr Spurlock agreed that this was the right approach to teach his students about health: “Like I said, [health] is more about choices that kids make. And [Life Education] does teach kids ‘this is what will happen if you eat these foods continuously’”.

The notion of informed choice re-arranged the health education curriculum assemblage by being fused to the concept of healthy lifestyles. For instance, Nestlé New Zealand (2011, p. 32, my emphasis) explicitly connects health, choices and life by providing students and teachers with a glossary of key words, one of which defines ‘lifestyle’ as “the way a person chooses to live, especially in relation to his or her diet or physical activity”. As a new type of healthy lifestyles education or healthy lifestyles choices education, these corporatised resources and pedagogies represent specific attempts not only to shape children’s thoughts and actions around health, but how they live their lives. Module Four of Be Healthy, Be Active (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 26, my emphasis) states:

there are many factors that affect students’ lifestyle choices, and not all of them are in their control. Students need to understand that gradually building the skills and practices that contribute to a healthy lifestyle will help them throughout their lives. People who have a healthy lifestyle have more skills, and they can cope better with life’s challenges.
The 5+ A Day (2011, p. 4, my emphasis) resources promote the need for children and their families to change their lives in ways that align with the interests of the fruit and vegetable industry:

Whether we are growing fruit and vegetables, eating them, or looking at fresh produce advertisements, 5+ A Day really can be part of our everyday lives. This resource aims to help make 5+ A Day a way of life for children and their families.

This connection between children’s lives and private sector interests was similar to the Iron Brion programme (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 1, my emphasis) which states its rationale as follows:

The New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau firmly supports educating young Kiwis about healthy eating and the role 
beef and lamb play in a healthy lifestyle. We see both the Iron Brion Show and the Teacher Resource Kit as our contribution to the well-being of school-aged children, both now and in the future.

Not only did some resources and lesson plans invoke the idea that a healthy lifestyles education was critical for children’s health, but re-assembled the resources in ways that were beneficial to corporate interests (e.g. to increase people’s meat or vegetable consumption). There was also an assumption reproduced across a number of the resources that by teaching children how to make ‘educated’ choices, children would continue to make these choices “both now and in the future”. The cover of the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ (WOF) workbook produced by the Life Education Trust (n.d.-a), for instance, features illustrations of children wearing badges that read: ‘WOF For Life’. When I talked to educator Marion, she told me that the “big aim” of Life Education was “encouraging [children] to make better choices for their future … I can’t target what [their choices] are now because it’s out of their control, as well as ours”. However, as Leahy (2009) notes, the idea that by ‘knowing’ about health (or obesity, fatness, or physical activity) children will change their behaviour and make ‘good’ choices is widely disputed.

**Learning to make good choices (and what bad things happen if you do not)**
The corporate produced resources and suggested pedagogies reinforced a healthy lifestyle message that resulted in some tensions around the neoliberal concept of ‘freedom of choice’. This was particularly the case when the ‘choices’ that children
were told to make were restricted to those that aligned with ‘official’ recommendations (e.g. to eat five or more fruit and/or vegetables every day), and/or corporate interests (e.g. *Iron Brion* promoting New Zealand beef and lamb). A common strategy was to inform children about which choices were the ‘right’ ones to make (i.e. healthy, energy-balanced ones), and which ‘wrong’ choices (i.e. unhealthy, obesity-causing, lazy) they needed to avoid or abstain from.

Making right choices was positioned as a secure and stable route for children to lead the right lifestyles, display the right conduct and possess the right (i.e. healthy, non-fat, active) bodies. For example, the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 7) emphasises that “with the right attitude, activity and appetite we might just get there in style”. In one of the ‘read and response’ cards in the *Be Healthy, Be Active* (Nestlé New Zealand, n.d.-b, p. 9, my emphasis) resource – ‘Building a healthy body’ – the good/right choices are clearly expressed:

> How do you build a healthy body? It’s simple: When you *eat the right foods*, you give your body what it needs to grow strong and healthy. *What are good food choices?* They are foods that have lots of nutrients – carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals.

There are a number of pedagogical devices employed to teach children the difference between ‘right and wrong’ or ‘good and bad’ choices. One such device is the ever-present food pyramid (and food pyramid-type illustrations). The *Iron Brion* resource includes a “My healthy food pyramid” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 18), with ‘fats and sugar’ at the top, “meats and alternatives” and “milk and milk products” in the middle, and bread, cereals, fruit and vegetables at the base. Alongside the pyramid are lessons and suggested learning activities, such as making a food pyramid with cut-out magazine photographs or examining copies of a food pyramid poster made by The Heart Foundation. The intention of these activities is for students to be able to “classify a variety of foods using the healthy food pyramid and identify foods rich in iron” and “explain which categories of the Food Pyramid they currently select from and how they may make changes” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 16). As this last learning intention illuminates, the need to teach children about food choices does not stop at just *informing* children which were good or bad, right or wrong, but comes with an expectation that the children need to act, “make changes”, alter their conduct, based on this information.
Life Education Trust’s ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook includes two versions of a food pyramid. One shows the “recommended fuel for a healthy body”, with treats at the top (accompanied by a picture of hot chips, sweets and a fizzy drink), “Milk and milk products” and meat, eggs, fish, nuts, dried peas and beans in the middle, and fruit, vegetables, bread, cereals, rice and pasta at the base (alongside a bottle of H2Go water) (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 9). On the following page the same food pyramid is reproduced, but this time with added information about the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ ingredients of each of these food groups and how much you should eat per day. Here we see a noteworthy contradiction. At the top of the page (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 10) the text states:

Remember that a healthy diet is about what we eat and how much we eat. Don’t get hung up on thinking about foods as fattening or bad. Labelling food as bad isn’t the way to go … just get interested in healthy options instead.

Although students are told not to think about food in a negative way, at the same time they are told to “be careful” (Life Education, n.d.-a, p. 7) and to avoid consuming ‘treats’: “sugary, fatty, salty food that we simply don’t need every day” (p. 11). Curiously (and hopefully by mistake) the ‘treats’ section of the food pyramid includes alcohol as a treat for children “to eat in small amounts occasionally” (p. 10).

The Life Education resources also state that the ‘other’ foods (those at the bottom of the pyramid) are inherently good: “It is almost impossible to over eat on a variety of fruit and vegetables which means they are the best snacks!!” (p. 11).

In Be Healthy, Be Active students are expected to learn about healthy choices by using a ‘food plate’:

The Interactive Food Plate is a visual way of exploring food groups and discovering sensible choices for a balanced diet – and it’s fun and engaging! …. The interactivity is designed to allow you and your students to explore the many aspects of a balanced diet and wise food selection. The plate links to a number of activities in the modules, but it can be used at any time when focusing on the importance of sensible eating and how it helps people to feel good and stay healthy. (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011 p. 2, my emphasis)

For the on-line version of the Interactive Food Plate, students and teachers are also informed that “the food plate is a great way to learn about different foods and making good food choices to ensure you are having a balanced diet … Learn about how
much you need to drink and the best choices” (Nestlé, n.d.-a, para. 4-5). The decisions that students are required to make in order to “feel good and stay healthy” and be a healthy body weight stresses the importance of making “sensible choices” through “wise food selection” and “sensible eating”. Of course, this value-laden articulation of choice intimates that if you do not make the suggested choices, you will not just be unhealthy, but foolish.

Games are another pedagogical device used to teach children to make the right choices in a ‘fun’ way and to demonstrate what ‘bad’ things happen if you make the wrong choices. Nestlé New Zealand (2011, p. 3) provide several “fun and informative” web-based games to teach “students the value of healthy eating and how this relates to exercise” (see also Nestlé, n.d.-a,). These games also demonstrate to the players the consequences of making good/bad or right/wrong choices. For example, The Fuel Up Challenge (Nestlé, n.d.-a, para. 1-2) is promoted as a fun and interactive game [that] helps you learn the benefits of healthy eating and how this can affect sporting performance. The Fuel Up Challenge lets you choose 3 foods and see how either Josh or Jess perform. They can swim, run or skateboard and depending on the foods you have chosen for them, they will either get a good time or need to perform better next time round.

The game includes a section with (unattributed, unreferenced) quotations to give ‘hints’ to the Year Seven and Eight students, to enable them to play this game successfully (e.g. “Fruit and vegetables are always great choices”) (to play game, see Nestlé, n.d.-b). To begin the game students are required to select either Josh or Jessica as their character, then pick an activity - either swimming, skateboarding or running. At that point they need to choose three food items to “fuel up” from a choice of eight pictures: a bowl of un-branded cereal, five sweets, a meat pie with tomato sauce, a kiwifruit, five potato chips, a banana, a glass of water, and an unbranded red and white can of “fizzy drink”. After making their selection, the player then clicks on ‘start’ and their character performs the chosen activity. For example, if a student selects swimming as their activity and makes only ‘good’ food choices (for example, cereal, water and a banana), their character will swim the fifty metre length in thirty seconds and receive the following praise and information at the end of the activity: “Excellent! And remember, you will always perform better when you have had a drink of water or milk.” However, if a player chooses the ‘wrong’
foods (e.g. a pie, chips and fizzy drink) it takes the character (with an exhausted, sad expression) sixty seconds to swim the same distance with the advice: “Oh no, you ran out of energy. Next time go for low fat choices without too much sugar.”

Although the Be Healthy, Be Active resource and The Fuel Up Challenge drew on the language of choice, students’ ‘freedom’ to choose is restricted to pre-determined ‘good’ choices – those that are low in fat and sugar, yet also high in energy.

Teaching children about ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ choices is made even more overt in the Health eDash interactive web-game:

> a free, web-based game promoting healthy eating with activity. Students control the Benny Bolt character to run through a landscape that’s filled with a variety of foods. Benny has more bounce when he makes healthier choices, and can run faster and for longer. (Nestlé, n.d.-a, para. 8)

The aim of the game is to “try and collect as many good foods as you can and avoid the bad foods. Good foods will boost your energy and help you run further. Bad foods will reduce your energy and means you can’t run as far” (to play the game, see Nestlé, n.d.-c). Once a student begins the game, they need to make good choices rather than bad ones, which assists them to run as far as possible. If Benny Bolt jumps up and chooses ‘good food’, such as an orange, milk or kiwifruit, a voice shouts out words of encouragement such as “Awesome!”, “Eureka!”, ‘Nice!’ or “Boo-yah!” However, if Benny chooses ‘bad foods’ - pies, fizzy drinks or potato chips - the same voice shouts admonishments like “Uh oh!”, “Oh no!” or “Oh man!”. These ‘voices from above’ are affective pedagogies (see Leahy, 2009, 2012), a strategy that attempts to connect young people’s emotions to their good/bad choices. Sadness and disappointment are attached to unhealthy, ‘junk’ food choices; feelings of happiness and success are tied to those choices deemed healthy, or ‘correct’.

The concepts of energy and energy balance are frequently taught to the students as a way of ‘informing their choices’ and demonstrating the consequences of good and bad choices. For instance, in Nestlé’s The Fuel Up Challenge, Year Seven and Eight students are taught that fizzy drink with sugar had less energy than water, which has zero calories. Although portrayed as a ‘scientific concept’, the notion of energy is often taught in a way that reflects more the moral values attributed to good/healthy food and bad/junk food, rather than actual energy measurements.
Misleading information about energy is also given to the Year One students at Dudley School through ‘Harold’s Picnic’. Although the “key message” for this unit is for children to learn that “we need lots of different foods all through the day to have lots of energy” (Life Education Trust, 2011b, p. 1), fruit and vegetables are constantly promoted as the best source to get energy. Dudley School Year One student Caitlyn was well-versed in Life Education’s ‘facts’ about fruit and vegetables giving “you heaps of energy” and “sweet stuff” making you “slow down”. Following Caitlyn’s ‘Harold’s Picnic’ lesson, I asked her:

**Darren:** Finish this sentence for me: We need to eat a variety of foods because…

**Caitlyn:** It is healthy for you.

**Darren:** Why is it healthy for you?

**Caitlyn:** Because they give you heaps of energy.

**Darren:** And why do you need energy?

**Caitlyn:** So you can do stuff.

**Darren:** What things do you need to keep your body healthy and happy?

**Caitlyn:** Sleep.

**Darren:** Anything else?

**Caitlyn:** Fruit and vegetables. You need to clean it.

**Darren:** What did you learn from ‘Harold’s Picnic’?

**Caitlyn:** That you have to eat healthy stuff.

**Darren:** What’s healthy stuff?

**Caitlyn:** Apples and tinned tomatoes and bananas.

**Darren:** Why is that stuff healthy?

**Caitlyn:** Because it’s fruit and vegetables.

**Darren:** What’s some unhealthy stuff that you learnt about?

**Caitlyn:** Chocolate and cupcakes and sugar.

**Darren:** Why are sugar and chocolate and cupcakes unhealthy?

**Caitlyn:** Because they have sweet stuff in it.

**Darren:** What’s wrong with sweet stuff? Sweet stuff is tasty!

**Caitlyn:** Yes, but it’s not good for your body.

**Darren:** What will happen if you eat sweet stuff?

**Caitlyn:** Bugs will poo on your teeth.

**Darren:** Anything else if you just eat sweet stuff?

**Caitlyn:** And you won’t have that much energy … It will slow down.

There were other games that Caitlyn and her classmates played to help them learn the difference between good and bad choices, as well as reinforce the notion that fruit and vegetables were the key to good health. One afternoon, Caitlyn and her Year One classmates were allowed to independently complete activities in their ‘Harold’s Picnic’ workbook. One ‘game’ in this workbook was for the children to finish a
simple maze with the instruction: “Help Harold find his way through the maze by eating all the healthy food only” (Life Education, n.d.-b, p. 4). However, when a child chose to go down the ‘wrong’ road (e.g. a road with a can of ‘Fizz’, an ice-cream or a single sweet) they ended up in a ‘dead end’ and failed the task. The ability of an individual to choose to be healthy is re-imagined by the resources and pedagogies to be as simple as playing a game: all you need to do to be healthy is choose the ‘right’ food and avoid the ‘wrong’ food.

It is not only informing children about energy sources that saturates the healthy lifestyles education, but energy balance also. When Marion led a staff meeting at Dudley School to inform the teachers about the Life Education units she would be teaching (the same meeting that Mr Spurlock described as professional development), Marion told the staff that the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit was about energy balance: “We are looking at how much energy we need to burn to balance energy in with energy out” (Journal entry, 13th November, 2012). On hearing this, the teacher in charge of health education shouted “Good!”, to which another teacher half-heartedly joked: “Is that for the teachers as well?”

The unit outline for ‘Warrant of Fitness’ (Life Education Trust, 2011c, p. 2) states that “successful learning” will result in “children demonstrating an understanding of the energy in-energy out relationship”. However, not all students felt like they had ‘successfully’ learnt (or been taught) about health or energy, as Dudley School Year Seven boy Eton explained:

**Eton:** Well, they [Marion and Harold] kept on saying, well, they were telling the truth, but they’re telling the obvious truth … I don’t think they did a whole bunch of research … Like, it was nice information, but it wasn’t the information that I thought they’d give. It was information everyone knows about.

**Darren:** So you didn’t feel like you learnt anything new?

**Eton:** No, not really.

**Darren:** What would have you liked to be told more about?

**Eton:** Like, they told us how long it would take to walk off your food, but I’d like to know how long it would take to run off your food and sprint off your food …. I don’t think they should be like hard-out scientists, but I don’t think they should just repeat themselves every time I go there … In this term they kept repeating like, ‘you are what you eat’ so you should eat healthy, and that’s practically the main message, and she just kept on saying that.

**Darren:** Do you feel like you’ve had this sort of message again and again?
Eton: It kind of got annoying after a while, but you had to put up with it.

Eton also bemoaned the repetitive nature of the ‘you are what you eat’ message, something that he (and other students) felt like they were exposed to every time *Life Education* came to Dudley School. In addition, both Eton and his friend Brian attributed the failure of *Life Education* to teach them effectively or in detail to an over-emphasis on what they perceived as irrelevant games. For instance, they told me about an activity when Marion asked them to explain what fast food they would buy with $10 and why:

**Darren:** What did you learn from that?
**Eton:** I’m not sure. I think it was just to make up some time, because she didn’t really go into detail, like I said before. I feel like it was a fun, little game-
**Brian:** -yeah.
**Darren:** So it was more about the fun?
**Eton:** Yeah.
**Brian:** She would play games every session.

Having fun, playing games and being entertained (or ‘edutained’) were frequently promoted as positive pedagogies to teach children to make healthy lifestyle choices. At the same time, more ‘negative’ pedagogical devices were used to emphasise the ‘bad things’ that would happen if you made the ‘wrong’ choices and had ‘bad’ bodies.

**Bad pedagogies: Fear, disgust, the ‘abject other’, and silence**

There are a number of *biopedagogies of health* (see Wright & Harwood, 2009) used by teachers and external providers to try and convince children that certain choices will lead to fat/thin, healthy/unhealthy, good/bad bodies. These pedagogical devices are “directed towards inciting, and building the capacity of, young people to behave in particular ways that align with contemporary governmental imperatives around weight and the body” (Leahy, 2009, p. 173). Some of the biopedagogies that aim to ‘teach’ children about ‘bad’ choices and ‘bad’ consequences are potentially problematic and dangerous. This is especially the case when emotions, such as fear and disgust, are recruited in order to invoke in children “a bodily response” (Leahy, 2009, p. 179) to notions of fatness, laziness, junk food, ill-health, or things “that poo on your teeth” when you eat sugar.
During ‘Harold’s Picnic’ at Dudley School, the Year One children were informed about the risks of sugar. In one moment, Life Education teacher Marion informed the five-year-old students that when you ate sugary food, like fizzy drinks (but not Just Juice), “germs poo on your teeth”. The students responded with a collective “Eeeehuuwmm!” and turned to each other with looks of disgust on their faces. A number of biopedagogical devices were used in this Life Education lesson to ‘teach’ children about unhealthy teeth, the effect of sugar on their health, and a brand of toothpaste. Notions of fear and disgust were harnessed to make children fear those “bugs” that “will poo on your teeth” (Caitlyn). The employment of fear and disgust to ‘teach’ children appeared to be in stark contrast with one of the central planks of the Life Education philosophy, displayed on the inside of the mobile classroom’s door and on its website:

Life Education does not necessarily work on changing children's behaviour, it works on changing desires. Rather than frightening children with various forms of scare tactics, the Life Education philosophy focuses on creating a sensitivity to values which lead to an understanding and appreciation of human life. This enables the child to make decisions about any negative influences that might impede the development of their fullest potential. (Life Education Trust, 2010, my emphasis)

Telling a five-year-old that “germs poo on your teeth” appears to contradict Life Education’s mission to not frighten children and give them an “appreciation of human life” and “values”. However, there is also a tension here. Life Education’s aim to change children’s “desires”, yet not change their behaviour, conflicts with their interest in ‘enabling’ children “to make decisions about any negative influences”. Shaping children’s decision-making is an attempt to change certain behaviours. What Life Education attempts to do is not only shape children’s desires, but their thoughts and subjectivities as well. Furthermore, the use of ‘disgusting pedagogies’ (Leahy, 2009) is stealthily connected to technologies of consumption. At the conclusion of the lesson the children were given free gift-bags by Life Education partner and toothpaste-brand Macleans (manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline). Mrs Constansa’s students took the Macleans bags back to their classroom and unpacked the contents. Inside was a tube of Macleans-branded toothpaste, a toothbrush, stickers, colouring-in pages and a brochure promoting the Macleans website and a Smartphone app. In other words, after being taught that germs defecated on their
teeth, the children were provided with an actual solution – Macleans toothpaste and toothbrushes!

In order to teach children about “negative influences”, healthy lifestyles education programmes and providers ensured that children were informed about the ‘negatives’ of health – those unhealthy desires, decisions and bodies that needed to be avoided. In the Year One’s ‘Harold’s Picnic’ lesson at Dudley School, the students were informed about the *Life Education* ‘traffic light’ system for classifying food groups in terms of which food to eat ‘most’ (green light), ‘some of’ (amber light) and only ‘now and then’ (red light). Fruit and vegetables, as well as bread, pasta and rice, received a ‘green light’. Eggs, meat and fish were classified as ‘amber light’. Sugar, salt and fat (interestingly, three types of ‘food’ that are more ingredients for other food, rather than food children would eat by themselves) were deemed to be ‘red light’ food. Next to the category ‘fruit and vegetables’, Marion displayed drawings of different fruits and vegetables. Next to the word ‘bread’, Marion produced a photograph of loaves of bread and continued to use such illustrations for each food group - except for salt, sugar and fat. Instead, for these ‘red light’ ‘foods’, Marion chose to show a grotesque caricature - a cartoon picture - of a fat man running along a street, a hamburger in one hand, a fizzy drink in the other, and his fat belly overhanging his shorts and protruding from beneath his shirt. Displaying pictures of salt or sugar or fat was deemed to be an insufficient, or at least ineffective, illustration to teach children about the ‘danger’ of these foods. Rather, the young children needed to be shown the ‘disgusting’ consequences of consuming these ‘treats’.

A number of students I talked to, from five-year-olds in Mrs Constansa’s class to twelve-year-olds in Mr Spurlock’s class, talked about fatness in ways that reflected their disgust of fat people, their fear of becoming fat, their desire to eat and exercise in the ‘right’ way, and to achieve the ‘right’, non-fat body. In a conversation at Dudley School, Anita and Chardonnay (both seven-year-old girls) talked about the idea that “if girls have huge muscles, we will look ugly!”. So I asked them:

**Darren:** What sort of body would make a girl not ugly?

**Chardonnay:** Eating healthy foods, getting skinny. Sometimes girls want to get skinny. I do!

**Anita:** I don’t want to be fat. I will look ugly!

**Chardonnay:** So you will be skinny.

**Darren:** So you both want to be skinny?

**Anita:** Yes.
Chardonnay: I want to be as skinny as a stick.
Darren: Why?
Chardonnay: So I can lie on the ground and someone can pick me up.
Anita: My little sister loves me. She’s a bit fatter than me.
Darren: And does that make any difference that she’s a bit fatter than you?
Anita: Yeah, ‘cause meat makes people fat and makes poos smelly.
Chardonnay: My mum only gives me one candy a day.
Darren: Why one candy?
Chardonnay: If I have ten [pieces of] candy a day I might get fat.
Darren: Why don’t you want to be fat?
Chardonnay: Because then I’ll be as fat as a ball!
Anita: As fat as a fat man!

Anita and Chardonnay made similar judgements on certain bodies, with “fat” or muscular bodies seen as “ugly” (especially for women), and skinny as “healthy”. They ‘knew’ that other girls wanted to “get skinny”, that they personally wanted to “get skinny”, and that “eating healthy foods”, avoiding candy and doing exercise (e.g. dancing) was a panacea to fatness and route to skinniness. This conversation was also a pertinent reminder that the pedagogies which shaped these Year Two girl’s ideas about fatness, self and others, had not only been the formal pedagogies of school and Life Education, but home and beyond also.

Fear is a powerful pedagogical strategy to shape children’s conduct – their desires and decisions. This is particularly so when disgust of the “unhealthy, abject other” is fused to children’s fear of becoming the fat and unhealthy ‘other’ (Leahy, 2009, p. 179). As Leahy (2012, p. 188) argues, while the “abject other functions as a potent warning mechanism within health education pedagogical assemblages … disgust is central to its production”. Fear and disgust of the ‘abject’ and unhealthy, fat ‘other’ are harnessed as a means to ensure children understood the consequences of their choices or decisions, both for now and in the future (see also Burrows & Wright, 2007). In another example, Mr Spurlock’s Year Seven/Eight class participated in three Life Education lessons that constituted the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit. In one lesson, Life Education teacher Marion taught the students about body image. On the inside wall of the mobile classroom, Marion displayed photographs of two famous people: former New Zealand Prime Minister, the late David Lange, and Australian model Elle ‘The Body’ Macpherson. The students were asked to describe the two people. This was followed by a discussion where the main point was “not to
judge a book by its cover … we are all special and unique” (Marion). Marion pointed out to the students that “just because [Macpherson] is skinny doesn’t mean she is healthy, but just because she is beautiful doesn’t make her stupid”. Marion then told the class that David Lange “died of obesity-related illness and he was fat his whole life, he was overweight his whole life, and he was picked on because of that”. By connecting David Lange’s fatness with his death (which was incorrect, as Lange died from complications relating to amyloidosis, a rare and incurable blood plasma disorder), Marion attempted to convince students of the risks associated with becoming the ‘unhealthy other’. She tried to mobilise multiple fears – fear of fatness, dying and being “picked on” – to coerce students into changing their ‘unhealthy’ thoughts, actions and bodies.

For some students, the fear of fatness, being teased and not having friends was a cause of anxiety. During one research conversation, I asked Eton (who had told me he was fat) what he thought was ‘wrong’ with being fat. He succinctly answered: “people mocking you all the time”. In fact, the relationship between being teased and being fat was so certain in Eton’s mind, that he was confused and somewhat angry that there was someone else in his class who was “bigger than me … but he doesn’t get mocked as much as I do”. The prospect of social exclusion was accepted by children as a ‘normal’ consequence of being fat. As Year Two’s Anita and Chardonnay demonstrated, the solution to this particular problem was simple: fat people needed to lose weight.

Chardonnay: If you were fat and your friends were skinny, and they didn’t like your fat-
Anita: You’d have to dance [does a little dance move].
Chardonnay: The person who was fat would have to do some exercising to burn all the fat out.
Darren: Would that help them have more friends?
Chardonnay: Yeah. The friends that the person had when he was fat, he’d get his friends back again?
Darren: Why do you think that you’d get more friends if-
Chardonnay: You’d get skinny? Because they might think you look better.

The solution to this type of marginalisation was based on two interconnected ideas: that people who were excluded needed to change their bodies and behaviours, and that the solution to fatness was ultimately one of individual responsibility – they “would have to do some exercising”. Furthermore, we see how fatness is not directly connected to ill-health, but the need to “look better”.

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Demonstrating the consequences of ‘bad’ lifestyle choices did not always require the invention of an unhealthy fat man or woman. In another ‘Warrant of Fitness’ lesson, biopedagogies of disgust were used in conjunction with an ‘abject other’, who this time was not human, but a pig. Dudley School Year Seven and Year Eight students were required to watch ‘Life TV’, a cartoon news-style programme featuring two central characters. The antagonist was Ham Trotter, described by Eton as a “fat pig” who was “eating burgers all the time”. The other character was Henrietta Hen, described by Eton’s classmate Helen as a “skinny bird” who was the “expert’ on matters of health, at one stage taking away Ham Trotter’s car in order to “to make him walk”. Life Education teacher Marion described this lesson to me:

So we have our video clip of a couple of cartoon characters, Ham Trotter and Henrietta Bird. And they are presenters on Life TV and they are talking to us through a series of clips that we are watching about how to care for the body. And Ham Trotter - being stereotyped as a big pig, right – so he gets obese, can’t stop eating, rah rah. She, being a ‘skinny stringbean’ as she calls herself. Right, so she’s seen as the Professor - Henrietta Bird. I’m just [studying] sociology at the moment, so my head is like (laughs) ‘oh, this is terrible stuff’ (laughs).

Although Marion had previously told me part of Life Education’s aim was to challenge stereotypes (such as stereotyping Elle Macpherson as ‘stupid’ because she was beautiful), the Life Education Trust resource writers deliberately created a stereotype of an “obese” individual (albeit a pig) who was fat because they “can’t stop eating”. On the other hand, the smart individual was positioned as someone who was educated (“the Professor”), who could tell fat people (or pigs) what to do (e.g. not to use their car), what to eat (e.g. healthy fruit and vegetables, not hamburgers), and what to look like (e.g. to be skinny and not be fat).

I asked Brian and Eton what the central message of Ham Trotter’s and Henrietta Bird’s Life TV ‘news story’ was. They replied:

**Eton:** The pig was like, huge and the hen was like, skinny as, and she was always saying ‘eat healthy’, but he was saying ‘bigger the better’.

**Brian:** He was like, saying eat healthy, but he just [ate] hamburgers and things.

**Darren:** Do you think that’s fair to fat pigs or fat people that they are portrayed in that way, to be eating junk food all the time, because surely there’s some people-

**Eton:** No, it’s their choice isn’t it?
Darren: It’s their choice to be fat or to eat?
Eton: Well, to eat, but it’s their choice to go to McDonald’s every day of [their] life.

Eton was, in his own words, “chubby”, but admitted he did not eat McDonald’s or other ‘junk food’ on a daily basis and said he scooted or bicycled almost every day with his dogs. However, through the invention of the stereotyped, gluttonous “fat pig”, the subjectivity of Eton and fat ‘others’ was bound to healthist discourses that conflated health with ‘bad’, immoral, consumptive choices. In a research conversation with Eton, James and Brian, the three Year Seven boys started to argue about whether MILO, and separate ingredients in MILO (e.g. chocolate, cocoa, sugar, water) were healthy:

Darren: Is chocolate healthy?
Eton: No, I learnt that the hard way.
Darren: What do you mean you learnt that the hard way?
Eton: I ate too much of it.
Darren: And what did it do to you?
Eton: It turned me fat! [Eton, James, Brian and Darren laugh] I turned chubby in like a week.
Darren: And what’s wrong with being fat?
Eton: It’s irritating. People mocking you all the time.
Darren: Is that what happened?
Eton: Yeah. I don’t eat chocolate anymore.

In the end, Eton blamed himself for his fatness and for being ‘mocked’ “all the time”. It was Eton who had to change his behaviour, rather than those who teased him needing to change theirs.

Five-year-old Leon, a student in Mrs Constansa’s class, also knew that to be healthy (as well as fit and strong) you needed to “eat healthy things”, “exercise” and not be fat. Following the ‘Harold’s picnic’ lesson, I sat outside Leon’s classroom with him and asked what he learned from Life Education:

Leon: To eat healthy things. You can only eat treats sometimes and you can eat ice-creams a little bit and you eat sandwiches every day and breakfast and morning tea. And you need healthy things, otherwise you won’t get strong and run for pretty long.
Darren: Why do you need to eat healthy things?
Leon: So you can get fit, strong, and you can run for a long time.
Darren: What does being fit mean?
Leon: I think it means you are being strong.
Darren: What happens if you don’t eat healthy things?
Leon: Um, you might, if you eat heaps of not healthy things, I think you get fat!
Darren: What happens if you get fat?
Leon: I don’t know.
Darren: Why are fat people fat and skinny people skinny?
Leon: If you [are] doing exercise you are skinny, and if you aren’t you might get fat.

I am not suggesting that Life Education was the only means by which children’s understanding of health, fatness and self were shaped. Harwood (2009, p. 21) reminds us that biopedagogies are not a straightforward, linear process of passing knowledge onto students, but rather complex “practices that impart knowledge writ large, occurring at multiple levels across countless domains and sites”. The children (and adults) in the three schools were exposed to a range of biopedagogical devices that ‘taught’ them about health, inactivity, obesity and fatness at a number of sites and spaces, both within and outside the school (see also Wright, 2009). What Life Education, other external providers and teachers failed to do was to challenge these pervasive biopedagogies. The biopedagogies employed to teach children about healthy lifestyle choices were, for the most part, undistruptive to dominant discourses of individualism, health and obesity.

On a number of occasions, teachers and the externally provided and funded ‘experts’ appeared to be either unwilling or unable to engage in discussions about the complexities of health and fatness. For instance, during the Year One students’ ‘Harold’s Picnic’ lesson about sugar, teeth and Macleans toothpaste, Marion asked the whole class: “Why don’t we eat sugar?” Leon raised his hand and at the same time shouted back: “Because it makes you fat!” Marion looked at Leon, remained silent, then turned back to the class and asked: “Anybody else?” As a biopedagogical device, ignoring Leon’s comment meant that Leon’s voice was constrained – Leon was silenced. By Marion choosing not to reply, verbally or otherwise, to Leon’s response, she employed a pedagogy of silence. Here silence was joined with discourse in a strategic way (Carette, 2000) and acted as a “shelter for power” (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). A potential teaching and learning opportunity that may have engaged children and their teachers in a discussion about fatness was shut down, silencing Leon, his classmates and Mrs Constansa. Through both the ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’, Leon’s (and the rest of the Year One’s) understanding of fatness, fat people, sugar, and exercise remained undistrupted.
Silence was also used within the healthy lifestyles education programmes in another curious way. Aside from promotional material that talked about crises of obesity and inactivity and the role educational resources would have in teaching children to make healthy lifestyle choices, the actual games, ‘fact sheets’, lesson ideas, reading resources, and other teaching and learning activities were completely silent about obesity and fatness. In other words, even though some of the programmes were explicitly promoted as being ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity (and others were understood by the participants as playing a role in preventing obesity), the actual resources, workbooks, coaches, and teachers barely mentioned obesity at all. The closest these resources came to mentioning obesity occurred in the *Be Healthy, Be Active* (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 14) resource which discussed “healthy body weight”. Although I can only speculate why fatness or obesity was not explicitly written about in these resources, this pedagogy of silence was attached to the assemblage in a way that did little to disrupt the dominant discourses that underpinned young people’s understanding of fatness or obesity. The status quo remained secure and stable.

This is not to say that children were unable to resist the notion that fat was inherently unhealthy, that all fat people were greedy and lazy, or that someone’s fatness was the result of individual failure. For instance, when I asked Leon: “Can fat people also be healthy?”, he replied, “Yeah, they can, but if they eat too many lolly-things they won’t be”. Year Seven Dudley School student Nicole described her mother as “obese”, but also healthy. However, even though a number of children admitted that you could be both fat and healthy, the consensus was that you would still be healthier (and happier, more attractive and have more friends) if you were skinny or lost weight. Ultimately, whatever the ‘solution’ to fatness and/or ill-health, the success of solutions was almost always directly linked to an individual’s responsibility to make healthy lifestyle choices.

**Transforming informed choice to personal responsibility**

The various corporate and charity resources and workbooks drew on the notion that all children needed to do to be healthy was be more responsible for making healthy choices. For instance, the *5+ A Day* resource states that one of its key learning outcomes is for students to learn to “demonstrate increasing responsibility for self-care” (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2009, p. 3, my emphasis). In other words, the
prominent rationale for the healthy lifestyles education programmes is to govern children to take increased responsibility for their choices and their lifestyles. The outline for Life Education’s ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit, for example, states: “We look at a variety of issues relating to food and nutrition including: body image, healthy nutrition for growing bodies, media influence, taking responsibility for a balanced lifestyle” (Life Education Trust, 2011c, p. 1, my emphasis). In a similar way, three of the ten lessons suggested in the Iron Brion lesson plans (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 13, my emphasis) are based on the following learning outcome: “Students will: describe their nutritional needs for growth and development and demonstrate increasing responsibility for what they eat”. The use of food and exercise diaries, often in conjunction with goal-setting activities, was a common technology to transfer the responsibility of (un)healthy lifestyles choices to children themselves (also see Gard 2008; Powell & Gard, 2014). For example, in Module Two of Be Healthy, Be Active - ‘Food and You’ – children are asked to self-monitor, record and even report their eating and exercise behaviours, with the instruction to teachers that “the focus should be about making the student responsible for their learning and actions” (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 16). In Iron Brion students are required to “Design a seven-day eating plan that shows meals for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner”, “Check their eating plan against their knowledge of the five food groups” (linked to the Iron Brion food pyramid), then “make changes to their food plan if they have identified that it is not balanced in terms of foods they should be eating ‘lots of’, some of’ and ‘little of’” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 19). The monitoring of food choices and consumption is not entirely limited to the self. Students are also asked to confess to classmates “what they have decided to eat for each day of the week” as well as making “recommendations to each other of what they could include” (p. 19). They are required to modify their eating plan in alignment with what their classmates, teachers, Iron Brion, The Heart Foundation, and the New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau think they “should be eating ‘lots of’, some of’ and ‘little of’”. Students are then instructed to share this plan with their families and are considered successful by being able to “describe their nutritional needs for growth and development and demonstrate increasing responsibility for what they eat” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 19, my emphasis). However, complexities around the notion of choice - such as the (in)ability of families or

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individual children to have the access and finances to take ‘responsibility’ to choose the ‘right’ food - was largely ignored.

In a comparable (although more simplistic) self-monitoring activity, the Life Education workbook for ‘Harold’s Picnic’ asked Year One students to “Draw pictures of everything you ate in one day” – “REMEMBER! Think about food you should eat most, food you should eat some of, and food you should only eat now and then” (Life Education Trust, n.d.-b, p. 5). In addition to the Year One and Two children being required to recall and ‘own up’ to their (un)healthy choices, they were also required to make judgements about their food according to the Life Education ‘traffic light’ system. Although they were told to ‘think’ about these foods and how much they should eat of each, the likelihood that most five-year-old children would have any say or control over what they ate that day was not open for discussion. Nor did this prescriptive curriculum cater for one of Mrs Constansa’s students, a five-year-old Māori girl called Marama, who regularly did not have anything to eat at school. Marama’s so-called choices were either to go hungry or accept ‘charity’ from some of her caring classmates.26

These types of self-monitoring and self-problematising activities acted as technologies of government by attempting to make children more responsible and by coercing children to set goals to ‘make changes’ in their everyday lives. For instance, Be Healthy, Be Active encouraged students to use Nestlé’s downloadable ‘Pocket Diary’ and provided a follow-up lesson for teachers in which students were instructed on how to use it:

> designed to allow you to record the food you eat and the activity you undertake on a day-to-day basis, over a 3 week period. After each day, check how you are going against recommendations of what you ideally need to be doing, aim to make some changes if you need to. Even small changes can make a big difference to how you feel …. Record your daily food intake and activity using the Tally System, as illustrated on the front of the Diary so you can add to it during the day. (Nestlé, n.d.-a, para. 10-14)

In the lesson provided to teach students how to use their journals, the technologies of self-monitoring and self-problematising are linked to the individual student’s

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26 On one morning at Dudley School, Jane, a five-year-old student in Mrs Constansa’s class, arrived at school with her mother and gave Mrs Constansa a plastic shopping bag with sandwiches, yoghurt and an apple inside. Jane’s mother explained that Jane had noticed her classmate, Marama, often had no lunch to eat, so Jane wanted to make her some. At lunchtime, Mrs Constansa tried to give Marama the food Jane had made for her. Marama refused to accept it.
responsibility to set goals, make changes and be healthier. At the beginning of the lesson teachers are instructed to: “Tell the students that setting and sticking to goals can be a great help in changing eating habits. The diary will help them focus their goal setting and show areas that need work” (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 16). For the next part of the activity, teachers are then required to: “Have the students write their goals in their Online Journals. They can then complete a second week in their diary to see if they achieve those goals, for example, eating a broader range of foods or more vegetables” (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 16). In other words, food and exercise diaries, goal setting and the use of ‘confessions’ were combined strategies that attempted to fuse self-surveillance, pre-determined ideal behaviours, and actual ‘improvements’ in individual conduct. The final activity in Life Education’s ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 35) is a ‘WOF Sheet’, in which students are required to answer ‘Pass’ or ‘Fail’ for nineteen statements, a selection of which are provided below:

- I eat 5 + A day from fruit and vegetables
- I choose healthy snacks
- I feel good about how I look
- I exercise for 30 minutes daily
- I choose foods based on their nutritional value
- I feel good about myself
- I feel in control of the choices I make
- I help to make food choices at home
- I am aware of healthy choices available in the school

This self-monitoring/self-assessment activity is obviously individualistic, as well as corporeal. Through the extensive use of ‘I’ statements, students’ (un)healthy thoughts, actions and bodies are reduced to individual choices, thoughts and feelings. However, it is not enough for students to merely identify their (un)healthy conduct - they also need to take responsibility for any failures by devising and recording “strategies to help resolve the problem”. In fact, one of the main learning intentions for the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit is for students to be able to “develop an action plan to meet our own nutritional needs” (Life Education Trust, 2011c, p. 1). If, for example, a student problematises their choices after failing to ‘pass’ a WOF test statement, such as “I eat 5 + A day from fruit and vegetables” (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 35), it then becomes the responsibility of the individual student to be able to create a plan to fix the ‘problem’. Of course, the significant influences that shape children’s ability to receive or even buy the ‘right’ amount of fruit and vegetables are
mostly, if not wholly, out of their control. The multiple, complex, and broad determinants of children’s ‘choices’ were once again re-imagined as problems that could be solved through personal choice and individual responsibility.

**There’s something about Natia: fat, unhealthy, irresponsible … and poor**

In my research, perhaps the most significant demonstration of how the responsibility for children’s health and fatness was shifted onto the shoulders of children took place at St Saviour’s School. In Ms Ellie’s class there was a twelve-year-old Samoan girl called Natia. Over the course of my six months conducting research at St Saviour’s, a number of children and adults had talked to me about Natia’s obesity/fatness and linked this directly with her unhealthy food choices, as well as her ‘irresponsible’ attitude to her own (and her younger brother’s) health. One lunchtime I entered the staffroom and a member of the administration staff pointed outside to alert me to what Natia had brought to school for lunch and was sharing with her brother: a large bag of Twisties chips.\(^{27}\) This Pākehā women was disappointed with Natia’s choice of lunch, adding that she “should know better” and that it was these ‘bad’ choices that had made Natia fat. This was not the first time adults had talked to me about children in general having bad eating habits, fat bodies, being lazy and eating ‘bad’ food.

What was different about Natia’s case was that the various staff members singled out Natia as a problematic individual; an individual with ‘unhealthy’ conduct, attitude and corporeality, even though there were a number of other children who were fatter, and also ate junk food at school.

Natia’s classmates also chimed in with remarks about Natia’s health, eating and fatness during research conversations. These were not conversations where I had asked the children specifically about Natia or others they thought were fat or unhealthy. Rather (and much like the adults), the children tended to point out Natia as a specific example of the ‘abject other’, positioning Natia and her choices as ‘what not to do’. For instance, in a conversation with Natia’s classmates Mary, Amy and Peta about the differences between healthy and unhealthy, the girls started talking about Natia as someone who was unhealthy because she often brought junk food to school. In another conversation, with the same three girls, we discussed what a

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\(^{27}\) Twisties are a ‘flavoured corn snack’ marketed by New Zealand company Bluebird Foods Ltd., a brand owned by PepsiCo.
healthy lunch would look like. I then followed up this conversation by asking ‘What does an unhealthy lunch look like?’ Amy swiftly replied: “Natia’s lunch!”

These students and another group of girls from Ms Ellie’s class also complained to me that Natia often tried to ‘scab’ food from them (note: scab is a colloquial term used by the children to describe when someone asks for free food or drink). Natia herself told me she sometimes ‘scabbed’ food when she was hungry, a result of either eating her own lunch before school started, giving her lunch to her brother, or having no food for lunch or breakfast in the first place. Some classmates also remarked that on days when Natia did have food for lunch, she tried to swap her ‘junk’ food for their ‘healthier’ sandwiches. Natia’s perceived inclination to bring chips to school, her tendency to ask other students to share or give her their food, combined with her fat body, meant that Natia was understood by others as not only unhealthy, but also immoral - greedy, lazy, a poor chooser and an irresponsible person.

I spoke with Natia on numerous occasions, both informally (usually as I wandered around the playground at lunchtime or before school), and formally (i.e. during recorded research conversations). It was clear that Natia and her family struggled with poverty. Natia lived with her mother, father and four siblings. The family had been living in a three bedroom ‘state house’ (one provided and funded by the government through the welfare system), but had recently been evicted for allowing their cousins to live in the house, breaking one of the conditions of their tenancy. At the time of my last conversation with Natia in December 2012, she was living in a car at the rear of her cousin’s house. There were times when there was no food for her to eat, never mind make a packed lunch and bring it to school (as suggested by the school receptionist). Sometimes Natia was able to get some money from her parents or her auntie and she would buy potato chips (and occasionally a fizzy drink) from her local shop on the way to school - the supermarket was too far away to walk. She frequently felt guilty about not being able to provide for her brother, asking classmates for food, and not having a healthy lunch like some of her classmates.

The choices in Natia’s life were highly constrained by political, socio-economic, environmental, historical, and cultural forces largely out of her control. However, Natia’s teachers’ and classmates’ understanding of health was inextricably interconnected to the rationality of healthism, which acted to place the
“responsibility for body vigilance solely on the individual, and deflects attention away from the social and cultural conditions which shape and constrain health” (White, Young and Gillett, 1995, p. 160). The notion of healthism reinforced the assumption that children like Natia not only could take responsibility for their own choices, but should (see Gard, 2011). Natia was obliged to take responsibility for her health and was blamed for making the wrong choices, being irresponsible, and having a fat body.

**Re-imagining the ‘influences’ on children’s choices**

This is not to say, however, that the broader influences of children’s freedom to choose their lifestyles are completely ignored or silenced by the outsourced healthy lifestyles education programmes. A number of charitable and corporate resources encourage students to recognise wider forces that act on their choices. However, there are tensions when different authorities try to ‘educate’ children about the broader socio-cultural influences on their health, bodies, lifestyles and choices, and attempt to create individualistic, self-responsible, citizen-consumers. For instance, in the Life Education Trust’s (2011c, p. 1) ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit, even though one of the four learning intentions is for students to “identify the elements that influence our choices re. health”, the other three intentions stress individual responsibility: “take responsibility for our own food choices”, “recognise the importance of the key elements in a balanced lifestyle: activity, attitude and appetite”, and “develop an action plan to meet our own nutritional needs”.

Similarly, in *Be Healthy, Be Active* (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 14), the aim of the second module ‘Food and you’ is as follows:

> to support students to develop healthy eating habits that contribute towards maintaining a healthy body weight. As part of this, students need to understand the concept of a balanced diet and healthy eating. They also need to understand the influences (from society, the media, their family/whānau, and their peers) on their eating habits and how they can set goals to work towards balanced eating.

So while on the one hand the *Be Healthy, Be Active* resource claims to develop students’ understanding of the wider societal influences “on their eating habits”, on the other hand children are told to “set realistic goals so they can work towards making healthier food choices” (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 14). The responsibility for children’s food choices and their body weight was once again re-
positioned onto children, rather than encouraging students to *take action* to shape media, family, peer, societal (or corporate) influences. *The New Zealand curriculum*’s aim to develop children’s “understanding of the factors that influence the health of individuals, groups and society: lifestyle, economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental factors” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23) was re-crafted to emphasise individual health, individual choice and individual responsibility. It certainly did not encourage students to use their “skills and understandings to take critical action to promote personal, interpersonal, and societal well-being” (p. 23).

In *Be Healthy, Be Active* students were also required to complete an online journal in which they self-monitored and recorded their food and exercise choices over one week. The follow-up activity for this journal writing was called ‘Setting Goals’ (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 16), in which teachers were instructed to begin the lesson by sharing *their own journals* - confessing and problematising their own choices - by asking the students questions such as:

- Which food groups did I eat too much of?
- Which groups could I have eaten more of?
- Was I on target with my healthy eating?
- What could I be doing differently? What steps could I take to do that?
- Was there anything that contributed to my eating too much or not enough?

The Nestlé New Zealand (2011, p. 16, my emphasis) resource then provided the following parenthetical note:

(For some students, this might be an issue related to money or access to food. This could lead to a conversation about how to deal with such issues, for example, suitable substitutes. The focus should be about making the student responsible for their learning and actions.)

So even though the resource writers conceded, albeit briefly, that students’ choices may be influenced by money, their proposed solution was simple: getting teachers to make the child responsible. The solutions to poverty, hunger and ill-health were rendered technical and non-political. The complex determinants of an individual’s health and the impact of social, cultural, environmental, political, historical and economic forces were re-imagined as insignificant compared to an individual’s ability to freely make the ‘correct’ choices.
These approaches to teaching about food, health and lifestyles are not merely simplistic; they represent a significant ‘dumbing down’ of the possibilities of health education. At best, they demonstrate an inability of corporations, charities and classroom teachers to engage with – or encourage students to engage with – the complex nature of health and how it may be achieved. At worst, they illustrate a deliberate attempt by corporations and their partners to misinform children and to divert children’s attention away from significant factors that shape children’s health. Either way, the healthy lifestyles education resources and pedagogies are careless. They demonstrate a lack of care for students’ learning. They show a lack of care for students’ everyday lives.

**Re-assembling resources and pedagogies**

The externally-produced resources and enacted pedagogies were re-assembled by the convergence of elements with key tenets of the neoliberal political rationality: personal responsibility, autonomy, freedom of choice and consumerism. As neoliberal pillars of health (Herrick, 2011), they underpinned the resources and pedagogies in ways that attempted to ‘inform’ children about making the right food, nutrition and physical activity ‘lifestyle’ choices, as well as the consequences of making the ‘wrong’ choices, displaying the ‘wrong’ body, and even having ‘wrong’ thoughts, attitudes and beliefs about health. Children’s individual responsibility to make the correct healthy lifestyle choices was promoted as the panacea to children’s ill-health and/or fatness. Instead of encouraging children to challenge the “façade” of choice (Ayo, 2012, p. 104), or the notion that fat people were fat because they ate too much sugary or fatty food, the outsourced resources and pedagogies merely reproduced the *status quo*.

Rather than corporations and their partners trying to *make* children be healthy, these organisations attempt to coerce children ‘at a distance’ (Miller & Rose 2008) to *want* to be healthy and be seen to be healthy. As Rose (1999a, p. 88) further explains,

> the project of responsible citizenship has been fused with individuals’ projects for themselves .... Thus, in a very significant sense it has become possible to govern without governing *society* – to govern through the ‘responsible’ and ‘educated’ anxieties and aspirations of individuals.
Teaching children that they have some responsibility to make healthy decisions is not in itself a bad thing. However, by and large these neoliberal resources and pedagogies exemplify Crawford’s (1980) concerns about healthism. They promote a narrow view of what health is (corporeal and individualistic) and how it may be achieved (responsible healthy lifestyle choices). At the same time, they ignore, mask, downplay and even subvert significant ‘other’ determinants of children’s health, such as poverty, government policy, industry lobbying, and corporate commercialism.

These corporatised healthy lifestyles education resources and pedagogies also represent “strategic attempts to market not a benign conception of health, but a particular brand of health – namely one that conflates health with morality and bodily perfection, and is ultimately connected to consumer culture” (Vander Schee, 2008, p. 5, italics in original). As Rose (1999a, p. 164-165) also argues, with neoliberal forms of governance there are “new forms of consumption ... the regulation of habits, dispositions, styles of existence in the name of identity and lifestyle ... the citizen is to become the consumer”. This new ‘brand’ of health and health education is intimately connected to new lifestyles and new identities for children, where the child-citizen is becoming the child-consumer. This was especially evident when children’s alleged ‘freedom of choice’ and their need to be self-responsible, healthier, active and non-obese, was fused with technologies of ‘healthy consumption’: the consumption of corporate products, corporate philanthropy, the corporate brand, and corporate ‘education’.
Chapter Eight: Assembling the (un)healthy child-consumer

**Darren:** Why do you think that a company would want you to be healthy or keep healthy?

**DJ:** To be strong.

**Mark:** To stay fit and stay healthy.

**Hone:** Because they care about us.

**Carlos:** So we can live a longer life and buy more of their products.

In neoliberal times there are “new technologies of government that fashion new institutions and modes of delivery within which new social subjectivities are being fostered; extensions of the logic of the marketplace that socialize individualized subjects and discipline the noncompliant” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390).

Technologies of consumption are one group of technologies that have re-fashioned the educational sphere, extending market ‘logic’ into schools and attempting to foster children as consumers (see Miller & Rose, 1997). Drawn into the healthy lifestyles education assemblage, these governmental technologies depend upon fabricating delicate affiliations between the active choices of potential consumers and the qualities, pleasures and satisfactions represented in the product, organized in part through the practices of advertising and marketing, and always undertaken in the light of particular beliefs about the nature of human subjectivity. (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 31)

These are technologies that shape resources and pedagogies, and attempt to shape children’s subjectivities to align with the goals of neoliberalism, corporations, and charities. With this in mind, I aim to critically examine the ways in which technologies of consumption have assembled with the notion of children as consumers to constitute healthy lifestyles education programmes. To do this I have analysed specific technologies of consumption - product placement, transforming children into marketers, sponsorship, free gifts - and interrogated how each of these technologies ‘congealed’ with the resolve of corporations to develop children as lifelong consumers of the corporate brand image and their allegedly ‘healthy’ corporate products. Whilst some of the healthy lifestyles education programmes claim to be ‘critical’ forms of education, there are certainly limits on how critical (or not) they expect teachers and children to be.
‘A message from Just Juice’: Product placement in educational resources

Product placement was one technology of consumption that endeavoured to connect branded and unbranded objects with children’s understanding of health and self. Product placement is a term commonly used to describe a form of advertising where corporate logos, products, trademarks and services are promoted in the context of a television programme, film, video game, or music video (e.g. a character in a movie drinking a can of Coca-Cola). In a number of instances, corporations and their ‘not-for-profit’ partners used, or as I argue exploited, the healthy lifestyles education programmes to market their corporate brand and corporate products directly to students. For example, despite Nestlé New Zealand (2011) explicitly stating in the foreword to their Be Healthy, Be Active teacher resource, “The content of the programme is not commercial in nature”, some of the students’ resources have Nestlé-branded products placed within them. The interactive ‘Food Plate’ (see Nestlé, n.d.-d), for example, has links to a ‘Snack Time’ section where students can view and use recipes for “twelve simple snacks you can make for home or at school”, such as ‘Sensational Smoothies’, ‘Muffin Magic’, ‘Mighty Muesli Bars’ and ‘Super Noodles’. However, the ingredients of these recipes contain Nestlé products.

‘Sensational Smoothies’ is a banana-chocolate smoothie made with popular brand MILO. ‘Muffin Magic’ includes Milk Melts – a Nestlé brand of cooking chocolate. ‘Mighty Muesli Bars’ are made with Nestlé’s Sweetened Condensed Milk, whilst ‘Super Noodles’ are to be made with Maggi ‘2 Minute noodles – chicken flavour’.

This form of product placement and branding appears to contradict one of the central assurances of Nestlé’s Healthy Kids Global Programme: “NO product branding” (Nestlé, 2014b).

Nestlé is not the only organisation to use a healthy lifestyles education programme to promote and market corporate products. The Life Education resources (as well as its promotional materials and mobile classrooms) display and promote a number of sponsors’ products. In fact, two of Life Education’s named national sponsors - Just Juice and Macleans - are products (as opposed to the corporation, Frucor or GlaxoSmithKline respectively, being named as the sponsor). On the inside cover of the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a), the Just Juice logo is displayed twice with the following ‘credit’: “This book was produced with the generous assistance of Just Juice”. In this student workbook, a picture of a Frucor product - a bottle of H2Go water - is conspicuously inserted into one of the
food pyramids that informed students about the “recommended fuel for a healthy body” (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 9). The same bottle appears in another lesson entitled “Consuming” (p. 20), where children are encouraged to keep hydrated by drinking water. In this lesson, students are also taught how to read a food label (another component of learning how to make ‘informed choices’), a label branded: “125ml Tetra Just Juice Orange and Mango flavour” (p. 23).

The resources and lessons provided to Year One and Two students also contained marketing for Just Juice. The children were sent home with a leaflet that outlined to parents what their children were learning in Life Education. At the bottom of the letter, next to a picture of Harold, it read:

A message from Just Juice – did you know...
That one glass (250ml) of fruit juice counts for one of your daily fruit servings for everyone over 5 years.
This information sheet has been produced with the kind support of one of our national sponsors, Just Juice. (Life Education Trust, n.d.-b, p. 1)

This is an obvious attempt to connect a corporate product - Just Juice - with a government-endorsed, private sector-devised, charity-promoted health imperative to eat a certain number of servings of fruit each day (at the time of writing, the New Zealand guidelines were for people to eat 5+ fruit and/or vegetables a day). The decision by Life Education to promote this particular product was unusual, given that Marion spent much time warning the Year One and Two children about the dangers of sugar and fizzy drinks, yet Just Juice has exactly the same proportion of sugar as Coca-Cola (see Community and Public health, n.d.). We can also see in this example that product placement was not just a tactic to attach a corporate product to children’s knowledge of what a healthy product looks like and which specific products they needed to consume, but was a public relations strategy to shape children’s and adults’ understanding of the corporation’s image. Product placement acted as a technology of consumption by attempting to re-invent Just Juice and its producer/marketer Frucor as healthy, as well as educational, “kind”, supportive, caring and “generous”.

The products placed within corporatised resources were not always branded products, but sometimes generic products, such as meat, fruit or vegetables associated with a particular industry group. For instance, the writers of the Iron Brion resources barely mentioned ‘New Zealand Beef and Lamb’ or its more recent brand...
name ‘Beef + Lamb New Zealand’. Instead they choose to liberally sprinkle more general terms, such as ‘beef’, ‘lamb’, ‘red meat’, and ‘iron’ (see New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d.). For all but one of the ten pre-packaged Iron Brion lessons, the students were taught about the healthy consumption of iron, beef and lamb. Here is a snapshot of some of the learning intentions in the Iron Brion resource materials:

Lesson 1: “Discuss which senses you might use when identifying iron” (p. 13)
Lesson 2: “Discuss and critically reflect on why people need iron in their daily eating plan” (p. 16)
Lesson 3: “Identify the main sources of iron in their weekly food plan” (p. 19)
Lesson 4: “Students choose a beef or lamb product to promote to their class members and design a package and label for this product” (p. 21)
Lesson 5: “Prepare and produce advertising material to develop an awareness of the importance of zinc, iron and protein in our eating plans” (p. 22)
Lesson 6: “Look at the labels on beef and lamb products and discuss the information they contain” (p. 23)
Lesson 7: “Gather a range of recipes that use beef and lamb” (see www.recipes.co.nz” (p. 25)
Lesson 9: “On an outline of a dinner plate or bowl, students design a meal and identify foods which contain easily absorbed iron and poorly absorbed iron” (p. 28)
Lesson 10: “Discuss how beef and lamb is kept at home” (p. 30)

The ubiquitous placement of beef and lamb in the resource’s learning experiences acted as a technology of consumption by fusing children’s understanding of beef and lamb consumption with notions of health: to ‘educate’ “young Kiwis about healthy eating and the role beef and lamb play in a healthy lifestyle” (New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, n.d., p. 1).

In the three primary schools, health education was re-assembled to incorporate product placement. By inserting product placement into the assemblage, what was meant to be an educational endeavour was transformed into one that represented the commercial interests of private sector players and partners. It is difficult to see exactly how placing a branded H2Go bottle in a food pyramid, or a Nestlé-branded product into a recipe, worked in the educational interests of children. Product placement was a technology of consumption used by the private sector, with the assistance of voluntary sector organisations, to form relationships between objects of consumption – Just Juice, H2Go, beef and lamb, and Maggi 2 Minute
noodles – and the subjects of consumption: children (see Rose, 1999a). It was not the only technology that attempted to achieve this. Product placement was a stealthy marketing strategy that joined with other technologies of consumption in an attempt to align children’s desires to make healthy choices with the desire of for-profit players to shape children to be uncritical consumers of their ‘healthy’ products.

**A pedagogy for healthy consumption: Transforming children into marketers**

A number of the corporatised programmes featured a pedagogical strategy that interconnected technologies of sponsorship and product placement, whereby children were required to become marketers of corporate products. For instance, the *5+ A Day* programme (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 4) aimed to raise “awareness, critical thinking and action” about food marketing by providing opportunities for children “to create their own advertising and marketing campaigns to promote fresh fruit and vegetables to their friends and families”. Predictably, these marketing ‘lessons’ exclusively promoted products manufactured/sold by the corporate sponsors/partners/developers of the ‘educational’ programmes and resources; they were used as a tactic to increase consumption of their products. In fact, the *5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, an organisation devoted to “increasing the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables” (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2013, para. 1) - one with strong personnel and funding links to the fruit and vegetable industry - produces an entire resource called ‘Bright ideas: marketing and advertising fresh fruit and vegetables’ (see *5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2011). One of the intended learning outcomes is for children to be able to “plan for and implement advertising strategies to encourage a greater consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables” (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 2). For students to meet this outcome, teachers are required to: “Tell children that they have a very important job to do. They have to help *5+ A Day* promote fresh fruit and vegetables to other children and their family” (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 6). One of the activities instructs children to

> draw a picture and write a message that promotes the eating of fruit and vegetables. (Designs could be laminated and posted around the school, or copied and placed into the school newsletter, or used as a school fundraiser, source and print aprons and tea towels and sell to school community). (*5+ A Day* Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 6)

In other words, the point of this lesson and activities is for children to disseminate *5+ A Day*’s marketing message to their classmates, parents and the wider community, a
message funded and promoted by a number of private sector organisations, including supermarket giants Countdown and Foodstuffs New Zealand Limited. In a similar vein, the ‘Give Me A Go’ activity asks students to design a poster to help “launch a new marketing campaign aimed at encouraging children to eat a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables” (5+ A Day Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 8). On the same page, another activity called ‘Simply the Best’ not only transforms students into marketers of the 5+ A Day slogan, but into health educators and health promoters as well: “Explain that the students are now professional health educators whose job it is to develop campaigns to encourage people to eat 5+ A Day”. After conducting research into healthy behaviours and deciding on a “target audience”, students are then asked to “prepare a short skit, print ad, or mock TV or radio ad that promotes their health message to their chosen audience”. The third marketing ‘option’ for students crossed over with embedded marketing practices, as students are required to analyse the 5+ A Day logo in order to ‘learn’ how to effectively use logos in marketing campaigns.

These marketing-focused learning activities act as technologies of ‘healthy’ consumption in three distinct ways. First, they reinforce the idea that in order to be healthy, children need to increase their consumption of fruit and vegetables to at least five servings a day. Second, they reinforce the 5+ A Day logo/slogan/brand/message as essentially a public health imperative, a regime of truth about health that has been significantly shaped by private sector interests (see also www.zoeharcombe.com). Third, even though this resource states that it encourages children to think critically about marketing, health and consumption, by turning children into marketers they attempt to ‘teach’ children to be uncritical of marketing strategies that saturate public and private spaces in their endeavour to shape children as subjects of consumption (see also Klein, 2002). In other words, turning children into marketers of corporate products aids in the naturalisation of advertising and consumerism in children’s everyday lives, rather than a socio-critical health education that encourages children to challenge or take action against the normalisation of marketing to children.

This is not to say, however, that children were unwilling to resist or problematise attempts to transform them into advertisers for the corporate sponsors. For instance, in one of the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ lessons that I observed in a Year Seven/Eight class at Dudley School, the children demonstrated that they were not ‘cultural dupes’ (Hall, 1981). In this lesson the children were required to create and
perform “a commercial kind of thing” (Eton) for H2Go, Just Juice, and Just Juice Splash (a ‘healthier’ diluted fruit juice beverage aimed at children) - all three were Frucor products. According to the students, the point of the student-created commercials was to entertain the audience, “tell them all about the calories in it” and make the product “look good at the same time” (Eton). However, Dudley School students Eton and Brian (as well as a number of other students) were critical of these lessons (and others like them), where they perceived the educational purpose and value of the lessons or resources as being undermined by the corporate efforts to advertise their products. During one conversation I had with Eton and Brian on the basketball court outside their classroom, they reflected on this ‘commercial lesson’ and a page in their ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook which featured product placement for a Frucor-brand of bottled water:

**Darren:** What sort of water was it?

**Brian:** Yeah, it was H2Go-

**Eton:** -but in our books, instead of like, putting just there a bottle of water … in the food pyramid … it would be like, all the healthy stuff, and at the bottom would be like, bottles of H2Go.

**Darren:** Was that a food pyramid in your workbook or in the van?

**Eton:** In our workbook-

**Brian:** -and on the van, like inside.

**Darren:** Why do you think they chose Just Juice, not just orange juice?

**Eton:** Because Just Juice sponsored them and like, they deserve [it]. Just Juice would be like, ‘if we sponsor you, you have to put us in your books’, so it’s like, advertising at the same time to all the kids that they go to.

**Darren:** And what do you think about being advertised to in school books and things like that?

**Eton:** I think it’s kind of dumb, because we’re there to do our school work.

**Darren:** What was the point of talking about advertising and making up your own ads?

**Eton:** I’m not sure, I reckon it was just another fun game.

**Brian:** I think there might’ve been a point behind it, but I don’t think she got round to telling us.

Eton and Brian were cognisant of the attempts being made to promote corporate products to them, as well as the reasons why corporate sponsors were able to insert their products into their workbooks, lessons and classroom spaces. More importantly, they did not just perceive these forms of ‘stealthy’ (or in this case, not so stealthy)
advertising as “dumb”, but were sceptical of the educative value of ‘teaching’ them to be marketers of bottled water and fruit juice.

**Sponsorship: ‘Promoting your products to consumers’**

Sponsorship was another technology of consumption that was connected to notions of education, health and corporate products. For example, United Fresh (2014a, p. 2), asserted in a brochure that the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust “promotes fresh produce, working towards raising consumption for all New Zealanders through … Sponsorship, Advertising, Public Relations and Communications” as well as “Curriculum linked education material for early childhood centres, schools and health professionals”. Under the heading “Raising Consumption”, United Fresh (2014a, p. 3, my emphasis) also stated that its

> Members can link with the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust’s high-impact promotional activity to *raise the consumption of their products* and fresh fruit and vegetables in New Zealand. 5+ A Day is very well established and links directly into the national school teaching curriculum, including early childhood education centres. The Trust is a respected provider of practical and fun classroom concepts that *encourage children to learn about and eat, fresh fruit and vegetables* every day. *Promoting your products to consumers through education*, social media, public relations, television, advertising, marketing and sponsorship.

United Fresh’s and 5+ A Day’s ‘philanthropic’ sponsorship provided resources to educate children, yet also acted as a technology - one assembled together with multiple technologies - to promote member’s products and encourage children to consume these products. The relationship between an ensemble of heterogeneous elements, such as corporations, schools, branded products, discourses of health and sport, and sponsorship, was a cause of tension. One such tension that was noted by most of the Year Six and Year Seven students I talked with (from all three schools) was the relationship between food and drink corporations and school-based ‘obesity solutions’, HPE programmes, resources, physical activity initiatives and sports events. In a lengthy conversation, James, Brian and Eton, three Dudley School Year Seven students, recognised the multiple and contradictory elements that are cobbled together when ‘fast food’ companies sponsor professional sports and healthy lifestyles education programmes. I began this part of the conversation by asking the
boys about the McDonald’s *My Greatest Feat* pedometer programme they had participated in two years earlier:

**Darren:** Why do you think McDonald’s would be wanting people to measure their steps?

**Eton:** To try and encourage people that McDonald’s is helping people get fit.

**Brian:** (Laughs)

**James:** But it’s not really – look at me! (James points to his own stomach)

**Brian:** [People] have McDonald’s, keep fit and then exercise a day later.

**Eton:** They try to encourage them to go to McDonald’s.

**Darren:** What do you think the ultimate goal for McDonald’s is in doing these programmes in schools?

**Eton:** Profit?

**James:** To see who has the most shops.

**Darren:** So you think it’s like a competitive thing, so against-

**James:** They’re fighting against like Wendy’s, Burger King, Subway.

**Darren:** So do you think that would help McDonald’s in some way, to compete against Burger King and Wendy’s?

**Brian:** Yeah, because they gave out free things.

**Eton:** Like Wendy’s doesn’t or BK or anything, [do not] support like the Olympics. McDonald’s [is] sponsored everywhere, but BK and Wendy’s doesn’t sponsor, like anywhere.

**James:** Even at basketball, I was watching a basketball game, it was the [Townsville] Croc’s versus something else, the [New Zealand] Breakers, and the Crocs had a big M [the McDonald’s golden arches symbol] on their shirts.

**Darren:** And on the court as well, like at the top of the keyhole.

**James:** And I was like, ‘Dad look, we’re having McDonald’s right now’.

**Darren:** So do you think people are more likely to go to McDonald’s because they support sports?

**Brian:** Quite a lot.

**Eton:** Yes - more advertising, then people will remember about it.

**James:** They just want to get their name out.

**Darren:** Would you consider that the *My Greatest Feat* thing was an education programme?

**Brian:** No.

The students were well aware of the intentions of ‘fast food’ sponsorship: advertising and branding opportunities; connecting the brand image with sports; to “get their name out” so “people will remember it”; “to encourage [people] to go to McDonald’s”; to be competitive; to be seen to be “helping” people “get fit” and “exercise”; and to “profit”. They were also conscious of the tensions that arose when corporations - especially those associated with obesity, ill-health and junk food -
tried to make children fit, not-fat, healthy, and ‘educated’. In one striking example, Dudley School Year Six student Helen wrote and delivered a speech to her class (for a unit of work her class was doing on speeches) in which she criticised McDonald’s sponsorship of sport and the role this played in increasing the prevalence of obesity. A cue card from her speech (with grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors included), read as follows:

I would just like to say mcdonalds shouldn’t sponsor events as
- It gives kids the wrong source of energy to play sports on.
- It will give us kids health problems in the future that can effect our life badly.
- And it will effect our every day life by being 1 of the millions of people being obese
- So now why don’t we all say no to mcdonalds sponcering our sports events because we like to live a healthy life!!

For Helen, McDonald’s sponsorship was inextricably interconnected with the promotion of ill-health and obesity, rather than being ‘part of the solution’.

A number of students recognised that sponsorship of healthy lifestyles education programmes was a corporate tactic that was not primarily about education or health, but money. Mary, a Year Six at St Saviour’s School, believed that the involvement of ‘pokies trusts’ in school activities was “to raise money” for the gaming industry. When I talked to Leroy and Sam, Year Seven students at Reynard Intermediate School, about My Greatest Feat, I asked them for a reason why McDonald’s sponsored this physical activity programme, to which they succinctly replied:

Leroy: Money.
Sam: Money – fast money.

Nonetheless, ‘money’ was not a simple or straightforward answer, nor was it the only answer. The children recognised that a sponsoring organisation’s quest for monetary gains and their ‘will’ to teach children how to be healthy was fundamentally linked to their desire to increase consumption of certain products and improve the brand image of the corporation. For example, when I asked Helen and Nicole, Year Six girls at Dudley School, why McDonald’s and their My GreatestFeat programme wanted children to be more active, they replied:
Helen: Make them [children] eat more.
Nicole: For McD’s [McDonald’s] to be more popular.

Leroy from Reynard Intermediate School also made a connection between public relations (“being popular”), increasing consumption and improving profit. He talked about the financial losses that corporations suffer when a product, or corporation itself, is seen as unhealthy. I asked Leroy why he thought McDonald’s failed to sponsor the My Greatest Feat programme for the London 2012 Olympic Games, to which he responded: “Losing too much money. Wanting to spend more on themselves. Some people watch those ‘What’s really in our food’ [television] programmes and stop eating McD’s [McDonald’s].”

Students were mindful that a corporation’s use of sponsorship was aligned with their desire to develop more positive public relations and increase revenue, especially at a time when corporations (and their goods) were perceived as being unhealthy. In a conversation with a group of Year Six boys from St Saviour’s - DJ, Mark, Hone, Carlos and Afakasi - I asked them why a company like Beef + Lamb New Zealand would want to create a character like Iron Brion and bring him to their school:

DJ: So that we know what food to put where in the food chart [pyramid] to eat and also keep us healthy at the same time.
Darren: Why do you think that a company would want you to be healthy or keep healthy?
DJ: To be strong.
Mark: To stay fit and stay healthy.
Hone: Because they care about us.
Carlos: So we can live a longer life and buy more of their products.
Darren: So you think part of it is-
Afakasi: -to get more money.
DJ: Yeah, to get more money!
Darren: How do you think they get more money from doing these sort of programmes?
Afakasi: They put a vivid image in children’s heads so they can go home and tell their parents about the company.

While the children were cognisant of the ‘money motives’ of corporate sponsorship, they were also aware of the ‘other’ technologies of consumption that intersected with sponsorship to help accomplish the profit-seeking intentions of the corporation: the corporation’s desire and need to be seen to be caring, to “care about us”, to make children fit, healthy and strong; to teach children about food and to pester parents to buy their food; to foster a positive brand image “in children’s heads”; to make
children healthier, so they would live longer and “buy more of their products”. These were elements that cohered together in the assemblage with the overall aim to shape children’s (and even their parents’) thoughts and actions, health, lives and consumption in alignment with the corporation’s best interests.

‘I want the free hamburgers!’: The ‘gift’ of food and other ‘healthy’ products
An additional technology of consumption that was attached to the assemblage and interconnected with technologies of sponsorship and philanthropy was that of free gifts. During a number of lessons and ‘edutainment’ events, students received free (often branded) gifts that were provided by the corporate sponsors. Life Education, for instance, provided a number of sponsors’ products free to children. Room Four students at Reynard Intermediate School remembered competing in a Life Education quiz and winning a whole-class supply of Just Juice. As described previously, the Year One and Two students at Dudley School received a free Macleans-branded gift bag. Curiously, when I asked Life Education teacher Marion about the Macleans gift bag, she claimed that she was “not promoting the bag and what’s in the bag itself” but was focused on teaching the children about advertiser’s ‘tricks’:

I’m doing a unit [on] making choices at the moment, using advertising. So we get to create an ad so that we can look at the tricks and trades of advertising and what they do. And we have Macleans toothpaste and we have the other products, so it’s a good opportunity to get the sponsor’s product in without actually having to go out of my way to promote it.

There are clear contradictions here between Marion’s claim that she did not promote the products or the gift bag, but was “definitely happy to promote” Macleans toothpaste and other products as “it pays the bills”. In the end, handing out the free gifts was more important to Marion and Life Education than the alternative – not receiving funding from Frucor or GlaxoSmithKline. There was also a clear tension between Marion’s assertion that she taught the students about the ‘tricks and trades of advertising’, but did not explicitly point out the use of free gifts (or sponsorship) as ‘tricks’ that Marion and the marketers of Just Juice and Macleans were employing on the students. For Marion, giving free branded gifts to children was rationalised as “part of the promotion – that’s what pays us. And I’m happy to do it if we can work it in and it’s not too much of a stretch.”
Nestlé also provided free gifts via MILO sponsored and branded cricket coaches who instructed Dudley School students for one session:

**Eton:** We had some MILO cricket coaches come in … we played a non-stop cricket game and they taught us skills and how to catch the ball and how to hit the ball, and if you did really well they gave you Raro – no, not Raro - MILO sachets.

**Darren:** Ok. So that was a reward?

**Eton:** Yeah.

**Darren:** Did they have any other MILO logos or-

**James:** -I think on their T-shirt.

**Eton:** Yeah, on their jacket they had a MILO symbol, and yeah, the jacket was green and had white stripes.

Gifting congealed with Nestlé’s governmental ambition to try to increase MILO’s brand recognition and improve its brand image. The results were somewhat mixed. Eton recognised the MILO logo, colours and slogan (“they say that MILO is the ‘official drink of play’”) and was aware that MILO was reinvented in ways that ‘encouraged’ consumers to see it as more than just a hot chocolate drink, but “an energy drink”. Eton and his classmates, however, were unsure as to whether MILO and its key ingredients were healthy or unhealthy (except for the water).

Children from all three schools frequently challenged the assumption that the gifting and incentive strategies would encourage children or families to make healthier choices. For example, a number of students at Reynard Intermediate School and Dudley School had participated in the *Yummy Apples School Sticker Promo*, a type of incentive scheme (see Molnar, 2005) that encouraged children and their parents to buy branded Yummy Apple products, collect the stickers attached to apple bags and individual apples, and return the stickers to school in order to help the school gain its “share of the $200,000 free DG Sport sports gear prize pool” (The Yummy Fruit Company, n.d.). During one conversation at Reynard Intermediate School I asked a group of Year Seven students what they thought about the following claim made by Yummy Apples brand ambassador and celebrity footballer Wynton Rufer: “I couldn't think of a better way to be encouraging our kids to be actively healthier Kiwis. Eating Yummy apples and getting free sports gear in return is an awesome campaign to be proactively supporting” (The Yummy Fruit Company, n.d., italics in original). The children instantly burst into laughter, then listed a number of ideas they had to improve children’s health and lifestyles, such as making fruit cheaper.
This ‘gift’ of sports equipment was not entirely free. Like most incentive schemes, parents had to spend money for schools to receive their “prize”: “The more [stickers] you collect, the more sports gear you get so get going and start collecting” (The Yummy Fruit Company, n.d., para. 1). In short, a school could only receive the “free DG Sport sports gear” when the parents of students had made the ‘right’ choice of consumption – choosing Yummy-branded apples. This technology of consumption is also a form of philanthropy, similar to what King (2006) describes as ‘consumer-oriented philanthropy’. It is when consumers are encouraged to buy a certain product over others based on the notion that their purchase will, in some way, benefit a charitable cause (e.g. the use of the pink ribbon logo on packaging or marketing a promise to donate money from every purchase of a certain brand of nappies to an immunisation programme in a developing country). In this way, the Yummy Apples School Sticker Promo attempted to increase consumption of its branded fruit by promoting two interconnected ideas: that the company - its marketing scheme, partners, products and consumers - were philanthropic; and that buying these apples would improve children’s health.

The children were not convinced, however, that the Yummy Apples School Sticker Promo would improve apple consumption. Eton said that although his mother did not buy Yummy Apples, he was “sure some other parents would say ‘I don’t mind paying thirty cents for these types of apples’”. Brian also said that his mother did not want to pay more for this particular brand of apple, so he collected stickers by stealing them off the apples when he was at the supermarket! When I asked Eton and Brian what free sports equipment their school received for participating in this scheme, Brian replied: “I’m pretty sure one year we won and the girl [from the Yummy Apple Company] came up with the big-as hula-hoop bag and every class got one”. To these students and their families, the benefits of buying the branded apples was outweighed by the monetary cost of purchasing what they perceived to be more expensive apples than other ‘brands’. Instead, students found other ways to subvert the promotion, yet still help their school receive free sports equipment.

The ‘charitable’ giving by external organisations was translated into a charitable act made by the teacher and/or principal, for the good of their students. For instance, I talked with some of the Year Six St Saviour’s boys about the Iron Brion BBQ Roadshow (when Iron Brion and Beef + Lamb New Zealand employees cooked and gave out ‘healthy’ hamburgers at the end of Iron Brion’s ‘edutainment’
event). The boys believed that it was their principal, Mrs Sergeant, who had paid up to $15 per student for Iron Brion’s performance and the free hamburgers. Students like Hone positioned the private sector ‘givers’ as organisations who “care about us”, but also saw teachers and principals in similar ‘philanthropic’ ways. Students were shaped as both subjects of consumption and objects for charity.

The roles of teachers and principals were also shaped by the act of gifting. The teachers frequently discussed with me their role as not just about providing educational opportunities, but an array of social, health promoting and/or entertaining experiences for their students. This was especially evident at St Saviour’s School, where students and their families lived in a low socio-economic area. I was told on a number of occasions at St Saviour’s that the students lived in poverty, were often hungry, and as Ms Ellie said, “have nothing”. As discussed earlier, Ms Ellie was aware that the Iron Brion BBQ Roadshow was “just a marketing thing”, far more “promotional” than educative. Yet it was the marketing aspect of this gift - the provision of free hamburgers - that convinced Ms Ellie (and her students) of its worthiness for consumption. Like Mrs Sergeant and her acceptance of programmes funded by pokies trusts, Ms Ellie did not want to ‘stand in the way’ of her students getting something for free, whether it was free entertainment, free education, or free food. As Ms Ellie explained to me: “Let’s face it, our children are, you know, hungry. And when Iron Brion arrived, everyone got a hot lunch”.

Teachers and principals endorsed and sanctioned free gifts based on an understanding that their children needed these free gifts. Teachers were re-imagined, by themselves and others, as more than ‘just’ teachers, but charitable ‘givers’ themselves. And through the practice of anti-politics, the policies and politics that had contributed to the children’s hunger (e.g. expensive fruit), or to teachers’ inexpertise (e.g. absence of professional development opportunities), or a lack of sports equipment in schools (e.g. government funding), were excluded from the assemblage and omitted from the possibilities for resistance.

A number of teachers further justified their use of the corporatised programmes by drawing on the notion that they had educational benefits for the students. However, this idea was contradicted by the students who believed that the act of receiving free gifts far outshone any educational purpose or relevance. For example, when I asked DJ, Mark, Hone, Carlos and Afakasi “would you want Iron
Brion to come back?” to St Saviour’s School, all five students responded with a resounding “Yes!” However, when I asked “Why?”, they responded:

**Afakasi:** I want the free hamburgers!
**Darren:** And would you want [Iron Brion] to do the same sort of talk in the hall?
**Mark:** Just the free burgers.
**Hone:** We already know what he’s going to say.

Rather than students simply being exploited by the private sector and their technologies of consumption, in some cases there was an element of children being willing to ‘exploit’ the free gifts and corporate philanthropy for their own gain.

Often the ‘educational purpose’ for the gifting was unclear. Year Seven students at Dudley School excitedly recalled an occasion when Ronald McDonald and “his assistants” (Brian), wearing red McDonald’s branded t-shirts, gave out McDonald’s hats, rugby balls and hacky sacks and taught them a dance. However, the students could not agree on why he was there. Whilst most of students thought it was part of the *My Greatest Feat* pedometer programme, some thought it was promoting another health education programme: McDonald’s Road Safety in Schools (see www.roadsafetyinschools.co.nz/). Again, rather than being easily duped into believing these gifts came with ‘no strings attached’ and no ulterior motives, a number of students were aware of corporate attempts to govern their thoughts towards consumptive ends. When I asked Helen, Nicole and Laura at Dudley School why Ronald McDonald gave them free hats and balls at school, Laura replied: “To make you hungry – to make you think of McDonald’s”.

Although I am unable to say whether or not these free gifts successfully shaped these students’ conduct and made them hungry or “think of McDonald’s”, they did not appear to discourage students from consuming McDonald’s products. All three girls (even Helen, who had delivered the speech about the dangers of McDonald’s and its sponsorship) said they regularly went to McDonald’s and enjoyed eating Big Macs, fries and Coca-Cola. It was a similar story for the Year Six boys at Dudley School who repeated Beef + Lamb New Zealand’s marketing message that Iron Brion’s hamburgers had “less fat”, “better quality beef” and were “healthier” (DJ) than McDonald’s, yet still thought that “McDonald’s tastes better” (Afakasi). When I asked Carlos “which [hamburger] would you rather have?”, he swiftly grinned and replied: “I’d have McDonald’s.”
‘Critical’ corporate resources?
The various healthy lifestyles education resources provided ‘free of charge’ to schools are widely promoted as being ‘linked’ and ‘aligned’ to The New Zealand curriculum, empowering children to live healthy lifestyles for life through teaching them how to be responsible and make informed choices. Some are also marketed as being a form of ‘critical’ education, one that draws on the socio-critical aims of the national curriculum and critiques broader influences on children’s choices, including food and drink advertising. For instance, the stated aim of the 5+ A Day resource ‘Bright ideas: Marketing and advertising fresh fruit and vegetables’ (5+ A Day Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 4) is to promote “awareness, critical thinking and action” about food marketing by providing “opportunities for children to critically analyse advertisements”. There are aspects of this resource that appear to encourage ‘critical thinking and action’ about advertising and how it may influence health. For example, the resource directs teachers to ask students to “examine how food advertisements affect our attitudes toward and choices of different foods” (p. 2), and suggests a number of activities for students to learn how advertisers used logos, mascots and cartoon characters to increase consumption.

Similarly, Life Education’s ‘Warrant of Fitness’ unit states that the purpose is to teach students to be critical of advertising. In the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 13) there is an ‘Advertising is everywhere’ activity which endeavours to teach children the differences between two food pyramids: one that represents “diet as recommended by doctors and dieticians” (a ‘healthy’ food pyramid); and the other which demonstrates “diet as shown by amount of advertising”. Students are instructed as follows:

Think about the types of food we see advertised, are they the sorts of food that would make up a recommended diet? Not really but advertising must work, after all the companies wouldn’t pay the big money that they do if it wasn’t going to help to sell more of their product now would they? And where do we see this advertising … not only TV [but also] sponsorship … So we need to think carefully about what we are seeing and believing. (Life Education Trust, n.d.-a, p. 13).

On the surface these ‘charitable’ resources give the impression they are teaching a critical form of ‘healthy lifestyles education’. However, they also employ pedagogies of silence to ensure children, teachers and the external providers remain uncritical of
marketing messages and tactics that might benefit the business interests of the corporate funders/sponsors. The resources and various teachers/educators/coaches/mascots did not attempt to ‘inform’ students how to negotiate marketing strategies of corporations that are not meant to be ‘seen’ as advertising, such as free gifts, product placement, or the ‘obesity solutions’ themselves. For instance, *Life Education* teacher Marion explained to me that the point of the ‘You are what you eat’ lesson was to “look at how people get tricked into buying junk food, what the advertisers want us to see, want us to buy, why they want, and that it’s just money”. Marion, however, never asked the students why Frucor, a Japanese-owned company that marketed and sold a range of ‘unhealthy’ products to young people outside of school, was wanting to teach New Zealand children about healthy choices. Neither did Marion, the resource writers or their advisor (Frucor nutritionist Jenny Yee) encourage students to discuss how Frucor profits from sponsoring *Life Education*, or critique how placing Just Juice and H2Go products in students’ workbooks and newsletters was a form of corporate ‘trickery’.

The notion of a form of ‘critical’ education that specifically challenged advertising was added to the assemblage as a way to resolve tensions between the need for organisations to market products to children and the need for school to teach children about health. For instance, charitable organisation 5+ A Day claims that its resource will teach children how to be critical of the influence of marketing on their “attitudes toward and choices of different foods” (5+ A Day Charitable Trust, 2011, p. 2). At the same time, however, the 5+ A Day programme employs a number of pedagogical strategies “to help children develop health enhancing attitudes to fruit/vegetables” (p. 3), “to promote fresh fruit and vegetables to their friends and families” (p. 4), and “help make 5+ A Day a way of life for children and their families” (p. 4). In other words, this form of critical education is shaped by the commitment of 5+ A Day to “[increase] the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables” (5+ A Day Charitable Trust, 2013), not only “for children and their families”, but to its ‘not-for-profit’ benefactor United Fresh, and its numerous fee-paying, *for-profit* members. The 5+ A Day resource does not ask students to challenge the idea that consuming five or more fruit and vegetables will inevitably make them healthier, or how the 5+ A Day message is not just a health message but a marketing campaign. Corporate and commercial interests remain firmly attached to the assemblage. The corporate healthy lifestyles education programmes act as a
vehicle to mobilise technologies of consumption that aim to achieve the dual governmental ambitions of the private sector: to shape the uncritical child-consumer and increase consumption. The possibilities to disrupt dominant discourses of health, consumption and marketing remained silenced.

**Assembling the (un)critical, (un)healthy consumer**

By using philanthropic strategies and charitable partners, what the private sector attempted to do was mobilise children (and their parents) ‘at a distance’ to consume. Corporations employed technologies of consumption to form connections between “very specific features of goods enmeshed in particular consumption practices” (especially in terms of health) and children’s “needs, desires, pleasures and terrors” (Miller & Rose, 1997, p. 43). From my numerous conversations with children, it was evident that a number of children (from five to thirteen years of age) had clear “needs, desires, pleasures and terrors” that were aligned with neoliberal notions of health and fatness. Key features of corporate products (e.g. ‘low calorie’, ‘sugar-free’, ‘gives you energy’) were attached to these beliefs about health in ways that fulfilled the child’s ‘desire’ to make the right choices, their ‘pleasure’ in having a thin body, their ‘terror’ of being fat, and their ‘need’ to consume healthy, often branded, goods.

The re-assembled ‘healthy’ corporation and their ‘healthy’ products were re-imagined as key solutions to multiple ‘problems’, such as iron deficiency, a lack of fruit and vegetable consumption, energy levels, sports participation, ‘junk’ food advertising, unhealthy lifestyles and obesity. These re-invented corporations, their products and practices were promoted and understood as providing simpler means for children to make healthier choices (e.g. to choose H2Go water over soft drinks); as a way to be active and have more fun (e.g. MILO as the ‘official drink of play’); and, to avoid being unhealthy, fat and disgusting (e.g. McDonald’s selling fruit, vegetables and Weightwatchers products).

However, it was not only ‘healthy’ corporate products that children were convinced to consume. Governmental technologies were also employed in an attempt to govern children and teachers to become uncritical consumers of corporate strategies and profit-seeking tactics: advertising, marketing, public relations and corporate philanthropy. For instance, Mrs Donna dismissed the intent of sponsorship, believing that “they’re not using it as advertising to the kids”. Mr Woodward stated
that profit was not the “prime purpose” of the programmes he allowed into his school and believed to be of value to his students, such as McDonald’s My Greatest Feat, Life Education, and the Yummy Apples Sticker Promotion. Mr Spurlock admitted he had “not noticed” the Just Juice and H2Go marketing in the ‘Warrant of Fitness’ workbook he asked his students to complete.

However, the success of these forms of government to work ‘at a distance’ and not be seen as obvious, coercive or ponderous forms of power were rather mixed. For example, when I asked Reynard Intermediate School Year Seven student Sam if he thought McDonald’s cared about children’s health: “I think McDonald’s probably does care a bit … they have like Weightwatchers meals, so it shows they kind of care for health. But then again they mainly deal fast food.” Similarly, there was both resistance and acceptance of the ‘official’ corporate rhetoric that they wanted to make children healthier. I asked Dudley School students Helen, Laura and Nicole if they thought McDonald’s implemented physical activity programmes in schools to make children active, or healthier, or to teach them about health:

Laura: No.
Helen: If they’re going to teach you about health-
Nicole: -make your food healthy!
Helen: But they have healthy food, like apples.

Assembling together the ‘healthy’ corporate products with the ‘healthy’ (and caring) brand image of the corporation acted as an additional technology of consumption, helping to smooth over any perceived contradictions between the aims of a corporation (e.g. to sell junk food, or to make profit) and the impact on children’s health or education.

I am not suggesting that children were naïve and easily coerced into becoming mindless consumers of corporate brands. Rarely were the students positioned by corporations as consumers who were “largely irrational or foolish, to be manipulated through methods not far removed from those of political propaganda” (Miller & Rose, 1997, p. 3). Like Kenway and Bullen (2001, p. 110), I also found that a number of “kids are highly literate when it comes to explicit advertising and [are] well aware of its purpose”. Indeed, a number of children actively contested, negotiated and resisted dominant discourses of health and consumption, as well as more explicit forms of marketing (e.g. the placement of an H2Go bottle in the Life Education food pyramid) and strategic philanthropy (e.g. the
free hamburgers from *Iron Brion*). The children’s perception that corporate sponsorship and product placement was mostly about profit contrasted with the ideas expressed by a number of teachers, principals and external providers. However, despite the students’ cynicism towards the intent of some of the technologies of consumption, there was also an acceptance of sponsorship, product placement and advertising as ‘normal’. As Eton recognised, when a corporation sponsored an education programme they “deserved” to promote their brand to children in schools.

Resistance to more *inconspicuous* and hidden forms of school-based commercialism was mostly absent, as was opposition to marketing and commercialism *in general*. Advertising was perceived, by adults and children alike, as a ‘natural’ and unproblematic part of children’s everyday lives. Indeed, there were a number of occasions when I was talking to Year Six or Seven students about advertising, McDonald’s or a specific product, and the children burst into spontaneous song (‘I’m lovin’ it’) or role-played scenes from their favourite (or most hated) television advertisements. Marketing was not just a normal part of life that was merely accepted, but something that children found entertaining, even enjoyable.

**Re-assembling the (un)healthy child-consumer**

It may be obvious, but corporations and industry groups (as well as their charitable partners) are unlikely to encourage children or adults to critically examine or take collective action against business strategies that attempt to influence children’s choices, lifestyles, education or lives. These corporatised healthy lifestyles education programmes certainly did not attempt to significantly ‘empower’ or ‘inform’ children how to take radical or critical action and challenge how corporations and their educational resources may *negatively* influence their own and others’ health. Not one of the resources encouraged teachers or students to critique the role of the food industry in shaping rules, laws and regulations around food production, labelling, marketing, pricing and selling. Not a single external provider or mascot spoke out against the absence of regulations in New Zealand to restrict marketing in schools and in educational resources. No external providers asked children to question if the private sector should be allowed to advertise to children at all.\(^{28}\) In this way,

\(^{28}\) In 2014, Brazil’s Conanda (National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents) passed Conanda Resolution 163, which stipulated that “the practice of directing advertising and marketing communication to children with the intention of persuading them to consume any product or service” is illegal as it is considered “abusive” (Consumer International Group, 2014, para. 2).
technologies of consumption were fused to the assemblage through the practice of anti-politics. Any potential debate about problematic politics and policies relating to marketing to children and targeting children as consumers were shut down. This represents what Ferguson (1994) described as ‘the anti-politics machine’, where solutions to various ‘problems’ – health, obesity and marketing - fall within the repertoire and expertise of the organisations with the most to gain (and the most to lose) from any challenges to the status quo. In this case it was the private sector who were re-invented as the experts on children’s (un)healthy consumption.

These for-profit organisations used education as a vehicle to reproduce the idea that for children to be healthy they need to choose certain products from “generous” and “caring” corporations. It was these very organisations who ‘taught’ children about the ‘tricks’ of advertisers, yet at the same time exposed the children to a range of stealthy marketing tactics, such as product placement, sponsorship, and free gifts. And it was the same authorities – Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Frucor, Nestlé, McDonald’s, United Fresh, 5+ A Day – who excluded the politics of health and marketing from their lessons. Potential challenges to the structure of political-economic connections, such as the relationships between corporations, industry groups, ‘charities’ and government agencies were ignored. Important political questions about the place of advertising in schools and/or to children were re-posed as questions of technique and responsibility. Corporations and charities used marketing strategies to exploit health education resources, ‘teaching’ children to ‘ignore’ and ‘not believe’ certain forms of marketing, whilst concurrently trying to convince children to consume their products and public relations.

The organisations who developed and implemented these programmes in primary schools, in particular those with profit-seeking motives, have a vested interest in shaping children into becoming and being a certain type of ‘healthy’ consumer. Healthy lifestyles education programmes have become not only an important ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity, but a critical element of the overall strategy to realise the “neoliberal imaginary”; to ensure that the endeavours of corporations, charities, governments and schools to govern children to healthy, self-responsible and actively consuming ends are rendered thinkable, do-able, and successful.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion

… it is all these different arts of government, all these different types of ways of calculating, rationalizing, and regulating the art of government which, overlapping each other, broadly speaking constitute the object of political debate from the nineteenth century. What is politics, in the end, if not both the interplay of these different arts of government with their different reference points and the debate to which these different arts of government give rise? It seems to me that it is here that politics is born. (Foucault, 2008, p. 313)

In this thesis I sought to critically interrogate the phenomenon of corporations funding, devising, and implementing ‘solutions’ to childhood obesity in New Zealand primary schools. To do this I paid particular attention to the different ‘arts of government’ undertaken by an “ensemble” of authorities, institutions and agents, using an array of technologies, tactics and bodies of knowledge, in an attempt to guide individuals’ conduct towards definite, albeit unpredictable, ends (Foucault, 1991a, p. 102). Given the large number of authorities, institutions and agents that positioned themselves as ‘part of the solution’ to children’s unhealthy lifestyles and bodies, this was no straightforward task. I began by analysing how the ‘wicked’ problem of childhood obesity enabled the interests of a heterogeneous array of players to forge alignments for often self-serving ends. I also examined how this set of actors and organisations converged and how they congealed, especially when they often had competing, even contradictory aims.

Li’s (2007a, 2007b) work on assemblage formed an integral part of my analytical framework. These practices – forging alignments, rendering technical, managing failures and contradictions, anti-politics and re-assembling – allowed me to explore the ways elements were assembled together in an attempt to regulate the lives of children and adults ‘at a distance’. By disentangling various elements of the assemblage - from discourses of health and fatness to technologies of consumption, from the political rationality of neoliberalism to the actually implemented curricula and pedagogies, from strategies of philanthropy and charity to marketing tactics of product placement and free gifts - I examined the means by which both disparate and similar elements were brought together and made to adhere. I also focused my collection of evidence and analysis on how individual and collective subjects
involved in the creation and implementation of these governmental programmes understood, experienced, and were (re)shaped by them.

Re-assembling the (un)healthy subject

A number of scholars have examined the governmental technologies and rationalities activated in the name of preventing childhood obesity. These have tended to take the form of discursive governmentality studies, that is, studies which focus on the ‘official’ plans to govern. In contrast, there have been far fewer governmentality studies that have investigated the messy micro-practices of government in actual sites and spaces. I have attempted to address this ‘gap’ in the literature by building on governmentality studies that have examined the everyday practices and people in schools. One aspect that I particularly wanted to explore, an element that continues to be relatively unexplored in the governmentality literature, was how the rationales and technologies of government assembled with, and re-assembled, the subjectivities of collectives and individuals.

My research adds to the literature by demonstrating how political rationalities have been assembled with technologies of government to produce (or at least attempt to produce) certain subjects as ‘natural’ and ‘necessary’. Schools, corporations, intergovernmental organisations (e.g. World Health Organization), industry groups (e.g. IFBA, United Fresh), governments, NGOs, charities, and other ‘not-for-profits’ were all able to be (re)assembled through their mutual interest in ‘educational’ solutions to fight childhood obesity. This convergence did not happen by accident, nor was it forced. Rather, by sharing interests, ‘scratching backs’, making compromises, managing contradictions, relieving tensions, and forming partnerships, disparate (and not-so-disparate) parties joined forces to hold the assemblage together. By re-assembling themselves (and each other), and by re-assembling the meaning of health, education and philanthropy, authorities were able to realise their ‘shared’ governmental ambitions and transform them into actually existing programmes of government.

Corporations, particularly those from the food and drink industry, appear to have successfully re-invented themselves as ‘part of the solution’ to the global socio-economic ‘problem’ of childhood obesity, by globalising philanthropic programmes that tell children to be more responsible for their health. Outsourceable healthy

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29 This title is borrowed from Leahy’s (2012) dissertation, Assembling the [healthy] subject.
lifestyles education programmes act as governmental strategies to promote consumption - healthy or otherwise - but also align public education and public health with the macro-economic objectives of governments, corporations and ‘not-for-profits’. In this way, corporations’ and charities’ interest in funding, devising and implementing school-based obesity programmes should not simply be understood as a shift in business strategy but, as King (2006, p. 98) points out, “part of a struggle over how and by whom socioeconomic management on a transnational scale should be undertaken”. This represents two noteworthy transformations in contemporary governance. First, the state’s responsibility for the health, wealth and education of the population has shifted to ‘others’. Second, the ‘non-coercive’ strategies that the various authorities employed, such as industry groups making marketing commitments to the World Health Organization or corporations gifting free resources to schools, worked as a form of “normative coercion” (Turner, 1997, p. xiv).

Governments, corporations, charities and schools worked together to construct the ‘problem’ (e.g. obesity, inexpert teachers) and then provided solutions that fitted their own interests and expertise; solutions that also became normalised. Teachers considered it normal to outsource HPE teaching. Students thought it was normal to be taught about health by corporate mascots. Charities and their employees believed that it was normal to accept sponsorship and nutritional advice from a soft-drink manufacturer. And corporations considered it normal to be involved in teaching children about health, fatness and advertising. The fact that private financial interests were able to align with the dissimilar purposes of governments, public health organisations, charitable trusts, national sports organisations, schools, teachers and children demonstrates the “triumph of ‘the neoliberal imaginary’” (Ball, 2012, p. 2).

This is not to suggest, however, that neoliberalism was the only rationality that re-shaped the assemblage. Not everything that happened in these primary schools in the name of promoting ‘healthy lifestyles’ and ‘fighting childhood obesity’ were examples of a ‘purely’ neoliberal governmentality. As Li (2007c, p. 6) points out, any explicit programme of intervention, although shaped by a ‘will to govern’ and ‘to improve’, is not necessarily “the product of a singular intention or will”. Whilst there is a tendency for governmentality scholars to suggest that neoliberalism is wholly responsible for technologies of privatisation, corporatisation, consumption, and commercialisation (an idea I recently heard described as the
‘neoliberalism did it’ explanation), the political rationality of *welfarism* was also evident and influential.

Welfarism was attached to the assemblage in a way that both *justified* the reason corporations, charities and schools ‘gave’ the healthy lifestyles education programmes to children, and *actualised* (Inda, 2005) the means to transform welfarism into ‘reality’ (Miller & Rose, 2008). In the provision of programmes - whether resources, external providers, sponsorship, or free gifts - the emergence of a ‘new’ mode of government that embodied a ‘moral’ form, articulated by distinctive idioms, such as corporate social responsibility, charity, partnership, and philanthropy was evident. These idioms were more than just the rhetoric of welfare, care and kindness. They were “a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political deliberations” (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 277). In this way, both neoliberalism and welfarism converged and congealed to help re-assemble the corporate endeavour to make children healthy. Healthy lifestyles education programmes were not just for improving children’s health, but public relations, branding, profit, philanthropy, and the ‘good’ of children, teachers, and society.

These rationalities of government underpinned, and helped to connect, a gamut of technologies of government, such as: the *Global Healthy Kids Programme*; Frucor’s partnership with the Life Education Trust; Ronald McDonald handing out free pedometers; the International Food & Beverage Alliance’s promise to reduce marketing to children; and the promotion of products in schools for ‘educational purposes’. These were all programmes of government articulated in relation to ‘problems’ of government – the social and public health consequences of childhood obesity, children’s unhealthy lifestyles, and a ‘lack’ of health and physical education. In this way, the governmentality of childhood obesity did not rely solely on a welfarist ‘nanny-state’, nor a corporate ‘owned’ public health imperative. It involved complex relationships between rationalities and technologies of government and public, private and voluntary sector organisations, relationships that connected ‘at a distance’ to the apparatus of the state.

Schools were re-positioned as more than sites for critical education and the development of democracy (Giroux, 2001). New elements were fused to the assemblage (e.g. commercialism, philanthropy, anti-obesity interventions) and old elements re-worked (e.g. the aims and vision of *The New Zealand curriculum*, the
expert status of teachers) in ways that substantially re-assembled the roles of schools, staff and students. The commercial interests of the private sector and their charitable partners meant that schools became legitimised sites for corporations and industry groups to promote their brands, brand images, products, new-found health statuses, and altruism. Schools re-imagined their role as ‘allowing’ these profit-seeking organisations and their beneficiaries into their schools for the ‘benefit’ of the students, and at the same time teachers, principals and students became active agents of the private sector, proxy marketers and active consumers of the philanthropic corporation and its healthy products.

The field of HPE was also re-imagined by the convergence of the national curriculum, educational resources, and pedagogies with key tenets of neoliberalism. The socio-critical aims of The New Zealand curriculum were re-posed to represent neoliberal notions of freedom of choice, individual responsibility, autonomy, self-care, self-monitoring and active consumerism. HPE was re-assembled as a healthy lifestyles education (Dinan-Thompson, 2009), one that employed resources and pedagogies which attempted to transfer the responsibility for children’s health, fitness and consumption away from corporations and the state, and towards children and their families. Furthermore, the normalisation and naturalisation of outsourcing HPE also worked to further enable the neoliberal imaginary to ‘triumph’, shifting the responsibility of the state to provide teachers with HPE professional development opportunities, and the responsibility of teachers to teach their students HPE, towards external providers. These were providers that, in the majority of cases, were not qualified, registered or experienced teachers, and as Petrie and her colleagues (2012; Petrie et al., 2014) point out, tend to rely on ‘one-size-fits-all’ teaching approaches. Ideas about the purpose of HPE, what quality HPE looks like, who the HPE expert should be, were re-assembled to align with the aims, interests, expertise and ambitions of corporations, charities, pokie trusts, industry groups, and sporting organisations – and rarely the specific interests or needs of the students.

The private sector has benefited considerably from this broad re-assemblage. The corporations of the International Food & Beverage Alliance, for example, have been re-assembled by grafting the element of education on to their ‘desire’ (and necessity) to be seen to be implementing healthy solutions to childhood obesity, and to their marketing practices. Corporations like Nestlé and McDonald’s are now able “to engage in product marketing communications to students in primary schools” as
long as the principals or teachers believe it is “for specific educational purposes” (IFBA, 2011b, para. 8). In short, as long as the gatekeepers of children’s education are convinced that profit is not these programmes’ “prime purpose” (Mr Woodward), or that “they’re not using it as advertising to the kids” (Mrs Donna), then it is permissible, even encourageable to reproduce the corporate ‘brand’ of health and education. The ‘unhealthy’, obesity-causing, corporation that is “greed-driven and uninterested in the wider public good” (Kenway & Bullen, 2001, p. 100) has been relatively successfully re-invented as an organisation that is healthy.

The ‘dangers’ of healthy lifestyles education programmes
This broad re-assemblage of schools, charities, corporations, and HPE has a number of potentially ‘dangerous’ implications for different organisations and actors. When teachers re-imagine their role as ‘outsourcers’ to expert providers, when they watch their students and ‘learn’ from the sideline, they are inadvertently placing a strain on their relationships with students. The young people I spoke with expressed love, care and admiration of their teachers, yet perceived their teachers’ reluctance to teach HPE as evidence of laziness and their lack of the appropriate skills and knowledge (in comparison to the sports coaches and other external providers). In turn, teachers were positioned, and positioned themselves, as deficient.

As well as contributing to the construction of the classroom teachers as inadequate, the teachers, by their reliance on external organisations to provide educational experiences to their students, were directly implicated in the increasing privatisation of education in New Zealand. As Thrupp (2015, para. 12-13) recently observed of the New Zealand education context: “Some of the privatisation could be considered hidden but a lot of it is becoming pretty obvious. New Zealand's privatisation of education is through public apathy as well as by stealth.” The teachers in the three schools in my study were often vociferous opponents of the more obvious ‘privatisations’ of education – such as the introduction of charter schools or the outsourcing of the payroll system – but were less opposed to and apparently ignored the ‘hidden privatisations’ (see Ball, 2007), such as outsourcing HPE to corporations, charities and other organisations. That is perhaps one of the greatest risks of outsourcing, it has become, or at least will become, the ‘new normal’ to be embraced, rather than resisted; a privatisation in and of education that is not
merely considered a ‘good’ way of teaching, but the ‘best’ way. As my conversation with Mrs Donna revealed when I asked her about outsourcing:

Mrs Donna: I think it’s perfect. I personally think it should happen more often.
Darren: Do you mean in health and physical education, or do you mean across the board?
Mrs Donna: Across the board.

For researchers there is clearly work to do. More research needs to be conducted with teachers and principals to help ‘connect the dots’ between the ‘humble and mundane’ use of outsourced, corporatised lessons, resources and providers and the broader social, cultural, political and economic forces that continue to shape schools’ propensity to revert to outsourcing, such as a lack of government-funded professional development, initial teacher education, or curriculum-informed (as opposed to curriculum ‘aligned’) resources. This could include finding effective ways to illuminate how GERMs and other reforms are not just enforced from the ‘outside in’ or ‘top down’, but are made possible from the ‘inside out’ or ‘bottom up’, and by pointing to the critical role teachers and principals play in (re)producing the ever-present practices of privatisation and corporatisation.

One aspect of my thesis that needs to be ‘opened up’ by future research is for evidence to be collected from a wider range of sources. For instance, when looking at the ‘plans to govern’ I frequently used documents such as annual reports, promotional material and websites produced by the corporations and charities. Following the work of Williams and Lee (2014) and Macdonald, Enright, McCuaig, Rossi, and Sperka (2014), there is space to talk to organisations and agents who devise and fund these programmes, rather than just those targeted by them. A CEO, for example, could be asked questions about the strategic nature of corporate philanthropy, partnership and sponsorship. Corporate nutritionists could be asked about the uncertain evidence that ‘fat is bad’ or that teaching children to be more responsible will make children healthier. Advertising agencies might be quizzed about ‘fat-washing’ or ‘health-washing’ corporate products and the brand image. Computer programmers could be questioned about their briefs to create interactive ‘health education’ web games. Charity and corporate board members might be asked about the blurred boundaries between profit and not-for-profit. Pokie trusts should be interrogated about the contradictions between providing funding for health programmes in schools whilst causing ill-health in the same community. By asking
questions about the rationales and technologies of government, we may discover more about the elements that constitute the assemblage and how they are made to converge and congeal. We might also gain greater insight into how the relay points of the assemblage may be weakened and made more susceptible to rupture.

Another limitation of my study is that I focused on three primary schools in the New Zealand context. Given that these ‘solutions’ to obesity in the name of ‘educational purposes’ are connected to international policies, further research is needed to critically interrogate how school-based healthy lifestyles education programmes are funded, devised, implemented and shaped on a global scale by international, multinational, national and regional authorities. How are similar programmes ‘brought into’ schools in Australia, Thailand, Russia or Nigeria? How do teachers, principals and children understand and experience them? What similar and diverse elements make up the assemblage in these contexts? And what practices make them ‘stick’?

Finally, there are obvious implications for children (as well as their classroom teachers, external providers and researchers) who were regularly and ubiquitously ‘informed’ by the various resources and teachers/instructors/coaches/mascots that health and fatness was their responsibility. In the view of many students, this repeated mantra of personal responsibility to make healthy lifestyles choices was frustrating, boring, and did little to develop their knowledge, skills or understanding about health in any meaningful or useful way. This healthist perspective rarely acknowledged the complex lives of children, especially young people like Natia who had little choice in what she ate or how she lived her ‘lifestyle’. Instead, these healthy lifestyles education programmes attempted to shift the “responsibility for the politics of health to individuals’ inherent ‘ability’ or capacity to act responsibly and change the ways they live their lives” (Evans et al., 2008, p. 54). Yet, despite the young people’s resistance to some aspects of these programmes, the children rarely challenged the notion that to be healthy they simply needed to make better choices, continue to self-monitor their attitudes and behaviours, be more responsible and be less fat. This is hardly surprising given the evidence that these responsibilising, individualistic, healthist imperatives are circulated in schools, families (Burrows, 2009; Fullager, 2009; Lupton, 2014), the media (De Pian, Evans, & Rich, 2014), and even supermarkets (Colls and Evans, 2008).
Clearly, one of the intended outcomes of a neoliberal approach is that the state and the private sector are absolved of any responsibility for children’s ill-health or fatness. At the same time they endeavour to make themselves appear to be responsible for children’s health and non-fatness. The programmes provided to schools worked to gloss-over, if not completely obscure, the multiple constraints, forces, drivers and understandings of health. In many respects, wider determinants of health, such as homelessness, marketing, cost of food, access to public transport, sub-par living wage, unemployment, and poverty, were re-imagined as merely excuses for unhealthy and/or obese children’s own moral failure to make the ‘correct’ (i.e. healthy) choices of consumption. In this way “the issue of choice can be seen as more of a facade as it is understood that a number of oppressive social and structural forces mediate the choices in which one is able to make” (Ayo, 2012, p. 104). One of my hopes for this thesis was to problematise the ‘façade’ of ‘informed choice’ as the foundation for teaching children about (ill)health and obesity. The causes of obesity are complex, yet through the lens of healthism, individual behaviour, emotions, attitudes, and bodies are re-positioned “as the relevant symptoms needing attention” (Crawford, 1980, p. 368). The fat child, like Natia, was therefore understood by children and adults alike as an unhealthy child, one that was fundamentally immoral, fat and “unhealthy on purpose” (Crawford, 1984, p. 71). The child who is ill or fat or poor (or all three) was able to be blamed for their own individual, moral and corporeal ‘choices’ (see also Crawford, 1977).

In contrast, a child who is dissatisfied with their health and/or body and desires to be more ‘responsible’ is also, as Pylypa (1998, p. 27) notes, “good for capitalism as it leads to consumption”. The corporate influenced lifestyle programmes I have examined in this thesis, deployed multiple technologies of consumption to not merely govern children to become healthy citizens, but healthy consumers. The insertion of ‘healthy’ corporate products into children’s resources, workbooks, letters home, and lessons; sponsorship of the programmes and resources; re-inventing children as marketers of the sponsors products; children and schools receiving ‘free’ sponsors products; and re-imagining a corporate-friendly form of ‘critical’ health education, were all mechanisms to achieve the goals of corporations and charities. The healthy lifestyles education programmes were an essential relay point in the assemblage; companies like Nestlé and Frucor would have arguably found it more difficult (although not impossible) to mobilise their commercialistic
strategies if it were not for the promise to schools for education, entertainment and health promotion. Rather than being a form of education that encouraged students or teachers to challenge the status quo, take critical action, or to empower students to resist the corporate version of health and health education, this type of healthy lifestyles education was employed as a means to shape children as uncritical consumers of corporations - their brand, image, PR, product, philanthropy - and uncritical consumers of this new “brand of health” (Vander Schee, 2008, p. 5). The phenomenon of corporations ‘teaching’ children about health, fatness and lifestyles represents a new brand of schooling - for consumption.

**Counter-politics: Unsettling the anti-political assemblage**

A significant practice of assemblage that joined together multiple rationalities, technologies and subjectivities was anti-politics (Li, 2007a, 2007b). This was a practice that enabled teachers, principals, students, external providers, CEO’s, charitable trusts and children to “exclude the structure of political-economic relations from the diagnoses and prescriptions” (Li, 2007b, p. 7) about health, education and marketing. It was inseparable from another practice of assemblage - rendering technical - where failures are re-imagined as superficial problems rather than fundamentally political ones (see Li, 2007b). By rendering the problems of childhood obesity and unhealthy lifestyles both anti-political and technical, authorities closed down discussions about, and challenges to, dominant discourses of health and fatness, the place of corporations and charities ‘teaching’ children in schools, and the broader determinants of children’s (ill)health, such as poverty or policy.

Although the ‘anti-politics machine’ (Ferguson, 1994) attempts to restrict debate about how to govern, who to govern, and what to govern, looking at healthy lifestyles education as an anti-political device also opens up opportunities to ‘unsettle’ (Youdell, 2011) or ‘convert’ the assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; see also Hickey-Moody, 2009). Li (2007b, p. 10) reminds us that the use of expertise to render problems technical and anti-political “is not a secure accomplishment”, but an on-going project: “Questions that experts exclude, misrecognize, or attempt to contain do not go away”. With this in mind, I am encouraged to find ways to ensure these questions remain, and discover how to make these questions audible, visible and ‘teachable’; to understand how teachers may challenge, and encourage their students to critique, this corporate ‘brand’ of health and education. This is an area of
research that needs further exploration and analysis. How do we enable a counter-politics (see Youdell, 2011) of the healthy lifestyles education assemblage?

In the three schools I conducted research in, there were glimpses of the assemblage being unsettled. Students, principals, teachers and external providers were not merely cultural or political dupes or corporate stooges who uncritically reproduced dominant notions of health, fatness, and consumerism. A number of children and teachers actively contested the multifarious discourses and discursive practices. Indeed, one of the most encouraging and rewarding aspects of my research was that children were perhaps the most critical out of all the participants I worked with. They regularly challenged the idea that corporate philanthropy was altruistic, that the free programmes and resources were more about education than advertising, or that people could not be fat and healthy. However, during my time in these schools, these critiques and debates only occurred in the research conversations outside the classroom. Neither the classroom teachers, the external providers nor the corporate educational resources encouraged the children to engage in any meaningful, in-depth critical analysis.

There were moments that placed the assemblage under strain, such as when five-year-old Leon shouted out that sugar was bad because “it makes you fat”, when Mrs Sergeant blamed inappropriate pedagogies of external providers on the fact they were not teachers, when Ms Ellie identified Iron Brion as promotional, and when teachers bemoaned the pressures of National Standards. Yet all too often these potential ‘openings’ to unsettle the assemblage were closed off, most often by teachers, principals, charities and corporations drawing on dominant discourses of education, health, obesity and/or philanthropy. These discourses congealed with the ‘official’ rationales for these governmental interventions, both acting as ‘thixotropic agents’ of the anti-politics machine (see Rose & Miller, 1991); potential lines of fracture and divergence - ones that threatened the assemblage - were transformed back into points of convergence and coherence. This bolstered fragile relay points in the assemblage, resulting in the assemblage not merely surviving, but being re-assembled and strengthened. The practice of corporations shaping healthy lifestyles education programmes in primary schools remained safe; it was “business as usual” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi).

What requires further investigation are the ways teachers and children - the targets of experts and authorities - are able to (re)create the conditions that enable
challenges to expert diagnosis and dominant discourses, make deliberate attempts to de-stabilise and covert the assemblage, challenges that the authorities cannot contain, control or close. As Foucault (1984a, p. 94) reminds us, power is productive, able to be “exercised from innumerable points” and is not necessarily hierarchical, to be imposed on populations and individuals from ‘above’. There needs to be further examination of the instances when teachers and/or students refuse to believe the idea that fat is bad, disgusting or unhealthy, or that health is a five-year-old child’s responsibility. More critical, in-depth research needs to be undertaken to examine how these moments are transformed into political questions, new ‘truths’, critical action and other forms of counter-politics. Critical ethnographies, such as Fitzpatrick’s (2010, 2013) ethnographic account of HPE teacher Dan and his students, are central to unearthing the politics, anti-politics and counter-politics of schooling.

One avenue for researchers, teachers and principals to explore is exploiting the healthy lifestyles education programmes for their own ends (see Boyles, 2001, 2005a). In this respect, teachers, students and researchers can critically examine the corporate providers (and various ‘partners’), the corporate materials, the political rationalities which underpin them, and the everyday practices they shape. A number of critical scholars highlight the possibilities of engaging with a critical pedagogy of commercialism and consumption (for examples, see Boyles, 2005b; Giroux, 2001; Saltman & Gabbard, 2011; Sandlin & McLaren, 2010), as opposed to schools ignoring, avoiding or banning corporate resources and programmes. Saltman and Goodman (2011, p. 53), for example, recommend that as corporate curricula continue to turn schooling into a propaganda ground for their own destructive interests, one solution is clearly to stop using them. Another is to provide teachers with resources for researching the agendas of the corporations that finance and distribute such products in public schools and museums so that the ideological functions of the curricula can be turned against themselves, and the corporation’s global agendas will be shown as contextualised and centred within the curricula. In this way, students can be shown how their interests and worldviews actually differ from the way their interests and worldviews are constructed in the curricula.

In other words, just as corporations or charities may ‘exploit’ concerns about obesity or health or education for their own interests, teachers can also be supported and encouraged to ‘exploit’ the relationships between these organisations and their
impact (intended or otherwise) on health and education “as object lessons for students’ critical analysis” (Boyles, 2005a, p. 218-219). In this way, teachers might ask: ‘In whose interests do these healthy lifestyles education programmes work?’ or ‘Are they really a ‘win-win’ situation for governments, corporations, and schools alike?’

Teachers could encourage their students to question why McDonald’s, Nestlé, Frucor and Life Education promote individualistic understandings of nutrition and physical activity over and above other knowledge children may have about health, fatness, eating or movement. Reynard Intermediate students, for instance, could write to Nestlé New Zealand and the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation and ask how “making the student responsible for their learning and actions” would solve the “issue related to money or access to food” (Nestlé New Zealand, 2011, p. 16). Teachers might support students to investigate Big Food - their practices (e.g. lobbying, marketing, philanthropy), products, profits, and criticisms; how they try to shape children’s bodies, thoughts, and conduct (for an example of students challenging Big Food, see Darts & Tavin, 2010). For instance, the five-year-olds in Mrs Constansa’s class at Dudley School could invite Ronald McDonald back to their school, then ask him why his company markets Happy Meals during children’s television programmes every morning, even though they are not old enough to go to McDonald’s by themselves. Mr Spurlock and his Year Seven students could ask Life Education teacher Marion why she said she would teach them about the ‘tricks’ of advertisers, yet did not point out the ways Frucor was trying to ‘trick’ students into buying H2Go and Just Juice.

Counter-politics should not just take a form of resistance to the specific healthy lifestyles education resources and pedagogies, but look to broader elements of the assemblage. Counter-politics can and does take place in “everyday struggles and resistances enacted by students, teachers or others in the practices of their everyday lives” (Youdell, 2011, p. 15). How do technologies of consumption, notions of individualism, the rationalities of welfarism and neoliberalism, and multiple ‘other’ organisations intersect with and shape the ‘everyday lives’ and subjectivities of children and adults in schools and outside of schools? For example, teachers could explore how healthism - an ideology that Crawford (1980) described as assuming a non-political agenda - works to privilege certain groups in society more than others, and why obesity rates, life expectancy and ill-health may be worse
for those living in poverty and/or from Māori and Pasifika communities. Natia and her classmates at St Saviour’s might ask 5+ A Day and United Fresh to answer questions, such as ‘Why are you telling us to eat 5+ A Day when we can’t afford it?’, ‘Why are fruit and vegetables in New Zealand so expensive’, ‘How much do the growers and the supermarkets pay you to promote the 5+ A Day message’, or even, ‘Is eating 5+ servings a day really going to make me healthy?’

Counter-politics might also take a “form of organized lobbying or co-ordinated resistance over particular policy initiatives” (Youdell, 2011, p. 15). In terms of the corporatisation of health and education this could take multiple forms, such as lobbying the World Health Organization to re-think its focus on multi-sector partnerships, or demanding the IFBA repeal its global policy to market to children for ‘educational purposes’. St Saviour’s students could set up and promote their own counter ‘5+ A Day challenge’, where students and the wider community would try to gather five plus signatures a day to petition supermarkets, growers and the government to make fresh produce more accessible and affordable for low income families. Teachers, principals, academics and unions could work together to lobby the government to re-instate professional development advisors in HPE, to re-distribute Kiwisport funds directly into HPE, to reduce the burden of National Standards and an increasingly narrow curriculum, and to challenge the politics of the ‘creeping privatisation’ (Sockett, 1984) of HPE and other ‘doesn’t matter’ areas of learning.

By urging teachers to enact a critical pedagogy of health and fatness, neoliberalism and corporatisation, children and teachers could be empowered to recognise the complexities of health, obesity and the ‘logic’ of marketing and consumption. Children would not be cajoled into rehearsing and regurgitating the usual messages about health, where the only route to good health is through taking more responsibility to make the ‘correct’ consumer choices; choices based on notions of energy balance, the food pyramid(s), the ‘you are what you eat’ message, a fear and disgust of fatness, and following corporate marketing. Instead, teachers and students could question why some of the wealthiest corporations are ‘gifting’ free solutions (and corporate products) to schools and students, and ask how these stealthy forms of marketing affect the health, well-being and lives of children, families and the wider community? A critical examination of these healthy lifestyles education programmes would provide teachers and their students the chance to
discuss, debate and reflect on what health and healthy bodies mean to them, what shapes their understandings of health, and how they may re-brand health and health education in a way that is relevant to them.

**Final thoughts: A healthy lifestyles mis-education**

On the surface, the various healthy lifestyles education programmes and associated resources appeared to be ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity. However, it may be more fitting to define these programmes as a type of healthy lifestyles mis-education. The healthy lifestyles education resources and pedagogies were mis-educative because they portrayed the path to good health as making ‘good over bad’ choices in life – as simple as the click of a mouse button to choose milk instead of a fizzy drink, or the swish of a pencil to navigate the ‘maze’ of food choices. They reproduced the dominant assumption that health is primarily one’s individual responsibility to make the right choices and that children had the same freedom to choose between good/bad, healthy/unhealthy, right/wrong foods. This mis-education represents a significant shift to ‘teach’ children, as young as five years of age, to monitor, judge and take more control of their health; an attempt to make children ultimately responsible for their (un)healthy conduct and bodies. It is a healthist perspective that mis-educates because it

> does not deny the possibility of other health-threatening factors beyond an individual's sphere of action, such as geographic location, environmental pollution, living and working space, poverty and stress, but by its sharp focus on free will and determination it nevertheless makes it less tenable to see such factors as pertinent. (Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989, p. 419)

In other words, the healthy lifestyles education programmes were mis-educative because they denied the evidence that a number of children, like Natia, did not have the same freedom to ‘choose’ what to consume. They consistently down-played the

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30 The term ‘mis-education’ does not mean that there is (or that I believe there is) one particular ‘right’ way to be educated. What the concept of a healthy lifestyles mis-education refers to is how certain institutions in our society (e.g. corporations) have manipulated (by design and by accident) public education in a way that reproduces certain régimes of truth (e.g. health as a personal responsibility), whilst concurrently marginalising alternative discourses and silencing opposing voices (e.g. the idea that marketing negatively impacts children’s well-being). Healthy lifestyles mis-education is, therefore, a form of neoliberal education that employs mis-direction, attempting to divert students’ and teachers’ attention from the profit-seeking motives of the private sector, and towards the re-invention of the new, ‘caring’, healthy corporation of the 21st century.
ways that children’s choices are constricted, constrained and moulded by a number of factors that are outside children’s (and their parents) control.

The process of ‘responsibilization’ (Rous & Hunt, 2004) aligns closely with central tenets of neoliberal governmentality and demonstrates the attempt to shape the “ideal subject of neoliberalism” (King, 2006, p. 99), one who is self-responsible, responsible to others, autonomous, competitive, entrepreneurial, consumerist, active and healthy. It also aligns with the neoliberal project to produce the “choosing subject” (Coveney, 2006, p. 141), a child (or future adult) who is educated to be more responsible to make the ‘right’ healthy choices of consumption. These notions of healthy choices were regularly assembled with specific ‘healthy’ products made and marketed by the corporate funders/sponsors/partners. As Vander Schee (2008, p. 5, emphasis in original) argued, the corporatisation of health education represents “strategic attempts to market not a benign conception of health, but a particular brand of health [that] … is ultimately connected to consumer culture”. This is a new brand of health and education that is inextricably tied to a new brand of corporation, one that is caring, charitable, responsible, and most importantly, healthy, as well as ‘new’ brands of ‘healthy’ corporate products, such as H2Go, Just Juice, MILO, and McDonald’s sliced apples.

Overall, these healthy lifestyles education initiatives were mis-educative because they were biased towards the commercial interests of the private sector, and to some extent, the financial interests of their charitable partners. The blurred boundaries between corporations, charities, the state and schools mis-educate teachers, principals, children, policy-makers and the public, about the role of the private sector in schooling and in our everyday lives.

The perceived educational, health and philanthropic benefits of these programmes acted as a type of ‘masking agent’, acting to conceal, or at least obscure, the business interests and practices of the corporation – to sell food and drink, profit, improve public relations, build brand loyalty, increase consumption, create a philanthropic image, shape regulatory controls, and divert attention from less agreeable (e.g. obesity-causing, junk-food marketing) practices. As Ball (2012, p. 89) argues:

Financially and organisationally and morally [an organisation’s] status and standing is often, at face value, unclear .... Where the social ends and the enterprise begins, and what not-for-profit means, is sometimes difficult to discern at organisational and individual levels.
The externally provided programmes did little to teach children in any meaningful way about the means by which their “bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being” (Foucault, 1988, p. 18) were shaped by corporations, philanthropy, charity and dominant discourses of health and fatness. They certainly did not encourage students to challenge the subversive ways “corporate and commercial interests play … in shaping personal and social meaning and identity” (Kenway & Bullen, 2001, p. 32), such as what it means to a child to be (or be seen to be) healthy or non-fat or drink MILO or eat McDonald’s. The corporate mis-education programmes did more than convince children and their parents to buy their products. They successfully shifted the responsibility of the state for children’s education onto corporations and the responsibility for children’s health onto children. At the same time, the corporation has been re-invented as ‘part of the solution’ to childhood obesity and officially endorsed by the state, charities and schools as a legitimate organisation to shape the way children think, act and live.
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