What Does a Role Model Australian Primary School Health and Physical Education Program Look Like?

Timothy Lynch, Ed.D., Monash University, Australia

History of Health and Physical Education in Australia

Health and physical education (HPE) should be given a major priority in today's education, as it can be justifiably argued that it is necessary for holistic lifelong health and wellbeing. An issue greatly valued by governments responsible for costs involved with wellness of citizens, the influence of hypokinetic diseases and the strong correlation research indicates physical activity plays a role in enabling optimal health and quality of life (Corbin, Welk, Corbin & Welk, 2011; Robbins, Powers & Burgess, 2011).

Throughout the history of HPE many discourses have influenced the construction and delivery of the HPE curricula in Australia. These have included military, scientific, health and sporting discourses, which have been underpinned by ideologies of sexism, elitism, healthism, individualism and mesomorphism. These ideologies often permeate the hidden curriculum (Tinning, Kirk & Evans 1993; Hickey 1995), wherein students acquire knowledge and attitudes unintentionally while in the school environment (Kirk 1992). It was the presence of such discourses that influenced the last curriculum reform for the HPE key learning area back in the early 1990s and in particular the adoption of the socio cultural perspective.

The HPE National Statement and Profile (1994) in Australia promoted a socially just curriculum. The national 'health and physical education statement is based upon key principles of diversity, social justice and supportive environments' (AEC, 1994). The socio-cultural perspective according to Cliff, Wright and Clarke (2009, p.166) adopted by the HPE key learning area in the last reform emerged 'as a complex counter-discourse informed by critical pedagogues and critical pedagogy in Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand'. They state with clarity how this has changed the teaching and learning in HPE: As a perspective through which to interpret HPE content and issues, it has important implications both for the work of HPE teachers and for how these teachers are prepared through pre-service teacher education programs; first, because its sociological and cultural studies underpinnings represent a significant departure from the predominantly medioscientific, biophysical and psychological foundations of HPE; and second, because its attention to social and cultural influences on health put it in opposition to notions that locate responsibility for health almost solely in the individual and his or her decisions. (2009, p.165).

While the adoption of the socio-cultural perspective was national, the depth that this perspective filtered into the implementation of the HPE curriculum in each Australian state and territory has differed considerably and in some areas little appears to have changed (Tinning, 2009; ACHPER, 2011).

Promoting social justice and equity in education through the HPE curriculum materials and the socio-cultural approach does seem to have led the way for other curriculum key learning areas. This is evident through the National Curriculum and explicitly within the goals established at the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December, 2008): Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence, Goal 2: All young Australians become, Successful learners, Confident and creative individuals: Active and informed citizens (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.)

These goals have driven the new Australian curriculum reform, namely the National Curriculum Framework. They support a socio critical pedagogy in education and are underpinned by the socio-cultural perspective. 'The most important driver for a National Curriculum should be about equity and social justice and improved learning outcomes for our most disadvantaged and isolated students' (Ewing, 2010, p.127).

Another change that occurred with the release of the 1994 HPE National Statement and Profile was nomenclature (Dinan-Thompson, 2009). In Australia the Health and Physical Education curriculum consists of three strands; Physical activity, Health and Personal Development. Before this the key learning area was named Physical Education, the title used in the National curriculum of England and Wales.

Teresa Carlson Award

The Teresa Carlson Award is the Australian Council for Health and Physical Education (ACHPER) Queensland's most prestigious. Dr. Teresa Carlson was an outstanding academic, teacher and ACHPER Queensland State President. The annual recipient is an ACHPER member who is dedicated to the teaching of Health and Physical Education (HPE) and the promotion of its benefits within the community. The award began in 2004 and recipients have included the likes of internationally renowned Professor Doune Macdonald, Head of the School of Human Movement Studies at the University of Queensland (Table 1). In 2002, Fellow of ACHPER, Dr Teresa Carlson, was involved in a terrible accident in Turkey which left her with severe intellectual and physical impairments. Terry had been an outstanding academic with a strong teaching and research profile in the education community. She had been totally committed to promoting Physical Education and supporting HPE teachers. Terry had been State President of ACHPER QLD for three years, was actively involved in organising conferences, and held a post editing the state newsletter. (http://www.achperqld.org.au/events-workshops/achper-annual-awards-night).

From the seven recipients, one was chosen for their significant contribution specifically within a Primary school.

Table 1
ACHPER Queensland Teresa Carlson Award Recipients

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mark Waugh, Mansfield State High School	David Brown, St. Peter's Lutheran college	Dr. Timothy Lynch, St.Elizabeth's Primary School	Dave Mayfield, Wynnum SHS	Dale Linini, Advisory Visiting Teacher, Sunshine Coast North	Jim Armstrong St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe	Professor Doune Macdonald, University of Queensland

Primary School Importance

Research suggests that the best time for children to learn and refine their motor skills is during preschool and early primary school years (Branta, Haubenstricker, & Seefeldt, 1984; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Espenschade & Eckert, 1980). Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength, builds lean muscle, builds stronger bones and decreases body fat (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Therefore, HPE in

the early primary school years plays a fundamental role in establishing a healthy and full lifestyle for children. Children from the beginning of their schooling lives in pre-school should participate in the fundamentals of skill development and exercise, experiencing the enjoyment that all can attain regardless of age, ability or personal interests (Queensland Government, 2003a).

It is also recommended that more time and expertise be made available to improve fundamental movement skills in primary schools as these skills are necessary for building proficient movement forms. Included among these are the locomotor skills of walking, running, hopping, vertical jumping, horizontal jumping, galloping, sliding, skipping, and leaping, as well as the manipulative skills of throwing (underarm and overarm), catching, dribbling, striking, kicking and punting (Olrich, 2002). Children do not acquire fundamental movement skills naturally, rather they need to be provided with quality learning experiences to enable skills development (Doorn, 1999). This phase of child development has the advantage that it is aligned with the child's natural play structure and is likely to have fewer competing activities, therein allowing children more time to concentrate on developing their motor skills. The early detection of motor problems facilitates early intervention programs that can reduce many physical and related emotional problems (Arnheim & Sinclair, 1979; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Hardin & Garcia, 1982; Haubensticker & Seefeldt, 1974; Johnson & Rubinson, 1983; Seefeldt, 1975; Smoll, 1974). Further, research indicates that active children become active adults, (Raitakari, et al., 1994), thereby increasing the likelihood of more healthy adult lives. Likewise, inactive children become inactive adults (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Sport & Recreation Queensland, 2005). The importance of fundamental motor skills acquisition in the early years of primary school also develops "the feeling of competence in movement" (Garcia, et al., 2002, p.1) which is necessary for children to develop their potential full range of movement: "Children need to develop fundamental motor skills to enable them to participate in the full range of human activities" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992, p.58). These are essential because "without adequately developed motor skills, it is more difficult to experience success and enjoyment in physical and sporting activities, which may lead to inactivity and avoidance behaviours" (Morgan et al., 2001). Wankel and Pabich (1981) found in their study that many children stopped playing sport because they could not perform the skills well enough and therefore did not experience success or enjoyment. Within the early years of primary school, HPE has particular importance for children developing the fundamentals of movement and skill acquisition. A lack of opportunity for skill development can be detrimental to children's confidence and attitude towards physical activities, thus limiting healthy participation in lifelong physical activity (Queensland Government, 2003a).

Case Study: School context

St. Elizabeth's Primary School community is located in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. It is a medium sized Primary School (360 children) and in 2006 when the author received the Teresa Carlson Award, St. Elizabeth's had two strands (form entry) from Year 1 to Year 7 (5-12 years). The author shared the specialist HPE teacher role (2 days) with that of Year 6 classroom teacher (3 days), he was responsible for co-ordinating the HPE learning area and for the teaching and reporting of the Physical Activity strand. He taught HPE Physical Activity lessons to each class in the school for forty minutes each week during which he connected the Health and Personal Development strands whenever possible. There was a Physical Education (physical activity strand) Whole School Program specifically designed by the author for the school that was updated each year. Clear communication enabled a common understanding that the classroom

teachers were responsible for the teaching and reporting of the Health and Personal Development strands and they were required to complete the assessment and reporting for these strands on their students' report cards.

Lack of space was an obvious problem at the school. The only grassed space for the 360 students was approximately twenty metres by twenty-five metres. To cater for the lack of space the school had a split playtime. At the first major break, Years Four-Seven play for twenty minutes, during which time the Years One-Three sat and ate their lunch in the eating shed. Then for the next twenty minutes the Years One-Three play while the Years Four-Seven ate. During the second break the same procedure was followed, only for ten minutes, thus the children could only play for a maximum of thirty minutes most days. It is recommended that children need at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). To compensate for the lack of grassed play area the school had other sporting facilities, including a basketball/ netball court which was three quarters undercover and a multi-purpose tennis court with a synthetic grass surface. Situated on a corner of the grassed play area was an adventure playground for the Years One-Three students. The school also had two sets of portable soccer goals for use on either of the play areas. Further, the school had a strong relationship with the local Junior Rugby club, located approximately 400 metres away. The upper school (Years Four-Seven) walked down to the rugby club most Tuesdays and Thursdays during their first and major break, where they had more room to play various sports. The school had keys to the park, giving them access to the toilet facilities and also to goal post protective pads. The school used the rugby field for most Physical Education lessons for students in Years Three-Seven, depending on the sporting facilities needed for particular physical activity skills. All sporting facilities maximized the little available space. The Whole School Physical Education program was designed in accordance with the 1999 Queensland HPE syllabus, consistent with the socio-cultural approach. Furthermore it used the Health Promoting Schools model.

Health promoting schools are schools which display, in everything they say and do, support for and commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral well being of all members of their school community (Centre for Primary Education, 1998, p.2).

The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) concept was developed to promote health in education (World Health Organisation, 1996). The Health Promoting Schools Model encompasses program implementation as it describes the broad, holistic framework for the implementation of health education beyond the boundaries of the classroom (Queensland Government, 2003b). It offers "a suitable approach because it encompasses a range of influences internal and external to the school environment" (O'Dea & Maloney, 2000, p.4). The HPS model comprises three overlapping elements: (1) curriculum, teaching and learning; (2) school organization, ethos and environment; and, (3) partnerships and services (Figure 1).

The HPS model also promotes the school/parent partnership in the development of children's activity levels (Medland & Taggart, 1993). This partnership is necessary as it is essential that parents support healthy lifestyles at home and in this they need to be educated (Howard, 2004; Borra, Kelly, Shirreffs, Neville, & Geiger, 2003). Furthermore, health is created in the settings of everyday life (Kickbusch, 1991). The HPS model educates parents about the need for children to participate in physical activities and promoting parental modelling of physical activities (Saltmarsh, 2001). Such modelling has the capacity to reverse parents' tacit of support of children's indoor sedentary activities (Allen & Hammond, 2005).

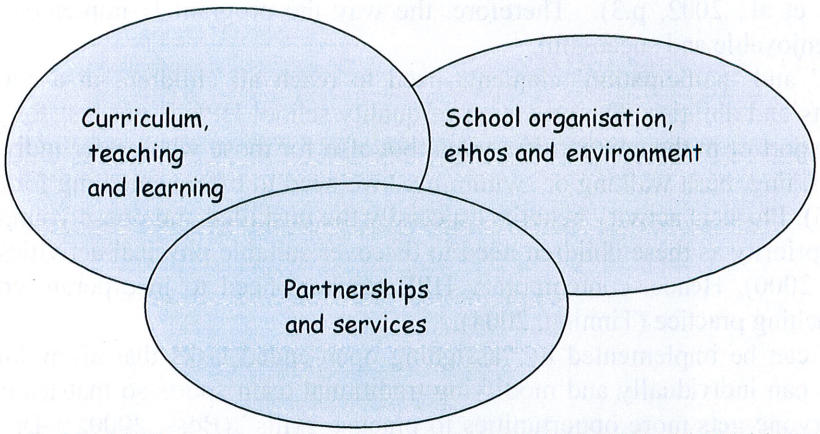

Figure 1. Health Promoting Schools Framework Model (World Health Organisation, 1994)

What does Physical Education using a socio-cultural approach look like?

In order for the HPE curriculum to fulfil a role in developing lifelong participation in healthy activities, it is imperative that a quality HPE curriculum be implemented in schools (Queensland Government, 2003a). "Improving the quality of physical education in schools is the best-documented intervention approach to promoting physical activity in youth." (ACHPER WA branch, 1999, p.9). Research data from a national survey in the United States of America of students Years Four to Twelve revealed that enjoying physical education was one of the most influential factors for encouraging participation in physical activities outside school (Sallis, et al., 1999) and that if opportunities for physical activity were denied during school time, children would not voluntarily catch up on physical activity (Dale, Corbin, & Dale, 1999). Teachers can influence, for good or ill, students' views about the value of physical education (Solmon & Carter, 1995), particularly students' beliefs about physical activity (Lee, 2002).

The development of children's fundamental motor skills occurs in the early years of the primary school and is influenced by both environmental and genetic influences (Branta et al., 1984; Gallahue, 1989; Malina, 1981; Malina & Bouchard, 1991; Rarick, 1981; Walkley et al., 1993). Genetic influences affect students' motor performance and depend on factors such as heredity, trainability, age and maturation (Pangrazi, 2000). Unlike genetic influences, the environmental factors are variable and capable of being influenced by the teacher of physical activity. Environmental influences are determined by the physical education teacher and include opportunities to practise, interest in the child's activities shown by significant others, and quality instructions (Espenschade & Eckert, 1980; Gallahue, 1989; Seefeldt, 1975; Singer, 1980, Walkley et al., 1993). A study by Kelly, Dagger, and Walkley (1989) found that when children had a HPE specialist teacher for PE they performed significantly better on fundamental motor skills than students who received supervised activity time only. This study further suggests that the physical education teacher can control the environmental influences that help promote a quality HPE lesson. Quality HPE "should be a developmentally appropriate educational experience designed to provide immediate and lifelong benefits, important benefits that are typically only taught in physical education classes" (Graham, et al., 1993, p.4).

Quality instruction is a vital aspect of any HPE program, yet other aspects to consider during the design and development stage of a program are enjoyment and fun for the participants (Garcia, et al., 2002). If children enjoy learning through movement they develop optimistic views about being physically active (Henderson, et al., 1999) and they "will be predisposed to

engage in it" (Garcia, et al., 2002, p.3). Therefore, the way the program is implemented is paramount to it being enjoyable and successful.

Consequently, 'fun' and 'participation' elements need to reach all children, in a class of diverse student interests and abilities. The provision of quality school HPE is not just for those children who excel in sport or in the competitive arena, but also for those who prefer individual activities such as bike riding, bush walking or swimming: "we need to offer something for all of them" (Boss, 2000, p.5). Physical activity benefits especially the unskilled and obese youngsters who need to be given priority as these children need to discover suitable physical activities that they enjoy (Pangrazi, 2000). Hence, contemporary HPE teachers need to incorporate critical pedagogy into their teaching practice (Tinning, 2004).

Inclusive programs can be implemented by "assigning open-ended tasks that allow kids to progress as far as they can individually and modifying traditional team sports so that teams are much smaller and everyone gets more opportunities to practise skills" (Boss, 2000, p.4). This replaces the relay races or large groups with minimal equipment, where many children are spectators waiting for their turn (Boss, 2000). Using modified games often involves Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) also known as Games Sense, Play Practice and playing for life. TGfU places an emphasis on the play, where tactical and strategic problems are posed in a modified game environment, ultimately drawing upon students to make decisions. It places the focus of a lesson on the student in a game situation where cognitive skills such as tactics, decision making and problem solving are critical (Webb & Pearson, 2008, p.2).

Hence, for quality programs to be implemented in the primary school it is essential that they have sufficient equipment and facilities for these to occur. Because of the skills and expertise necessary to implement these programs specialist HPE teachers are preferred, as some teachers "view physical education as a release from the classroom and 'real work' rather than an integral aspect of children's education" (Clarke, 2000, p.7).

Model Primary School Early Years (Year 1 & 2)

Physical Activity School Program: The program for Year One and Two began using the Jack Capon Perceptual Motor Program (Level 1 & 2), although it was also extended by introducing assorted motor skills that are not used in this program. This program used five parent helpers and consisted of six stations of various movement patterns and manipulative skills over approximately twelve lessons. The students develop their balancing (static and dynamic), locomotor movements (hop, skip, run, jump, gallop), hand-eye and foot-eye coordination (throw, catch, strike and dribble balls of various sizes), body and space awareness, ocular pursuit (tracking with eyes), laterality (awareness of the difference between right and left), cross-laterality (use of limbs on the opposite side of the body) and kinesthesia (awareness of muscular movement and use of energy).

Swimming is conducted at the local pool by qualified instructors. The 'Learn to Swim Program' is taught once a week for six week blocks in Term One and Four. Dancing includes Rhythmic Movements through Perceptual Motor Rhythm Games, Motor Fitness Rhythm Games and Bush Dancing. Manipulative skills and body movement developed extraneous to the Perceptual Motor Program included ball, rope and hoop activities, bean bag and rhythm stick activities, skipping with a rope, throwing underarm and overarm, tracking and trapping, kicking, striking, dribbling, catching, and passing. All fundamental skills are developed using a variety of different sized objects.

Students train and develop the ability to run a long distance of 500 metres culminating in their participation at the annual school cross country. Athletics involves introducing and preparing the students for various relays, running using the correct technique, sprinting 60 metres and mini tabloid sports. The program includes assorted fun games used throughout the year, which often require the use of learnt skills in combinations. Listed games included Simpson circle race, Chain tag, Rats and Rabbits, Wicket stump hit, Boppa tee-ball, Mini red rover and Flag sprints.

There are four rules and expectations for Physical Activities: Every participant must wear a hat; the whistle signals to stop, look and listen; do not touch the sports equipment unless you are asked to, and be kind to others.

Model Primary School Middle Years (Year 3 & 4)

Physical Activity School Program; The middle years build on work done in the early years, with the following extensions: social dancing, swimming incorporating water polo skills, freestyle, backstroke, breast stroke and introductory butterfly. Movement and manipulative skills are extended. Taught skills are designed to be demonstrated with cues given and then practised by the students in closed motor skill environments, with the skills then further developed in an open motor skill medium, such as minor or modified games.

Specifically, in Term One the skills developed are: underarm throw; over arm throw; introduction to cricket bowling; catching using both hands/ one hand; and striking a ball using one hand/ two hands for a stationary target and a moving target. Modified sports include Mini (ace) tennis, Bucket ball, Zig-Zag tee ball, Boppa tee ball, Wicket stump hit, Tee cricket, Diamond cricket and Kanga cricket. Students train, and develop the ability to run a long distance of 1300 metres culminating in participation in the annual school cross country.

In Term Two, supplemented specific skills include: two hand pass to a stationary and moving target (chest pass and rugby pass); dribbling a basketball and soccer ball; hand pass (AFL); catching/marking (hands outstretched and chest); kicking both oval shaped and round balls (soccer pass and kick/ from hands-drop punt); and kicking for accuracy. Modified sports include Tag (Aussie Footy), Touch rugby, Roo ball, Gaelic Football, Sideline netball and Sideline Basketball.

Term Three focuses on preparation for the Athletics carnival. Athletics involves introducing and preparing the students for various relays, running using the correct technique, sprinting 80 metres, starts, finishes, lanes and ball games (Captain ball and Tunnel ball). The program gives recognition to fun games such as the Simpson circle race, Chain tag, Rats and Rabbits, and Flag sprints. Students may be introduced to shot put. Basketball skills and Netball skills are further developed.

Term Four involves reinforcing and combining skills covered throughout the year to play modified games of European Handball, Newcombe ball (mini volleyball), Ten Pin Bowling, Tee ball and Kanga cricket. The Physical Education Whole School Program also involves many fun games such as Boppa tee-ball, Wicket stump hit, Tee cricket, Mini red rover, Tail tag, Scarecrow tiggy, Poison ball and bopper tag. Such Games often require the use of the skills in combination and are used interchangeably as fun warm up games and lessons. Rules and expectations for Physical Activities in the middle years included the same four rules used in the early years.

Model Primary School Upper Years (Year 5, 6 & 7)

Physical Activity School Program; Locomotor and manipulative skills are very similar to the ones introduced in Year Four only the students are extended through the use of distance, using their opposite side or non-preferred side of the body. There are also fewer rule changes used in the modification process for games. More time is also allocated to developing students' skills and understanding of the sports offered for inter-school sport.

Dancing increases in complexity as the students learn and perform more difficult dances. The swimming program is of the same duration as Year Four, with students usually able to swim twenty-five metres competently in freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke. More advanced students will also be able to swim twenty-five metres in butterfly. They should have competent skills for water polo and have an understanding of lifesaving and emergency survival procedures, rescue tows and safety dives. Cross Country running is increased to approximately three kilometres. Shot put is covered, as too is high jump and long jump if facilities can be made available. The students practise sprinting 100 metres, relays and the ball games such as Zig-Zag, Leader ball and Captain ball.

Conclusion: What can be learnt from this model Australian Primary school?

The author was employed in an English International school comprising of students from over 32 nations in Qatar (2007-2010). As Head of Foundation Stage and Key Stage One (3-7 years) pedagogy and curriculum aspects were adopted from the 2006 programme, which was successfully implemented and again was popular amongst students. Thus, offering a learning opportunity for other schools within the Middle East region and other countries.

The imperative concepts to learn about the schools PE program are;

- needs to begin as soon as possible (early years),
- quality learning experiences (not to be replaced with quantity),
- inclusive in that it caters for all needs, everyone feels comfortable (no fear of failure) and everyone can succeed in their own way
- sufficient equipment,
- enable maximum participation and be fun,
- teacher (specialist or not) needs to understand successful pedagogy for the age group and provide quality instruction,
- use parents and external partnerships to strengthen opportunities for the children,
- developmentally appropriate (whole school programme),
- wide range of activities,
- safe environment and clear communication amongst teachers

This case study school had many obstacles that needed to be overcome, similar to most schools, which relates to the final and essential concept; advocacy.

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