

# **Research Proposal**

## **Doctor of Education**

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**TITLE OF STUDY:** Evaluating school responses to the new Queensland Health and Physical Education Documents (1999) in Brisbane Catholic Education Primary Schools.

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**FACULTY:** Education

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## ii Abstract

Within Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) the new HPE syllabus (1999) was implemented between 1999 and 2001. The purpose of the study is to explore the implementation of the new Queensland HPE syllabus (1999) in three BCE primary schools of varying enrolment numbers. The research problem is: *'How developed is the implementation of the new HPE syllabus in BCE schools?'* The data collection will be guided by the following research questions:-

- How are teachers implementing the HPE curriculum documents?
- What readily accessible resources do schools have to assist with the implementation of Health and Physical Education?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the importance or otherwise of HPE as a Key Learning Area?
- What are the children's perceptions of the HPE Key Learning Area?

This study is significant for the feedback it will provide to BCE of the HPE syllabus implementation process and in informing BCE of the current status of the HPE key learning area within a sample of systemic Catholic primary schools. The findings have the potential to contribute to the BCE Strategic Renewal Framework currently occurring within BCE schools for all curriculum areas and which is planned for completion by the end of 2006 (BCE, 2003b).

This research has been designed within a constructionist paradigm. An interpretivist study will be conducted employing symbolic interactionism. This qualitative, interpretive study is most appropriate as meanings will be constructed. The methodology chosen to construct meaning through capturing the context of each school is case study. The sites for the three case studies will involve: one small sized BCE primary school (less than 200 students); one medium sized BCE primary school (200 - 400 students); and one large sized BCE primary school (over 400 students). The participants will be teachers and students from the respective schools. The research instruments to be used to capture significant and relevant data are; semi structured and focus group interviews, reflective journal notetaking, observations and document analysis.

## **1.0 The introduction**

The candidate has nine years of teaching experience within both primary and secondary school, Pre-school to Yr. 12, and is currently employed in his fourth school. He worked for Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) for eight years and was a member of the BCE Health and Physical Education (HPE) network panel of teachers who were selected to facilitate the implementation of the new syllabus (1999-2001). The candidate has been involved with the three different education systems in Queensland; Catholic, Independent and Public, and during 2000 whilst completing a Master of Education (Physical and Health Education) from Deakin University was a regular supply teacher within BCE primary schools. His teaching experiences include six years as a classroom teacher and three as a Health and Physical Education specialist teacher and sports coordinator within the primary school (P-7). Before beginning his teaching career he was employed by the Queensland Australian Football League, working casually as a Development Officer. The candidate is presently the Junior Sports Master, a pastoral care teacher for a vertical class of Year 8- 12 students and a Year 7 class teacher at St. Patrick's College, Shorncliffe (Edmund Rice Education). This research emphasises equity for the HPE learning area within the Catholic education system, and equity in its current role amongst BCE primary schools.

## **2.0 Context of the research**

The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of the new HPE Queensland syllabus within Brisbane Catholic Education. Throughout the history of Health and Physical Education many discourses have influenced the construction and practice of the HPE curricula. These have included military, scientific, health and sporting discourses, which have been underpinned by ideologies of sexism, elitism, healthism, individualism and mesomorphism. Such ideologies often infuse the hidden curriculum (Colquhoun, 1991, 1992; Hickey, 1995; Kirk, 1992; Kirk & Twigg 1993, Tinning, 1990; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992; Tinning Kirk & Evans, 1993; Scraton, 1990), whereby students acquire

knowledge and attitudes unintentionally from being in the school environment (Kirk, 1992). In the late 1980's and early 1990's the HPE curriculum within Australia was considered to be in crisis (Tinning, Kirk, Evans & Glover, 1994). The crisis was directly related to social and cultural forces adversely influencing perceptions of this key learning area (Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). 'In-house' discussions of crisis led to a Senate Inquiry (1992) into the state of HPE within Australian Education systems, with the findings of the inquiry supporting the 'in-house' discussions of crisis (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). The Senate Committee recommended that as a matter of priority detailed written policies for physical education be prepared and circulated. In Queensland, this required primary schools to replace the outdated Syllabus of 1972 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992).

In 1989 *Ten Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia* were established by the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education. Goal Nine was "to provide for the physical development and personal health and fitness of students, and for the creative use of leisure time" (Australian Education Council, 1994), thus highlighting the importance of HPE as a key learning area within Australian education systems. In 1991, the Australian Education Council (AEC) recommended that statements and profiles be developed for eight broad learning areas (AEC, 1994). The major change in the National Statements and Profiles was the shift from content based education to outcome based education (BCE, 1999; QSCC, 1999a). The devising of the HPE National Statement and Profile coincided with the Senate Inquiry and provided a timely motivation for the development of the new syllabus (Dinan, 2000; QSCC, 1999a). The culmination of these strategic political initiatives offered possibilities for rescuing HPE from potential cultural obsolescence (Kirk & Penney, 1996).

The Senate Inquiry recommended increased Education Department support for the HPE curriculum area (1992) and in 1996 within the Catholic sector a coordinating education officer was appointed within Brisbane Catholic Education.

A scan of the HPE curriculum and teaching was conducted throughout BCE schools to assess the degree of 'crisis' (BCE, 1999). The findings from this scan were withheld from this study as they "were never envisaged as being of a public nature or for use in research" (Brennan, 2003). Despite what the scan revealed, subsequently, HPE curriculum officers with BCE increased significantly and collaborative work with the other two education systems and the Queensland Schools Curriculum Council (QSCC) continued. This collaboration was necessary to support schools trialing the draft syllabus, to raise awareness of the new socio-cultural approach, to identify lead teachers to assist with the implementation, to trial professional development and to provide discipline renewal support in areas of need identified by the scan (BCE, 1999). These actions suggest that the 'crisis' was evident in BCE primary schools.

The Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC), renamed the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) in July, 2002 was "an intersystemic statutory authority established in 1997" (QSCC, 1999a) to oversee the development of the Years 1-10 curriculum materials for each of the eight key learning areas. The HPE syllabus for the first time was constructed intersystemically, under the guidance of the three education systems within Queensland; Education Queensland (EQ), The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (AISQ) (Dinan-Thompson, 1998). The HPE syllabus along with the Science syllabus was given priority and both were the first to be developed, as it was acknowledged that both Science and HPE had been neglected (Macdonald Glasby & Carlson, 2000). The newly constructed HPE syllabus was a public incremental, educational policy (Dinan-Thompson, 1998).

The new syllabus consisted of three strands of equal weighting:

- Enhancing personal development;
- Developing the concepts and skills for physical activities;
- Promoting the health for individuals and communities.

The allocated minimum time required to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the core learning outcomes for all three strands was 1.5 hours per week (QSCC, 1999a).

While an intersystemic structure was employed for the development of the syllabus, its implementation was the responsibility of each system (Dinan-Thompson, 1998) and it is the implementation phase that can determine the ultimate success or failure of a policy (Schneider, 1982). The new syllabus adopted a socio cultural approach to learning as the 'crisis' was considered to have a cultural meaning (Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). The socio-cultural approach recognizes that students are influenced by different physical, social, cultural, political and economic environmental forces in respect to their well being (Dann, 1999). Within Brisbane Catholic Education the HPE syllabus policy was implemented between 1999 and 2001. During the period of implementation the HPE curriculum area in BCE schools was given significant status due to the release of the new syllabus and the recruitment of increased HPE specialist teachers into the Catholic system. The third enterprise bargaining agreement (EB3) entitled Catholic primary classroom teachers to 120 minutes of release time per week, a demand which was often met through the employment of HPE specialist teachers within schools, to take class groups and thereby release the generalist classroom teachers.

The concepts outlined in the HPE national curriculum document which laid the foundations for the Queensland HPE syllabus, are closely aligned with the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) principles (Centre for Primary Education, 1998). The Australian Health Promoting Schools Association was established in 1994 and HPS developed in juxtaposition to the development and implementation of the new curriculum documents.

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 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to promote health in education. The HPS Model covers the scope of health implementation. This model comprises three elements: Curriculum, teaching and learning; School organization, ethos and environment; and partnerships and services. The overlapping components “need to be considered as a whole rather than as separate entities” (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 1996, p. 1). Implementation across the three allows for more comprehensive promotion of health and therefore forms an ideal framework for the three strands: Enhancing personal development; developing the concepts and skills for physical activities; and promoting the health of individuals and communities, which constitute the syllabus.

BCE implemented the HPE syllabus using a ‘whole school’ approach which involved the collaboration and co-operation of the whole school staff. Whole School Curriculum Programs are contextualized translations of the current curriculum documents. They are adjusted to meet the needs of students within specific BCE school communities (BCE, 2003b). The implementation phase in BCE schools was twelve months less than in Education Queensland schools. Authentic change can be threatening and stressful for teachers (Sparkes, 1991) and using statements and profiles in planning can add significantly to the work load of teachers adversely affecting the quality of that work (Garrett & Piltz, 1999). Because of these factors there is a realistic likelihood that the implementation phase may have suffered somewhat in the process.

The implementation process is presumably complete because since the end of 2001 there have been no longer any Health and Physical Education officers employed by BCE or any professional development within this area. Further it is unlikely that there will be direct support to schools in this learning area over the next few years (Hutton, 2003; BCE, 1999). School communities have done well in dealing with the many curriculum developments of the last decade, including



the implementation of the HPE syllabus (BCE, 2003b, p. 1). Alarming, the literature in HPE reports that children's physical activity has declined worldwide (Tomson & Patterson, 1998) and that "Australian school physical education is failing to provide children with the opportunity to develop physical competencies and be physically active" (Morgan, Bourke & Thompson, 2001, p. 1). In Australia, children are less fit (McNaughton, Morgan, Smith & Hannan, 1996; Thompson, Woodcock, McCormack & Thomas, 1995), more obese (Magarey, Daniels & Boulton, 2001; Lazarus, Wake, Hesketh & Waters, 2000), spend less time in physical activity (Booth, Mascaskill, McLellan, Phongsavan, Okely, Patterson, Bauman & Baur, 1997), especially in schools (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992) and also have low levels of motor competence (Booth et al., 1997; Walkley, Holland, Treloar & Probyn-Smith, 1993; Thompson et al., 1995). This decline is due to technological advancements and social and environmental pressures (Shilton, 1997), which may account for why implementation of the new syllabus may not be fully developed.

Although BCE have planned to be involved in a Strategic Renewal Framework (2002-2006) which renews all curriculum areas, there has been no specific mention of how this will be done nor the degree of importance that will be afforded the HPE learning area other than that it seems unlikely there will be any specific support from BCE to its schools in this key learning area over the next few years (Hutton, 2003). There needs to be caution about what Sparkes describes as 'superficial' change. That is, "an appearance of change on the surface, while we are left with the feeling that not much has changed at a deeper level" (1991, p. 2). In the end it is not BCE as the employing authority who will determine how successful or otherwise the implementation will be, ultimately it will be for teachers and students in classrooms to demonstrate (Gardner & Williamson, 1999). Therefore the implementation of the new HPE syllabus by teachers and their students in BCE schools deserves systematic and scholarly examination to ascertain whether change at a deeper level is or is not evident.

### **3.0 Research Problem**

Although the HPE curriculum in schools is given significant support within Australian education systems and by the Australian public (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992) paradoxically, it was neglected and allowed to fall into a state of crisis. For this reason it is necessary that the new syllabus be given every chance to succeed. Accordingly, the research problem for this study is 'How thorough and systematically developed is the implementation of the new HPE syllabus in BCE schools? This may be interrelated and explored using the Health Promoting Schools Model as a gauge for determining the extent of HPE syllabus implementation.

### **4.0 The Research Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to **explore the implementation of the new Queensland HPE syllabus (1999) in three BCE primary schools of varying enrolment numbers.** Therefore, the investigation will attempt to answer the question of 'How is Health and Physical Education taught within these schools?' three years after the completion of the implementation process.

### **5.0 Research Questions**

The overarching general research question that will guide conduct of this research is:

**How is the key learning area Health & Physical Education taught within three BCE primary schools?**

By investigating teaching of HPE, the implementation of the syllabus in practice will be identified. More specific research questions that will generate data include:

**1. How are teachers implementing the HPE curriculum documents?**

This question investigates how teaching staff are covering the three strands within the syllabus; Who is responsible for covering each of the three different strands?; Is a specialist HPE teacher providing the lesson, as recommended (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992); and are students receiving the advised time

of 1.5 hours per week? Are these lessons quality HPE lessons, especially the physical education strand? The findings of the Senate Inquiry during the time of crisis substantiated the decline in quality HPE, finding that there was a lack of time given to the learning area within a crowded curriculum and that there were problems related to a lack of resources for teaching (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). Are these still existing issues in BCE schools after the implementation of the syllabus documents? How do teachers deal with these issues in HPE learning environments?

The issue of resourcing leads to a second specific research question:

**2. What readily accessible resources do schools have to assist with the implementation of Health and Physical Education?**

Quality programs not only require the skills and expertise of specialist teachers but also sufficient equipment and facilities to utilize these skills and enable maximum participation of students.

**3. What are teachers' perceptions with regard to the HPE Key Learning Area?**

Another problem identified as a possible factor adversely affecting the HPE curriculum is a lesser importance attributed to it by the classroom teachers. In many instances teachers perceive physical education as a release from classroom activities rather than an integral aspect of their students' education (Clarke, 2000; Medland & Taggart, 1993). Teachers' perceptions play a major role in the implementation of any new syllabus documents, but especially in HPE: "teaching ideologies are often affected by teachers' perceptions of their prior experiences in sport and physical activity" (Morgan et al, 2001, p. 2). For many non-specialist HPE teachers prior experiences may have been negative, inclining them to replicate that negativity in their teaching (Downey, 1979), resulting in the HPE learning area becoming devalued (Hickey, 1992). Success of policy implementation ultimately depends on teachers and students (Gardner & Williamson, 1999). If teachers who had negative experiences are reproducing

such experiences, this will continue to delimit the HPE learning area for the next generation of teachers and students, until the trend is reversed. Hence, the teachers' perceptions need to be investigated.

The fourth and final specific research question again relates to perceptions:

#### **4. What are children's perceptions of the HPE Key Learning Area?**

Enjoyment and fun for the participants must be considered when designing a HPE program (Garcia, Floyd & Lawson, 2002). When children enjoy learning through movement, they develop optimistic views about being physically active (Henderson, Glancy & Little, 1999). Results of a national survey for students from Year 4-12 in the United States revealed that enjoying physical education was one of the most influential factors affecting participation in physical activities outside school (Sallis, Proschaska, Taylor, Hill & Geraci, 1999). Furthermore, fun elements need to be all inclusive, catering for the diverse interests and abilities within a class (Pangrazi, 2000; Boss, 2000). This is a purpose of the syllabus as "an inclusive curriculum seeks to maximize educational opportunities for all students" (QSCC, 1999b, p. 1). Is the HPE curriculum being implemented successfully to achieve this syllabus intention? The children's perceptions will be investigated to find out.

## **6.0 Significance of the Research**

This research has the potential to provide feedback to BCE about the HPE syllabus implementation process. Further, it could inform BCE of the current state of the HPE key learning area within selected systemic primary schools and identify any obstacles that may be limiting the process. The research may be able to identify whether any of the issues that contributed to the crisis in this curriculum area still exist within the BCE school system. This study will investigate, evaluate and identify these issues so that the implementation process can be modified and extended if necessary. Feedback will enable BCE to guide future stages of the implementation/ renewal process. The findings have the capacity to make a valuable contribution to the BCE Strategic Renewal

Framework due for completion at the end of 2006 (BCE, 2003b). The timing of this research is also significant for literature within this field. This research study will explore the impact of the new HPE socio-cultural syllabus, a topic which currently forms a lacuna in empirical and contextual literature.

This research will contextualise major issues and changes that have occurred in the HPE learning area over the last decade, both nationally and internationally. The study will enable BCE to assess the needs and developments of the HPE learning area within a sector of the local Catholic school system enabling the voices and perspectives of the teachers and students to be heard.

The HPE curriculum area has been neglected within BCE, partly due to a lack of understanding as a result of minimal research. Although a scan was held in 1996 to assess the degree of effect from the crisis, the findings were not made available to the researcher, as they “were never envisaged as being of a public nature or for use in research” (Brennan, 2003). Therefore, this research will be the first legitimate study in this discipline area to be conducted within the BCE system.

Evaluative and multiple case study (Merriam, 1998) has been chosen as they enable “specific issues and problems of practice to be identified and explained” (p. 34). The data collecting techniques of interviews, reflective journal, observation and document analysis enable perspectives within the curriculum implementation process to be given voice and understood within a context.

## **7.0 Review of Literature**

### **7.1 Conceptual Framework**

In exploring the implementation of the new HPE syllabus it is necessary to understand the relevance of the major themes that underpin the conceptual framework for this review.

When exploring the implementation it is necessary for the researcher to envisage what a fully implemented syllabus ideally looks like. As part of this, **the importance of the HPE key learning area in a Catholic primary school** will be examined. The HPE learning area is essential within a **Catholic primary school context** as it promotes gospel values and development of the whole person through the promotion of authentic human and Christian development. For this reason it is important that the HPE learning area **begins in the early years**. The early years of implementation are when the child develops the fundamentals of movement and skill acquisition. If children are not given the opportunity to do this it can be detrimental to their confidence and later attitude towards physical activities, potentially hindering their healthy participation in lifelong physical activity. There are many **health benefits** and research findings indicate **improved performances in other curriculum areas** as a result of **quality HPE programs**. This relationship is also reciprocal, if quality HPE lessons are not being experienced this suggests that the syllabus is not fully developed within the school resulting in minimal benefits for students.

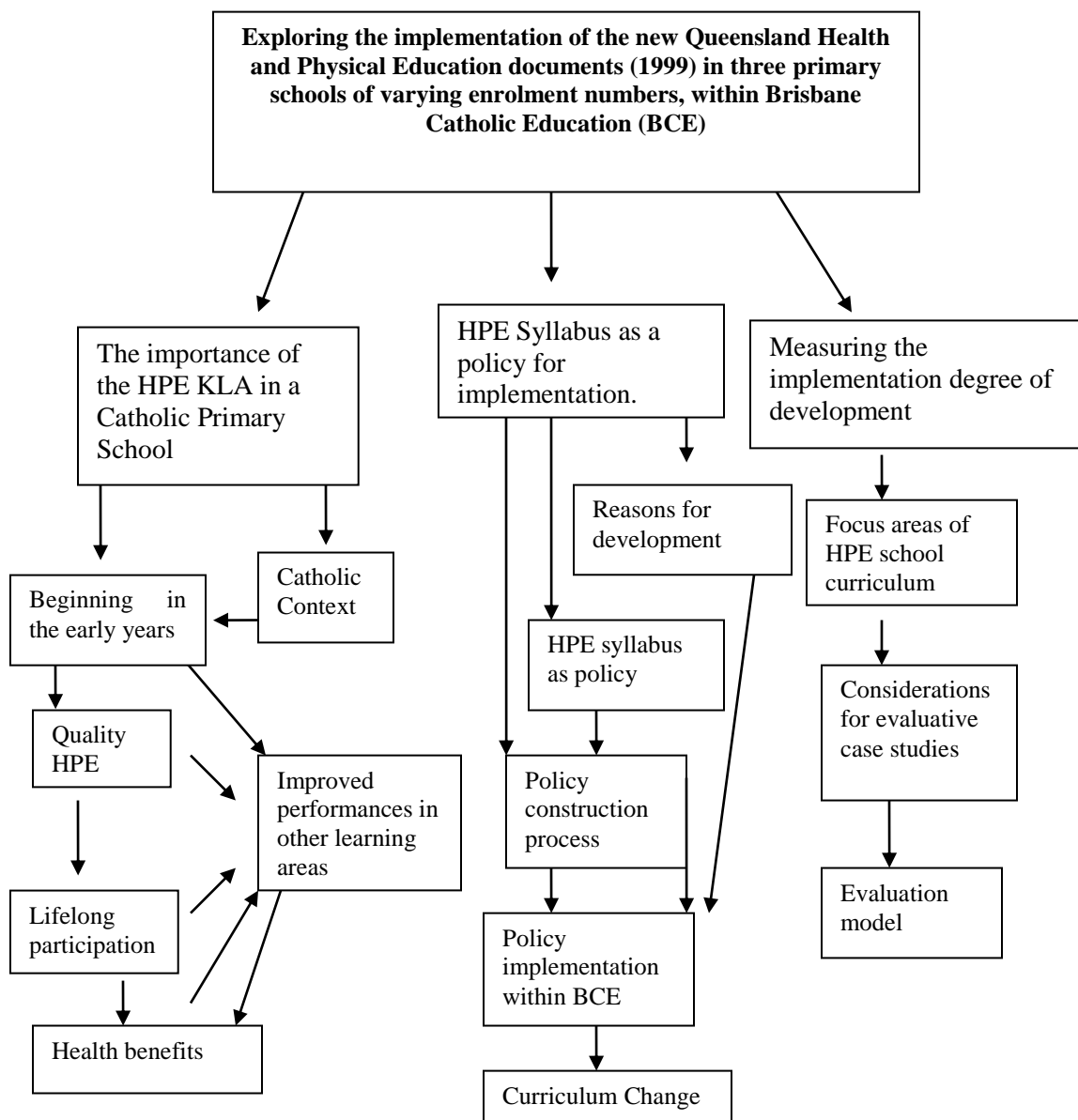
When exploring the implementation of the HPE syllabus within BCE schools it is necessary that the researcher has an understanding of why and how this **policy implementation** occurred. 'Why' questions are answered by investigating the **reasons for development** of the HPE syllabus. Investigation into educational policy reveals the syllabus **documents as policy**. The **policy construction and policy implementation processes within BCE** also raise necessary questions regarding the status of HPE as a key learning area within BCE schools. The policy construction and implementation result in education **curriculum change**.

Finally, when exploring implementation of HPE policy the researcher is required to **measure the extent of the implementation process**. Therefore research **focus areas within the HPE curriculum** are identified, as too are the **evaluation models** and issues that need to be considered for **evaluative case studies**.

Together these themes provide the elements that shape the conceptual framework. An overview of the conceptual framework that guides the literature review is provided in Figure 7.1. It offers direction to the research purpose as it helps to paint the 'big picture' from the relevant literature.

The literature for this research has been comprehensively reviewed. This literature review is constrained by the nature of the Research Proposal document.

**Figure 7.1 Conceptual Framework for the literature review.**



## **7.2 The importance of the HPE key learning area within a Catholic primary school.**

This component of the literature review outlines the possible impact of the HPE key learning area within a Catholic primary school. Five key questions emerge from this component of the literature. They are:

**7.2.1** What importance does HPE have within the Catholic context?

**7.2.2** What are the health benefits?

**7.2.3** Are there academic benefits?

**7.2.4** When is the best time to begin the implementation of HPE in the primary school?

**7.2.5** What is meant by quality HPE?

### **7.2.1 The importance of HPE within a Catholic context.**

Health and Physical Education closely operates in conjunction with Religious Education to develop the whole person. One of the three strands within the HPE syllabus, *Enhancing Personal Development* is an essential curriculum component as well within Religious Education (BCE, 2003a). The numbers of children within Catholic primary schools who have no religious affiliation is increasing rapidly (O'Shea, 2000) and for many students today the Catholic school is often their only experience of Church (Puttock, 2002). The role of the Catholic School, "to provide the opportunity to experience in an active manner the key elements of Christian life: liturgy, prayer and service" (Hutton, 1999, p.1), more so than ever before, has taken on greater importance. Consequently, the connectedness between the HPE and Religious Education key learning areas has become more significant.

The key learning area of HPE promotes authentic human development and in that Christian values by promoting the various dimensions of health which advances students' physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual growth (QSCC, 1999a). There are eight Catholic qualities, which include; the sense of sacramentality (finding the infinite in the finite), a feeling of community, an



appreciation of human potential and fallibility, a concern for justice and the unfortunate, a reverence for tradition, and a conviction that care should have no borders (Groome, 2002). The HPE syllabus in schools relates to and informs each of these. As such, HPE is consonant with Gospel values, Papal teachings and Catholic tradition.

The nature of HPE promotes Catholic qualities through movement, skill and physical fitness where God's influence and design are apparent (Catholic Education Commission, 1993). The Church approves and encourages sports, viewing them as training for social relations (John Paul II, 1979) and physical activities enable the realization of talents, strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and limitations, self discipline and improvement (Hoffman, 1992).

The HPE curriculum documents are committed to social justice (QSCC, 1999a). Physical activities and sports enhance the Gospel message (John Paul II, 1980, p.10) and taking care of one's physical body through exercise is an example of good stewardship (Hoffman, 1992). The values of loyalty, fair play, generosity, friendship and a spirit of cooperation are promoted through sports (Hoffman, 1992).

### **7.2.2 The health benefits of HPE.**

Physical fitness and physical activity minimizes the risk of disease and maximizes wellness (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). These benefits are evident in both adults and children (ACHPER WA Branch, 1999). Health benefits include reduced risk of coronary heart disease (Shilton, 1997) and several studies have tracked coronary risk factors from childhood into adulthood (Schmidt, Walkuski & Xiaoqian 1997). Physical activity may protect the heart as it increases High-Density Lipoprotein ('good') cholesterol (Bouchard, Shepherd, Stephens, Sutton & McPherson, 1990, Fletcher, Balady, Froelicher, Hartley, Haskell & Pollock, 1995). Exercise is associated with lower rates of colon cancer (Blair, Kohl, Paffenbarger, Clark, Cooper & Gibbons 1989; Schardt, 1993) and

weight bearing exercise enhances bone density (Caplon, Lord & Ward, 1993; White, Wright & Hudson, 1993), thus physical activity may reduce the risk of osteoporosis in later life. Studies suggest more active people are less likely to develop non insulin dependent (adult onset) diabetes (Schardt, 1993; Blair & Meredith, 1993). Exercise is an important management tool for asthmatics, for reducing the risk of obesity (Shilton, 1997; Berkowitz, Agrass, Korner & Kraemer 1985; Johnson, Burke & Mayer, 1956; Stefanik, Heald & Mayer, 1959) and blood cholesterol (Bauman & Owen, 1991). Also, physically fit people have a better immune system against colds and upper respiratory tract infections (Schardt, 1993).

There are also mental health and social benefits to participating regularly in physical activities. Physical activity has been consistently related to improvements in symptoms of clinical depression (Taylor, Sallis & Needle, 1985; Calfas & Taylor, 1994). Other mental health and social benefits include; better stress management, having fun, building relationships, building self esteem and self efficacy, and building personal and social skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork and cooperation (Shilton, 1997).

### **7.2.3 The academic benefits of HPE.**

Different cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have shown an improved performance in other curriculum areas when physical education time is increased (ACHPER WA Branch, 1999). Such studies include the Vanves, Trois Rivières and Hindmarsh (ACHPER WA Branch, 1999).

Findings from these studies were similar in that they all found that regular physical activity enhanced performance in a range of other pursuits, although the Senate Inquiry stressed that increased academic benefits shouldn't be expected all of the time (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992).

#### **7.2.4 The optimum time to begin implementation of HPE in the primary school.**

Research suggests that the best time for children to learn and refine their motor skills is the preschool and early primary school years (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Branta, Haubenstricker & Seefeldt, 1984; Espenschade & Eckert, 1980). This has the advantage that is affiliated with the child's natural play structure and has fewer competing activities allowing the children more time to concentrate on developing their motor skills.

The early detection of motor problems facilitates early intervention programs which 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). Furthermore, recent research indicates that active children become active adults, thus increasing the likelihood of a healthy adult life (Raitakari, Porkka, Taimela, Telama, Rasanen & Viikari, 1994). Likewise, inactive children become inactive adults (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992).

The importance of motor skill acquisition in the early years of primary school also develops "the feeling of competence in movement" (Garcia, Floyd & Lawson, 2002, p. 1), which is necessary for children to develop to their potential full range of movement (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992, p. 58). Many children stop playing sport because they can not perform the skills well enough and therefore do not experience success or enjoyment (Morgan et al, 2001; Wankel & Pabich, 1981).

Therefore, within the early years of the primary school, HPE has particular importance for the children developing the fundamentals of movement and skill acquisition. If children are not given the opportunity to do this then it can be detrimental to their confidence and attitude towards physical activities as adults, thus possibly limiting healthy participation in lifelong physical activity.

### **7.2.5 Quality HPE defined.**

In order for the HPE curriculum to fulfil a role in developing lifelong participation, it is imperative that a quality HPE curriculum is implemented (ACHPER WA Branch, 1999). “There is no higher priority in life than health. Without it, all other skills lack meaning and utility” (Pangrazi, 2000, p.18). This suggests that a quality HPE program should be given priority rather than be neglected or relegated a minor place in the school curriculum.

One recommendation from the Senate Inquiry was that all children be provided with quality sporting opportunities conducted by qualified physical education teachers with sufficient sporting equipment (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). Research has 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 (Kelly, Dagger & Walkley, 1989).

Quality instruction is a vital aspect of any HPE program. Other aspects to consider during the design and development stage are enjoyment and fun for the participants (Garcia et al., 2002). When children enjoy learning through movement, they develop optimistic views about being physically active (Pangrazi, 2000; Henderson, Glancy & Little, 1999) and will be predisposed to engage in it (Garcia et al, 2002). Therefore, the way the program is implemented is paramount to it being enjoyable and successful.

Quality lessons are inclusive, catering for diverse interests and abilities (Boss, 2000). Physical activity benefits the unskilled and obese youngsters the most and needs to be given priority as these children need to discover suitable physical activities that they enjoy (Pangrazi, 2000). Inclusive programs can be implemented by assigning open-ended tasks including individual challenges and modified team sports (Boss, 2000).

### ***7.3 The Queensland HPE syllabus as a policy to be implemented within BCE***

This component investigates the need to develop a new HPE policy, its form, the construction process and implementation within BCE. Within this component four key questions emerge from the literature. They are:

- 7.3.1** Why were new HPE curriculum documents developed?
- 7.3.2** How is the HPE syllabus a policy?
- 7.3.3** What was the policy construction process?
- 7.3.4** How was the HPE policy implemented within BCE?
- 7.3.5** What are the necessary considerations for curriculum change?

#### **7.3.1 New HPE documents developed.**

In the late 1980's and early 1990's the HPE curriculum within Australia was considered to be in crisis (Tinning et al, 1994). The crisis was directly related to the social and cultural forces influencing various perceptions of this key learning area. Policy frameworks that made sense of change necessitated updating in response to the cultural changes that had occurred (Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). The in-house discussions of crisis among HPE professionals led to a Senate Inquiry (1992) into the state of HPE within Australian education systems. The findings of the inquiry supported the in-house discussions of crisis (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). The Senate Committee recommended that as a matter of priority detailed written policies for physical education be prepared and circulated. In Queensland, primary schools were required to replace the outdated Syllabus of 1972 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992), which had been in need of review and updating for some time (BCE, 1999) and the Senate Committee recommendations were a timely contribution to this process.

#### **7.3.2 The HPE syllabus as policy.**

By examining the elements of policy it can be seen that the HPE syllabus (1999) is a policy, more specifically it is a public incremental educational policy (Dinan-Thompson, 1998). The Queensland HPE syllabus (1999) is a public policy that is conceptualized as text. A "public policy is whatever governments choose to do

or not to do” (Dye, 1984, p.1). The Queensland government chose to establish the QSCC to oversee the syllabus development process including a new HPE syllabus in accord with the HPE National Statement and Profile (1994). The syllabus is incremental, with the latest edition of HPE policy dependent upon previous policies and practices (Dinan-Thompson, 1998). It was influenced by previous syllabi dating back to 1972 for Primary Physical Education, 1982 for Primary Health Education and 1987 for Secondary Health and Physical Education. It was strongly influenced by the 1992 Senate Inquiry into Physical and Sport Education in Schools and also by the Australian mass media which highlighted many issues of concern in HPE in such programs as ‘Going for Gold’ which was shown in April 1992, on ABC Television’s *Four Corners* (Dinan, 2000; Haines, 1998).

Varying contexts that inform any policy development process are the context of influence, the context of text production, the context of practice, the context of outcomes and the context of political strategy (Ball, 1994). All contexts exist within the construction and implementation of the HPE syllabus policy.

Policies are intended “to bring about idealized solutions to diagnosed problems” (Ball, 1990, p. 22). The socio-cultural approach used in the new syllabus development process was regarded as beneficial to remedying the crisis in the HPE learning area, because it had the potential to inform teachers and students of the social and cultural forces within this field. This approach was deliberately chosen with the intent of enabling teacher and student healthy and educated lifestyle choices.

### **7.3.3 The policy construction process.**

There are two distinctive moments of the policy development process, construction and implementation (Alford & Friedland, 1988). The construction of the policy often involves many different parties forming and bringing together different related perspectives (Codd, 1988). The HPE syllabus was constructed

under the guidance of the QSCC and representatives from the different education systems within Queensland. This intersystemic structure was a first in Queensland education syllabus development, however, the Independent School systems, with which BCE is closely affiliated were only marginally involved in construction, trialling and providing feedback on the new syllabus (Dinan-Thompson, 1998).

At the same time as the Senate Inquiry was in process, the National Statement and Profile for HPE was being devised, a first step in the construction of new HPE curriculum documents. The Statement and Profile for HPE held more status due to the *Ten Common Endorsed and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia* (AEC, 1994), which effectively reinstated HPE as an essential component in a child's learning (Dinan-Thompson, 1998).

The HPE Statement and Profile lacked consultation with and thus input from teachers (Garrett & Piltz, 1999; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992), but were generally received favourably amongst educators as they offered possibilities for rescuing HPE from becoming culturally obsolete (Kirk & Penney, 1996). The Statement and Profile provided a foundation to the construction of the Queensland HPE syllabus (Dinan, 2000), fulfilling one key Senate Inquiry recommendation (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). The HPE syllabus developed by the QSCC in collaboration with the three Queensland education systems evolved through five drafts and was trialled from May 1997, with the final published document being released in January 1999.

The new HPE syllabus adopted a socio-cultural approach to learning. This was designed intentionally to combat those cultural influences that had contributed to the crisis in the HPE learning area since the 1972 syllabus.

#### **7.3.4 HPE policy implementation within BCE.**

The first development of the implementation of the new curriculum documents began within Catholic Education in 1996. A scan of the HPE curriculum and teaching was conducted throughout the BCE schools as an assessment of the degree of crisis. As a result of the findings subsequently the HPE curriculum officers employed by BCE increased substantially in number and collaborative work with the other two education systems continued providing discipline renewal support in areas of required needs identified by the scan (BCE, 1999).

During the pre implementation phase a network of lead teachers with a keen interest and experience in the HPE KLA was selected from BCE primary and secondary schools to act as facilitators within the schools and school districts (BCE, 1999). The implementation was the responsibility of each system (Dinan-Thompson, 1998) and BCE implemented the syllabus using a 'whole school' approach (BCE, 1999).

The implementation of the syllabus began in 1999 and it was anticipated that by the end of 2001, teachers would be working from School Curriculum Programs based on the syllabus (BCE, 1999). The implementation process is presumably complete, because since the end of 2001 there have been and are no longer any Health and Physical Education officers employed by BCE nor any professional development provided within this area. Further, it is unlikely that there will be direct support to schools in this learning area over the next few years (Hutton, 2003; BCE, 1999). Ultimately the responsibility for syllabus implementation lies with a schools administration whose authoritative role is to support the development, implementation and monitoring of the curriculum (BCE, 2003c).

Although BCE have planned to be involved in a Strategic Renewal Framework (2002-2006) which renews all curriculum areas, there has been no specific mention of how this will be done nor the level of importance that will be afforded the HPE learning area.



### **7.3.5 Curriculum change.**

Policy construction, implementation and evaluation are designed to bring about curriculum change, “which implies a level of metamorphosis in the overall plan of education, including teachers and their ideologies” (Dinan-Thompson, 2001, p. 9). Curriculum change is a complex process (Sparkes, 1991), a fact which is often ignored (Hall, 1992) as schools and teachers in many countries appear to be extremely resistant to real change, often experiencing only surface or superficial change (Sparkes, 1991).

Real change involves transformations of people’s beliefs about their surroundings which can be threatening and stressful for the teachers involved (Sparkes, 1991). Such transformations often result in conflict, loss and struggle, which are fundamental to successful change (Fullan, 1982). The appellation ‘real change’ is referred to as more appropriately ‘authentic change’ (Dinan-Thompson, 2001), which includes the “important elements of emotion and the role of interactions in teacher change” (p. 9). If emotional dimensions are ignored during curriculum change then “emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door” (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 109). Therefore, authentic change takes into consideration the micro-politics which often causes change to fail (Dinan-Thompson, 2002; Datnow, 1998; Sparkes, 1990).

Throughout history different strategies have been used in attempt to bring about changes in schools. These have included the top-down approach during the 1960’s and 1970’s. This approach minimized the teacher’s influence on curriculum reform (Macdonald, 2003; Kirk, 1990) and as a result failed (Sparkes, 1991; Lawson, 1990). During the 1970’s and the early 1980’s teachers and schools were located at the centre of curriculum reform efforts (Macdonald, 2003), in the adoption of a bottom-up approach. This resulted in “poorly resourced and loosely assessed curricula. The consequences for PE were the loss of systemic attention and support” (Macdonald, 2003). Throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s ‘partnerships’ were adopted. This was “a new model of

curriculum reform which involved collaborative relationships between administrators, curriculum developers, professional associates, researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and parents” (Macdonald, 2003, p. 142).

It is through forming partnerships of equal basis, collegially working not bottom-up or top-down, but rather horizontally that will enable meaningful and useful changes (Hall, 1992). Through such partnerships, change focusing on where, what, how, and which young people learn needs to direct any reform (Macdonald, 2003). In addition, time and resources need to be equally provided to the implementation process as is currently given to the construction and leadership needs to be done from a facilitating perspective (Hall, 1992).

#### ***7.4 Measuring the extent of the implementation process.***

This component of the literature review investigates the extent of the implementation of the new HPE syllabus within the BCE primary schools. Within this component three key questions emerge from the literature. They are:

**7.4.1** What specific areas of the school HPE curriculum will be investigated?

**7.4.2** What factors need to be considered for choosing evaluative case studies in HPE curriculum?

**7.4.3** Which curriculum evaluation models are the most appropriate for this study of HPE implementation?

##### **7.4.1 Specific areas of the school HPE curriculum to be investigated.**

The problem issues existing within Health and Physical Education in Australian primary schools, when the key learning area was in crisis (Tinning et al, 1994), will be used as a benchmark for this investigation. The problems included a shortage of resources, of HPE specialist teachers and time allocated to the HPE key learning area within primary schools (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992).

Evidence of the socio-cultural approach embedded in the new syllabus, will be investigated within selected BCE primary schools. The socio-cultural approach

recognizes that students are influenced by the different physical, social, cultural, political and economic environmental forces that impact on their well being (Dann, 1999). Implementation challenges faced by BCE will be investigated, including social justice perspectives, inclusive curriculum, commitment to stewardship, just and effective use of resources, and critical reflection on teaching for quality experiences (BCE, 1998). The teaching time apportioned to each of the strands will be examined within the case study.

The Health Promoting Schools Model covers the scope of health implementation and will be used to guide this investigation. The model comprises of three overlapping elements: Curriculum, teaching and learning; School organization, ethos and environment; and partnerships and services, which need to be considered as a whole (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 1996). Implementation across the three elements allows a more comprehensive message and promotion for health and therefore forms an ideal framework for evaluation of all three strands of the Queensland HPE syllabus. “Health is created in the settings of everyday life” (Kickbusch, 1991) and therefore the everyday life of the school will be part of the investigation, rather than just the sport or physical activity lessons.

#### **7.4.2 Factors needing to be considered for choosing evaluative case studies.**

Evaluative case studies are the most appropriate methodology for exploring the implementation of the new syllabus as they “attempt to understand what is happening and link the contextual realities to the differences between what was planned and what actually occurred” (Anderson, 1990, p. 157). They also take into account the perceptions of practitioners (Douglas, 1995), as success of policy implementation ultimately depends on the teachers and students (Gardner & Williamson, 1999). Therefore, the study should be helpful to teachers as well as to policy makers, as teachers carry the main burden of curriculum

implementation (Norris, 1998). Case studies will enable teachers to better understand the research, which is advantageous if change is anticipated.

When choosing a case study method there are some contributing factors that need to be taken into consideration. These include choosing suitable teachers who provide a diverse range of experiences and values from a range of contexts (Douglas, 1995). This factor will be considered when choosing the three schools to investigate more closely, representative of different developmental stages of HPE syllabus implementation within Brisbane Catholic Education.

In asking teachers to give up their time to participate in research necessitates being cognisant of the skepticism of teachers towards academics. Research and practice tend to follow divergent paths, and it is often a perception of teachers that there is no advantage for them in being involved in research conducted by an outsider (Schon, 1984). Much care and detail will be taken to form positive relationships with colleagues to be interviewed and whose co-operation will be paramount to the conduct of this investigation.

#### **7.4.3 Curriculum evaluation models most appropriate to this study.**

As this study will take place as curriculum implementation evaluative case studies, it is important to choose the most appropriate evaluation approach. The approaches relate to the two metaphors that have influenced education over the years. They are the 'factory' metaphor and 'schooling as travel' metaphor (Stufflebeam, Madaus & Kellaghan, 2000). The factory metaphor is where the child being educated is likened to an object efficiently manufactured in a factory, whereas the schooling as travel metaphor likens the education process to that of a memorable guided tour.

It is the 'school as travel' metaphor that relates to the new outcome-based approach that the HPE syllabus (1999) employs. The syllabus uses a learner-centred approach where teaching is the act of guiding and facilitating learning

(QSCC, 1999b). Therefore, this study will be influenced by the school as travel metaphor. This requires a naturalistic approach and is concerned with program processes and how they impact on individuals and groups (Stufflebeam et al., 2000). This invites use of qualitative methods in the research process.

This curriculum implementation evaluation will be a very comprehensive evaluation conducted within BCE for HPE. It will be useful for the key learning area as it will surface and illuminate strengths and weaknesses in the HPE program implementation (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972) and has the potential to make an impact.

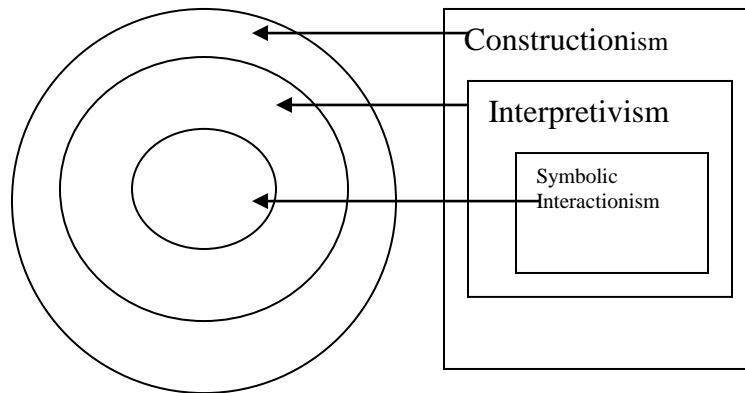
All themes embedded within this literature review are necessary for exploring the problem for this research study. The research problem is 'How thorough and systematically developed is the implementation of the new HPE syllabus in BCE schools? Exploration of this problem will help establish whether or not the new syllabus has rescued the HPE key learning area from the crisis caused by social and cultural influences impacting on it in the past.

## **8.0 Research Design**

### **8.1 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical perspectives that frame this exploration of the implementation of the new HPE syllabus within selected BCE primary schools is a constructionist epistemology, embedded in an interpretive approach, grounded in symbolic interactionism (Figure 8.1). This theoretical framework is the most appropriate for this study considering that the success of policy implementation ultimately depends on the teachers and students (Gardner & Williamson, 1999). Hence, their voices will be heard as this theoretical framework enables the participants to share their stories on how HPE is taught within the context of their schools. This will provide valuable insight into the implementation of the new syllabus.

Figure 8.1 Theoretical Framework



### 8.1.1 Epistemology

A constructionist epistemology grounds this research as meanings will be developed from engagement and interaction with the participant teachers and students through the sharing of their lived experiences and interpretations of those experiences. This epistemology is most appropriate as success of policy implementation ultimately depends on the teachers and students (Gardner & Williamson, 1999).

According to the constructionist epistemology the researcher's task is to construct meaning through engagement with the world realities. Constructionist knowledge is individually constructed (Crotty, 1998).

Our constructions of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm" (Schwandt 1989, 399. Cited in Glesne, 1999, p. 8).

There will be many shared viewpoints and opinions from a variety of perspectives and all will be valid, for the constructionist epistemology does not acknowledge one true meaning, but a multiplicity of meaning. It is this supposition that will form the relationship between the researcher and that being researched.

From the concepts that arise in the participants' responses to the key questions that emerged from the literature, theories will be constructed. Theories tell us how concepts relate to each other (Neuman, 2000). The interpretations and perspectives will vary for reality is subjective (Sarantakos, 1998) and each school context is unique.

### **8.1.2 Theoretical Perspective**

A theoretical perspective embedded in a constructionist epistemology that is most appropriate for the purpose of this study is interpretivism. An interpretive epistemological framework elicits interpretive accounts of phenomena (Candy, 1989). The research questions that emerged from the literature review will have mixed responses. Responses will vary from school to school depending on the particular contexts of the schools and perspectives of the participants. A perspective is a bias that influences our action in the world (Charon, 1998). The research questions require that the interpretive paradigm be employed for this research study, for the question "Which problem is it more significant to have solved?" acts as a guide to the choice of research approach (Candy, 1989, p. 10).

From within an interpretivist theoretical perspective, a symbolic interactionist lens will be applied for the purpose of investigating 'How Health and Physical Education is taught?' Determining the degree of syllabus implementation will involve investigating the teaching of the HPE curriculum, within the three BCE primary schools. Employing the interpretivist perspective assumes that there is change as this perspective portrays an ever changing world (Glesne, 1999), where emphasis is placed on change and development of individuals, groups and societies (Sarantakos, 1998). It is envisaged that investigation of the changes will discover both positive and negative outcomes in the implementation process. The assumption here is that the key learning area, Health and Physical Education, within BCE was in crisis before the development and implementation

of the new HPE curriculum documents because the literature suggests this was the case throughout Australian primary schools. If such is true of BCE Catholic primary schools then the changes and development of individuals and groups within selected Catholic primary school communities needs be the focus of this research. Symbolic interactionism enables this to occur.

Figure 8.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

3.2.1	Epistemology	Constructionism
3.2.2	Theoretical Perspective	Interpretivism - Symbolic Interactionism
3.3	Research Methodology	Case Study
3.4	Data Collection Methods	Interviews; Semi-structured Interviews; Focus group Reflective journal Observation Document Analysis

## 8.2 Research Methodology

A research methodology situated within a constructionist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective that is most appropriate for this study is an 'evaluative' and 'multiple' case study (Merriam, 1998). "Case study research in education is conducted so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained" (Merriam, 1998, p.34). This design has been selected as appropriate to the purposes of this research problem, the nature of the research problem and the research questions being investigated. For this educational study, research case study is the best plan for answering the research questions (Merriam, 1998), as case study is "process-orientated, flexible and adaptable to changes in circumstances and an evolving context" (Anderson, 1990, p.157).

To identify the degree of syllabus implementation that the HPE curriculum documents have received within three BCE primary schools, each case study will



take place as an evaluative case study (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative case studies are “particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic” (Merriam, 1998, p.43), and so are appropriate to this research. The study is particularistic as it focuses on a particular program/event: implementation of the HPE syllabus. “This specificity of focus makes it an especially good design for practical problems- for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practise.” (Merriam, 1998, p.29) Therefore, a case study is ideal for attempting to answer ‘How is HPE taught in three schools?’ The case study will be descriptive in that the research data that will emerge will be rich and thick. The case study will be heuristic in that it will illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of the program (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972) thus increasing the reader’s understanding of the HPE curriculum in practice within three selected BCE primary schools.

### **8.3 Participants**

Non-probability sampling is purposeful selection so that learning is maximized, which is the most appropriate strategy for this qualitative research study (Merriam, 1998). It is anticipated that varying degrees of implementation of the HPE curriculum within BCE primary schools will be identified by deliberately choosing three different sized schools. This is a selection process referred to as maximum variation representation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) or purposeful representation (Patton, 1990), which is employed so that maximum insight can be gained from the best participants (Merriam, 1998). From these schools participants will be chosen deliberately as a representative of each school/case. The HPE specialist teacher will be a priority to interview, and if the school does not employ a HPE specialist then the sports coordinator/ HPE lead teacher will be the second preference. Such representatives have been identified as it is assumed that they will have a comprehensive knowledge of the school’s HPE program. This participant along with three classroom representatives, one each from the early years, the middle years and the upper years respectively, will be interviewed in a semi structured interview format in order to gain insights into research Questions One, Two and Three (cf. pp. 10-11). These questions cover

the issues of syllabus implementation, available resources and teachers' perspectives. HPE lessons (Physical Activity strand) will also be observed to supplement the issues raised in the semi-structured interviews. A variety of lessons will be observed in the three levels of the school; the early years, middle years and upper years. Classroom teachers will only be observed teaching the lesson if there is no specialist HPE teacher. Also, attempts will be made to enable the class being observed to have a sample of its numbers in the focus group interview as participants.

The student participants will be chosen for interview to seek responses to the fourth research question (cf. p.12), which relates to students' perspectives. There will be three focus group interviews within each school/ case. One focus group with representatives from a class in the early years, one with representatives from a class in the middle years and one with representatives from a class in the upper years of the school. Maximum variation representation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) involves "identifying and seeking out those who represent the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest for the study" (Merriam, 1998, p.63). Maximum variation representation will be employed through means of a questionnaire to select four representatives with a high interest in physical activities (two boys and two girls) and four representatives with little interest in physical activities (two boys and two girls). The questionnaire results will be checked for confirmation by the classroom teacher.

It is anticipated that classroom teachers to be interviewed will give a more realistic indication of the school's position than would school administration staff. Using the one class for the interview (semi structured and focus group) and for observations is designed to facilitate consistency of perceptions shared by the participants during the interviews.

Table 8.3 Research Participants per case/ school.

Categories of participants	Data Collection Strategies
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<b>Researcher EdD thesis 2004</b>		Semi Structured Interview		Interview Focus Group		Observation of class		Maximum <b>TOTAL</b> of <b>participants</b>	
Specialist HPE/ Key Teacher		1		0		1		<b>1</b>	
Classroom Teachers	Early Years	1	3	0		1	3 (only if no HPE teacher)	<b>3</b>	
	Middle Years	1				1			
	Upper Years	1				1			
Students	Early Years	0		6	18	25-30 student approx	75-90 approx	<b>90</b>	
	Middle Years			6		25-30 student approx			
	Upper Years			6		25-30 student approx			
Maximum <b>TOTAL</b> for each category.		<b>4</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>91(93 maximum)</b>		<b>94</b>	

#### 8.4 Data Gathering Strategies

The standard data gathering techniques used in qualitative research are participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, and document review (Marshall & Rossman, 1994), for data gathering is about asking, watching and reviewing (Wolcott, 1992). The techniques to be used in this study are interpretive, subjective and flexible, with emphasis on discovery and exploration (Sarantakos, 1998).

The data gathering strategies and subsequent analysis have to be appropriate for an interpretive case study research design. For “methods have to be perceived in the context of a certain framework and should also fit into the theoretical and methodological model of the perspective in question” (Sarantakos, 1998, p.41). Therefore, the techniques have been chosen to complement the theoretical perspective of the study.

#### **8.4.1 Interviews: semi structured**

Interviews are valuable techniques because the researcher cannot observe participants' thoughts and feelings (Merriam, 1998). The only persons who fully understand the social reality within their context are the persons themselves (Burns, 1997). Hence, interviews enable the researcher to find out the thoughts of the participant (Patton, 1990). Semi-structured interviews are essential for this interpretive study, for "we cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Hence the HPE specialist and the three classroom teachers will be asked to share their stories and expertise to contribute valuable information within the context of the school that cannot possibly be observed by the researcher due to limitations of time available for data collection. Sometimes the only way to get data is through interviews (Merriam, 1998) and all interviews will be audiotaped and later transcribed to enable the researcher to focus on interaction with the participant during the interview.

The semi structured interview has been purposefully chosen to create a relaxed environment for the participant. It will be "guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions will be predetermined" (Merriam, 1998, p. 93). This less structured alternative will enable an atmosphere where trust and rapport between the researcher and participants can develop (Burns, 1997), thus increasing the likelihood of the participants sharing their unique perceptions developed within their school's particular context.

#### **8.4.2 Interview: Focus group**

For this study the focus group will be a small group of eight students, the ideal number for focus group interviews (Wilson, 1997). They will represent their class, a cross-section of the primary school and ultimately students' attitudes with regard to the HPE Key Learning Area. Focus groups are very appropriate for this study as they are used for program planning, program improvement and

program evaluation (Anderson, 1990). Furthermore, they provide synergy within the student group adding depth and insight (Anderson, 1990), as interview data will be collected from six students rather than just the one.

This interview technique enables the participants to brainstorm ideas and bounce off other participants' thoughts and views to initiate thought processes. The interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed so that during the interview the researcher can concentrate on interacting with the participants. As this interview technique is "socially oriented, studying participants in a natural, real life atmosphere" (Marshall & Rossman, 1994, p. 84), where meanings are not formed in a vacuum but rather derived from social interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 1994), it lays embedded within the symbolic interactionist strand of the interpretivist approach, the theoretical perspective for this research study.

#### **8.4.3 Reflective Journal**

During the research a journal will be kept to record both fieldnotes and the insights of the researcher. This will enable evaluation of the implementation of the syllabus across the three elements that comprise the Health Promoting Schools model. Fieldnote data includes records of conversations, details of the setting and the researcher's impressions/observations (Burns, 1997), which becomes the raw data from which a study's findings eventually emerge (Merriam, 1998).

#### **8.4.4 Observation**

Observations will be conducted for classes during HPE physical activity lessons and also will occur throughout visits to the case/school for interviews. The observations will be recorded as fieldnotes in the reflective journal. "Observations are used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1994, p.80). Observations, while they do have some similarities to interviews, can also elicit data that interviews cannot. Observations take place in the natural field setting and represent a firsthand

encounter with the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, observations will enhance and validate the data gathered during the interviews. The nature of observations makes them most appropriate for this symbolic interactionist study.

#### 8.4.5 Document Analysis

For this field study documentary analysis will also be used in addition to both interviews and observations. “The terms fieldwork and field study usually connote both activities (observation and interviews) and, to a lesser degree, documentary analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 94). Analyzing the HPE work program will serve to confirm and interrogate the accuracy of what is being shared during the interviews. “The review of documents is an unobtrusive method, one rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 1994, p.85). Document analysis is another method of data gathering that accommodates symbolic interactionism within an interpretivist perspective.

The document that will be analysed during data gathering is the *School Curriculum Program for HPE*. “Documents are, in fact, a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (Merriam, 1998, p. 112). Physical materials, as well, will be analysed. “Physical material as a form of document, broadly defined, consists of physical objects found within the study setting. Anthropologists typically refer to these objects as artifacts, which include the tools, implements, utensils, and instruments of everyday living” (Merriam, 1998, p. 117). Some physical materials or instruments that will be analysed during this field study include sports equipment and facilities.

Figure 8.4.5 Choice of strategies to address research questions

Research Questions	Data Gathering Strategy
1) How are teachers implementing	Semi structured Interview

<p>the HPE curriculum documents?</p> <p>2) What readily accessible resources do schools have to assist with the implementation of Health and Physical Education?</p> <p>3) What are the teachers' attitudes to the HPE Key Learning Area?</p>	<p>Reflective Journal</p> <p>Document Analysis</p> <p>Observation of lessons</p>
<p>4) What are the children's attitudes to the HPE Key Learning Area?</p>	<p>Focus Group interview</p> <p>Observation of lessons</p> <p>Reflective Journal</p>

### 8.5 Analysis of data

The interpretivist data analysis strategy that is to be employed for the purpose of this research study is Narrative/ Descriptive analysis. Each case study will be investigating a different context, a different story and this analysis strategy enables emphasis to be placed on the communication of these stories (Merriam, 1998). The interpretivist is committed to hearing the stories of the participants, their perspectives of the world they experience (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The researcher will attempt to capture the stories by interpreting the culture of the school through reported experiences, understandings and other collected data. This will ultimately result in a learning episode for both reader and researcher (Glesne, 1999). The Narrative/ Descriptive Analysis method has been deliberately chosen to illuminate each story/ case study in this interpretive, symbolic interactionist study.

As this research is employing multiple case studies it is necessary to collect and analyse data from several schools (Merriam, 1998). The analysis process will involve employing a narrative / descriptive report for each of the three school/ case study contexts. Each individual case will be analysed using Wellingtons six staged simplified version of the 'Constant Comparative Method for Analysing Qualitative Data', (Figure 8.5.2) before being described. "The constant

comparative method of analyzing qualitative data combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all existing units and subsequently categorized and coded with similar units. If there are no similar units of meaning, a new category is formed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Cross-case analysis begins at the completion of analysis for each case, “A qualitative, inductive, multicase study seeks to build abstractions across cases” (Merriam, 1998, p. 195). Repeating the same analysis process, Wellingtons six stages will be used to analyse the data across the case studies which will again be reported using a narrative/ descriptive report (Figure 8.5.1).

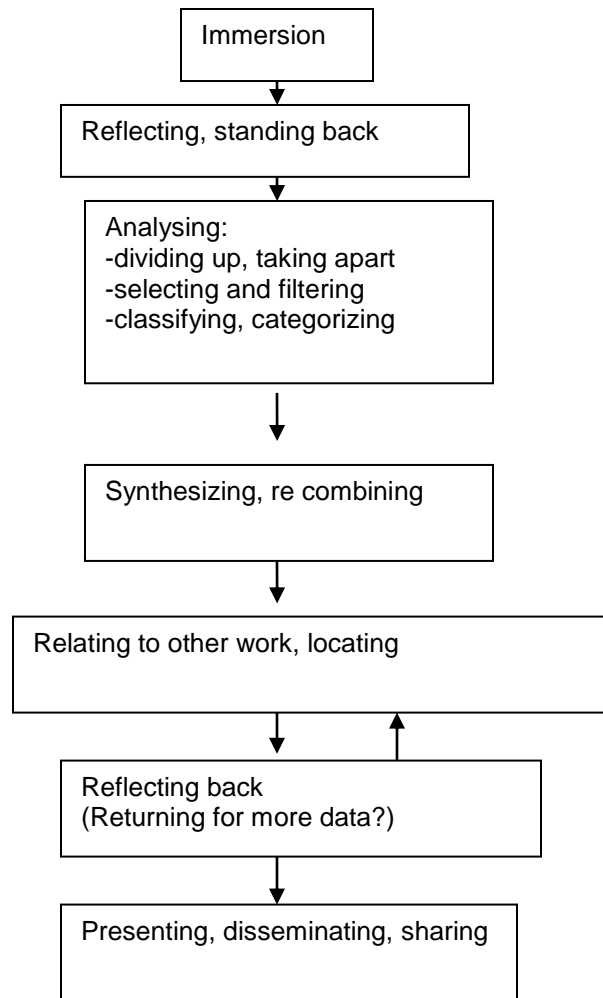
Figure 8.5.1 Process of data analysis.

Stage 1	Analysis of each case study/ school using Wellington’s table of analysis.
Stage 2	Narrative/Descriptive report given for each case study.
Stage 3	Cross case analysis again using Wellington’s table of analysis.
Stage 4	Narrative/Descriptive report given for cross case study analysis.

Analysis is iterative (Dey, 1993) and during cross case analysis the researcher attempts through iteration to see processes that are common. Further, relating to the similarities in context can develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Figure 8.5.2 General stages in making sense of qualitative data (Wellington, 2000, p. 141).





## 8.6 Verification

Throughout the data collection and analysis of this interpretive, qualitative study, a conscious effort will be made by the researcher to be fair in the collection of data, fair in the interpretation of data, fair in the formulation of theories and fair in the presentation of the data. For “all research is concerned with producing credible and dependable knowledge in an ethical manner. Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields, such as education, in which practitioners intervene in people’s lives” (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). Therefore, fairness in a qualitative, interpretive research requires “analytic openness on the grounds of refutability and freedom from bias” (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, p. 28). As the role of the researcher will be that of both

author and instrument (Patton, 1990) it is anticipated that bias will be recognized and wherever possible, consciously avoided.

To enable this study to be legitimate it will seek to demonstrate integrity in the research process, as descriptions of meaning will show substantial overlap and be disclosed for the reader. It is purposefully designed to be shared and transferred from the context of the case studies and the research as a whole, to the reader's own experience. That is, from the world of the participant and researcher to the world of the reader.

The data analysis process has been designed to walk the reader through the stages of analysis. This will be achieved by combining a narrative report and a descriptive report whilst at the same time applying the constant comparative method. It will be narrative report in that it will tell a story, and descriptive to offer sounds, smells and sights, giving the reader the sense of being there (Zeller, 1995, p.76, cited in Bassegy, 1999, p. 88). This addresses the issue of public disclosure of processes and gives the themes congruence and verisimilitude (Anfara et al, 2002). This approach adds trustworthiness, credibility and as a result, strengthens the quality of the research.

Strength will also be accomplished through prolonged engagement with data sources. This will be achieved by observing the same class as the one from whom student interviewees will be drawn. That is, the class teacher will be interviewed, her/his students will be chosen for the focus group interview and the same whole class will then be observed during a HPE physical activities lesson. The observation will not be limited to that of the lesson, but rather every interaction with individuals will constitute an observation. Therefore, there will be consistent observations of emerging issues. The time of engagement per case/school will be throughout a one month period which is a considerable amount of time for the methods being employed, hence, the time of engagement for the entire research study will be over a three month period.

Member checks involve soliciting informants' views as to credibility of findings, and will be utilized to confirm the plausibility and credibility of interpretations. Themes and conclusions may be checked within the other data gathering methods. For example, a finding during an observation may be interrogated during an interview.

Credibility of the study will be achieved by employing triangulation, the process for using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning (Stake, 1994). The multiple perceptions will be obtained from observing and interviewing a variety of participants. As well, the data will be collected using a variety of techniques. The corroboration of evidence from a variety of sources increases the chances of accuracy (Creswell, 2002) and consistency, which in addition to being credible, also makes the study dependable.

Dependability in qualitative research means that "rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense, they are consistent and dependable" (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). The researcher will be sharing prior experiences within the related field, referred to as the investigator's position (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). Documentation of the researcher's subjectivity will be recorded in a reflective journal. It is anticipated that by sharing the researcher's interests and perspectives, the reader will be able to understand how and why themes and issues have been further developed. Thick description of the researcher's position will enable the reader to enter the world of the researcher and participants when necessary, thus enabling the results to make more sense and result in dependability.

Peer debriefing will be applied where an experienced researcher (supervisor) will critically reflect on the research processes and outcomes as they emerge. The final strategy to be applied so that the study is dependable is an Audit Trail, which will be achieved through means of thick description of "how data were

collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the enquiry (Merriam, 1998, p. 207).

## **9 Ethical issues**

Codes of ethics have been established to regulate issues common to all social science research. The regulation is for “the protection of participants from harm, the right to privacy, the notion of informed consent, and the issue of deception” (Merriam, 1998, p. 213). There are two ethical clearances that must be granted before this interpretive research can be conducted. They are ethical clearance from Australian Catholic University, which involves passing a presentation research proposal to the Research Projects Ethics Committee, and from Brisbane Catholic Education. These clearances are necessary before initiating the research as inadequate negotiation of field setting entry can compromise potentially good research (Erickson, 1986).

Assuming the clearances are granted and the research study begins there are ethical standards that must be met. The participants will all be participating on a voluntary basis which they will have clearly explained to them. From the beginnings of the research a strong and honest relationship will be developed between the researcher and participants as this is essential if the researcher is to gain valid insights (Erickson, 1986). The participants will be informed to their respective levels of comprehension the purposes and activities of the research that will occur, and of any extra work load that the study may entail. The participants will be protected from any risks (Erickson, 1986). One risk is that regret or embarrassment may be caused by something the participant may say or do during an observation or an interview. If this happens to be the case then the participant will be given the opportunity to check and amend the transcription of either the observations and or the interviews. Regularly throughout the study the participants will be reassured that the researcher’s purpose is not to evaluate them nor their teaching styles. For this has been identified as one source of

difficulty with trust in the participant and researcher relationship and could possibly act as an impediment to the data gathering phase (Erickson, 1986).

Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured during the study as pseudonyms will be assigned to protect the privacy of the participants and schools. This is important within this study as one of the focus participants is the HPE specialist teacher. As this participant is in most cases the only person holding that role within the school care must be taken as they would be easily identified and thus open to recognition by the readers.

## **10 Limitations and delimitations of the study.**

Limitations are research issues that are beyond the researcher's control, while delimitations are within the researcher's control. The major limitation in this study is determining the level of implementation of changes in the HPE key learning area since the introduction of the new syllabus. Not having access to the results of the BCE scan of HPE in its schools was a perceived limiting factor for this study, as this scan is the only documented evidence of the HPE learning area's status within BCE schools before the release of the syllabus. Decisions made and actions within BCE after the scan, does suggest the HPE curriculum in BCE schools was any different from other Australian education systems, in which the HPE curriculum area was in crisis (Tinning et al, 1994). For the purpose of this study it will be therefore assumed that the HPE curriculum in BCE schools before the release of the new syllabus was also in crisis.

When exploring the HPE syllabus implementation, the scope of the HPE curriculum is delimitation due to the many dynamics that influence this field. The Health Promoting Schools Model has been adopted to cover the scope of health implementation. This model was chosen as it takes all influences of health and physical education within the school context into consideration, both in and out of the classroom.

Another delimitation of this research is that only select schools were chosen as case studies and only a relatively small sample of participants were chosen to be interviewed. Three schools were accessed and only one researcher in this qualitative research was actively involved (Sarantakos, 1998), operating as both data gatherer and analyser. These schools of varying enrolments were selected purposefully, designed so that schools at varying stages of syllabus implementation could be studied. Within the school, classes from different sectors of the school were studied to get a better cross section of viewpoints. As teachers and students are the ones who ultimately implement the HPE syllabus, they were the main foci of the study.

The school administration staff (Principal, Assistant Principal and Assistant Principal Religious Education) were deliberately not included as participants in the study, as it was anticipated that their interpretations of the questions would be answered from an optimistic and biased perspective, perhaps not giving an accurate or true indication of the degree of the status of the implementation of the HPE syllabus in the school.

## 11 Overview of research design

Figure 11.0 Overview of research design

Research Questions & Related Issues	Data Gathering Strategy/ Strategy	Participants/Accessories	Timeline/ Stages
Ethical Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Research Proposal Defence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCE</li> <li>• ACU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sem 2 2003</li> <li>• Nov 2003</li> </ul>
Case Study and Participant selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose suitable schools</li> <li>• make contact and present purpose and benefits of research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals</li> <li>• HPE specialists</li> <li>• Classroom Teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb 2004</li> </ul>

The following stages indicate the procedure for each school/ case study.

1) How are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HPE lead teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stage 1</b></li> </ul>
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<p>teachers implementing the HPE curriculum documents?</p> <p>2) What readily accessible resources do schools have to assist with the implementation of Health and Physical Education?</p> <p>3) What are the teachers' attitudes to the HPE Key Learning Area?</p>	<p>Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Journal</li> <li>• Document Analysis</li> <li>• Observation of lessons</li> <li>• Reflective Journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teachers- early years, middle and upper primary</li> <li>• Researcher's subjective fieldnotes</li> <li>• HPE School Program and facilities</li> <li>• HPE teacher and classes from early years, middle and upper primary</li> <li>• Researcher's subjective fieldnotes</li> </ul>	<p>Semester 1 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stage 2</b> Semester 1 2004</li> <li>• <b>Stage 3</b> Semester 1 2004</li> </ul>
<p>4) What are the children's attitudes to the HPE Key Learning Area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Group interview</li> <li>• Observation of lessons</li> <li>• Reflective Journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students- early years, middle and upper primary</li> <li>• HPE teacher and classes from early years, middle and upper primary</li> <li>• Researcher's subjective fieldnotes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stage 4</b> Semester 1 2004</li> </ul> <p>(Stage 3 Semester 1 2004)</p>

The purpose of this research study is to explore the implementation of the new Queensland Health and Physical Education syllabus in three primary schools of varying enrolment numbers within Brisbane Catholic Education. Within the

constructionist paradigm, an interpretivist study will be conducted and more specifically the interpretivist study will employ symbolic interactionism. This qualitative, interpretive study is most appropriate due to the significance of constructed meanings developed from the interpretation of shared experiences and perspectives. The perspectives will differ depending on the context of the school and the experiences of the participant within the school. The methodology chosen to construct meanings through capturing the context of each school is case study. The methods to be engaged so as to enable precision of details within the chosen theoretical framework are interviews; semi structured and focus group, reflective journal, observations and document analysis. The participants will be teachers and students from the respective schools.

This study is significant as it has the potential to provide feedback to BCE about the HPE syllabus implementation process and further, it could inform BCE of the current state of the HPE key learning area within selected systemic primary schools.