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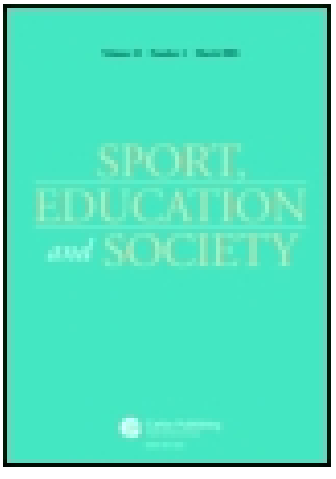

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How does a physical education teacher become a health and physical education teacher?

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How does a physical education teacher become a health and physical education teacher?

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The purpose of this study is to explore what the role of a health and physical education (HPE) specialist teacher in the primary school entails. The new Australian Curriculum: HPE Framework requires schools and teachers to implement the HPE key learning area. Many self-perceived physical education (PE) teachers have voiced concern about not knowing how they go about this. This research investigates 'How PE teachers best become HPE teachers?' We are reminded by Kirk that this is not the first time teachers have implemented this very change in Australia. Many similarities can be drawn between the recent national Australian Curriculum: HPE and the 1994 HPE National Statement and Profile, which provided a foundation for the construction of the 1999 Queensland HPE (P-10) Syllabus. As recommended by Kirk this study 'look[s] to the past for lessons about the present and where we might be heading in the future', by investigating school responses to the 1999 Queensland HPE (P-10) syllabus and curriculum documents. Within the constructionist paradigm, an interpretivist study was conducted. The methodology chosen to construct meanings through capturing the context of each school was 'evaluative' and 'multiple' case study. The sites for the three case studies involved: one small; one medium; and one large-sized Brisbane Catholic Education primary school. The three case studies were selected as representative of different demographics and the methods engaged so as to enable precision of details were semi-structured interviews, reflective journal, observations and document analysis. Data gathered suggest that enacting the HPE key learning area is very achievable. Implementation is enhanced by HPE leadership, underpinned by clear communication. More so, barriers can be overcome through professional development and support. This study is significant nationally, and the findings may be of wider international interest. It models how school leaders can optimise the health opportunities within their context and models how PE teachers can become HPE teachers.

Keywords: *Physical education; Health; Curriculum reform; Primary school*

Introduction

During the 28th Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) International Conference (held in Melbourne, Victoria, from 27 to 29 November 2013), a feature forum involving a panel of health and physical education (HPE) curriculum experts was assembled to discuss the emergence of the national

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HPE curriculum. The panel included globally renowned Professor David Kirk (University of Bedfordshire, UK), Professor Chris Hickey (Deakin University, Australia), Professor Doune Macdonald (University of Queensland, Australia) and Professor Dawn Penney (Monash University, Australia).

The panel discussed and shared insights from their experiences around various curriculum development topics and concluded with questions from the floor. One question from Christina (pseudonym), a self-titled physical education (PE) teacher, identified what the crux of the new National HPE Framework meant for many primary PE teachers; they only perceive themselves to be teachers of PE and are required to become HPE teachers. This brought to the fore the issue for many schools when beginning the implementation phase of the curriculum or what is also referred to as the dynamic between the text and context (Penney, 2014). 'Implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change' (Fullan, 2001, p. 69), and HPE does surprisingly appear to be a new concept for many teachers. One reason for this is because within Australia, states and territories are responsible, currently and historically, for education implementation. Subsequently, there are differences in the implementation of curriculum within schools (Australian Government, 2014; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001).

How the Framework is implemented relates directly to the experience of children in schools (Penney, 2014). The classrooms and playing fields of schools throughout Australia are the epicentre of curriculum implementation, 'for it is what occurs in the local contexts of schools and classrooms that determine curriculum change' (Lynch, 2014a, p. 511). However, this is not the first time teachers have implemented this very change in Australia, where PE teachers were required to become HPE teachers. It is in fact a repeat of history, for many states and territories this complex change was embraced approximately 20 years ago (Cliff, Wright, & Clarke, 2009; Dinan-Thompson, 2001, 2006). As Kirk connoted, it does seem astoundingly as if this event has been forgotten.

Kirk shared that he attended the pre-conference one-day forum titled 'Implementing the Curriculum: Intentions for Action', which was held in Melbourne on Wednesday 26 November, the day prior to the 28th ACHPER International Conference. There were 100 invited delegates representing all states, education sectors, schools, universities and allied agencies to support the successful implementation of the new Australian HPE curriculum (ACHPER, 2013). He offered a descriptive recount of where many people were advising the lead writer of the curriculum, Doune Macdonald on how the HPE curriculum would be best supported. 'I started listening to conversations … and I started to think, we've been here before!' (Hickey, Kirk, Macdonald, & Penney, 2014, pp. 183–184). This is affirmed by Lynch, 'One does not have to look back far in history to realise that the ideals of the new national curriculum may not be as revolutionary or as promising as advocated by governing bodies' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 518). Kirk further explains,

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> Doune and I were heavily involved with the previous National Curriculum foray, back in the early 1990s, known as the National Statements and Profile … so, as an international observer, I'm thinking none of the people who you [Macdonald] are listening to know that. (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 184)

He then goes on to express his surprise at the limited research surrounding the issue of HPE implementation:

> So here's the thing that bothers me. How come our collective memories aren't following what's going on anymore? We've published on this, so there's been quite a bit of stuff out there in journals … I don't know how others feel about this but it frustrates the hell out of me! Because I'm a part-time historian as well, I tend to look to the past for lessons about the present and where we might be heading in the future. (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 184)

The data gathered for this research investigate school responses to the National HPE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b) in the state of Queensland. The purpose of this research is to explore what the role of an HPE specialist teacher in the primary school entails. This study contributes to the current HPE literature, subsequently assisting schools and teachers (where and when change is necessary). Thus, as recommended by Kirk this research 'look[s] to the past for lessons about the present and where we might be heading in the future'. Kirk's identification of limited knowledge and understanding of the Australian HPE history and dynamics surrounding curriculum implementation gives this study impetus.

Literature review

The research problem, 'What does health and physical education in the primary school look like?' was explored by investigating how schools implement the HPE curriculum. In exploring school responses, it was necessary to understand the relevance of major underpinning themes:

- What are the perceived constraints of HPE teachers?
- National Australian Curriculum in HPE: Past and present.
- Significant elements of the school HPE curriculum

What are the perceived constraints of HPE teachers?

The following excerpt from the feature forum at the ACHPER conference captures a discussion around teachers who perceive themselves to be PE teachers and want to know how they become HPE teachers.

> **Christina:** Both Doune and Dawn have talked about integrating health more into the primary curriculum. Coming from a background as a secondary teacher, and now I'm a primary PE teacher, I'm finding it very hard to incorporate health. Do you think somewhere down the track there will be more scope for teachers like us to become the health teacher as well?

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> **Macdonald:** YES, YES, this is your moment! There is the advised curriculum time for HPE in terms of what the writers were asked to envisage at around two hours of HPE each week. You add in the learning guarantees that come with HPE each week then I'd say you've got a policy document that speaks to you and your principal – saying that someone, whether it be you or a partnered teacher relationship – has to teach this material. So it's an exciting time for you, and the opportunity for you to call yourself an HPE teacher.
> **Mark:** Can I just make a comment on that. I tried to argue for that too (I'm primary too) and I was told, 'you are no longer doing health because you're the PE and you only see the children one hour a week, so we'll get other teaching staff to look after the health'. So it's not just as simple as saying we are happy to do it.
> **Jenny:** And that's the reality for most primary school PE teachers, we see our kids once a week. We concentrate on something to do with physical activity, like movement skills or fitness things because we don't have the option to do any more than that!
> **Macdonald:** Can I suggest that the area still needs leadership in schools and you are very well positioned to be the leaders of this learning area in primary schools. Although your face-to-face teaching might focus more on PE, I believe that schools will need advocates and expertise to guide teachers in classrooms in this area. After all, you are the health and PE specialist in the school, and while you may well be teaching PE only at the moment there is a need for you to lead the area. I know that sounds like a bit of a pipe dream but I think there's a policy document that will help make that argument. (Hickey et al., 2014, pp. 190–191)

The teachers sharing difficulties during this feature forum were not an anomaly. On 24 June 2014 (almost seven months later) Dawn Penney presented as part of the 'Dean's Lecture Series' at Monash University (Peninsula Campus, Victoria). The lecture was titled 'Health and Physical Education and the Australian Curriculum: Full of holes; Full of potential?' At the conclusion of the lecture a request was made for teachers to share their thoughts. A teacher stepped forward and remarked;

> The health part of it pretty much we don't, like I hardly even touch on it, which is really sad because I am very passionate about that as well. It is just a whole time thing for us, there's just no time. (Penney, 2014)

It is fair to suggest that this issue of teachers perceiving themselves as PE teachers and wanting to know how they can become HPE teachers, or what being an HPE teacher entails, is common.

Not all states and territories in Australia have prepared teachers to teach HPE (Lynch, 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore, the depth that the socio-cultural perspective adopted by the 1994 National Statement and Profile has 'filtered into the implementation of the HPE curriculum in each state and territory has differed considerably' (Lynch, 2014a, p. 513). Subsequently, so too has the influence of this perspective on teachers' ideologies (Kirk & Macdonald, 2001). As mentioned, 'It is Australia's states, because of constitutional decisions taken in 1901, which retain control over education' (Braithwaite, 1994, p. 543). It may be surmised that because it was not mandatory to utilise the Statement and Profile, the potential for change was compromised. 'The lack of mandatory requirements significantly reduced the

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potential for the HPE Statement and Profile to create change' (Kirk & Penney, 1996, p. 7). Hence, state control of education seems to have hindered Australian curriculum generally (Ewing, 2010).

A limitation for teachers of PE becoming HPE teachers is the formal training of teachers. It is a concern that many teachers who are responsible for teaching HPE may not be prepared in either 'physical education' or 'health' (Lynch, 2014b). Teachers of PE may not have the knowledge, understanding and skills to teach or lead health within the school, resulting in limited confidence and competence. The second scenario involves teachers who are inadequately prepared in both aspects: physical education and health. This is supported by ACHPER (Victorian branch) who share 'Many primary school physical education teachers [Health and Physical Education teachers] find themselves in this role with little or no formal training or experience specific to this learning area [Health and Physical Education]' (ACHPER—Victoria, 2013, p. 9).

Teacher preparation appears to be of concern throughout many Australian regions. Surveys completed by 376 primary school principals from a cross-section of Australian Government schools (representing every state and territory, region and size) indicated that 166 principals (63.6%) stated that their school had an HPE specialist teacher who was a qualified specialist, 95 principals (36.4%) stated that their HPE specialist did not have specific qualifications and 115 did not answer the question, implying that they did not know or preferred not to say (Lynch, 2013).

Another concern relates to more experienced teachers who may have completed their pre-service teacher education before the National Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b) was enacted. The quality of this preparation has been questioned within the state of Victoria: 'Given the status of training opportunities provided for PSTT [Pre-Service Teacher Training] it should not be surprising that Victorian school children are being severely disadvantaged in the area of physical education [Health and Physical Education]' (Walkley, 1993, p. 4).

Limited teacher and school knowledge of how to integrate the HPE curriculum with other learning areas, secondary trained PE teachers teaching HPE in the primary school, limited teacher training and background in health or HPE generally, limited time for face-to-face classes with children, limited knowledge of how to lead the HPE key learning area and no prior experiences with the socio-cultural approach are all perceived constraints for schools.

National Australian Curriculum in HPE: past and present

As identified by Kirk, many similarities can be drawn between the recent national Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education and the 1994 HPE National Statement and Profile. This is affirmed by Lynch, 'it appears this political reform implementation plan is no different to the last' (2014a, pp. 521). The focus for this study pertains to change in HPE made within the State of Queensland. Therefore, parallels between the 1999 Queensland (P-10) HPE syllabus and present national HPE curriculum will be explored.

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The 1994 Statement and Profile documents provided a foundation for the construction of an HPE syllabus (Dinan, 2000; Glover, 2001) and were favourably received by educators. The Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC) was established in 1997 to oversee the development of Years 1–10 curriculum materials for each of the eight key learning areas (Dinan-Thompson, 1998). The HPE syllabus, together with the Science syllabus, was given priority and both syllabuses were the first to be developed, as it was acknowledged that both Science and HPE had been neglected (Macdonald, Glasby, & Carlson, 2000). One of the theoretical intentions for devising the 1999 HPE curriculum materials was to help make both teachers and students more aware of the social and cultural forces that shape perceptions of this key learning area.

The 1999 HPE documents adopted a socio-cultural approach to learning which recognises that students are influenced by the different physical, social, cultural, political, economic and environmental forces affecting their well-being (Dann, 1999). 'The Syllabus embraced a socio-cultural perspective that suggests the disciplines of social psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, sociology and history sit alongside the biophysical sciences of anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics to inform the learning area' (Macdonald et al., 2000, p. 6). This approach also promoted social justice (QSCC, 1999a), enabling members of society to be informed and aware of such forces within their various environments.

> The key learning area emphasizes the social justice principles of diversity, equity and supportive environments. These principles underpin the syllabus and guide curriculum design and delivery. They are embraced in the tenets of an inclusive curriculum which seeks to maximize educational opportunities for all students. (QSCC, 1999c, p. 1)

As a result people are assisted to make well-judged decisions in relation to good health and well-being (QSCC, 1999b).

The 1999 Queensland HPE syllabus, for the first time, was constructed under the guidance of the three schooling systems within Queensland; Education Queensland (EQ), The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (AISQ). The syllabus was trialled in the three school systems; however, the implementation process was the responsibility of each of the three school systems (Dinan-Thompson, 1998).

The recent national Australian Curriculum: HPE as a Framework has a similar purpose to the 1994 National Statement and Profile and is comparable (Lynch, 2014a). The recent national curriculum is underpinned by the socio-cultural perspective [Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2010] and continues a commitment to quality and equity (Penney, 2014). This is evidenced by the goals established at the Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008).

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Table 1. HPE curriculum document similar concepts

HPE Framework	1999 Queensland HPE syllabus
Futures orientation	Futures perspective
Healthy School Environment	Health Promoting Schools
General capabilities	Attributes of lifelong learners
Cross-curriculum priorities	Cross-curricular priorities
Focus on educative purposes	Focus on learning—understanding about learners and learning (outcomes)
Strengths-based	HPS—curriculum, school organisation and partnerships with family and community services.
Critical inquiry	Inquiry-based approach (learner centred)
Movement	Physical activity as a medium for learning
Health literacy	Lifelong health-promoting behaviours

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Furthermore, it is argued that 'terminology consistency appears to be the only amendment' (Lynch, 2014a, p. 520). Both have similar strands; the Framework has two rather than three but all of equal weighting. The Framework's two strands are 'Personal, social and community health' and 'Movement and physical activity'. The three strands of the 1999 Queensland HPE (P-10) Syllabus include 'Enhancing personal development', 'Promoting the health for individuals and communities' and 'Developing the concepts and skills for physical activities'.

Focus areas that sit within the HPE umbrella in the new Framework include: mental health promotion, sexuality and reproductive health, food and nutrition, safety, drug use, respectful relationships, personal identity and sense of self, physical activity (PA) and fitness, games and sports, and aquatics and water-based activities (ACARA, 2012), all of which were also represented within the 1999 Queensland (P-10) HPE syllabus and curriculum materials. Other text commonalities are demonstrated in Table 1.

While there may be some concept extensions or evolvement in definitions, they do all seem to be the same or very similar to concepts previously adopted within curriculum developments. The review of the Australian Curriculum (final report) warned that 'Slogans and clichés like "lifelong learning"… while sounding forward looking and impressive, disguise the fact that knowledge and an appreciation of the past is equally, if not more important, than focusing on contemporary issues' (Australian Government, 2014, p. 29). Time will tell for the HPE Framework, as it becomes localised, which are slogans and which are concepts in their own right.

Significant elements of the school HPE curriculum

The context of focus for this study, where the significant elements of the HPE curriculum are explored, is Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE). BCE is situated in the state of Queensland and implemented the HPE syllabus using a 'whole school' approach. This was recommended by QSCC, which involved the collaboration

and co-operation of whole school staff. A network of lead teachers with interest and experience in the HPE key learning area was selected from BCE primary and secondary schools. These teachers were major consultants and facilitators in the policy change through which implementation responsibilities were spread across the Archdiocese. It is important to remember that Catholic schools educate approximately one in five school students in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; MCEETYA, 1995) and therefore exert an influence on a large percentage of Australian school students.

The HPE key learning area within BCE was given significant status at the time the syllabus was released: the BCE implementation phase (1999–2001), combined with the adoption of the third enterprise bargaining agreement (EB3). EB3 entitled Catholic primary classroom teachers to 120 minutes of release time per week (Catholic Education Employing Authorities in Queensland, 2000). Queensland State primary teachers had been entitled to release time since 1995 and have been entitled to the provision of two hours release time each week since the end of 1996 (Roulston, 1999). Release time was usually provided for classroom teachers by employing a specialist teacher. It seemed to be a popular choice for many schools to employ an HPE specialist teacher so that both demands, to implement the Queensland HPE documents and to provide 120 minutes of release time, could be met (Lynch, 2005). The recommended minimum time allocations required to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the core learning outcomes for all three strands was 1.5 hours per week (QSCC, 1999c); however, the PA time within schools has been suggested as two hours minimum per week (Howard, 2004), which is the required time for the new HPE Framework (Hickey et al., 2014).

Within the BCE context the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) model covered the scope of health implementation. BCE adopted HPS framework to represent the shift away from disease prevention towards a more holistic social view of health as depicted by the World Health Organisation Ottawa Charter for health promotion (BCE, 1999, p. 3). 'The Health Promoting Schools Framework offered a suitable approach because it encompasses a range of influences internal and external to the school environment' (O'Dea & Maloney, 2000, p. 4). The model comprises three overlapping elements: curriculum, teaching and learning; school organisation, ethos and environment; and partnerships and services, which 'need to be considered as a whole rather than as separate entities' (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 1996, p. 1). Implementation across the three elements promotes a comprehensive message and promotion of health and therefore forms a useful theoretical framework for evaluating the three strands of the Queensland 1999 HPE syllabus. Health is created in the settings of everyday life (Kickbusch, 1991) and therefore the everyday life of the school was investigated.

Research design

The purpose of this study was to assist teachers of PE in their transformation to becoming teachers of HPE, by investigating how schools implement HPE

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curriculum. Within the constructionist paradigm, an interpretivist study was conducted. The participants shared their experiences and perspectives, which are never wrong. A constructionist epistemology frames the research as meaning-making and was developed from engagement and interaction with the participants sharing their lived experiences and interpreting those experiences.

The methodology chosen to construct meanings through capturing the context of each school was 'evaluative' and 'multiple' case study (Merriam, 1998). The sites for the three case studies involved: 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 three case studies were selected as representative of their different demographics, pertaining to their size as measured by enrolment numbers, their geographic location and their socio-economic status. The study was a storytelling case study as it is a 'narrative and descriptive account of an educational event, program or system which deserves to be told to interested audiences, after careful analysis' (Bassey, 1999, p. 58).

The methods engaged so as to enable precision of details within the chosen theoretical framework were semi-structured interviews, reflective journal, observations and document analysis. The specific questions offering guidance during the semi-structured interviews with the HPE teacher/coordinator and three classroom teacher representatives (one each from the early years, middle years and upper years of the school) include:

- What has your training/study involved for teaching HPE? (institution, qualifications, training and in-services)
- Tell me about your dealings with the HPE syllabus (1999).
- How does the school manage the three strands of the HPE syllabus?
- What equipment and facilities does the school have for HPE?
- How interested are the students in HPE? (attitudes towards)
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of having a specialist HPE teacher?
- What does the school do well in the HPE curriculum?
- What areas of the HPE curriculum require attention?
- Outside of the classroom, how is healthy living promoted throughout the school?

Verification and ethical issues

Two ethical clearances were granted before this research was conducted. An ethical clearance was awarded from Australian Catholic University and from BCE. Permission was then granted by each of the case study school principals; each of the teachers within each case study school; and consent from the parents of student participants. A conscious effort was made by the researcher to be fair in the generation of data, in the interpretation of data, in the formulation of theories and in the presentation of data.

Member checks involved soliciting informants' views as to credibility of findings, and these were utilised to confirm the plausibility and credibility of interpretations.

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Themes and conclusions were checked within the other data-generating methods, for example, a finding during an observation was further explored during an interview. This addresses the issue of public disclosure of processes and gives the themes congruence and verisimilitude (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Credibility of the study was achieved by employing triangulation, the process for using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning (Stake, 1994). The multiple perceptions were obtained from observing and interviewing a variety of participants.

Analysis of data

An interpretivist data analysis strategy employed for the purpose of this research study was narrative/descriptive analysis. Each individual case was analysed using Wellington's (2000) simplified version of the 'Constant Comparative Method for Analysing Qualitative Data' (Figure 1) and was described. Cross-case analysis was presented at the end of the analysis of each case. Repeating the same analysis process, Wellington's stages (Figure 1) were used to analyse the data across the case studies. All data findings of individual case study schools and cross-case analysis were reported using a narrative/descriptive report.

Units of meaning were formed, coded and categorised with other similar units. Table 2 illustrates a copy of a coded semi-structured interview transcript.

The process of analysis formed an audit trail and is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2 for students' and teachers' perceptions.

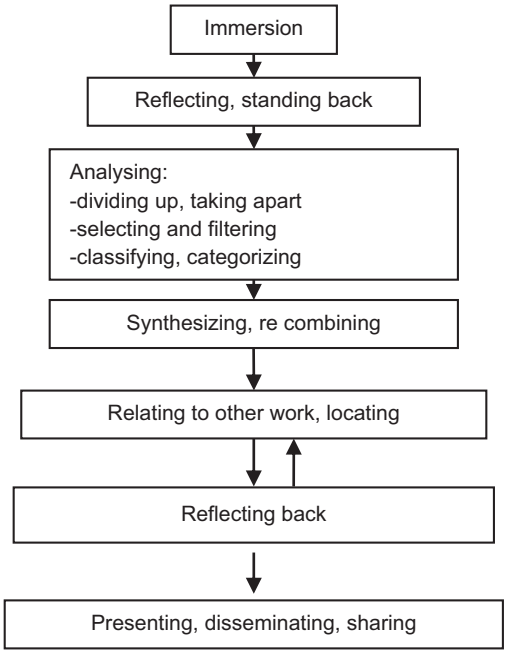

Figure 1. General stages in making sense of qualitative data (Wellington, 2000, p. 141)

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Table 2. Coding of interview transcript

	Interview transcript	Coding
I	How does the school manage to fit the demands of the Health & PE syllabus that is the three strands, into the crowded curriculum?	- HPE specialist
P	We are fairly lucky here because we have an HPE Specialist who comes in and takes that strand of things for 40 minutes a week.	- Time afforded to strands
I	So physical activities?	
P	Physical activities, yep. In terms of health and personal development, that's left up to the classroom teacher to do in your own planning. Personal Development is, we have included that into some of our units that we have done previously particularly with RE and with some of our SOSE, but with the health and any other personal development you do, it's basically what you can implement into your everyday planning. Whether you do that with your buddy teacher or not, or whether you do that with your own class.	-Teachers responsible for strands - Integration with other KLAs - Methods of implementation
I	Do you integrate or connect the curriculum with the health and personal development to fit that in?	- HPE connections with religious education
P	We try to do it—I guess it's happened more with personal development than what has happened with health. Just that personal development does seem to fit in well with some of the RE outcomes. Yes it would be good to integrate it but it's hard.	- Integration with other KLAs

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Confidentiality and anonymity was assured during the study as pseudonyms were assigned to protect the privacy of the participants and schools.

Presentation of findings

Summary of Case Study One school (less than 200 students)

Case Study One school did not have a specialist HPE teacher, and classroom teachers were responsible for the implementation of all three strands of the syllabus. Each of the teacher participants in Case Study One school had undertaken professional development in the 1999 Health and Physical Education syllabus to greater and lesser extents. All teachers interviewed were experienced teachers, each with at least 10 years of teaching experience. The PA strand (developing the concepts and skills for physical activities) was given the most consideration and time. There was no Whole School Program for HPE, and concepts and skills were few and often repeated. The degree of coverage of the HPE curriculum depended on each class teacher, and there was no Perceptual Motor Program (or focus on fundamental movement skills) in the early years at the school.

Process of Analysis

How are the teachers implementing the HPE curriculum documents?

STAGE 1 *Data Generation, display and reflection.*

Participants	Data Generating Strategies
HPE specialist teacher/ HPE lead teacher Classroom teachers	Semi-structured interview Document Analysis Reflective Journal Observations of lessons

STAGE 2 *Data coding and distillation.* Themes from data gathered.

- Promotion of Healthy Living	- Student book	- HPE whole school program
- Teaching pedagogies	- Disinterested students	- Variety of physical activity
- Teaching strategies	- Time afforded to strands	- Equipment & Facilities
- HPE specialist	- Qualifications & training	- Integration with other KLAs
- HPS partnerships	- Inter-school sports	- Teacher confidence & knowledge
- Perceptual Motor Program	- Quality lessons	- Teachers responsible for strands
- Teacher dealings with HPE syllabus	- Visiting organizations	- Teacher experience

STAGE 3 *Generation of key themes.* Data themes from stage 2 categorised.

- Teacher familiarity with syllabus	- Integration with other KLAs
- The school environment	- Promotion of healthy living
- School resources/facilities	- Methods of implementation

STAGE 4 *Story report and conclusions*

The degree and methods of implementation of the HPE curriculum documents varied across the three Case Study schools. Only one of the three Case Study schools used a whole school curriculum program. Some teachers lacked knowledge and confidence to implement the documents adequately. Some teachers were responsible for implementing all three strands and some teachers were of the belief that they were not responsible for implementing any of the strands.

Figure 2. Description of data analysis

When asked about cross-curriculum connections Kate, the early years teacher, stated the HPE curriculum 'connects with religious education through cooperation and games' and Jody who taught in the middle years concurred saying that you 'can't help the incidental learning which occurs [between HPE and RE], and you need to go with this each time'. Kevin in the upper years' teacher and HPE coordinator, shared that he often connected the HPE curriculum with other learning areas in his planning:

> We find that health and science connect well. In Term One we have a major focus on Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE) which is science related. They cover 'reproduction of plants' and this connects well with Health.

Case Study One school had very good facilities; however, some were showing signs of neglect. Jody clarified that 'Kevin's class deliver crates of sports equipment to the playground [at lunch break]. The equipment is for the top oval, netball court and bottom oval. The students take and return equipment from the crates as they please'. Sporting equipment was sufficient though health and personal development resources were either lacking or were in need of updating. Students enjoyed HPE

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and teachers enjoyed taking HPE, believing it to be valuable. The teacher participants did not believe that the school was disadvantaged by not having a specialist HPE teacher. Healthy living was further promoted through organisations visiting the school such as the Life Education Van, Jump Rope for Heart, Dance Fever and through their sun safety rule 'No hat, No play'.

Summary of Case Study Two school (between 200 and 400 students)

The four teacher participants interviewed for this study had a range of experiences, and all were recommended by the school principal. To various degrees each of the four teacher participants at Case Study Two school was in-serviced on the 1999 Queensland HPE syllabus. The HPE specialist teacher, Rory (pseudonym), was a member of the BCE HPE support network assisting with the implementation of the new syllabus in the BCE system and is a strong advocate for the HPE key learning area.

The school appeared to have a well-designed and implemented PE curriculum programme ('developing the concepts and skills for physical activities' strand), which both teachers and students believed to be important, beneficial and enjoyable. The school had an experienced HPE teacher, providing each class with at least one 40-minute lesson per week. It was clearly understood that the HPE specialist was responsible for the PA strand (developing the concepts and skills for physical activities) of the programme, and the classroom teachers were responsible for the Health and Personal Development strands. Rory shares, 'As the HPE specialist I take full responsibility for the PA strand'. Rory incorporates the Health and Personal Development strands into his lessons whenever possible; however, his focus is the PA strand. This was confirmed in the document analysis of the Physical Education Whole School Program. Most responsibility for the Health and Personal Development strands was assigned to the class teachers as they are required to complete the assessment and reporting for these strands on their students' report cards. Kim, in the early years, summarised the usual situation stating:

> Firstly, with our HPE specialist we are allocated a time each week to have physical activity. Also, within the classroom I do the health side of it and promote health lessons and healthy living once a week [which also covers the personal development] in the classroom, for a 45-minute lesson. I slot that into my programme each week.

The early years' student participants concurred that in health they learn about food. They were able to identify healthy food and junk food sold at the tuck shop and shared their PE rules, demonstrating an understanding of sun protection, hydration and people's rights.

Rory discussed how teachers manage to fit the demands of the Health and Personal Development strands into the crowded P-7 curriculum: 'When planning [teachers] attempt to connect the Health and Personal Development outcomes whenever possible'. This was confirmed by the upper years' teacher, Lucy, who

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agreed that the school was fortunate to have the HPE specialist to take the PA strand: 'In terms of health and personal development this is left up to the classroom teacher to do in their own planning'. She added that in Year Six they try to connect the curriculum where they can, successfully connecting personal development with RE (religious education) and SOSE (study of society and the environment) units. Lucy elaborated, '[connection] happened more with personal development than with health. It's just that personal development seems to fit in well with some of the RE [religious education] outcomes'. When health or personal development does not integrate, then 'it's basically what you can implement in your everyday teaching'.

Rory promoted physical activities during breaks by distributing old sport equipment to each class, along with a large sport container in which to keep their equipment. Sean who taught in the middle years' endorsed this policy: 'I think that was a really classic idea distributing the equipment to classrooms and getting classes to own it'. Rory believed that this was the only way that he could promote physical activity while monitoring the school equipment and managing his own class' equipment all at the same time.

Teacher resources for HPE were located in the library. Lucy said, 'We also have in the library different kits for health, and personal development kits, and we have Jump Rope For Heart Kits and things like that'. The researcher's observations confirmed that the school library had many functional kits, books and videos that were stored in their own HPE resource section.

The physical activities covered were numerous, wide in scope and variety, utilising the school's facilities and limited space to the optimum. A lack of space and grassed area was compensated for by using a rugby field which was 400 metres from the school. A school partnership was established to enable this sharing of facilities. Equipment and resources were considered by the researcher and teacher participants as adequate. Although the PA strand of the syllabus was well established, the health and personal development strands required further development in a Whole School Program. Healthy living was further promoted by the availability of healthy foods at the tuck shop, as well as by a school 'No hat, No play' sun safety rule, through a Walk to School Program, together with Auskick and lunch time touch football and netball competitions.

Summary of Case Study Three school (more than 400 students)

The two teacher participants representing the middle years and upper years of the school were very experienced teachers. The HPE specialist and early years' teacher were at the beginning of their teaching career and had graduated just a few years earlier. The Case Study Three school has a full-time HPE specialist teacher, Naomi, who is given one full day release from teaching for sports coordination. Naomi teaches every class in the school from Pre-school to Year Seven. Pre-school to Year Five have HPE for one hour a week, and Year Six and Seven have it for only half of an hour. This is designed to accommodate teachers' release time. The Year Six and Seven teachers have extra Japanese time for Language Other Than English (LOTE),

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which is also used for teachers' release. Therefore, the Years Six and Seven HPE release time has been reduced. When asked if teachers view her role as their release time, Naomi replied, 'Definitely, yeah, it is, it's their non-contact time. And I respect that too, because they have an hour'.

The school has ample space, many facilities, sufficient equipment and modern health and personal development resources. In the early years, Alicia's professional development had been minimal, she had received no in-services at school and did not study an HPE unit at university. She explained that her dealings with HPE 'were quite slim actually because when I was going through Uni with Early Childhood it [HPE] was scrapped for us'. Her only training in the HPE curriculum involved her Early Childhood lecturer: 'she said, "listen you're missing out on this [HPE] because you're doing Early Childhood, I'll just quickly run through it just in case you get an HPE job or something, because it is possible"'. The run through was 'really basic, like it was a photocopy, I hadn't even really seen the syllabus, so it was very minimal'.

In the middle years, Bianca confirmed that in 1999 the staff had two to three 1–2 hour HPE syllabus in-services on pupil free days or after school. Veronica, who taught in the upper years, attended the same in-services and implementation process as Bianca and added, 'we were introduced to the HPE syllabus by our HPE specialist teacher at the time who walked us through it'. When asked how many in-services were provided, Veronica's reply was, 'We had quite a few in-services'.

There were mixed and contrary views held by the teacher participants in relation to who was responsible for the teaching of the three HPE strands. Two teacher participants believed the HPE specialist was responsible for teaching all three strands, whereas the HPE specialist believed that she was responsible for only the PA strand. Alicia said that Health and Personal Development are covered when it is raining. 'I think the HPE teacher here, Naomi does it well. If it's raining, she'll come in and do the theoretical side of it. She just juggles from week to week what she has to fit in there'. A great deal of faith is placed in the ability of the HPE specialist teacher: 'She'll [Naomi] have her plan and we don't really see much of what goes on, but we just assume that Naomi's getting through everything and gives us the results at the end of the year'. When probed about learning health, the children confirmed that they 'learn about health from Ms Alicia and Ms Naomi'. Bianca added that the three strands are 'basically left to the HPE teacher', and that health and personal development is only incidentally covered in the classroom, 'Not as a conscious effort'. Naomi, the HPE specialist, stated that she was in charge of the PA strand only:

> Obviously in my role I can only do the physical activities side of things, depending on the rainy days and things like that, I can use, I can come in and do some of the health subjects. So I really do rely on colleagues at the school to make sure that they are covering the other strands of the syllabus.

This was confirmed by Veronica who commented, 'we have sport [PA strand], but for the other strands we do not do a great deal'. She elaborated, 'I don't see evidence

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of it [health and personal development] covered [in HPE]. There might be an occasional lesson, but not really'. Veronica said that the students do not have an HPE book and that the major obstacle for teaching all three strands is a lack of time.

Bianca said that she 'looks at personal development in religion time'. Veronica added that there are definite connections between personal development and religion and also that '" personal development" is a big part of the RE [religious education] curriculum'. The HPE specialist, Naomi, believed that 'being a team member, on a team, you're doing all types of values, you're showing respect, cooperation and leadership'.

Case Study Three school did not have a whole school programme for any of the HPE strands. The HPE specialist teacher claimed that the early years' children did the Perceptual Motor Program using a buddy system with older students; however, no teachers or students could verify this. All teacher participants found the HPE learning area to be very valuable and students appeared to enjoy HPE physical activities ('developing the concepts and skills for physical activities' strand). However, the students did not appear to be as interested in the key learning area as the teachers perceived them to be. The HPE specialist teacher and student participants believed that healthy living was promoted through visits from organisations such as the Life Education van, Dance Fever and Jump Rope For Heart, and the school rule, 'No hat, No play'. Teacher participants listed all three strands in the HPE syllabus as areas requiring attention.

Summary of cross-case analysis

The key learning area was perceived as HPE by all teacher participants who also had an understanding of the three strands. The shift towards an inclusive, socially just curriculum was evidenced in all three Case Study schools. The degree of shift related to the students interest; teacher participants' experience, knowledge and confidence within the HPE learning area; Case Study school facilities, equipment and space; Case Study school partnerships and services made within the community; whether or not the Case Study school had an HPE specialist teacher; if the school had implemented an 'whole school' approach as recommended by QSCC (and/or planned) a whole school programme for the HPE key learning area (or any strand within); advocacy and leadership demonstrated within HPE; the strength of communication regarding shared responsibility for the key learning area; and connecting HPE with other learning areas.

Discussion

The data gathered suggest that all teachers in the primary school require professional development in the HPE curriculum document as part of the 'whole school' approach. It is imperative that the specialist HPE teacher or Lead Teacher (when no HPE specialist) is in-serviced as they are required to advocate and lead the key learning area. This is supported by Macdonald 'the area still needs leadership in

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schools and you are very well positioned to be the leaders of this learning area in primary schools' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 190). For specialists to lead the HPE key learning area it is essential that they are confident, and have the knowledge, understanding and skills to do this.

Many of the experienced teachers did receive professional development which resulted in an understanding of the curriculum documents. However, interestingly many teachers who had only recently graduated such as Naomi and Alicia (Case Study three) and Lucy (Case Study two) had limited professional development and confidence in the 1999 HPE curriculum documents. In Lucy's context it was not problematic as she had school support, there were 'advocates and expertise to guide teachers in classrooms in this area' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 191).

This is significant as they had only recently completed their degrees at university which does question HPE pre-service teacher preparation. In some Australian states and territories teacher preparation and qualifications appears to be a barrier for the HPE curriculum area; 'Coming from a background as a secondary teacher, and now I'm a primary PE teacher, I'm finding it very hard to incorporate health' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 190). Furthermore, '95 primary school principals from 376 surveyed representing a cross-section of Australian Government schools stated that their HPE specialist did not have specific qualifications (36.4%)' (Lynch, 2013).

In Case Study Two school, Rory led with confidence. He was qualified in HPE, he had been professionally developed in the 1999 Queensland HPE syllabus and curriculum materials, and he advocated HPE as a key learning area. Rory believed in HPE, perceived himself as an HPE specialist and optimised learning opportunities within this context. While Rory was only responsible for reporting on the PA strand and this was his area of focus (planned a whole school programme), he incorporated the health and personal development strands into his lessons whenever possible. This approach is supported by Macdonald who views the new HPE Framework as 'a policy document that speaks to you [teachers] and your principal – saying that someone, whether it be you or a partnered teacher relationship – has to teach this material' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 191).

This worked well within the Case Study Two context and yet PA lessons were for only 40 minutes per week; hence time was of the essence but not a barrier. Naturally, time does create difficulties in the absence of an HPE specialist, as seen in Case Study one, where Kevin had to juggle HPE advocacy for the entire school along with full-time responsibilities for all key learning areas in his class. Limited time appeared not to be of concern in Case Study Two school, as suggested by perceived PE teachers:

> And that's the reality for most primary school PE teachers, we see our kids once a week. We concentrate on something to do with physical activity, like movement skills or fitness things because we don't have the option to do any more than that! (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 190)

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HPE belief and advocacy was not confined to the 40-minute lessons once a week. This was evidenced by the distribution of sport equipment (both Rory and Kevin in Case Study one). Advocacy for healthy lifestyles was also demonstrated by Naomi (Case Study three) and Kevin when coordinating sporting events. Rory was assisted by other teachers in establishing partnerships within the community for creating extra space (rugby field), managing health and personal development resources, organising programmes such as Auskick and school safety rules. It appeared to be helpful that the teachers had an understanding of curriculum expectations and strand responsibilities (whole school approach). Teachers in Case Study two were confident in connecting the curriculum with other key learning areas or implementing in separate health or personal development lessons.

Communication was a school strength in Case Study Two and consequently there was a common understanding amongst teachers. Effective communication enabled clarity which appeared to overcome constraints relating to limited time and a crowded curriculum. When there was a breakdown in communication, as in Case Study Three school, then there was confusion over who was responsible for aspects of the HPE curriculum. This can create oversights in implementation regardless of the facilities, equipment and space available.

The data gathered evidence Macdonald's arguments that for all HPE teachers 'this is your moment' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 190). This study provides insights into how teachers who perceive themselves as PE teachers can become HPE teachers and what it entails. After all, implementation consists of enacting structures that are new to the people expected to change (Fullan, 2001). As Macdonald encourages, 'So it's an exciting time for you, and the opportunity for you to call yourself an HPE teacher' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 190).

Conclusion

This study explored primary school responses, in three BCE case study schools, to the National HPE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b). The study was conducted in the state of Queensland as it is argued that there are many similarities between the 1999 Queensland (P-10) HPE syllabus, derived from the National HPE Statement and Profile, and the new Australian HPE Framework (P-10). The purpose of this research is to contribute to the current literature, assisting self-perceived PE teachers believe that they can choose to become HPE teachers, and to provide examples to schools on various ways HPE can be implemented. This study was in response to the recommendation of Kirk 'to look to the past for lessons about the present and where we might be heading in the future' (Hickey et al., 2014, p. 184).

There were a number of issues influencing the effectiveness of the teachers' practices. These included: teaching experience, preparation and professional development which contributed to an understanding of the HPE curriculum and teacher confidence; schools' facilities, equipment and space, or partnerships developed that increased availability of these; whether the school had an HPE specialist teacher or

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designated allocated time where lessons were guaranteed; and where an HPE specialist or coordinator has taken leadership in advocating a whole school approach. An whole school approach involves a programme for each of the HPE strands and enables staff opportunities to communicate openly about implementation of the HPE curriculum. Addressing these issues can act as school strengths for promoting implementation of the HPE curriculum.

Concerns of self-perceived PE teachers are that HPE implementation is not possible due to time constraints. However, data gathered suggest that HPE implementation is very real and achievable through HPE leadership, underpinned by clear communication. Furthermore, pre-service teacher preparation may be a barrier, but data suggest that this can be overcome through professional development and support through an 'whole school' approach. This study is significant nationally and findings may be of wider international interest as it models how school leaders can optimise the health opportunities within their context. It is suggested that national consistency within teacher education has been of concern but should improve as the new HPE Framework policy document is enacted. There is scope for further research specifically in HPE teacher preparation. As this research study was only a small-scale sample, the data generated were limited by its nature. For this reason it is recommended that a large-scale 'school response' research project be conducted to ascertain verisimilitude of findings to other schools and other educational systems and specifically with the latest Australian HPE Framework.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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