



# HPE continuum from early childhood to secondary level of schooling

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## Learning objectives

By engaging with the text in this chapter, students will be able to:

1. understand the health and physical education continuum of learning from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to primary and secondary schooling of *Australian Curriculum: HPE*
2. understand and apply the principles of social justice to health and physical education as covered by the *Australian Curriculum: HPE* and delineate the areas of physical education, sport, physical activity and play to understand these are related but not synonymous terms
3. recognise and appreciate the relevance and impact that teacher education students' past school experiences have on their ability to transform physical education, health and wellbeing of all students throughout their teaching career.

8 ■ HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Kesang is 22 years of age and has been working with young children since she was 16. Her reputation as an excellent babysitter led to casual aid work in her local preschool, where she has been working for some years, and now Kesang is studying for a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care at TAFE. She is planning on taking advantage of the progression to a Bachelors level early childhood qualification at her local university.

Kesang is starting to understand many aspects of child development from a disciplinary and research point of view, confirming and enhancing many of her experiential 'real-life' interactions with children in her child care centre. She is particularly interested in how children from diverse cultural backgrounds interact in the early childhood years.

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Kirk is excited. He loves all the units of study in the primary school curriculum. However, he is feeling anxious about EDPE314, the Health and Physical Education Pedagogy unit in his teaching degree. Kirk remembers how in his own schooling he excelled in strategies to avoid participation in physical education classes. He wonders how he will cope with demonstrating skills when it comes to teaching.

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Darleen is beginning the Secondary Physical Education PSTE program at her inner-city university. Having been accepted into the program, Darleen feels confident that her strong athletic background and excellent sporting achievements will make it easy for her to succeed. She feels that these are key to making a difference with her secondary school-aged students. Darleen's view on good teaching in HPE is that students need a strong, skilled, competent and enthusiastic person to lead them across the areas of physical education and sport. She is a bit concerned about how she will cope with the theoretical part of the course.

## Introduction

In this chapter, the learning entitlement, defined as equitable access for all children of health and physical education, is outlined in terms of the transition from state curricula to the Australian Curriculum. There are developments to report since the first edition was released. The *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* curriculum has moved through the stages of writing draft, consultation and review. An educative underpinning of physical education has been established. Viewing health from a strengths-based approach as a philosophy for working with individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities provides an ecological perspective. An ecological perspective incorporates the diverse factors that are evident in most educational settings with unique attributes.

As an initial learning activity, Teacher Education Students (TESs) will engage in a teacher biography profiling exercise. This encounter with the past is recommended by researchers and teacher educators in order to acknowledge the background, experience and formed attitudes students bring to the subject of health and physical education. As such, this exercise provides an excellent starting point to prepare teachers of the future to achieve quality physical and health education for all students in schools.

**FIVE PROPOSITIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

This chapter contributes to developing three of the five propositions.

- **Focus on educative purpose**
- **Take a strengths-based approach**
- Value movement
- Develop health literacy
- **Include a critical inquiry approach** (ACARA 2016)

These three propositions underpin and intersect with the development of the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (HPE). The curriculum is the framework for the development of state-specific syllabi. The focus on the educative purpose underscores the development of the syllabus at the national level. The strengths-based approach of the curriculum builds on the understanding of how the three cross-curriculum priorities and seven capabilities of the HPE learning entitlement intersect in a positive achievement of educational goals. It encourages students to focus on individual strengths rather than taking a deficit-based view of health. Including a critical inquiry approach increases understanding of the development of the Australian Curriculum HPE and of the TESs themselves, by encouraging critical enquiry and analysis of health-related knowledge. Activity 1.1 (Teacher Biography) at the conclusion of this chapter is quintessentially a critical inquiry.

FIVE PROPOSITIONS

**The Early Years Learning Framework to the Australian (to state) Curriculum**

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), also known as ‘Belonging, Being, Becoming’, is Australia’s first national framework for early childhood educators. Central to this framework is a play-based approach to learning: the concept of children learning through play, about their social worlds, actively engaging with people, objects and representations (DEEWR 2009, p. 46). The EYLF is focused on children from birth to five years of age, and is represented by three interrelated elements: Principles, Practice and Learning Outcomes (DEEWR 2009, p. 10). The five Principles include secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; partnerships with families; high expectations and equity; respect for diversity; and ongoing learning and reflective practice. The Practice includes holistic approaches; responsiveness to children; learning through play; intentional teaching; learning environments; cultural competence; continuity of learning and transitions; and assessment for learning. The five Learning Outcomes include that children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with and contribute to their world; children have a strong sense of wellbeing; children are confident and involved learners; and children are effective communicators. As with the Principles and the Practices, each of the five outcomes has some additional detail underpinning these central tenets. There is strong alignment between the elements of this framework for children from birth to five years of age and the health and



Videos



physical education learning intentions. The EYLF also has a strong alignment to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, with safety and physiological needs at the base of the pyramid – that is, all physiological needs of individuals are to be met before a sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation can be realised (Maslow 1943).

The EYLF and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The EYLF is aligned with and supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

The Convention states that all children have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximises their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages. The Convention also recognises children’s right to play and be active participants in all matters affecting their lives (EYLF 2009, p. 5).



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Early childhood educators who are guided by the EYLF will reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the Convention.

Australian Curriculum HPE (F–10)

The inclusion of health and physical education in the Australian Curriculum as a learning requirement, for all students in each year from Foundation (kindergarten) to Year 10, is established. Curriculum writing and advisory teams have constructed the focus of learning for students in Foundation–Year 10 across all states. Recommendations for the required school learning and the number of school hours that students are required to engage with and participate in quality health and physical education and **sport** were formulated, the health and physical education profession were consulted, and modifications made to the health and physical education curriculum. The process of consultation and review followed the guidelines set by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). *The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* has been released. Some states and territories have adopted the Australian Curriculum and others have adapted it and moved through a similar cycle of writing, consultation, modification, consultation and endorsement.

**Sport:** a socially constructed activity, which McFee (2004) indicates is a construct that is neither possible nor desirable to define. It is different and distinct from physical education and fitness and physical activity, although these latter terms all contribute to the individual capacity to engage in and enjoy sport.



The Australian Government will liaise with all state and territory ministers and decide the actions to be taken by ACARA. The primary level of schooling is the most affected by this review (Department of Education 2014b). The specific state school expectations regarding implementation of the Australian Curriculum remain in place (DET 2014b). Contrary to initial expectations that the Australian Curriculum would be adopted across all states – notionally the National Curriculum – each state and territory is engaging in varying levels of adaptation which would constitute syllabi. It has taken considerable and sustained political action by professional groups such as the Australian Council of

Health and Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) and the Health and Physical Education Special Interest Group of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) to gain a space on the Australian Curriculum agenda. Outdoor education has also been an area where lobbying has been effective in gaining a space on the HPE curriculum. Catholic and independent schools continue to be active and avid advocates for their philosophy of education to be infused within HPE syllabi.

Each state has its own focus, conceptual underpinnings and approach; however, physical education is about gaining competence in a range of physical domains, while health education is focused on informed decision making. When these two areas overlap there is a shared focus: developing in students the skills and lifelong commitment to be physically active and healthy individuals. Historically, health education and physical education have been conceptualised as either separate or integrated areas of study. The logistics of tertiary institutions may determine how health education is presented relative to physical education. These pragmatics could be confused or conflated as an educational philosophy. For example, many pre-service teacher education (PSTE) programs are distinct in their approaches where they may respond to student demand by offering health education degrees or physical education degrees and/or stand-alone units where students can enrol in either health education or physical education without disadvantage.

The flexibility of offering units without prerequisites – thereby assuring flexibility for individual student learning programs – may be the rationale for such approaches, in preference to the philosophical approach of teaching two integrated units of health and physical education. From the very inception of a teacher’s career, beginning at the PSTE level, health and physical education can create a divide which conceptually is neither intended nor ideal. Such approaches at PSTE level can determine the school-based approach. It is not the view of the authors that these two areas are separate; however, there is a distinction in coming to know the domains of learning which necessitate a focus on physical development informing physical education in certain chapters of this text (3 and 4) and integration of health in others (5 and 6). Health integrated with physical education is an ideal approach for school-aged students as this allows students to make meaningful connections between these two distinct aspects of the HPE learning area.

*Health and Physical Education* is the title of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2011a). This title aligns with the current state and territory syllabuses for Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. **Personal development** is added for New South Wales (where the learning area is known as Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)), and **wellbeing** for Tasmania (Health and Wellbeing). Victoria has Physical, Personal and Social Learning Health and Physical Education. Overall, health and physical education is the term provided by the Australian Curriculum and is therefore the term adopted in this book.



Multiple-choice questions

**Personal development:** the growth or development of a particular individual to bring out his or her potential and capabilities, making the individual more aware of his or her inner feelings and belief systems to become a more conscious, whole or healthy human being (Janssen 2011).

**Wellbeing:** the individual self-evaluation of cognitive and affective domains of one’s life, referred to in terms of health, happiness and prosperity (Ferguson 2008).



Discussion question

## Teacher Education Students (TESs)

This book is for you! This book is about helping you to be as well prepared you can be for the initial level of teaching in the most challenging, yet exciting and interesting subject of the entire school curriculum.

If you are a secondary school specialist TES, you are likely to agree with the above statement regarding the place of physical education in the curriculum. However, if you are a generalist primary or early childhood TES, required to take units that prepare you to teach this key learning area, you may question this assertion. As teacher educators, we understand that there may be varied responses to this claim and, as such, we intend to provide you with a great foundation in the discipline of health and physical education. Regardless of your level of commitment to the key learning area, this section will provide you with invaluable insight and skills to move ahead.

We have been assisting students for many years in our respective academic careers to scaffold the learning and increase individual knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes surrounding the subject of health and physical education. It is our practice and goal to move students along a continuum towards greater confidence and understanding of their role as TESs.

From our own school-based, university teaching experiences, and from culturally aligned research, it is understood that just because we are excited and enthusiastic about this subject, it is not a given that you share such a view. We know that your attitude to this area is due to a range of personal experiences that may not always predispose you positively to the subject. We also acknowledge that many of you have had very positive experiences in physical education and you have a strong affiliation with sporting culture and are ready to share your positive experiences with your students. These confidence-boosting origins of high personal achievement, particularly for secondary HPE teacher education students, will initially be an advantage; however, your experiences need to be tempered with an empathetic understanding of the 'last one chosen' and students who are not 'naturally sporty' and skilled. Inclusive pedagogical practices will need to be adopted in light of this activity.



Multiple-choice questions  
Discussion question

## Teacher biography

Literature based on the theory of teacher socialisation suggests that the first step in your journey requires you to acknowledge your past experience and engagement in this subject area. We will start with your personal biography, which has been demonstrated by researchers to be an important place to begin (Morgan & Hansen 2008a; Haynes, Miller & Varea 2016). Their research has established that within the Australian context, teachers have been strongly affected by the specific nature of their own school-based physical education experiences. This relates in particular to primary school generalist teachers. Prior to these findings, Lortie (1975) established that pre-service teachers have a 'subjective warrant' that indicates they arrive at university secure in the notion that because they have had up to 12 years of compulsory schooling, they already know what they need to be able to teach based on everyday cumulative years of teacher observations (Calderhead & Robson 1991). There is also aligned research applicable to feelings of confidence to teach



mathematics (Beswick et al. 2011), science (Appleton 1995), and other areas key learning areas, so this situation is not unique only to HPE.

Overwhelmingly, primary school generalist teachers report having negative school experiences themselves and, without conscious recognition or interrogation of that experience, teachers are tending to replicate these experiences in their own teaching practice (Morgan & Hansen 2008a). Teacher educators are concerned with and motivated to address this issue with TEs, so that any potential for such a negative cycle is ameliorated in the best interests of the future physical education experience for **school-aged** children.

As such, many PSTE courses begin with the premise that students bring a lot of past baggage with them when preparing to learn to teach health and physical education. The teacher biography exercise provided in Activity 1.1 below is of value at the beginning of the course. Before we engage in presenting any discipline-specific content, pedagogy or differentiation of the curriculum, we need to begin with what you are bringing to the subject from your past.

Activity 1.1 is designed to elicit your past experience in physical education. We begin with physical education because it has been identified by pre-service teachers as being the curriculum area with the lowest demonstrated levels of perceived competence and confidence to teach (Morgan & Hansen 2008a) and, in particular, there are differing levels of confidence towards teaching different parts of the physical education curriculum (Freak 2012; Freak & Miller 2017).

This process of starting with your experience as a student in primary or secondary school will facilitate your understanding of the concept of how previous experiences can affect your present approach to learning to teach physical education. The scaffold for this exercise is to write down what you recall, who was there, what happened and what your feelings were about a particular incident that occurred in a physical education lesson and then to examine the possible alternative interpretations (Haynes, Miller & Varea 2016).

**School-aged (early childhood/primary/secondary):** early childhood refers to children birth–5 years of age; primary to 5–12 years of age; and secondary to 13–18 years of age.



TEACHER BIOGRAPHY

Activity 1.1

Recall an incident (positive or negative) from your primary or secondary schooling experience that occurred in a physical education or sport-related context. Using the following questions, analyse your own synopsis to identify the ‘taken for granted’ assumption that what happened was appropriate or ‘normal’ practice (and determine who assumed this).

Complete an analysis of your incident.

- What happened? What was I doing? What were other people doing?
- What was I trying to achieve? Or what was trying to be achieved?
- How might others give a different meaning? Include the perspectives of teachers, parents or students.
- What alternatives for action were there?
- Who was disadvantaged/advantaged?
- What is the ‘taken for granted’ assumption?

Extension

Reconstruct the memory and create a new one, moving this from an intractable vignette to one that is transformed into a positive or different learning vignette.

This examination of your own experience as a school student has the potential to be a powerful tool in placing you at the centre of your own learning. In principle, this same process of starting all learning from a single perspective with the individual child is recommended for your teaching practice in schools, both as a TES and a beginning teacher. That is, the starting point of effective teaching is to place the focus on the individual – which is where the philosophy of student-centred learning originates. For the purposes of engaging with reconceptualising our response to the past, the pedagogy for building scenarios is comprised of seven steps:

- 1. asking a question
- 2. identifying the driving forces
- 3. coding the driving forces
- 4. identifying two important driving forces
- 5. constructing the grid
- 6. writing the scenarios
- 7. developing a title of the scenario (Errington 2003, p. 10).

Errington suggests that ‘our ability to envision the future, make sense of the past and cope with the present is fundamental to all our human activities’. The use of teacher biographies or scenarios has been shown to have a possibility of allowing PSTE students to reorient their perspectives on values and commit to the knowledge and skills as well as the values and attitudes shared within the PSTE program (Meldrum 2011).

Given the research by Morgan and Hansen (2008a), and the resultant interrogation process that was conducted with primary generalist teachers, it is a cogent argument that the resistant attitudes of primary generalists may be equally applicable to early childhood teachers. Early childhood teachers will be required to understand and apply the central and vital role they fulfil to enhance the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children in their care as they progress through periods of rapid growth and ever increasing levels of competence. This is initially based on the continuum of motor development (expanded in Chapter 3) and the significant role that **play** has in children’s development. Constructing play environments and providing materials that elicit types of play that scaffold the six areas of play outlined in the ‘Definition of terms’ included in this chapter are endorsed here.

**Play:** is intrinsically motivated; freely chosen by the participants; pleasurable; non-literal (has elements of fantasy and make believe); actively engaged in by the players; and an activity that has physical and psychological involvement (Hughes 2010).



Discussion question

Learning entitlement for early childhood, primary and secondary students

Will the learning entitlement be the same for all groups? What is the difference, if any, across these three distinct levels of schooling? For example, is it within the early childhood mandate to ‘teach’ specific academic and physical skills? This question has been one of contention for some years: what is the current state of play?



Research emanating from Queensland reported findings pertaining to the issue of outsourcing the health and physical education curriculum (Williams, Hay & Macdonald 2011). The practice of outsourcing health and physical education was considerably widespread in the sample of school principals surveyed in Queensland. The main reason for providing students with outsourced physical education in schools, sport and/or outdoor education activities was found to be lack of expertise within the school teaching staff profile. The capacity for the school or parents to be able to pay for the services was also a key issue. Within New South Wales, the ‘Healthy Harold’ Life Education van reportedly circulates extensively to provide a primary school-aged health education curriculum to schools for a fee. There may be other examples of such outsourcing in other parts of Australia. Private providers moving into schools to provide physical education for a fee is a growing phenomenon.

Queensland schools provide the context for outsourced health and physical education and sport. As the findings presented in Williams, Hay and Macdonald (2011) demonstrate, the external suppliers to whom this key learning area is outsourced are many and varied. They include, among others, sporting organisations and health agencies, as well as commercial and non-commercial fitness, dance, swimming and outdoor adventure centres. In this way, the outsourcing of health and physical education and sport is a practice that ‘re-agents’ (Jones 2003) education, or, as Ball (2007, p. 16) has put it, inserts ‘new players into the field of ... education service delivery’ (as cited in Williams, Hay & Macdonald 2011, p. 403).

The outsourcing of the health and physical education curriculum has **social justice** implications for those students in schools that do not have the teaching expertise and/or cannot be given access to learning entitlement due to lack of affordability. A key question remains regarding the reaction (or lack thereof) to this situation: does or would the private provider of mathematics or English create the same response?

To counter this outsourcing of the health and physical education learning entitlement, this book seeks to provide PSTE students with vital knowledge and skills to safely and effectively teach health and physical education to students in all our schools. This is explored in greater detail in the chapters which follow.

**Social justice:** provides equitable outcomes to marginalised groups by recognising past disadvantage and the existence of structural barriers embedded in the social, economic and political systems that perpetuate discrimination. Social justice is aligned with equal opportunity and in the realm of education calls for availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability and adaptability. See further Miller (1999).

**LEARNING ENTITLEMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Select a level of schooling that is relevant for your situation (early childhood, primary, secondary). Form groups that can represent these levels of schooling and diverse perspectives on the following issue:

Your educational director/principal has announced that outside providers will be engaged to implement physical education curriculum in your school. You are a permanently appointed classroom teacher in the school.

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**Activity**  
1.2



In your group, complete the following tasks:

1. Consider the following questions. What issues are relevant to the educational impact of the introduction of private providers? What benefits and disadvantages would be relevant to this scenario?
2. Discuss this issue from the teacher's point of view in a professional context (e.g. whole-school staff meeting).
3. Discuss this issue in the context of a response to concerns from parents who are not in agreement with this action (e.g. parent–teacher night).
4. Read the article 'The outsourcing of health, sport and physical educational work: A state of play' by Williams, Hay and Macdonald (2011). After reading the article, consider what social justice principles you can identify that are relevant to this tutorial activity.
5. As an additional facet to this activity, hypothesise health education as the area of privatisation. What differences and similarities would you expect in replicating the above activity? Discuss.
6. Investigate the reactions to the private provider debate by revisiting the issue replacing physical education with mathematics education. How would reactions differ when the subject or discipline area changes? What do you think this suggests about the status of health and physical education relative to other key learning areas?



Discussion questions  
Multiple-choice questions  
Essay question