

DESIGNING LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Defining the focus of Physical Education in your own school context, is an important part of developing learning experiences responsive to the needs of your students. Physical Education programmes have the potential to empower students to understand the importance of holistic well being, and to equip them with the capabilities to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Through an increase in critical thinking and the ability to apply critical lenses students are likely to be more informed about decisions they make and positive contributions involving themselves, others and society. At its core, Physical Education is focused on learning in, through and about movement.



A critical step in programme development involves identifying the relevant (critical) knowledge for students in your school context. An example of how this might be achieved is outlined below. For all physical educators, it is important to acknowledge the central role of the New Zealand Curriculum in designing learning programmes at all levels. Teachers and leaders are responsible for unpacking, understanding and responding to the learning demands of the Curriculum and to implement programmes which allow students to have access to and experiences in the learning outlined by the Curriculum. As such, adopting an approach that requires unpacking of the Curriculum is essential in any programme design process.

CURRICULUM PROGRESSION (IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS)

In the Health and Physical Education Curriculum a clear progression emerges where students are required to move from descriptive understanding to critical analysis and application. Students are increasingly challenged to engage with complex issues, evaluate information, and apply their knowledge in practical ways. Let's break down what happens at each level:

Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Years 9 & 10	Years 10 & 11	Year 12	Year 13
Building Foundational Knowledge	Applying Knowledge Exploring Perspectives	Critical Analysis Evaluation	Devising Strategies Critical Examination
This level lays the groundwork for the more complex thinking expected in later levels.	This marks a shift from basic comprehension towards applying knowledge to analyse situations.	This level hones their analytical skills and encourages them to think critically about broader implications.	This level cultivates independent, critical thinking, preparing students for future learning pathways and active citizenship.
At Level 5, the emphasis is on building foundational knowledge and understanding. Students are learning to identify, describe, investigate, and relate concepts.	Level 6 prompts students to apply their knowledge, demonstrate understanding, and start examining different perspectives. They're encouraged to think about the 'why' behind concepts.	Level 7 elevates the learning experience by requiring students to engage in critical analysis and evaluation. They're expected to appraise, analyse, and evaluate information, perspectives, and complex situations.	Level 8 represents the peak of this learning progression. Students are tasked with devising strategies to address complex issues, critically examining data and situations, and justifying their evaluations.
For example, in Personal Health and Physical Development, they describe physical changes and relate them to adolescent development.	For example, in Relationships with Other People, they move from simply identifying relationship issues to demonstrating an understanding of how individuals and groups influence relationships.	For example, in Healthy Communities and Environments, they go beyond investigating environmental impacts to analysing how population pressure and technology affect the environment and community well-being.	For example, in Personal Health and Physical Development students critically evaluate data to create well-being strategies and critically examine health products and programmes.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

While these levels represent a clear progression, it's crucial to remember that learning is fluid. Students may exhibit skills and understanding from different levels at various points in their education. By understanding these progressive shifts from Level 5 to 8, you can better support students in navigating the Physical Education learning area and developing the competencies necessary to thrive in their personal and social lives.

The focus of this resource is Physical Education. However, it is noted that the New Zealand Curriculum, underscores the importance of interconnected learning. The skills and knowledge developed in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum are transferable and complementary to other learning areas. While Health is not explicitly the focus here, it is acknowledged that as a Learning Area, learning is often interconnected and developed in holistic ways.

UNPACKING THE CURRICULUM

Unpacking the curriculum is a critical process for educators seeking to ensure that all students can navigate their learning journey with clarity and purpose. This task involves a deep analysis of the curriculum to identify the progression of learning that underpins student success. It is not merely about

aligning activities with standards but understanding how different elements of the curriculum—knowledge, understanding, experiences, and skills (KUES)—connect and build upon each other. One approach to unpacking the curriculum could be through the use of a 'KUES+A' Framework.

Understanding the curriculum at this granular level is essential because it reveals how students develop competencies over time and across different contexts. By carefully mapping the **Knowledge** students need, the **Understanding** they should achieve, the **Experiences** they need to engage in, and the **Skills** they must develop, educators can design learning opportunities that are both meaningful and developmentally appropriate. **Assessment** is also an important part of all learning experiences, whether summative, formative or standards-based. Teachers should align appropriate assessment opportunities to learning experiences in order to understand how students are progressing and what the next steps of teaching and learning might be. This structured approach ensures that each student receives the right support and challenge at the right time, promoting equity and deeper learning outcomes. The goal of this process is to determine what is meaning and powerful learning in PE within the local context. The KUES+A Framework is summarised below:

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+ A

KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDINGS	EXPERIENCES	SKILLS / CAPABILITIES	+ ASSESSMENT
What students will know, understand or be able to explain.	How they will experience and apply the knowledge.	What specific skills they will develop and demonstrate.	How progress will be measured.

Moreover, unpacking the curriculum clarifies the expectations for learning and provides a shared language for educators to communicate student progress effectively. When educators identify the KUES that underpin the curriculum, they can tailor their teaching strategies to address gaps, reinforce connections, and create a coherent learning journey that prepares students for future success.



PROCESS

To design effective teaching and learning programmes, teachers can follow a structured approach that ensures all key elements of the curriculum are addressed. This involves identifying and integrating the core components of Knowledge/Understanding, Experiences, and Skills (KUES). Below is a step-by-step process to guide teachers through this planning:


<p>1. Establish Context and Define the Learning Focus</p> <p><u>Understand the School Context:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by reflecting on the unique needs, interests, and cultural contexts of your students. What are the specific physical education priorities for your school community? <p><u>Clarify the Learning Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what meaningful and powerful learning looks like for students in your context. Determine the overarching Big Ideas that will drive the programme. 	<p>2. Unpack a Curriculum Using the KUES+A</p> <p><u>Knowledge and Understandings (K/U):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the critical concepts and theories students need to learn? How should understanding progress from foundational (descriptive) to advanced (analytical and evaluative) levels? <p><u>Experiences (E):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What real-world experiences should students engage in to deepen their learning? Ensure a variety of contexts (e.g., movement in natural environments, cultural sports practices, leadership in physical activities) to enrich student experiences. <p><u>Skills and Capabilities (S):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What physical, cognitive, and social skills should students build? Focus on both lower-order (e.g., observation, communication) and higher-order skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership). 	<p>3. Design Learning Objectives</p> <p>Map curriculum levels (5–8) to the relevant year group, noting how students' learning should progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5 (Years 9 & 10): Build foundational knowledge and understanding. Level 6 (Year 11): Apply knowledge and explore diverse perspectives. Level 7 (Year 12): Engage in critical analysis and evaluation. Level 8 (Year 13): Devise strategies and demonstrate independent, critical examination. <p>Use the Learning Progression Overview to ensure a clear and coherent learning journey.</p>
<p>4. Select and Sequence Learning Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose learning activities that align with the identified KUES Incorporate diverse experiences: physical activities, group work, real-world problem-solving, reflective practice, and cultural engagement. Ensure the experiences connect to the Big Idea and support both knowledge acquisition and skill development. 	<p>5. Incorporate Assessment Opportunities</p> <p>Design assessment tasks that align with each component of KUES. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and Understanding: Written reflections or explanations. Experiences: Scenario-based activities, group projects, or physical demonstrations. Skills: Peer assessments, self-assessments, and performance evaluations. 	<p>6. Review and Adapt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use student feedback and formative assessments to refine the programme. Ensure flexibility to respond to student needs and emerging contexts.

EXAMPLE

The following example outlines what KUES for Level 6–8 of the NZC might look like followed by an example of how this connects to a 'Big Idea' and the way in which assessment opportunities, both NCEA or school-based, can interface with the KUES.

CURRICULUM LEVEL(S): 6–8		
 <p>KNOWLEDGE UNDERSTANDINGS</p>	<p>PERSONAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the inter-dependence of the factors that contribute to hauora. Understand perspectives relating to self, others and society. Understand reasons for 'risk' and protective factors to wellbeing. This includes the alignment of strategies and consequences. Learn about the role and place of movement in their own lives and society as a whole. (e.g. barriers/enablers to participation) Understand safety management processes, factors and strategies. Learn about factors that contribute to personal identity, individuality and diversity. 	<p>RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about the impact of identity and self worth on relationships with people in a variety of contexts. Understand the impact of interpersonal skills on group or team dynamics. (i.e. conflict resolution, group management, etc...) Learn about emotional intelligence. Learn about attitudes, values and behaviours when working with others. Understand leadership (e.g. styles, principles, etc...) including different ways to lead in physical activity. Understand social responsibility models and practices.
	<p>MOVEMENT CONCEPTS AND MOTOR SKILLS</p> <p>Student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how to use PE knowledge for specific purposes. (e.g. develop fitness, improve performance, motor skill learning, etc...) Learn about social and cultural needs and practices when participating in physical activities. Learn about the body in movement. (e.g. biophysical principles) Understand sociological theories in PE. (e.g. commodification) Learn about the process of new skill acquisition and strategies to extend their abilities in physical activities. 	<p>HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about health promotion models and the impact on the well-being of self, others and society. Learn about community services available to promote wellbeing. Understand people's rights and responsibilities in school and the community.
 <p>EXPERIENCES</p>	<p>PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES</p>	
	<p>Should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning in, through and about movement. (e.g. theory and practice) A real-world application of PE knowledge and understanding. Experiences in a range of factors that contribute to hauora. Exploring the impact of socio-cultural factors in a range of contexts. Participation in, and an exploration of, a range of physical activities. Having fun in physical activity and exploring its impact on wellbeing. Exploring a range of perspectives on issues in health or physical activity. Undertaking challenging physical activities, including risk-management. Drawing on personal experiences. Developing competence and confidence in a range of movement contexts. Extending the physical abilities of students. Experiences and the application of biophysical principles. Experiences in a range of socio-ecological and socio-cultural factors that impact health and physical activity. (e.g. participation) Leadership in action. Leading in a range of physical activity contexts including diverse social and cultural needs (e.g. coaching, outdoor leadership, organising events, student leadership) Working in groups and teams. Exploring relationships and strategies for positive outcomes. Opportunities for students to make 'safe' choices for themselves and others. Creating strategies to improve wellbeing. This includes exploring both the positive and negative impacts on health. Exploring attitudes, values and behaviours that reinforce cultural norms. Exploring definitions of identity and self-worth. Questioning and challenging cultural norms and assumptions. Advocating for change and taking action. Investigating community services that support and promote people's well-being. Exploring and implementing a range of health models, including te whare tapa whā, and applying these across a range of contexts. Exploring social determinants of health. Taking collective action to create environments that support wellbeing. Exploring ethical dilemmas and the interaction between values and beliefs. 	<p>Written as learning objectives (limited examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to demonstrate and discuss the theory behind a specific movement (e.g. a sprinting technique) and apply it during a short practical session. Students will be able to identify and explain how knowledge from PE can be used in a real-world situation, such as planning a personal fitness routine. Students will be able to participate in a class discussion on different factors affecting well-being (hauora) and share personal experiences that contribute to their own well-being. Students will be able to research and present how social and cultural factors influence participation in a chosen sport or physical activity. Students will be able to participate in a variety of physical activities, such as a circuit workout, and reflect on the experience in a short journal entry. Students will be able to engage in a fun group game and discuss how being active can positively impact their mood and overall well-being. Students will be able to explore different perspectives on a current health or physical activity issue through a brief debate or group discussion. Students will be able to practise and refine a specific movement skill (e.g. dribbling in soccer) to build competence and confidence. Students will be able to analyse how the body moves during a specific activity (e.g. jumping) and identify ways to improve performance. Students will be able to discuss in small groups how social or cultural factors might affect participation in physical activities, then present their findings. Students will be able to take on a leadership role in a small group activity, such as leading a warm-up session or organising a mini-game. Students will be able to brainstorm and create a simple action plan to improve personal well-being, including identifying both positive and negative health influences. Students will be able to participate in an activity where they identify and discuss different attitudes, values, and behaviours that align with cultural norms in sports. Students will be able to engage in a class discussion to question and challenge common cultural norms and assumptions related to physical activity.
 <p>SKILLS</p>	<p>SKILL OR CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT</p>	
	<p>Students will develop skills in (from lower-order to higher-order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Skills Acquiring & Applying New Knowledge Participation Managing Groups Observation Explanation Communication Self Management Cooperative Learning Interpersonal Interactions Negotiation Articulating Viewpoints Empathy Planning for Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspective Taking Investigation (e.g., theories and practices in PE) Research Inquiry Analysis Problem Solving Decision Making Justification with Evidence Drawing Coherent Conclusions Synthesis (e.g., linking or integrating ideas) Critical Thinking Critical Evaluation Critical Action

CURRICULUM LEVEL(S):

 <p>KNOWLEDGE UNDERSTANDINGS</p>	<p>PERSONAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Students will:</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE</p> <p>Students will:</p>
	<p>MOVEMENT CONCEPTS AND MOTOR SKILLS</p> <p>Student will:</p>	<p>HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS</p> <p>Students will:</p>
	<p>PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES</p>	
	<p>Should include:</p>	<p>Written as learning objectives (limited examples):</p>
 <p>EXPERIENCES</p>		
 <p>SKILLS</p>	<p>SKILL OR CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT</p>	
	<p>Students will develop skills in (from lower-order to higher-order):</p>	

BIG IDEA: Movement is Integral to Hauora

YEARS: 11, 12, 13

Rationale: This focus captures the essence of why we study Physical Education: that movement is fundamental to our lives, and contributes to our development, both as individuals and as members of our communities. Learning in, through, and about movement makes a significant contribution to hauora. We learn movement by developing physical skills and experiencing enjoyment.

K U KNOWLEDGE UNDERSTANDINGS	E EXPERIENCES	S SKILLS	A ASSESSMENT
Potential Learning Objectives:	Potential Learning Experiences:	Potential Skills & Capabilities Focus:	Potential Assessment Opportunities:
<p><u>Personal Health and Physical Development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to explain how hauora provides a holistic understanding of well-being, including the physical, social, spiritual, mental, and emotional aspects of health. Students will be able to analyse how movement can influence different aspects of hauora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn movement by developing physical skills and experiencing enjoyment. Develop social, emotional, intellectual, and cultural skills through participating in movement activities. Understand what influences personal and others' movement choices by exploring how and why people move. Explore the meaning of movement through different models and approaches to hauora. Engage in various forms of exercise, games, play, sport, recreation, adventure, and expressive movement in different physical and social settings. Understand how movement can impact all aspects of hauora and explore diverse movement contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Explore the relationship between movement and the natural environment, including land, mountains, oceans, rivers, lakes, and forests. Reflect on personal connections to place and space through concepts like mana atua and mana tangata. Develop and apply strategies to meet current and future needs to enhance hauora through movement. Create and refine strategies to improve movement skills in different contexts. 	<p><u>Physical Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to perform various movements, exercises, and physical activities effectively and safely. <p><u>Critical Thinking:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity to analyse how and why people move, as well as to explore the relationship between movement, hauora, and different social and cultural contexts. <p><u>Self-Reflection:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skill to reflect on personal experiences and connections to places and spaces. <p><u>Social Awareness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and respecting diverse social and cultural needs during participation in physical activities. <p><u>Emotional Intelligence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions during movement activities and interactions with others. <p><u>Cultural Competence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and appreciating diverse movement practices, including those unique to Aotearoa New Zealand and other cultural contexts. <p><u>Communication:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to articulate thoughts, share reflections, and collaborate with others in physical and social environments. <p><u>Collaboration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working effectively in teams during activities, showing leadership, and engaging in cooperative learning. <p><u>Connection to Environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the relationship between movement and the natural environment, and how physical activities connect with the land and natural spaces. 	<p><u>Skill Demonstration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate students as they demonstrate and explain movement skills in different contexts, highlighting their physical competence and understanding of movement mechanics. <p><u>Reflective Journals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students maintain a journal to reflect on their participation in physical activities, how these experiences impact their hauora, and their connections to place and space (e.g. mana atua and mana tangata). <p><u>Group Projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign students to develop and lead a physical activity session, taking into account diverse needs, cultural practices, and safety considerations. <p><u>Class Discussions & Debates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students in discussions or debates about the social, cultural, and environmental influences on movement. Assess their ability to articulate viewpoints, consider multiple perspectives, and connect concepts to their own and others' experiences. Facilitate debates on cultural norms around physical activity, assessing students' critical thinking and capacity to challenge assumptions. <p><u>Presentations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to investigate a specific movement practice (e.g., a sport or cultural dance) and present how it is influenced by social and cultural factors, reflecting on their own movement choices. <p><u>Peer and Self-Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement peer assessments during group activities to evaluate teamwork, social interactions, and leadership. Include self-assessment rubrics for students to evaluate their participation, effort, and skill development in various movement contexts. <p><u>Scenario-Based Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use scenarios where students must make decisions about safe participation in physical activities, considering social responsibility, cultural sensitivity, and risk management.
<p><u>Movement Concepts and Motor Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to develop social, emotional, intellectual, and cultural skills through participation in movement activities. 			
<p><u>Relationships with Other People:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to explain how understanding why and how people move can influence their own and others' movement choices, as well as affect movement settings and trends. Students will be able to describe and apply models and practices of social responsibility in physical activity settings. 			
<p><u>Healthy Communities and Environments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to reflect on their connections to place and space, including concepts such as mana atua and mana tangata. 			

NCEA OPPORTUNITIES

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Scholarship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 - Apply movement strategies in an applied setting. (5) 1.3 - Demonstrate understanding of the influence of personal movement experiences on hauora. (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 - Examine the role and significance of physical activity in the lives of young people in New Zealand. (3) 2.4 - Perform a physical activity in an applied setting. (4) 2.8 - Consistently demonstrate social responsibility through applying a social responsibility model in physical activity. (3) 2.9 - Examine the implementation and outcome(s) of a physical activity event or opportunity. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 - Evaluate physical activity experiences to devise strategies for lifelong well-being. (4) 3.2 - Analyse a physical skill performed by self or others. (4) 3.4 - Demonstrate quality performance of a physical activity in an applied setting. (4) 3.7 - Analyse issues in safety management for outdoor activity to devise safety management strategies. (3) 3.9 - Devise strategies for a physical activity outcome. (4) 	<p>Critical Analysis of Movement and Hauora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students to critically analyse how movement impacts hauora, exploring the relationship between physical activity and well-being across physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. This involves using case studies, personal experiences, and scholarly research. <p>Reflective Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students to reflect on their own movement experiences, including connections to cultural concepts, in order to develop critical thinking, insight and understanding personal and societal influences on movement. <p>Socio-Cultural and Environmental Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students to explore and critique how socio-cultural and environmental factors influence physical activity and movement practices. <p>Research and Evidence-Based Inquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in research projects to gather, analyse, and synthesise information on PE topics. This develops evidence-based thinking and higher-order analysis. <p>Communication and Argumentation Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practise structured debates, discussions, and essay writing to help students articulate complex ideas, construct well-supported arguments, and critically evaluate different perspectives in PE.

BIG IDEA:			YEARS:
Rationale:			
K U <small>KNOWLEDGE UNDERSTANDINGS</small>	E <small>EXPERIENCES</small>	S <small>SKILLS</small>	A <small>ASSESSMENT</small>
Potential Learning Objectives:	Potential Learning Experiences:	Potential Skills & Capabilities Focus:	Potential Assessment Opportunities:
<u>Personal Health and Physical Development:</u>			
<u>Movement Concepts and Motor Skills:</u>			
<u>Relationships with Other People:</u>			
<u>Healthy Communities and Environments:</u>			
NCEA OPPORTUNITIES			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Scholarship