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Tēnā koutou katoa

Welcome to the December edition of Physical Educator.

Following on from a successful conference in July, this issue recaps and congratulates the recipients of the annual PENZ awards. As conference this year had a significant focus on mental health and wellness, we learn of a timely resource (p.19) that is being developed and is expected to be available in 2018, 'Mental Health matters and how we can teach about it'.



Our feature article by Dr Wayne Smith, challenges us to consider how the growing division in New Zealand is impacting on our young people and the implications that has for us as educators "how can we possibly teach the same curriculum to our two different societies and expect to address the disparity and serious social-health issues we now have in our divided land?" he provides some insight into how we need to "constructively challenge the social barriers" and encourage our students to do the same.

If you are looking for some end of year inspiration, Dennis Slade provides some valuable games resources regarding 'Enabling constraints to transform player invented games' and our Lead PENZ Subject Advisor, Susie Stevens responds in detail to a number of questions and information requests that she and fellow advisor Sara Hayward are commonly presented with in the regular Q and A section.

With the start of Term 4 heading into the warmer weather, Ben Christie from Water Safety New Zealand delivers some concerning statistics involving lack of water survival skills amongst many of our primary students. He then explains the skills being taught under the new national standard for aquatic education for 5-13 year olds called Water Skills for Life (WSFL). The aim is to ensure students are being better equipped with the right tools to safely enjoy our varied aquatic environments. "International research tells us water survival skills should form the basis of aquatic education and present the most effective way to improve water safety outcomes. It is now accepted that the ability to swim on its own is not enough to save a life." Water Safety New Zealand is offering a resource kit and support for the professional development of staff so they can successfully implement WSFL.

Finally, we feature retiring Principal Graeme Lind who has spent over 45 years in education and during this time he has observed and researched clear links between physical activity and cognitive development in a range of students. Principal Lind shares with us excerpts from his recent sabbatical and interview with Professor Peter Gray of Boston College; whose current research and writing focus is primarily on children's natural ways of learning and the value of play.

As Term 4 is under way and with it the bustle of exam preparation and end of year activities, we wish you all the best for the remainder of the year and hope you enjoy this latest edition.

Ngā mihi nui

Maree Cotter

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Graeme Lind

Teaching Health and Physical Education to the two New Zealands

Wayne Smith

University of Auckland

The New Zealand 2017 general election is just weeks old, but once again the results tell a story of a divided society. We have long denied that we are a society divided by class in New Zealand, but this myth should now be put to bed. Whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, there are two New Zealands. We are a society divided into the rich and the poor, the haves and the have nots, the privileged and the marginalised. The truth is that whilst many school students enjoy the fruits of wealth and prosperity, others suffer from the serious inequities commonly associated with the poor, the have nots, and the marginalised. Poor social-health problems such as, family poverty, homelessness, mental illness and stress, substance abuse, youth suicide, morbid obesity and student disengagement are particularly prevalent in many of the communities of our poorest schools. My question to you all, as health and physical education teachers, is - how can we possibly teach the same curriculum to our two different societies and expect to address the disparity and serious social-health issues we now have in our divided land? I will argue that in our privileged schools we must teach the privileged among us to develop a critical consciousness that recognises the inequities in our society and to act in a more socially responsible way, and to the marginalised, while also developing a critical consciousness, we must recognise the strengths they have and support them to use these strengths to bring about more equitable outcomes for themselves.

Collectively, this means we must teach our children and youth how they too can constructively challenge the social barriers that the privileged and privilege place in the paths of others. Teaching the privileged to better recognise the social inequities they reinforce (most often unintentionally and inadvertently) is perhaps the most important message here. Class divide is as much an issue to be addressed by the privileged as it is by the marginalised, and I believe that this is possible in our HPE classes, thanks to our enlightened HPE curriculum, which asks and enables us to address such critical health issues.

What is the basis of my analysis of why we cannot ignore class as a determining factor? Later, I will draw on the recent work of France and Roberts (2017), who have argued that class does matter in our analysis of New Zealand society, but for the moment I will remain focused on the election story. When we analyse the 2017 electoral results we can clearly see a division between rural New Zealand, our farming communities, and much of our central and urban cities. However, we also, unsurprisingly, see a significant difference in all of our major cities and towns between the more wealthy suburbs and the others. There is a clear socio-economic status (SES) divide and therefore one of class difference. Our society is divided, into those that want to retain the status-quo and those who want change, but equally it shows that we have very different views about how we might address the social inequalities in our society. I will return to the role of HPE and the need to teach differently to our two different New Zealands in the latter part of the article but for now permit me to reflect on my own recent experiences and privileged history, to offer one explanation of how we have come to be so divided.

Along with two of my colleagues, I recently returned from a visit to Sweden and Norway, two countries known for their advanced socially democratic policies, where, as part of a collaborative European Union/New Zealand research project called 'EDUHEALTH - the promise of school HPE', we visited many schools, primary and secondary, to analyse equity, and the social health outcomes of their HPE classes and schooling more generally. Both Sweden and Norway have a

political system based on the principles of social democracy. Both have strong reputations for equity, supported by the Nordic welfare system. Whilst now under strain, we did see evidence of this Nordic ethic in their schools. They have very different national, regional and school policies and practices relating to equitable health outcomes than we do. At a structural level, they are steadfastly guided by egalitarian principles that have led to non-hierarchical, democratic practices, which stand in contrast to the more formal, hierarchical, and conservatively authoritarian social structures of New Zealand schools. They do not have single sex schools or classes, no school uniforms, all teachers, principals and students are addressed by their first name, all dress similarly, in smart casual dress (mainly jeans) that is, from principal to students. There is no ability grouping and no national standards assessment until at least 12 years old to avoid early categorisation. All school students and most teachers have free school lunches. It is only in recent times, that under the pressure of a neo-liberal agenda, private schools have crept in in the form of alternative schooling for the more affluent, which is a sign of a social divide. The teachers' teaching style is very much non-authoritative and non-confrontational, in which mutual respect is expected and achieved, from what we were able to observe. They also have free tertiary education for all, so there are no student loans. I repeat, free tertiary education! Imagine the different society we too might have if we didn't have the great divide between our elite private schools and our poorer suburban schools.

This brief overview tells us that there are alternative ways to organise a country than our New Zealand 'model'. My own history as a student and teacher also tells a story that we too once had values of a social democracy but, unfortunately, we now uphold those of a neo-liberal-democracy and it is this that is creating social stress and inequity in our society.

As I stated above, I am among the middle-classed privileged of our society. As a child I grew up in Canterbury, New Zealand in the 1960s and 70s before I ultimately went to the University of Otago, School of Physical Education. Now I am an older, white, male, New Zealander, living in my own home, in the Eastern suburbs of Auckland. I have always been a teacher or teacher educator in secure work.

But like Gareth Morgan, who, as the leader of 'The Opportunities Party', stated on election night, I am disappointed in those I represent in the story I present here. Unlike too many of my generation, I recognise the privileged start I was given through my childhood, youth and young adult life and wish this same for today's generation. So, permit me to tell a little of how it worked then, with a view to show what could be possible again if we thought differently about the underlying reasons for our inequities.

Prior to the neo-liberal reforms of the mid 1980s and particularly 1990s, New Zealand could consider itself to be a social democracy with similar values to those of Sweden and Norway. I grew up in the South Island town of Kalapoi, which was then a working class town with a woollen mill, freezing work and milk factory. I was from a working class family, which certainly could not have afforded to support me through university. So one could say that I was not part of the middle-class privileged as a young New Zealander, but I was part of a privileged society. Mid 1970s off I went to university, all my fees and all of my hostel accommodation was paid for by the State because I wanted to become a teacher. I was granted a teacher's studentship, which was common among my peers. All of my flatmates and I had studentships. This gave me a living allowance over an above

all my fees being paid for the four years I spent in university or at teachers' college. As funny as it may sound now, my starting salary as a teacher was \$6,700 per annum, but the real story is that, thanks to my studentship, I received \$1000 in my first year at university, \$2000 in the second year and \$3000 in the third, I then received \$4000 in my final year while at the teachers' training college. That is a large percentage of a teacher's starting salary. Although, I was bonded to teach for the equivalent of the four years that I had received the studentship, I didn't have a student loan to pay back or any other debt at all. Then, when I graduated and went teaching I was able to benefit from another government scheme that provided up to \$9000 for the deposit on my first home, which was given on a one-for-one basis based on my own saving. So my partner and I saved \$9000 and the government gave us an additional \$9000 for our first homeowner deposit. Our first home cost \$100,000.00, so you can see that with an \$18,000.00 deposit we were able to get into our own home. If we stayed in it for five years the government's \$9000 deposit was written off. The rest of the story of a New Zealand home owner, with a secure job as a teacher in New Zealand speaks for itself. As most of us did, I moved through the teaching ranks to be in a very comfortable position. Now, although a middle-class New Zealander in a privileged position, hopefully my story shows that it was not so much self made, as many of my generation argue, but thanks to the support of a caring social democracy. Later, as a father, being in this privileged position, I was able to support my own son financially and academically as he too progressed through his school years and on to university, which was very fortunate because there are many in our society who do not have this opportunity. This financial support and social step up is what Gareth Morgan was referring to when he said he is disappointed that my generation is selfishly denying many young New Zealanders of this same life chance.

So what does all of this mean for us as health and physical education teachers? The most unfortunate thing is that our schools and we as teachers are a significant part of the inequity problem, but we can also be part of the solution, if we use our written curriculum wisely, and embrace a critical consciousness in our teaching. We can make a difference and hopefully help our students, the haves and the have nots to address the serious inequities and consequential social health issues in our society, if we chose to challenge the status- quo.

I now draw on France and Roberts (2017) to return to the call for us to recognise the centrality of class as the basis for the social health problems in our schools and society more generally. France and Roberts (2017) propose that even in these new times class remains influential for young people. They argue that we can only understand the 'lived experiences' of young people by recognising the important role that the social division of socio-economic status plays in their lives. Whilst they recognise and do not wish to 'devalue the importance of how other inequalities can and do operate in young people's lives' (p.136), they argue that we must not lose sight of the core place of the social division of socio-economic status. Our work as teachers in emphasising intersectionality between class and gender and/or race and of course other dimensions of difference such as sexuality, disability etc. do provide a fuller explanation of how these inequalities intersect but we must not lose sight of the central role of social class in bringing about privilege and marginalisation (France & Roberts, 2017). As an educator, I support their stance and add that the social divisions we

perpetuate through our schooling are a root cause of privilege and marginalisation in New Zealand. For this reason, our own critical analysis of our beliefs and practices (whether they be intentional or otherwise) must be central to our teaching.

Unfortunately, we continue to deny the oppressiveness of our social divisions and the impact this has on many in our society, because of a political rhetoric and public imagination that claims that New Zealand is a 'meritocratic' and 'egalitarian' society in which social mobility can be achieved if one works hard enough. As I exemplified with my own life story above, it once was, but it is not today. This state of enduring illusion, is what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and in turn France and Roberts (2017), called a state of 'doxa'. Doxa exists when the self-evident, taken-for-granted articulations of reality are so entrenched that they become an unquestioned acceptance of the established order and we assume that there is no other way. In New Zealand, we have come to believe that we are a fair and just society in which everyone has the opportunity to succeed, but the reality of our increasing level of poverty, homelessness, housing crisis and mental and social health issues belies this state being. However, we can draw on the underpinning notion of doxa as a tool to analyse our own taken-for-granted beliefs and practices to challenge the status quo.

I now turn to the need for us as teachers to embrace a form of critical consciousness and adopt critical pedagogies in our teaching and classroom practices. Our New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007) provides the perfect springboard for us to engage in various forms of critical pedagogy through both health education and physical education, that challenges our students to think about and take critical action to address social inequities. Quoting Beista (1998, in Tinning, 2002), Tinning (2002) defined critical pedagogy as "a commitment to the imperative of transforming the larger social order in the interest of justice, equality, democracy, and human freedom" (p.224). This is a big call for teachers but one we must rise to in these divided times. We have a mandate and a responsibility to do so.

Mirroring the 1999 New Zealand Health and Physical Education Curriculum ((Ministry of Education, 1999) the health and physical education learning area of the NZC emphasises the well-being of the students themselves, and that of others and society. The learning area is very supportive of teaching for social change, in that it is underpinned by a socially-critical philosophy that embraces the concepts of hauora, social ecology, attitudes and values that ask us to address the well-being, respect, care and concern for other people and a sense of social justice, and health promotion, which asks us to develop and maintain, among other things, personal and collective action. Under the umbrella of the key values and healthy communities, it also asks us to take responsible critical action, address issues of equity, fairness, integrity, honesty, and to teach our students to act ethically, while respecting the rights, roles and responsibilities of others to bring about a more equitable community (Ministry of Education, 2007). But we cannot do this if we do not have a critical conscience and adopt critical pedagogies in our privileged schools to address these social health issues or focus too much on diversity at the expense of socio-economic inequities in our more marginalised schools.

Tinning (2002, 2007) called for health and physical educators to adopt a form of critical pedagogy, which he termed a 'modest pedagogy'. In so doing, he was proposing an orienting way of thinking about pedagogy that requires health and physical education teachers to move beyond the rather restricted concern with "the freedom of an individual to participate in the movement culture, [and] become self-reliant or independent rather than with the broader sense of emancipation underpinning critical pedagogy" (Tinning 2002, p.228). This is a form of critical pedagogy that whilst not requiring an over-zealous passion for emancipatory politics, does seek to develop an emotional commitment for change in students (Tinning, 2002).

One possible way to engage a form of 'modest critical pedagogy' is through the use of collective group action, which embraces a social or collective democratic voice to address social justice issues and societal inequities. France and Roberts (2017) for example, report how 'friendship groups' have been used by others to provide mutual support and the generation of capacities that allow students to address different forms of subordination. Bourdieu's (1984, 2000) theorising through his concept of 'group or isomorphic habitus' offers further support for collective voice and actions. He proposed that a group or isomorphic habitus is the result of "practices of members of the same group or class that results from homogeneity of conditions of existence [and] is what enables practices to be objectively harmonised" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.59). Inscribed in individuals with identical histories it enables their practices to be co-ordinated in the direction of a common cause. This collective critical action could apply equally to those in the privileged schools as those in the marginalised, it would involve different forms of collective practice aimed at moving students' thinking about inequities, but firstly, it requires a critical consciousness and a will for change from those involved, that is, teachers and students.

To conclude, whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, we are a society divided, which means there are two New Zealands. This in turn means that as health and physical educators we cannot simply teach the same simple restrictive curriculum in our very different schools. On the positive side, we are fortunate to have a written curriculum that promotes social justice and equity, but this requires teachers who care and teachers who are committed to addressing our very serious social-health issues. The EDUHealth project in Sweden and Norway, demonstrates that there are more socially democratic societies from which we can learn, and there are ways of structuring our practices for fairer outcomes. My own story of how our own society used to be shows that we also once supported all sectors of our society.

The main hope is that it demonstrates that it is possible to do so again, but this will not be possible unless we have a collective desire for change, and we can begin by changing the way we think about inequity. The rich and the privileged and the poor and the marginalised have to play their part. A starting point is for all of us as teachers of health and physical education is to adopt a critical consciousness, and fully embrace the riches of our unique and enabling HPE curriculum.

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CEO Report

This year is drawing to a close but for many the remaining weeks are hectic, with school camps, end of year activities and catching up on those tasks that have been put to one side. For PENZ this is the busiest time of year, as we try to both steer the ship and ready it for the upcoming year ahead.

Recent months has seen our financial situation improve enough to allow the extension of my role from three days a week to four. Claire Waring, our Office Manager has also had her hours extend while still working three days each week but is now doing full days instead of six. We also have a new addition to our team Maree Cotter, who is our Physical Educator Journal Editor. Maree works just a few hours each week to bring the journal together and has been a big help in getting the journals back on track. It's also the first time PENZ has had a dedicated and experienced editor to co-ordinate this task.

These few additional hours each week have allowed us to start to start thinking and planning more and we have some exciting things planned for the remainder of this year and 2018.

In October, the board was presented with a revised draft strategic plan. In broad terms this plan outlines the mission, vision and strategic priority areas (the "When and What" we focus on) of the organisation for the next three years. For the first time, we have also developed a draft project register and operational plan. This describes the "How" and outlines in detail each project we will undertake and how it links to the strategic plan. Over the next two weeks we will post the strategic plan on our website and in the newsletter for your comment and feedback.

An important part of our new strategic plan is the ongoing development of our capability to support members. In 2018, we will look to expand the number and specializations of Subject Advisors located throughout the country. The role of Regional Subject Advisors will be very diverse, but the key objective will be a local point of contact who can provide support for members. If this role appeals to you, then look out for adverts on our Vacancies webpage early in the new year.

Our annual Inspired Leadership Conference (ILP) is taking place in Hamilton on 14th and 15th of November. If you are thinking of taking your career to the next level, then you should consider attending this conference as it brings together a range of people with similar intentions. This year we are fortunate to have people such as retiring principal Graeme Lind and Leadership guru Diana Jones; both of whom offer years of high level experience and advice in workshop settings.

Annual financial audits are not exciting, but they are very important. For members they provide an opportunity to discuss the direction and stability of the organisation they are investing time and money into. This year our audit has been particularly difficult as our new auditors poured over every aspect of our accounts, our processes and grappled with capturing the extent of the fraud which occurred toward the end of last year. I am happy to say that we should be able to present a final set of audited accounts to our members at the Special AGM at the November Auckland Branch meeting on the 16th of November. During the audit process we have also been liaising with New Zealand Police to bring a successful prosecution with final sentencing (ironically also occurring on the 16th of November) at the Tauranga District Court.

After a year's absence we have reinstated and rebranded the PENZ Academic Advisors Group (AAG). This has representatives from seven universities and institutes of technology. The focus of the group is to assist in advancing engagement and strengthen connections between communities involved with HPE. The group will also undertake collaborative research which addresses contemporary issues which are priorities for PENZ and industry partners. For example, our role in the AIMS games may lend itself to working with games organisers across a range of issues to grapple with some of the challenges schools, competitors, coaches and organisers face. A new webpage has been developed on the PENZ website to provide more detail on this group and its role within the organisation.

By December PENZ will have its new website. This site will have increased security around payments, provide an online shopping facility and have an events calendar and dedicated sub-site for events management and promotion.

Finally, it's that time when departments are planning for the coming year. It's often easy to just roll your departments budget over with a tweak here and there knowing that as long as it's within boundaries, it will be accepted. However, now is also the opportunity to really think about the professional development, mentoring, workshops or resource development that you or your staff may need for the coming year. As your subject organisation, we can support by coordinating groups of like-minded people, assisting with Col PLD applications, providing resources and advice, advertising vacancies and more. We do need to know about your challenges and desires for 2018, so take the opportunity now to discuss these with your PENZ Subject Advisors, so we can better coordinate PLD for 2018 and provide you with the training you need.

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- The opportunity to collaborate with effective leaders from around New Zealand.
- Contextually relevant learning opportunities that link to physical education and leadership.

Accommodation: Available close to the venue at the **Ibis**, book online at **accorhotels.com**

Optional Dinner: Tuesday 14th Nov at The Roaming Giant (upstairs) 6.30pm, Nibbles provided by PENZ – main and dessert \$40 per person to be paid on the night, but must be booked via registration

Who should attend?

- HOD/HOLA in Secondary Schools.
- Teachers in Primary Schools in leadership positions.
- Tertiary Teacher Educators in leadership positions.
- Any emerging leader or educator new to their leadership role

**Ahakoia nga ueue kia
kaha, kia toa, kia
manawanui**

When you find things that
are difficult in life, stand
strong, stand tall and be
of great heart.

Registration

To register go to
penz.org.nz/inspired_leadership_conference_2017

**Early Bird Registration - closes Fri
27th Oct 2017**

PENZ Members - \$315
Non-Members - \$375

**Registration (Regular) - Begins Sat
28th Oct 2017 - closes Fri 3rd Nov
2017**

PENZ Members - \$345
Non-members - \$400

**Late Registration - Begins Sat 4th
Nov 2017 - closes Wed 8th Nov
2017**

PENZ members - \$400
Non-members - \$460

PENZ Awards 2017

The Awards Ceremony is at the heart of Conference where we celebrate commitment, success and achievement with the Physical Education profession. This conference we looked back for a moment and remembered those people who have done so much for Physical Education New Zealand in times past. In this spirit, invited to this ceremony and the Presidents Lunch, were a small group of people representative of the many who have served the profession over the years and helped shape and develop it into what we know and celebrate across New Zealand today.

Conference 2017 not only celebrated the past and present positions within Physical Education but also helped to inspire us with innovative practice. The award recipients have reflected and demonstrated these inspirational and innovative qualities in their practice throughout the year.

This year the committee was made up of past award recipients:
Bevan Grant (Awarded Life membership in 2008 and awarded the Alexander Gilles Medal for Outstanding service to the profession in 2010)
Nick Leask (2013 winner of the Outstanding New Professional)
Deldre Duggon (Lead Maungatapu Primary school to the Outstanding Physical Education award in 2013).

The first category of award is for Outstanding New professional. This award is for a teacher in early childhood, primary, secondary, or tertiary setting, who is new to the roll (i.e. less than 5 years teaching as at 31 December 2013), yet has made significant contributions to the Physical Education of children and young people in New Zealand. This year the award went to Mallory Bish.



Outstanding New Professional- Mallory Bish

The second category is for Outstanding Physical Education. This award is presented to an early childhood centre, school or department that has demonstrated excellence in Intra-curricular Physical Education but does not include extra-curricular sport or physical activity. The 2017 receivers of this award were Te Puke High School.



Excellence in Intra-curricula Physical Ed – Te Puke High School

The final award to be presented at this years ceremony is made by the Board, for what is termed as those 'golden nuggets' of service that may be left field and are undertaken in relative obscurity. More formally known as the Te Iho-Takaro Ringawera Award, this award is highly prized as in the distinguished and respected work of a 'ringawera'. This annual award will be passed on from one awardee to the next at the award ceremony at National Conference. This year saw three very worthy colleagues receive this award: Ian Culpan, Alan Ovens and Lizette Burrows.



Te Iho - Takaro Ringawera Award: Ian Culpan and Maddy Ovens accept the award on behalf of the three recipients: Alan Ovens, Lizette Burrows, Ian Culpan

Honoured guests at the awards were:
Mike Nitz and Gordon Paterson.

The awards recipients this year were of an extremely high calibre. Congratulations once again to all our 2017 awardees.

Honoured Guests



Honored Guests (from left) Mike Nitz, Gordon Patterson, Brian Bradley, Gren Alabaster, Barry Herring



PHYSICAL EDUCATION NEW ZEALAND

TE AO KORI AOTEAROA



SAVE THE DATE

Dunedin

60TH CONFERENCE
9TH TO 11TH JULY 2018





Quality Physical Education (PE) in Primary Schools

FAQ sheet

Here at PENZ we receive lots of questions about quality PE in primary schools, what is expected and what our position is regarding good practice; we have compiled a few of these responses.

Question 1:

How much time should we be spending on Physical Education each week?

Great question! Physical Education is one of eight learning areas and is called Health and Physical Education. It is no different to other learning areas such as Social Science, Mathematics and statistics, Technology, or English. These learning areas all require time to adequately teach the strands; there needs to be a balance between them all. Quality PE should not be viewed as scheduled fitness time, sports or 'breaks' from learning, these things are important, but by themselves they are not quality PE. Prescribing lesson times and frequency should be based on your school philosophy and the NZC. At PENZ, we would recommend that the time you spend in other curriculum areas is replicated in HPE.

FACT: The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) states that "None of the strands in the required learning areas is optional, but in some learning areas, particular strands may be emphasized at different times or in different years" (NZC, 2007, p38). This is a pretty important statement as it reinforces the need to cover all strands which in PE means planning for Personal Health and Physical Development; Movement Concepts and Motor skills; Relationships with Other People; and Healthy Communities and Environments.

So, if you look at it this way (even though we are extremely empathetic and understanding of issues surrounding limited time to learn HPE in initial teacher training, national standards, crowded curriculum, and literacy and numeracy - phew!) there shouldn't be a week that goes by where you have not taught quality physical education because it should be planned for rain or shine, in or out, equipment or not. It's not really an option or a 'task' that needs to be completed. It is a major part of our New Zealand Curriculum.

Question 2:

What is my school required to do to support delivery of quality Physical Education?

This means your school must support you to deliver PE as a valued part of your curriculum. If you feel like you are not receiving enough support in this area, please talk with your senior leadership team about it. You can become members of the subject associations from the learning areas as well (see question 6 for links)

Question 3:

What is quality Physical Education? – Can you explain your definition on your website please!

Sure thing, we have extracted all the key bits out of that statement and provided an example for each.

1. It uses effective pedagogy. This means that the teacher modifies activities to include all students no matter their ability, maximises time on the task for all students. For example, try to avoid elimination games, long wait times, lines, or one piece of equipment between large numbers of tamariki.
2. Focuses on movement. Try to do as many things as actively as possible. For example, if you are teaching about team work, play a game where they have a chance to experience team work. If you are teaching about personal safety for example, choose a physical task that requires some thinking about very few rules – maybe a dodging or chasing activity. You could do a practical task with about few rules, use the Achievement Objective to guide your questions around safety and why we have rules, and then try the practical activity again to test out their ideas to make the activity safer.
3. Understanding the NZC (2007). The HPE curriculum and the corresponding learning area are great for children. Moving, values a different type of learning and is so important for all children to experience.
4. Inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies. This is no different to what you would be doing in other subjects. Teachers have an amazing understanding of what their students need to be successful and what they need to learn. You will know if specific types of games will work for your class, or not. You will also know how to connect your lesson planning to wider school or kura goals, whanau, or community projects. Quality PE is no different than other subjects. Use contexts that suit and are inclusive, for example if you are doing a beach unit or live close to the ocean, why not explore movement like beach sprints (no sand needed, on the grass will work just fine!) or if your class are exploring weather or looking at winter based units – think of the fun you could have pretending to figure skate in socks on the hall floor.

5. Plan for a range of authentic activities. Many Achievement Objectives can be linked to other subject areas. The key is keeping the integrity. Don't just send kids to the fence and back and claim that's your PE. Use the objectives to guide your planning. You may focus on some more than others depending on your student's needs. Try to use different movement experiences. Things like:

- a. The playground, or school environment (steps, courts, grass)
- b. Alternative equipment like scarves, spikey balls, hoops, Frisbee
- c. Regular equipment but for different activities
- d. No equipment, just bodies (people making tunnels for others to go through, building shapes or pictures with our bodies)
- e. Homemade equipment – what can you make and then use in a game?
- f. Learning about our bodies in movement (what happens to our breath, heart rate, skin colour)

6. Clear learning intentions and high expectations. Use the NZC to guide you with make learning progressive and intentional. The 2007 NZC is fabulous for planning and the 1999 document provides great additional information on the underlying concepts. You can find it here:

<http://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Health-and-PE-in-the-NZC/Health-and-PE-in-the-NZC-1999>

7. Fun. Make it joyful, creative and fun. If you have fun, your children will too.
8. Teaching by qualified teachers. This is because PENZ believe that in a school, the teaching staff know what their children need to learn. You know if your tamariki need large or small groups, quiet or loud friends, help with communicating, support with their anxiety, extra leadership challenges, or time to settle in to an activity. Sometimes when we get 'specialist' teachers or outside providers in, they don't have this information and deliver a session that is made to fit one type of learner. This may be quality PE for 1 or 2 students, but not the rest. There is more on this below in the answer to question 4.

Question 4:

Is getting people in from the community to teach sport ok for Physical Education?

Short answer – Not really. Sport is not PE. It's like getting in a specialist to teach all your lessons in Mathematics or English. We don't need to be an expert in specific sports skills to teach PE. Sometimes we use sports in PE as a context, but remember that 'sport studies' is only one of the seven key areas of learning in PE, the others are body care and physical safety, food and nutrition, mental health, outdoor education, sexuality education and physical activity.

So, if you were teaching Year 4, your HPE lesson could be using the school playground to experience different types of play. Afterwards, you could talk about risky things in that playground and the positive and negative aspects of being risky, this could link to why there are rules for the school playground. This would be connecting the strand of personal health and physical development with the key learning area body care and physical safety. This PE lesson wouldn't be using sport as a context and it wouldn't need any specialist gear, but is an excellent example of a quality PE lesson.

The problem in getting people in to do the job, even if they appear to have excellent resources or skills, is they may not understand the curriculum, or the children's learning needs. Primary educators do an exceptional job of educating children, they understand learning, and how to use tools to engage and work with different learners. Using outside providers in curriculum time can be tricky to schedule and often costs a lot! These groups are fabulous to get in at lunchtimes, or after school and provide a wonderful addition to the teaching and learning that occurs in curriculum time.

The best thing to do here is think of outside providers like resources. Talk about how and why you currently use them, the value of using them and how they can enhance your teaching and learning not replace it. Ask difficult questions and challenge your thinking around these things.

Question 5:

Can I link Physical Education to other subjects?

Absolutely, and this shows careful planning and preparation. Using movement to teach other curriculum areas can be exciting and relevant for learners, as well as making the learning authentic. For example, 'an under the sea unit' in Year 2 that incorporates aspects

of marine biology, writing stories or creating art, could also include a relay race of dolphin, whale and fish movements or experiment with different pieces of equipment to make new games that have under the sea themes (movement concepts and motor skills), or you could look at Maori myths and legends that involve the sea (moana) and retell those stories with our bodies or use action songs, rakau, or haka. This would also be a great link to your Kapahaka group at school. The main thing you need to do, is make sure is that you are maintaining the integrity of the curriculum areas that you are using. You can do this by using your curriculum document and exploring the achievement objectives that work best for your unit of work and the students you have.

Question 6:

Where can I go for specific help? For example if I want to know what to teach for a specific subject like nutrition, or get someone to help with my planning?

If you have specific questions, require support for planning, or want to arrange some professional learning development for your school or CoL the best way is to get in touch with us:

PENZ	Physical Education	http://www.penz.org.nz/
NZHEA	Health Education	https://healtheducation.org.nz/
EONZ	Outdoor Education	http://www.eonz.org.nz/
HETTANZ	Home Economics	http://www.hettanz.org.nz/

We will all provide some limited help to non-members and in-depth, ongoing support and discounted workshops or professional learning to members. Get in touch to find out more.

For those of you wanting a decent read about our learning area, there was a recent report compiled by NZCER in 2015 called the RAMP review for HPE. It is academic and well researched, so excellent to stimulate your thinking about HPE. Don't let that put you off, as there are plenty of easy to read bits (if you just want to skim through) like the table on page 15 that shows how HPE has changed from heavily physical skills curriculum, to a more balanced view of how we learn to acknowledge the social, mental and emotional, and spiritual parts of as well. You can find the link to the RAMP overview on our website here:

http://penz.org.nz/files/RAMP%20Health%20and%20PE%20Literature%20Overview_2015.pdf

For those of you wanting a one stop shop to all your questions about PE, sport, PA, planning and general guidelines for quality practice in your schools then this is the document for you: MoE (2007) Physical activity for healthy, confident kids; Guidelines for sustainable physical activity in school communities. Learning Media: Wellington.

You can find it here:

<http://www.sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/managing-sport/young-people/Physical-activity-for-healthy-confident-kids-guidelines.pdf>

What is this document good for?

- Explaining the roles and responsibilities of those involved with physical activity in schools
- It specifically explains the role of the physical educator.
- Helps to distinguish between PE, PA and sport.
- Helps principals and Boards of Trustees to make educated decisions about their PA culture, and their strategic and annual planning.
- Helps schools understand the relationships with schools, outside providers, curricular and co-curricular.
- Links to further references and resources.

Any feedback, thoughts or comments get in touch with:
susie@penz.org.nz

The National Board of PENZ

Back in July at the PENZ National Conference at Papamoa College in Tauranga two new Board Members were welcomed into two vacancies that were available. We are pleased to introduce your Board for the 2017/2018 year led by President Margot Bowes.



Margot Bowes - President

Margot is currently a Lecturer in Physical Education in the School of Critical Studies in Education at the University of Auckland. Margot has taught Physical Education in schools for 15 years and has been lecturing at university for 10 years. Margot has been involved with PENZ for over 25 years and has been an active member of the Auckland Branch of PENZ Committee since 1995. Her research interests are in senior school physical education, teacher professional development and learning, pedagogy and assessment.



Sue McBain

Sue was a Senior Lecturer in the College of Education, Health and Human Development at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and is currently working at Ara in Christchurch. She has worked in secondary physical education teacher education at the University of Canterbury for 20 years and previously to this, taught both physical education and outdoor education in schools, polytechnics and outdoor education centres. Sue's research interests include understanding pedagogical problems of practice for physical education teachers; developing physical education classes as learning communities; pedagogies associated teaching about the socio-moral and socio critical and exploring initial teacher education physical education student's professional identity and its relationship to practice.



Kane Wilson

Kane comes from the east coast of Whangarei, a small village called Ngunguru. Kane's whenua is in the far north, Takou, his Iwi is Ngapuhi and Hapu are Ngati Rehia and Ngati Whatua. Kane was educated at Whangarei Boys High School and the first Maori Head Boy in the schools history. His experiences at high school gave him the passion and determination to become an educator and make a difference for youth, empowering them with the skills to lead their future aspirations. Since leaving University Kane has taught at Saint Kentigern College, Kinross Wolaroi School in NSW Australia and is in his tenth year at Dilworth School as the Head of Physical Education. He is passionate about Maori and Pasifika education, in particular how successful boys are in our education system. Kane is married to Helene who is also a trained physical education teacher. They have two sons: Jayden 10 years and Brady 7 years old. Kane has been on the board of North Harbour Touch and is currently a Board member of the Auckland Secondary School Rugby Executive and the President of the Torbay Athletics Club. Kane brings experience in governance, strategic planning, policy and procedure and is looking forward to giving back to the PENZ professional community.



Nichola McCall

Ko Atuanui te maunga, ko Hotoe te awa, ko Kaipara te moana, ko Mahuhu-ki-te-rangi te waka, ko Ngati Whatua te Iwi, ko Ngati Rongo te hapu, ko Puatahi te marae, ko Nichola McCall toku ignoa.

Nichola McCall is of Ngati Whatua descent and has recently completed a Masters in Professional Studies where her dissertation was titled Nga wawata o te whanau - Decolonising Education at Manurewa High School. She has enjoyed 10 successful year working at Manurewa High School and is currently 2iC of HPE. Her areas of interest include creating and supporting spaces where Maori Indigenous knowledge and practices (as defined by whanau, hapu and/or Iwi) are validated and legitimised in order to re-frame and re-claim positive Maori self-representations. She is passionate about all students having access to Te Ao Maori (the Maori world view) and developing their bicultural skills through our HPE programmes

Introducing New Board Members:



Celia Fleck

Celia is the PE Curriculum Facilitator for Play.sport, based in Wellington. Play.Sport is a project supporting teachers, schools, parents and communities to improve the quality of young people's experiences of play, physical education, physical activity and sport. Her role allows her to provide much needed Health and Physical Education curriculum support to teachers and schools in the primary and intermediate sector especially.

Prior to this position she worked for 19 years as a Health and Physical Education teacher, including six years in the role of Head of Department. She is passionate about educational change, and was privileged to lead the Sport in Education Project at Aotea College. This allowed her to lead change in curriculum design and delivery across learning areas, and in developing some innovative teaching and learning, and assessment practices. She now supports the National Implementation of Sport in Education across over 20 Secondary Schools.

She has gained invaluable knowledge and skills, and met amazing like-minded physical educators through the support of PENZ. She would now like to give back and contribute to the growth and strengthening of our subject association.



Katie Spraggon

Katie Spraggon is currently Deputy Principal at Manurewa High School. She has been at Manurewa High School for 12 years and Head of Health and Physical Education for 3 years before taking on a Deputy Principal role this year. She is currently studying towards her Masters in Educational Leadership through AUT where she is researching curriculum development, design and change leadership. She is also a member of the Auckland PENZ branch where she has been involved with developing the Graduate Mentoring Programme alongside other experienced teachers from a range of schools. She has strongly advocated for Health and Physical Education in the school curriculum and the opportunities that it affords our learners.

Katie believes in integrative thinking and leadership which challenges and re-imagines what is possible for learners both in the classroom and beyond. She is excited about the opportunities that exist through PENZ and looks forward to the opportunity to drive further developments and initiatives that nurture and grow communities now and into the future.



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Kids have fun and learn water safety

Water Skills for Life – national aquatic education for children 5 – 13 years

By Ben Christie, Water Safety New Zealand

Aquatics is a critical part of every New Zealand child's physical education. We live in a country blessed with stunning beaches, lakes and rivers and getting into the water is part of our kiwi way of life. But our waterways present very real dangers and our children need to know how to assess and manage that risk.

Some recent research has reinforced what we know about the state of aquatic education in this country. A recently qualitative survey conducted by Associate Professor Chris Button of Otago University found a sample of primary school aged children lacked a range of water survival skills (e.g. 62% were unable to swim 100 metres). He also found knowledge of risks and emergency responses was notably low and retention levels of taught water safety and survival skills were also low. Assoc. Prof Button says the research shows that further attention to how these skills are acquired is needed amongst education providers.

This backs up a study in 2016 funded by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) and conducted by the New Zealand Council for Education Research of 2409 primary schools that found that only around a quarter (27%) provided a minimum acceptable combination of eight or more water-based lessons a year. Based on sector knowledge, WSNZ believes that the minimum should, in fact, be 10 lessons of at least 30 minutes.

Sliding standards of aquatic education alongside an immigration boom and an increasingly diverse and ageing population will have serious implications for New Zealand's drowning problem. We have one of the highest fatal drowning rates within the OECD countries. In 2016, there were 78 preventable deaths. Despite the best efforts of the water safety sector, too many New Zealanders continue to die or are injured in our waterways.

WSNZ recognizes aquatic education is crucial to tackling our high drowning toll. Working with PENZ and other educators, an extensive review of current aquatic skills programme delivery in New Zealand was carried out. Also, the latest international research and best practice was examined to come up with an effective drowning prevention programme. WSNZ then developed the national standard for aquatic education for 5-13 year olds called Water Skills for Life (WSFL).

International research tells us water survival skills should form the basis of aquatic education and present the most effective way to improve water safety outcomes. It is now accepted that the ability to swim on its own is not enough to save a life. New Zealanders need to be able to recognise hazards and make sensible decisions in, on and around water.

The new skills are the building blocks for the safe enjoyment of the many aquatic pursuits our country has to offer and are also the essential basis for participating in all aquatic sports including competitive swimming.

Working with our aquatic education providers including Swimming New Zealand and Austswim Aotearoa, WSNZ offers schools a resource kit aimed at introducing this new approach, and providing the information and tools needed to incorporate Water Skills for Life into existing programmes. WSNZ is supporting the delivery of professional development for teachers at no cost to the school, so they can implement WSFL. The programme is easier to teach than technical swimming and is fun for the students to learn. It is focused on practical skills and knowledge for real-world situations.

Water Skills for Life (WSFL)

Seven skill sets make up WSFL, consisting of 21 in-water skills and six water safety awareness-related skills.

The skill sets are:

- Water safety and awareness
- Getting in and out safely
- Submersion
- Personal buoyancy
- Orientation
- Safety of self and others
- Propulsion – moving through the water.

The skills do not need to be taught in any particular order, and one lesson can cover the development of more than one skill. Some skills may take many lessons to achieve fully, but it is expected that a student will have achieved all of the skills by the age of 13 (the end of year 8).

For every group of skills, the overarching focus is on water safety and awareness. The expectation is that students are learning to assess risk, apply critical thinking and make sensible and safe decisions around water.

The skills should be practiced and repeated throughout primary school and tackled in a variety of ways – as part of aquatic activities or sports, with and without goggles, wearing clothes, in situ or simulated environments, in shallow and deep water, and in cold water.

WSNZ has a summary wall chart of the skills available, as well as a teacher's guide. These can be downloaded as PDFs from watersafety.org.nz/forlife

Using WSFL will help our kids learn to keep themselves safe; they will also be taking part in an active programme that supports their health and wellbeing. Adopted nationally, WSFL will bring down our national drowning toll.

For more information, visit watersafety.org.nz/forlife or call us on 04 801 9600



**Water
Skills
for Life**



Kids have fun and learn water safety

Aquatic education, based on Water Skills For Life, is the most comprehensive and best way children can learn to stay safe in, on and around water.

Water safety and swimming skills, in combination, will result in fewer drownings.

Enabling constraints to transform player invented games



Dennis Slade, Senior Lecturer School of Sport, Exercise & Nutrition Massey University

A former teaching model recently finding renewed favour in teaching children games, is the use of invented games (Butler, 2016). This model is certainly not new and was recommended as a discovery learning approach to teaching PE in the New Zealand 1987 PE Curriculum. The discovery learning method (as a starting position for teaching games to novices) works because it is about play and it provides the accessible building blocks towards transforming the play towards more formal games. It achieves this outcome through fun and almost implicit learning contexts.

Easy for teachers:

It is also an easy starting point for teachers and coaches with little experience in games teaching. The starting point only requires a basic understanding of game categories e.g., invasion or target and once these are explained to the novices, the next steps are up to them. Teachers can then employ enabling constraints to further develop the players understanding of games.

Enabling constraints

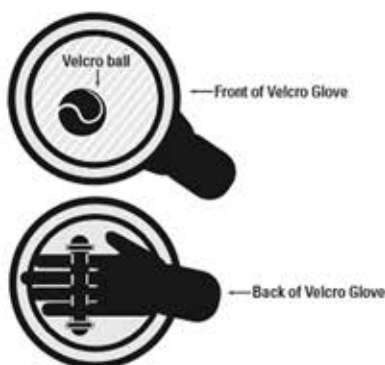
The term is an oxymoron, given that to enable something facilitates its likely occurrence, yet a constraint confines and restricts. In the instance, of transforming children's invented games, it is perfectly logical. By asking students to impose constraints such as: all players need to be engaged, games must have attacking and defensive zones, a bonus point for a long received pass etc. the constraints enable tactical understanding and the development of specific techniques, within a non-linear game experience, thus contributing to the development of fundamental game skills (Smith, 2016)

To illustrate my point, the following introductory invasion game (developed by primary school teachers at a recent PE in-service course) serves as both a generic invasion game tactical activity and one I have transformed into a non-linear approach to teaching techniques and concepts associated with softball. Hoop Pass started as an invasion game that required relationship play between team members, throwing and catching, finding space and concepts of attack and defence.

Generic Invasion Game: Hoop Pass.

Playing Area: Across a gym – volleyball court size proved ideal.

Equipment: Velcro gloves and ball. The gloves should only be of two colours and the face of the gloves the only means of identifying teams (no bibs!) Hoops: 12 hoops.



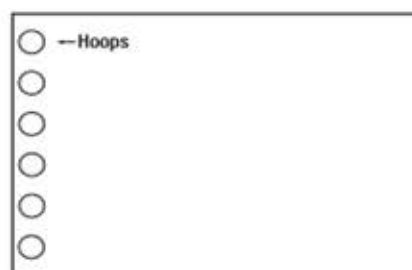
Cones: Used to designate the playing area.

Teams: Two even teams: depending on age, 4-5 per team works well. Note always start with fewer players than scoring hoops. This ensures defenders cannot merely defend by standing in a hoop.

Layout: Evenly place six hoops across the end of the playing area, these are the goals to attack and defend. Game starts with one team having possession of the ball standing in their defensive half but thereafter the game is continuous.

Game objective:

Using passing and catching of the ball, but no running with the ball, players attempt to catch a ball while also placing a foot inside an opponent's hoop. If successful, the ball is turned over to the opponents and that hoop is eliminated, that is, now only 5 hoops to play into. Playing within a set time, the winning team is the one with the most hoops left in play.



Rules

- 1. Possession:** Possession is lost if: the ball is dropped, intercepted, thrown out of the designated court area, caught outside of the playing area, following a score.
- 2. Scoring:** A ball caught while an attacker has at least one foot inside one of the opponents 6 hoops that are reduced in number following a score.
- 3. No overt body contact** though some contact is almost inevitable at an incidental level when attempting a score.
- 4. No calling for a pass.** This is done to deliberately promote the use of body language – extending the arm and displaying the colour of the Velcro glove to team mates who in turn are forced to look up and scan for passes and not be influenced by a call but more what they consider the most appropriate pass.

Some outcomes:

Concepts associated with attack and defence in team games. Zone defence works as hoops are eliminated. Fast break, as a long outlet pass from a turn-over of possession can result in an easy score. Body language, finding space, throwing and catching. I am sure once played, students could develop, with some simple enabling suggestions from the teacher or from their own discussions, further tactical and game constraints.

Game 2: Transforming Hoop pass to learning different throwing techniques in softball.

Playing Area: A grass area about the size of a netball court divided into thirds
Equipment: 1x softball glove per player, bibs, 12 softball bases, a softball, cones.
Teams: Two even teams: depending on age 4-5 per team works well. Note always start with fewer players than scoring bases. This ensures defenders cannot merely defend by standing in front of a base.

Layout: Use cones to define the playing area and divide it into thirds. Place six (6) softball bases across the ends of the playing area. Allocate points to the bases with the outside bases worth 1 point, the next two inside bases worth 2 points and the centre two bases, worth 3 points. Two teams of 4-5 players per team distinguished by wearing coloured bibs and each player having a softball glove. Game starts with one team having possession of the ball standing in their defensive half but thereafter the game is continuous.



Game object: Through running and passing the ball, teams try and accumulate points by receiving a pass with at least one foot on a base. The points allocated depend on the base on which the ball is received.

Rules:

1. Possession: Possession is lost if: the ball is dropped, intercepted, thrown out of the designated court area, caught outside of the playing area, a player runs out of the playing area while in possession of the ball, following a score.

2. Moving the ball: Players may run with the ball. The ball must be played in each third of the playing area. This can be achieved by passing or running the ball through each third. This is to stop players merely throwing the ball from one end of the playing area to the other.

3. Tackle: A tackle is achieved by making a tag. Players tagged must stop and pass the ball.

4. Scoring: A ball caught by an attacker, with at least one foot on one of the opponents 6 bases, are allocated points based on the base point value. The values are, 1 point for the widest bases, 2 points for the next two in and 3 points for the two centre bases.

5. No overt body contact though this is almost inevitable at an incidental level when attempting a score.

Throwing constraints

1. To start with, throws might be restricted to under-arm or over-arm throws. Further constraints might involve bounce passes.

2. Another difficult constraint, is to constrain throws to a team not using the same type of throw twice in succession. For example, an over arm throw must be followed by an under arm, or bounce pass throw, or side arm throw. Rolling the ball as a pass to teach ground fielding.

Some outcomes: While this game is in structure, an invasion game and the allocation of points to the bases should result in teams defending in a zonal structure, it also introduces concepts and techniques associated with fielding in softball and teaches softball glove catching techniques. The nature of the game also reduces the learning of the throwing and catching to being implicit like.

Mastery learning:

If throwing is an issue and this is sometimes the case with the over-arm action, a brief time out can be taken to rehearse the throws before returning to the game. Other games, e.g., Throw golf (Slade, 2010), can also provide specific integrated throwing game experiences.

Extension: Practice could also be in students setting individual goals to improve on their distance or accuracy of their throws.

Questioning: When observing the games ask questions of the players to develop their tactical understanding.

Observing the game should prompt all sorts of related fun activities. To get the teams to rehearse in the manner of a sport education context, should improve their performance of the various aspects of fielding in softball, in a way that is more about softball than simply standing still and throwing a ball back and forth to another person.

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Why is mental health education important (and how can I teach about it)?

Katie Fitzpatrick and Rachel Russell

Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland

Introduction

The area of mental health education is under-resourced in New Zealand schools. While there are resources in other health-related areas, few currently available support teachers to address mental health, interpersonal skills and resilience. As a response to this gap, we are in the process of writing and trialling a new mental health education resource (this will be published in 2018 by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research). The new resource is a collaboration between five writers:

**Mental health education and hauora:
A resource for teaching about interpersonal skills,
resilience, and wellbeing**
By Katie Fitzpatrick, Kat Wells, Melinda Webber,
Gillian Tasker & Rachel Russell

In this article, we outline some of the thinking and research behind the resource, and argue for a critical approach to teaching about mental health consistent with The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) and contemporary research. We maintain that teaching about mental health involves drawing on the latest research in the fields of wellbeing and psychology, as well as work in critical approaches to education, critical pedagogy, and Māori health.

Why do we need mental health education?

Mental health is a key area of learning in Health and Physical Education as part of The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Recent youth health research also suggests that such learning is urgently needed. In the latest iteration of the Youth 2000 survey series (a youth health survey with over 8,500 New Zealanders aged 13-18 years) mental health was a key concern (Clark et al., 2013, p. 22):

- 9% of boys and 16% of girls showed signs of depression
- 18% of boys and 29% of girls engaged in deliberate self harm
- 10% of boys and 21% of girls admitted having suicidal thoughts

The Youth 2012 findings identified that "bullying...[and] significant depressive symptoms...[are] significant problems for New Zealand youth" (p. 5). While it is not the express purpose of schools alone to address these societal health issues, learning in health education can help young people to develop the skills and knowledge to support themselves and others in developing resilience, interpersonal skills, and positive emotional and mental wellbeing. Health education can also enhance social connectedness at school (Bond et al., 2007).

It is important, however, that mental health education is primarily educative. This means that the focus is on learning, rather than trying to 'fix' health issues. The reason for this focus is that health issues are always a complex combination of social, political, biological and contextual factors; it is not possible for schools alone to directly impact these in fundamental ways. The key focus of health education should be learning about health, rather than education for health (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014).

Mental health education encompasses a wide range of content including learning about identity, wellbeing, interpersonal skills, social and emotional learning, resilience, and understanding how social hierarchies (power relations) impact individuals. The previous health and physical education curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 37) stated that mental health education, included opportunities to:

- "strengthen personal identity"
- "[develop] skills to examine discrimination"
- "[develop] personal and interpersonal skills to enhance relationships"
- "[develop] knowledge, understandings and skills to support themselves and other people during times of stress, disappointment, and loss"
- "[develop] values and attitudes that support the enhancement of mental health"

In more recent times there have been moves to include mindfulness, positive psychology and wellbeing education. In the next section, we reflect on some of the research in these fields, and then argue that these need to be included alongside

learning about the social and political contexts of health issues.

Research on wellbeing and mental health education

Contemporary discourse on wellbeing tends to locate it in relation to 'good' health (McNaught, 2011). This discourse has been influenced by the World Health Organisation (1946) definition of health as: "not merely the absence of disease but a state of wellbeing" (p.100). A state of wellbeing is articulated therein as an interrelationship between physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual health (WHO, 1946). Wellbeing has been primarily located within the mental and emotional domains of health (La Placa, McNaught & Knight, 2013). While establishing a link between health and wellbeing is valuable, La Placa, McNaught and Knight (2013) state it also undermines: "the significance and complexity of wellbeing as a concept" (p.116). When viewed as concept wellbeing extends far beyond the interrelationship between the components of health, and they argue that wellbeing is a phenomenon that could be "analysed separately, even if it is agreed that both are related" (La Placa, McNaught & Knight, 2013, p. 117).

Definitions of wellbeing are heavily contested across philosophical, political, historical, sociological, and biomedical fields, and so there is no one universal definition (Haybron, 2008; La Placa, McNaught & Knight, 2013). Given the range of approaches to theorizing wellbeing, McNaught (2011) suggests a definitional framework of "the principle factors and relationships that create what is perceived as 'wellbeing'" (La Placa, McNaught & Knight, 2013, p. 118). This framework broadens the concept beyond the interrelationship between physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual health by including of a range of factors, such as: environmental, geographical, socio-economic and political forces (McNaught, 2011). Importantly, this framework aims to articulate wellbeing as an interplay between forces and resources - between circumstance, interrelationships (with family/community/society), and psychological resources (as evident in Figure One).

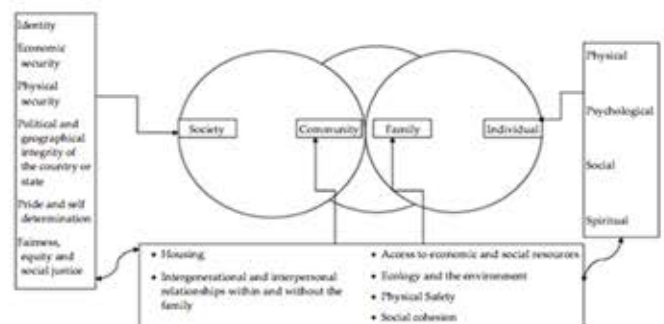


Figure One: A Structured Framework for Defining Wellbeing (Knight & McNaught, 2011, p. 11)

Historically, mental health and wellbeing education has focussed on enhancing knowledge and understanding of psychological skills. Mental health and wellbeing education began with the self-esteem movement in the 1970s, and progressed to "social skills programs in the 1990s and resilience and anti-bullying programs in the 2000s" (Dulagil, Green & Spence, 2016, p. 131). In the present day, the field of positive psychology is increasingly utilised to inform mental health and wellbeing education. Positive psychology is a relatively new branch of psychology, that aims to contribute to the field of mental health through the exploration of what factors promote human functioning (Norrish & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). Positive psychology focuses on understanding various factors that promote wellbeing, as well as skill development (Seligman, 2011). Martin Seligman – a pioneer of the positive psychology movement – established a theory of human flourishing (Seligman, 2011). He suggested five primary enabling factors for human flourishing through which individuals can experience heightened levels of wellbeing, these include: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Secondary enabling factors include: self-determination, resilience, grit/perseverance, optimism, vitality, and self-esteem (Seligman, 2011).

The five primary enablers can be understood as follows:

creating learning opportunities for gratitude can enhance positive emotion (Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski & Miller, 2009; Froh, Sefick & Emmons, 2008). To teach gratitude there are a variety of learning tasks teachers can draw upon including, writing letters of gratitude addressed to people who have had an impact on their lives; collecting images that represent things that are important to them or for which they are thankful; or simply reflecting on things that went well during the week (Seligman, 2002).

To develop skills for resilience, engagement and accomplishment an educator could focus on teaching about explanatory style and decatastrophising (Seligman, Ernst, Gillman, Reivich & Linkins, 2009; Seligman, 2002). Explanatory style is associated with optimism and pessimism (Seligman, 2002). It is the way an individual explains the events that occur in their lives, which can be divided into three factors: permanence (the extent that good fortune will last), pervasiveness (the extent of the impact of good fortune on other aspects of life) and personalisation (the extent to which you achieved good fortune through individual actions) (Seligman, 2002). An optimistic explanatory style has high permanence (good fortune will last), high pervasiveness (good fortune will impact other aspects of life) and high personalisation (good fortune was achieved through individual actions) (Seligman, 2002). To examine explanatory style, educators could facilitate students to differentiate between 'positive thinking' and explanatory style through an analysis of case studies or scenarios of individuals who experience good or poor fortune.

Decatastrophising also targets thought patterns, specifically automatic negative thoughts (Seligman, 2002). Automatic negative thoughts are linked to a historical need to identify threats (also called survival instincts) (Seligman, 2002). While holding the ability to perceive threat and possible consequences is a valuable skill, it can lead to a state of catastrophising, and a distorted view of a situation (Seligman, 2002). Individuals who are in a catastrophised state will assume a negative outcome will occur, and that when it does occur, it will cause significant damage or harm (Seligman, 2002). Decatastrophising aids individuals by challenging automatic negative thoughts. Seligman (2002) created an ABCDE decatastrophising technique:

1. Adversity: identify the adversity.
2. Beliefs: identify and describe the beliefs held about the adversity.
3. Consequences: identify and explain the consequences of holding the aforementioned beliefs.
4. Disputation: challenge your beliefs about the adversity.
5. Energisation: identify and describe the possible impact/outcomes of challenging the aforementioned beliefs.

Educators can help students to apply the ABCDE model to scenarios, and encourage them to reflect on their thought processes when they experience a significant challenge. Journal entries, blogs or vlogs could also be utilised to support this reflection.

Utilizing positive psychology theory, alongside socio-emotional learning, self-esteem and resilience frameworks can be useful for supporting learning about mental health and wellbeing. However, this approach tends to focus exclusively on the individual, without consideration of broader social and political contexts. In this sense, focusing on positive thinking skills, without understanding what else is impacting mental health, can be detrimental. For example, positive thinking will not overcome the effects of institutional and personal racism, gender discrimination or homophobia. Understanding health equity then is also important.

Research on mental health and identity

There is extensive international research in the area of health equity. As a field, this research explores why some populations and individuals are disproportionately healthier than others. Underpinning this research is an understanding that the interrelationships between individuals, cultures and environments are imperative to any attempt to explain or impact health inequalities. Head (2008) notes that issues such as these, which are "complex, open-ended and intractable", can be thought of as 'wicked problems'. Inequity in human health is a complex and wicked problem that exists at the intersection of genetics, behaviour, culture and environment. Nutbeam (2000, p. 260), for example, argues that "[h]ealth status is influenced by individual characteristics and behavioural patterns (lifestyles) but continues to be significantly determined by the different social, economic and environmental circumstances of individuals and populations". Public health scholars have sought to understand health inequalities in many different ways. In order to get beyond the limits of individualistic analyses, the determinants of health, in particular the social determinants, have been widely explored (e.g. Davidson, 2014; Marmot and Wilkinson, 2005; Solar and Irwin, 2010). Ingh-Manoux and Marmot (2005) take this one step further, contending that: "cultural, behavioural, structural and material explanations of social inequalities need to be integrated in order to understand the social determinants of health" (p. 2130, emphasis added). They refer to this as 'socialisation' which, they argue, is a function of social class. The issue in health equity is actually the fact that societies are unequal. Wilkinson and Marmot (2003, p. 10) summarise the situation as follows: "People

all makes good sense, but the key factor (and the interesting thing) here is that social hierarchies make a difference. Those with less status and less power are more likely to have worse health. This is the key reason that we need an educative approach to mental health that takes on a critical perspective.

A critical approach to mental health education includes attention to social issues such as gender and sexuality inequalities, racism, ableism, discrimination, bullying and so forth. Research suggests, for example, that young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or intersex (LGBTQI) are more likely to experience bullying and discrimination at school (Clark et al. 2013). This, of course, impacts mental health. Critical approaches to mental health education include the study of (for example) gender inequalities, racism, homophobia, and sexism. This might include beginning by studying identities and discrimination. While positive psychology can be individually helpful, it does not address these wider social issues, or enable students to act to contest cultures of exclusion in schools. We suggest that a truly educative approach to mental health education includes both a focus on individual health and wellbeing, as well the study of social inequalities. It also includes enabling students (and teachers) to take action against injustice.

Conclusion

In New Zealand and Australia, there has been increasing recognition of the relationship between wellbeing and learning in educational policies and frameworks. In New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO) released Wellbeing for Success: A Resource for Schools, which explicitly draws a connection to wellbeing and learning: "Wellbeing is vital for student success. Student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning. A student's level of wellbeing at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning, and their social-emotional behaviour" (ERO, 2016, p.4). Similarly, in New South Wales, the Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC) released a Wellbeing Framework for Schools. This Framework connects wellbeing and learning: "Wellbeing, or the lack of it, can affect a student's engagement and success in learning. Educators need to understand potential wellbeing has to bring about positive change, what is required to foster wellbeing, and how it can become a powerful force in students' learning and development" (NSW DEC, 2015, p.2). Specifically, higher levels of wellbeing have been shown to improve attentional focus, creative thinking, and holistic thought (Bolte, Goschke, & Kuhl, 2003; Frederickson, 1998; Seligman, 2011). Higher levels of wellbeing have also been shown to promote academic behaviours that support learning, including high levels of self-regulated learning, a mastery approach to goal orientation, perceived control over their study, and lower levels of procrastination (Howell, 2009).

The recognition of the relationship between wellbeing and learning in educational policy can be viewed as an endorsement for the importance of mental health and wellbeing education in schools. However, wellbeing is also fundamentally dependant on broader social relations, so how students experience power relations, social hierarchies and access to resources is absolutely crucial. Taken together, it is important for teachers to place mental health strategies within their social and political contexts: if a person is experiencing marginalisation, racism, sexism and homophobia, then strategies such as optimism, gratitude and so forth (that ignore the political issues) will not have much effect. Addressing issues of discrimination, unfairness and inequality is important.

We have been working on bringing this work together to write a new mental health education resource for teachers to use with students. It combines aspects of positive psychology, wellbeing, and interpersonal skills, with critical approaches to social inequalities, identity and issues such as racism, discrimination and sexism. The new resource will be published in 2018 by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and available to schools thereafter.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN BOTH PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Graeme Lind is the principal of Greenpark school in Tauranga, Bay of Plenty; he will be retiring at the end of the 2017 academic year after dedicating 46 years to education. During his career, Graeme has a strong advocate of the importance of physical activity and child centered play. Over his 46 years he has understandably made many observations but when he had the opportunity to take sabbatical earlier this year he was able to research and review literature on The Importance of Physical Activity in Both Physical and Cognitive Development. Part of his leave involved visiting the United States and interviewing Psychologist and research professor at Boston College, Professor Peter Gray.

It's well understood that unstructured, child-centered play has enormous benefits for young children and those benefits cannot be tested by benchmark testing. Our capacity to be creative thinkers and innovative problem solvers comes from using our own mental processing to explore the world. My interview with Professor Peter Gray follows explores the benefits of unstructured child-centered play.

"Regarding the effect of physical activity in relation to learning, it has become evident to this experienced Principal that some changes in teacher's pedagogical practice can significantly improve education outcomes."

The following is an abridged version of the interview between Graeme Lind and Professor Peter Gray

Interview with Professor Peter Gray; Boston College

Graeme: What was the main catalyst for writing the book?

Peter: I do a blog for Psychology Today and a literary agent contacted me and ... asked me if I wanted to write a book... I had for many years been doing research on self-directed education. Studying, started off looking at the graduates of this very remarkably different school from the Sudbury Valley School, which my son went to; he is still a staff member there. And got really interested in how children learn when they're not being taught. When there is nobody taking charge of their education, how do they learn? And the more I looked into that the more I became impressed by the idea that children come into the world biologically designed to educate themselves. Not just to learn but to educate themselves. By which I mean to learn the kinds of things that they need to know to do well in the culture that they're growing up in.

And that we don't have to force them to learn. We don't have to use coercive means. All we have to do is to provide the opportunity. This is ... an idea that runs so counter to what most people think, that I just needed to get this out there and to get it as clear and evidence based as I possibly could. And that really required a book. I'd been writing articles but any given article isn't really enough. So, I wanted to make this case, get it out there so people could read it, so people could think about it, people could react to it.

Graeme: That's like in New Zealand we have national standards, so we start testing kids at age 5 ½. They can be below standard at 6 years old.

Peter: Isn't that sad? Yes.

Graeme: And I'm really anti-national standards. Telling kids that they're failures at age 6 is not good. New Zealand has the highest OECD suicide rate for 15 to 19 year olds. I don't believe that National testing does anything to alleviate this.

Peter: Really? Wow.

Graeme: Now, what I like about what you say in your book, and it really supports what I have always felt, in that we need to get our kiddies to feel good about themselves. We don't need to pressurise them with testing and that. And we all know that males develop later than females, but I think that we go down a regime of test, test, test. Then we have people sitting on boards of trustees who govern our schools, who are hell bent on seeing the results and wanting to know what you're doing to improve the results.

Peter: Right.

Graeme: In other words they are results driven.

Peter: Right.

Graeme: Rather than looking at the global perspective.

Peter: Right. Right this is international ... I mean this occurs everywhere and you know it's in some ways it's the natural consequence of our beliefs about education. So you know the way it goes we start off with the idea that education is something that teachers do to children. Right? Teachers educate children, and therefore if we're going to assess education we have to be able to measure it somehow, right? And teachers have to be held responsible. That's the idea, and so how are you going to measure it, you measure it by some kind of test to see if the children have learned the curriculum have they learned what they're supposed to learn in first grade and second grade and all the way along the way.

And so, yeah, so that's happened everywhere and it becomes then a kind of cruel game in a way in which the children are pawns in it. The children are the victims of all of his that we ... you know it's like a contest, who can wring the highest test scores out of these little kids and the bigger kids too. And the means of teaching, in this country there are many teachers who are resigning especially in the elementary schools and

especially in the lower grades. Kindergarten teachers especially but first grade, second grade because they recognise that what they are now being required to do is harmful to children. They can see it.

Graeme: Yes. So, what would you hope to be the key things that readers would take from your book?

Peter: Well there are two levels of hope. My more radical hope, and I don't know how you'll feel about that, but my more radical hope, is that parents will decide to not send their children to school. And in this country, home-schooling is becoming more and more prevalent. There's more and more evidence that home-schoolers do very well in life, they go on very well in life and there's an increased number of home-schoolers who call themselves "un-schoolers" where they allow the children to control their own learning. And they just help the children, they find they make connections, they find they make the connections that the children to pursue their own interests. And I studied ... I've studied grad ... I've studied un-schoolers and they're doing very well in life because they've never taken a required course before, or if they want to go on to college or university, they don't seem to have any difficulty getting on.

Graeme: Socially?

Peter: And socially they do well because they're not deprived socially and in some ways they have a more natural social life, most of them than kids in school do. Because think of that, in school, your social life is all kids your own age. That's abnormal. That is weird, right? That's just weird. All kids your own age and then this big adult. And they're socialising across ages they've got friends who are older than them, younger than them because they're not in school and they're getting together with other kids who are not in school. And they're socialising that way. So the parents are very aware that it, you know there are some cases where it doesn't work, where the parents are isolating the children and that's not good.

But I think what's happening now because there are more and more homeschoolers and unschoolers, they're getting together and forming learning centres, that are not like schools. But they're places where there's equipment, there's opportunities for learning, there's people who can teach things if you want to be taught something. And there's not ... you're not segregated by age, and you can spend as much time or as little time as you want there. This is becoming more and more common and this becomes a way for kids to get to know one another, to have playmates and so on.

I think that's happening and my hope... is that before long, we will start to spend public money for these kinds of centres and that way they'll become more available for everybody, right now they cost something and so if you're poor you can't necessarily afford to do this. But my hope is that once we reach a tipping point where there are enough families doing this and there's a kind of voting block for this, then there will be money for supporting these kinds of learning centres and I could imagine them being like, right now, what is the public learning centre? It's the library. Every community has a public library. Public funds are spent there.

Graeme: Yes.

Peter: I could imagine the library growing and becoming a place that also is a daycare centre and a place where kids could spend the day while their parents are at work and there's learning opportunities going on. I could imagine an expansion of the library so it becomes a community learning and recreation and play centre, and that some of that money that we're now using for coercive schooling, would be used now for this. Ultimately, I think when people see that this works, I think that the age graded schools, where everybody is supposed to be learning the same thing at the same age, which is not natural, that those will wither away, because people will stop sending their kids there. That's my large scale hope. My smaller scale hope is that in the interim, we will start within our existing schools, instead of going in the direction that you're describing, of more testing, and more drill, and more concern about test scores, we'll start to reverse that.

In this country, one thing that's happened over the years here is the school year, I don't know if this is true in New Zealand, but the school year keeps getting longer and longer when it's ... the school year is now five weeks longer than when I was a kid so there's a shorter summer vacation, there's less time off during the year, more and more homework, there was never any homework, when I was a kid there was never any homework in elementary school.

Graeme: I can never remember doing any when I went to elementary school.

Peter: Yeah, and now you see little kids with backpacks carrying books back and forth and work-sheets back and forth from school to home. And this in my mind is almost criminal.

Graeme: Well we're depriving kids the opportunity to be kids.

Peter: We're depriving them of their right to be children.

Graeme: We're taking it away from them too early in life, in my view.

Peter: That's right. So between that and also in this country there is a growing fear, that's been growing over decades but it's reached a really ridiculous point, a growing fear of children just being out playing with other kids without adults around. And so between

The Importance of Physical Activity in both Physical and Cognitive Development

this fear that something terrible is going to happen to your child if you let them go out and play without there being an adult supervisor, between that and the increased schooling, children just aren't getting much free play. There's very little free adventure, so the other part of what I'm trying to do with the book, is to convince parents, to convince society in general, children need play away from adults. They need to get away from adults to play because as long as there's adults around who feel responsible for the children the adults are going to supervise the play, and tell them what they can do or can't do and the result of that is that play kind of gets destroyed. The real value of play is that in play children make their own decisions, they solve their own problems, they figure out how to deal with minor bullying themselves without having to call on some adult to solve the problem for them. They figure themselves what's dangerous and what's not dangerous.

And this is all throughout history, throughout human history this is how children have learned these kinds of very important skills. Skills that are much more important than reading and arithmetic. You know how to take care of yourself, how to make your own decisions, how to solve your own problems, how to get along with people even with people who aren't that easy to get along with, you know?

Graeme: Those sorts of ideas are wrapped up in what we call our key competencies.

Peter: Yeah.

Graeme: And mind you they are what we should be looking at a lot closer, as opposed to writing, reading and mathematics.

Peter: Right.

Graeme: And those are the three areas that we have to look at for standards. So the key competencies in my view are far more critical. Would you go along with that?

Peter: Now what do you think are the key competencies?

Graeme: Managing self, relating to others.

Peter: Right. Right. Yeah now those, I agree with that but those can't really be taught. Those have to be acquired through, in my mind through free play with other kids.

Graeme: You also say that free play is essential for normal emotional development.

Peter: Right. Yes, for a number of reasons. One is that ... one is in free play is how you acquire a sense of self control, a sense of "I can solve my own problems, something happens, I can take care of myself, I can figure this out, I have gotten into trouble and I've figured out how to get out of trouble, I've gotten lost and I've figured out how to find myself, I've gotten high up in a tree and I've figured out okay I can get down. And so I've learned that if I feel frightened I don't have to panic, I can figure this out. Kids are always playing, kids naturally play, in ways in which they're kind of testing their ability to experience a certain amount of fear. They play deliberately in ways that induce a certain amount of fear. They climb trees high, little kids swing way up high on the swing, they walk down the slide rather than slide down the slide or walk up it, they do all these all things that are a little bit frightening to them.

And why do they do that? They're doing it because they're learning to control their fear. They're also in play, learning to control anger I mean when you're playing with other kids, sometimes you get mad, sometimes maybe you're play fighting and the other person accidentally hurts you and then you get mad and it could turn into a real fight now. But you don't want it to turn into a real fight cause that's ruins the play, so you might have this experience of it turning into a real fight, or you might have this experience of having some sort of a temper tantrum but playmates don't respond well to a temper tantrum. Nor does getting mad and fighting solve the problem, that just kind of ends the play. So you learn how to deal a more constructive way with anger because that's the only way you can continue playing. You figure that out, not everybody always figures it out, I don't want to idealise children.

But all in all that's how children figure out how to deal so they learn how to deal with fear, they learn how to deal with anger. And because they're learning how to solve their own problems they're going out into the world less afraid of the world. Less afraid that something's going to happen that is going to be a disaster because they're not going to be able to solve this problem.

Graeme: So would say them solving their problems in play without adult assistance being critical.

Peter: I see that that's critical, now I think in this world it's not likely, today, at least in the United States that we're going to go back to the 1950's when I was a kid where kids are just out there and nobody knows where they are I think that there's too much fear of danger. I don't think the dangers are any greater now than they were then but parents are much more aware of dangers whenever something terrible happens everybody hears about it so people think it's more common than it is.

What I envision is something a little bit like the kinds of adventure playgrounds that exist in the UK and other parts of Europe where there's sort of somebody who's there, a play worker who knows how to be present without intervening unless really necessary. It's a little bit like a lifeguard on a beach, "I'm there to save your life or to prevent you from doing something that we all know is terribly dangerous but I'm not there to tell you what to do, I'm not there to solve your minor problems among yourself, I'm not there to bandage your little scrapes, you know those things you can do yourself."

Graeme: In your book you also say that "Over the past half century or more we've seen a continuous erosion of children's freedom to play in corresponding with that a continuous decline in young people's mental health, and physical health. And if this trend continues we're in serious danger of producing generations of future adults who cannot find their own way in life."

Peter: I think we're already beginning to see that a little bit. You know there are more and more reports from colleges, college counselors and heads of mental health centres that are finding out that what's happening is that we now have a generation of students going off to college who really don't know how to be adults. Who haven't figured out how to solve their own problems so that the kinds of minor bumps in the road of life, that everybody experiences that in the past you would've solved yourself now become emotional crises. ... and because they've been raised in the way that if you've got some problem you're supposed to solve the problem by going to some adult authority to solve the problem for you...they go to the guidance counsellor, they go to the mental health centre about whatever the problem is.

So they've, maybe they've had a break-up with a boyfriend or a girlfriend and they're distraught about it and they're so distraught that they can't do their school work, and they go and they have break down about it or they have a room-mate problem or they've gotten a bad grade ... they haven't grown up knowing how to solve problems, they've grown up with this idea that you're supposed to find somebody else who knows how to solve the problem for you if you've got a problem. So I think we're already beginning to see that.

Graeme: So that also lines up with what you say that the decline of children's freedom has resulted in the rise of psychological disorders within them.

Peter: Yes absolutely, especially depression and anxiety, you know if you don't feel that you know how to control your life that you know how to solve problems then that's a very anxious, anxiety provoking feeling. And it can also be a very depressing feeling, that... things are just hopeless.

Graeme: In your book, you talk about the seven sins of the system of forced education. What do you think needs to be done to erase these and how could we go about that?

Peter: Well, I think as I said before, I think that alternately, the solution is not going to come by some kind of reform within the existing system, because I think the existing system is set up in such a way that it's a top down authoritative system that is based on the premise that children are not going to learn what they need to learn unless we make them learn it in some way. We provide, and you can be ... you can have different views about how to make them learn it, you can have sort of gentle prodding and coaxing, you can have a much more strict approach, but the idea that everybody needs to learn the same things at the same time, all of our public schools are based on that premise, that's why they're graded. They're sort of ... and it's very difficult to imagine any sort of reform that's going to change that. So I think that you have to kind of start from scratch. You have to start with, look we're not going to change the schools as they exist, we're trying to think entirely differently about schooling, and the first thing that has to go is the idea that every bodies supposed to learn the same things at the same time.

Because that's just not natural. I mean there are some kids who learn how to read when they're three. My son learned how to read, I have no idea how he learned how to read, but he just learned how to read. There are other kids who just don't have any interest in reading until maybe they're nine, or ten, you know and then they learn how to read. And they learn how to read easily, and naturally when they're ready and they really want to learn how to read. So if we take the approach that everybody needs to know how to read by age 6 or 7 or 8 because otherwise they're not going to be able to do the rest of the school then necessarily they're going to have to figure out some way to make kids learn how to read who don't really want to learn how to read.

So that really means ... it really means some kind of very radical reconception of schooling, otherwise you're stuck with this idea of forcing in one way or another to learn things that they don't want to learn.

Graeme: You've written a number of other papers. That I've enjoyed reading as well, Peter. And in some of the quotes that I've taken from these papers you say that, "early academic training produces long term harm."

Peter: Yes, well that comes from a number of controlled research studies and in the ... this was one of my psychology today blog posts, I reviewed some of those studies, but there are studies, actually well controlled studies where same class of kids, you know, some of them are put into pre-schools and kindergartens where there's academic training as part of it, which is becoming more and more common in this country, even pre-schools these days.

Graeme: Kids in New Zealand too.

Peter: And ...you know pre-school is now like what kindergarten used to be, kindergarten is now like what first grade used to be. And so there've been research studies where you have some of the kids go to these sort of academic training pre-schools, kindergartens and others more old fashioned style where it's play and you follow them up over a period of time. Now what impresses the policy makers is that when they go to academic pre-schools and kindergarten then by first grade, right off at the beginning of first grade, low and behold, they're little better at reading and numbers and arithmetic than those who didn't get training, well no surprise right? I mean of course they are. It would be crazy if you didn't find that result. But, by third grade at least, that difference always washes out, that difference is totally gone by third grade and in some

of the studies, by third or fourth grade you find a reversal so that those who had the academic training early on are now actually performing worse on academic things and even still more worse on social aspects of their lives than those who had play based learning early on.

To me that's not surprising, because I think what happens when you teach children too early you teach them kind of the mechanics of arithmetic, you teach them some of the mechanics of reading, but they don't really have the intellectual foundation for it. They don't have any reason to know how to do numbers. Right, they haven't ... their life hasn't involved that enough, they don't have any particular reason to read, they don't you know they aren't ... so they're doing it in this mechanical way and they're doing it as work and it's a chore and several years later it still seems like a chore to them because they learned it in this kind of way. And at least if you wait later on there's a bigger chance that the children at this point actually have some reason why they wanna be able to read. Or why they wanna be able to use numbers. Maybe they're playing games that involve numbers maybe they're starting to cook and they need to cut recipes in half or they're working in a workshop and they need to measure things so they're beginning to understand that there's some rational for all of this. But if you teach them early then they don't have that understanding.

So the policy makers just ignore this research, they only look at the short term effect. And that short term effect leads them to think, "oh, this is working, we've gotta do more of this early, early training in literacy and numeracy."

Graeme: In another paper you talk about risky play, why children love it and need it.

Peter: Yeah. Well children, it's not just our children but the young mammals of at least many species if not all species play in risky ways and so researchers have asked the question, "well why do they do that, why hasn't natural selection weeded out such risky play given that it can result in injury, it can even result in death?" Very rarely but it can result in death. "Why wouldn't natural selection weeded out the tendency to play in risky ways?" Yet monkeys play in risky ways, they swing, little monkeys swing from branch to branch that are far ... high enough up and far enough apart in play chasing one another around that if they fell they could hurt themselves, kids run along cliffs, you see in many animal species you see this. And of course our children when they're free to play, play in a variety of risky ways, from heights, they like to play with fire they like to play with sharp knives and dangerous tools, so why do they like to play in these ways?

And one of the arguments is that over the course of natural selection, those youngsters who played in risky ways developed courage. That's really nature's way of developing courage, and courage promotes your survival if you suddenly now later on in life some real danger arises, if you have the courage that allows you to maintain your mental composure and your physical composure, you don't fall apart, you're much more likely to survive that. You're much more likely to figure out what to do about this danger. Save your life or save your child's life as opposed to the person who's never played with danger and hasn't developed the ability to feel fear and know that I can continue to retain control of my mind and my body and this fearful state.

Graeme: Good, you also talk about helicopter parenting in college students and through helicopter parenting they've got increased neediness.

Peter: Yes. Yes. Well there's a certain amount of research, it's correlational research, on ... I told you before that college students are coming to college in many ways not prepared to take charge of their own life, and it turns out that there's some studies that look at ... there's questionnaires that you can give to the students and you can also give them to the students' parents in some of these studies that assess the degree to which the parents are over involved with their children's lives...always giving advice, always in many ways being controlling, beyond the years in which they should be controlling of their children.

Graeme: So that also leads them to ... young people not having much resilience.

Peter: And that exactly leads people to not having much resilience. So because their parents have been ... at least there's a correlation. Those colleges whose parents score high on helicopter parenting, have more problems than those who don't.

Graeme: Good, there's just a few other things that I'd like to go over with you Peter if you don't mind it's just canvassing your views, so can physical activity improve cognitive ability, and how does it?

Peter: Well I think that ... I think there's two parts to that question. One is whether pure physical exercise improves cognitive ability and there is ... this is not my own specialty, there is some research that it does, that and who knows exactly why, it may do so simply by promoting overall physical health including circulatory system and brain health just by promoting health I think that promotes cognitive you know, but I also think that the real promotion of cognitive activity comes from not just any kind of physical activity but from free play physical activity because when you are playing, you are not just exercising your body but you're also exercising your mind. You are figuring things out. You are figuring, you're thinking about that tree, how high can I climb up in that tree, you're thinking about it, you're making contingency plans, about what would happen if I fell? Or if you're playing a game where it's an old fashioned pick up game whether it's baseball or soccer or whatever it is there's a lot of cognitive stuff going on. You have to kind of make the rules because you don't have a regulation court, and you don't have the required number of people so you've gotta figure all this out yourself.

So I think that when adults take over the control of children's physical activity I think it becomes less cognitively stimulating ...because there's always a cognitive component to it when they have to control their own physical activity.

Graeme: So physical activity and free play combined.

Peter: That's what I think is ... yeah. Now there may well be just plain physical activity, just plain running around the track or lifting weights or whatever else, especially for old people just like me is probably it probably keeps the circulatory system going and keeps blood flowing into the brain and so on and so forth, but I think for kids free play is especially important. Because as the way of promoting cognitive development.

Graeme: Good well thank you very much Peter, it's been very informative. A great chat about free play and all of the associated aspects of free play for cognitive development. So thank you very much for giving your time I certainly do appreciate it and I know that a number of other who may listen to the tape will enjoy it as well.

Peter: Well good, I hope so.

Graeme: Thanks very much.

Peter: Thank you.

Professor Gray is the author of *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life* (Basic Books, 2013), and he writes a popular blog for *Psychology Today* magazine entitled 'Freedom to Learn'.

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