The value of Health and Physical Education in the curriculum

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Health and Physical Education teaches students how to enhance their own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation in varied and changing contexts. The Health and Physical Education learning area has strong foundations in scientific fields such as physiology, nutrition, biomechanics and psychology, which inform what we understand about healthy, safe and active choices. The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (Foundation–10) is informed by these sciences and offers students an experiential curriculum that is contemporary, relevant, challenging, enjoyable and physically active.

In Health and Physical Education, students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying relationships. The curriculum helps them to be resilient, and to make decisions and take actions to promote their health, safety and physical activity participation. As students mature, they develop and use critical inquiry skills to research and analyse the knowledge of the field and to understand the influences on their own and others’ health, safety and wellbeing. They also learn to use resources for the benefit of themselves and for the communities with which they identify and to which they belong.

Integral to Health and Physical Education is the acquisition of movement skills, concepts and strategies to enable students to confidently, competently and creatively participate in a range of physical activities. As a foundation for lifelong physical activity participation and enhanced performance, students develop proficiency in movement skills, physical activities and movement concepts, and acquire an understanding of the science behind how the body moves. In doing so, they develop an appreciation of the significance of physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport both in Australian society and globally. Movement is a powerful medium for learning, through which students can acquire, practise and refine personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills.

Health and Physical Education addresses how contextual factors influence the health, safety, wellbeing, and physical activity patterns of individuals, groups and communities. It provides opportunities for students to develop skills, self-efficacy and dispositions to advocate for, and positively influence, their own and others’ health and wellbeing.

Healthy, active living benefits individuals and society in many ways. This includes promoting physical fitness, healthy body weight, psychological wellbeing, cognitive capabilities and learning. A healthy, active population improves productivity and personal satisfaction, promotes pro-social behaviour and reduces the occurrence of chronic disease. Health and Physical Education teaches students how to enhance their health, safety and wellbeing and contribute to building healthy, safe and active communities.
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education has been shaped by five interrelated propositions: *Focus on educative purposes; Takes a strengths-based approach; Value movement; Develop health literacy* and includes a *critical inquiry approach* that are informed by a strong and diverse research base for a futures-oriented curriculum that aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to:

- access, evaluate and synthesise information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and others’ health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity participation across their lifespan

- develop and use personal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and wellbeing and to build and manage respectful relationships

- acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts and settings

- engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practices and outcomes

- analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally.

**What does the Health and Physical Education curriculum cover?**

The curriculum is organised into two content strands — *Personal, social and community health* and *Movement and physical activity*. Each strand contains content descriptions, which are organised under three sub-strands, while the focus areas provide the breadth of learning across Foundation to Year 10 that must be taught in order for students to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills described in the achievement standard for each band of learning.

*(See diagram overleaf)*
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) is based on the principle that all young Australians are entitled to study Health and Physical Education as part of the Australian Curriculum each year from Foundation to Year 10.

**Foundation–Year 2**

When students transition into school, they bring with them a wide range of health and movement experiences. Students’ sense of self is evolving and they are beginning to develop the capacity to understand and self-regulate their emotions in ways that account for their own feelings and those of others. They develop skills to initiate social interactions and begin to explore how their body is growing and changing as they get older. Through the development of fundamental movement skills, physical play, manipulation of equipment, and spatial awareness, children begin to develop movement competence. They also become sufficiently skilled and confident to complete everyday tasks, explore their physical surroundings and participate in movement activities.

The curriculum in Foundation to Year 2 focuses on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills to support students to be healthy, safe and active individuals who can move competently and confidently in different physical spaces and on diverse surfaces.

Year 3–Year 6
As students move through primary school, the focus broadens to include the knowledge, understanding and skills required to support and enhance their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of their family and friends. Students are progressively more connected to their world and their peers. Personal and social skills take on an increasing importance and students become more aware of gender expectations and stereotypes. They look to family, peers, the media, the Internet and the community for role models. Students in Year 3 to Year 6 further develop and refine their fundamental movement skills, learn about the common features of games, and expand their understanding of movement concepts and strategies to engage more confidently in a broad range of physical activities.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum in Year 3 to Year 6 provides explicit learning opportunities to develop communication skills, social skills and behaviours required to work effectively with others in different environments and contexts. The curriculum allows students to experience a range of movement activities and to further develop movement competence and confidence. It also supports and encourages lifelong physical activity participation.

Year 7–Year 10
Students in these years are beginning to face more complex life decisions. Their lives and the environments in which they are living are changing rapidly. A major influence on these students is the world around them, with peers becoming a key source of information and motivation. Increasing levels of access to mobile technologies give students the capacity to be connected and online at all hours of the day. It is important that students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to manage their online engagements, particularly their online identities, and balance their time online with schoolwork, sleep and other commitments. Health and Physical Education in these years plays an important role in maintaining physical activity participation. Practical learning experiences support students to select, implement and maintain appropriate physical activity routines to enhance their health and wellbeing. They learn about the benefits of being fit and how fitness can be improved and maintained through specific activities.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum in Year 7 to Year 10 focuses on the broader role that students play in contributing to the health, safety and wellbeing of their wider community. The curriculum provides scope for students to examine and address health areas relevant to them and their families and community, as well as developing health literacy skills. The curriculum supports students to investigate techniques to assess the quality of movement performances using a range of tools to appraise, analyse and enhance performances. In addition, students develop the skills and confidence to be creative in how they adapt and improvise their movements to respond to different movement situations, stimuli, environments and challenges.

Health and Physical Education and the general capabilities:
General capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. The following provides an overview of how general capabilities are addressed in the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10):
**Literacy**
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) assists in the development of literacy by introducing specific terminology used in health and physical activity contexts. Students understand the language used to describe health status, products, information and services. They also develop skills that empower them to be critical consumers able to access, interpret, analyse, challenge and evaluate the ever-expanding and changing knowledge base and influences in the fields of health and physical education. In physical activity settings, as performers and spectators, students develop an understanding of the language of movement and movement sciences. This is essential in analysing their own and others’ movement performances.

Students also learn to comprehend and compose texts related to Health and Physical Education. This includes learning to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes to different audiences, express their own ideas and opinions, evaluate the viewpoints of others and express their emotions appropriately in a range of social and physical activity contexts.

**Numeracy**
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) provides students with opportunities to recognise the mathematics that exists in Health and Physical Education learning experiences. As they engage with Health and Physical Education, students see the importance of numeracy, select relevant numeracy knowledge and skills, and apply these skills in a range of contexts. Students use calculation, estimation and measurement to collect and make sense of information related to, for example, nutrition, fitness, navigation in the outdoors or various skill performances. They use spatial reasoning in movement activities and in developing concepts and strategies for individual and team sports or recreational pursuits. Students interpret and analyse health and physical activity information using statistical reasoning, identifying patterns and relationships in data to consider trends, draw conclusions, make predictions and inform health behaviour and practices.

**Critical and creative thinking**
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) develops students’ ability to think logically, critically and creatively in response to a range of Health and Physical Education issues, ideas and challenges. Students learn how to critically evaluate evidence related to the learning area and the broad range of associated media messages to creatively generate and explore original alternatives and possibilities. In Health and Physical Education, students’ critical and creative thinking skills are developed through learning experiences that encourage them to pose questions and seek solutions to health issues by designing appropriate strategies to promote and advocate personal, social and community health and wellbeing. Students also use critical thinking to challenge societal factors that negatively influence their own and others’ health and wellbeing.

The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) also provides learning opportunities that support dance making, games creation and technique refinement. Students develop understanding of the processes associated with creating movement and reflect on their body’s responses and their feelings about these movement experiences.
Personal and social capability
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) is a key contributor to the development of personal and social capability for all students. Working collaboratively with others in movement-based and non-movement-based activities develops students' personal and social skills as well as an appreciation of their own strengths and abilities and those of their peers. They develop a range of interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, teamwork and leadership, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives.

The curriculum provides opportunities for students to explore their own identities and develop an understanding of factors that influence and shape who they are. They learn how to recognise, understand, validate and respond appropriately to their own emotions, strengths and values. They develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to set and monitor personal and academic goals, effectively manage their time, and prioritise tasks and responsibilities in order to balance their school, home, work and social commitments.

Ethical understanding
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) focuses on the importance of treating others with integrity, fairness and compassion, and valuing and respecting diversity and equality for all.

Students examine ethical principles and codes of practice appropriate to different contexts, such as at school, at home, in the community, in relationships, on the sporting field, in the natural environment and when using digital technologies such as social media. As students explore concepts and consequences of fair play, equitable participation, empathy and respect in relationships, they develop skills to make ethical decisions and understand the consequences of their actions. They also develop the capacity to apply these skills in everyday situations and movement-based contexts.

Intercultural understanding
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) provides opportunities for students to recognise and respect different ways of thinking about personal, family and social health issues. They also learn about different individual, group and intergroup participation in physical activity and health practices. Students learn to appreciate that different beliefs and perspectives may affect how some people make food and health choices, or how they are able to participate in physical activities.

Students recognise occasions when tensions between individuals and groups are based on cultural differences, and learn to act in ways that maintain individual and group integrity and that respect the rights of all. They examine stereotypical representations of various social and cultural groups in relation to community health issues and concepts of participation, success and failure in physical activity. In doing so, students gain an understanding of how culture shapes personal and social perspectives and interactions. They also gain an understanding of what is valued in terms of health and physical activity within their families, social groups and institutions, and within other cultures in the broader community.
Information and communication technology
The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (F–10) enhances ICT learning by helping students to effectively and safely access online health and physical activity information and services to manage their own health and wellbeing. Students further develop their understanding of the role ICT plays in the lives and relationships of children and young people. They explore the nature of ICT and the implications for establishing and managing relationships in the twenty-first century. Students develop an understanding of ethical online behaviour, including protocols and practices for using ICT for respectful communication. Students use ICT as key tools for communicating, collaborating, creating content, seeking help, accessing information and analysing performance in the Health and Physical Education field.

They use a range of ICT to analyse, measure and enhance movement performances and to access and critically evaluate health information, products and services. They also use ICT to develop personalised plans for nutrition and physical activity participation.

This year the Health and Physical Education department have successfully introduced the electronic text ‘Fit for Life’ in Years 7 and 9 (with plans to transition into Years 8 and 10 in 2016), which has been specifically written for the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, in a clear and engaging way. A visual interactive text, for online and offline use, chapters mirror the learning areas and explicitly cover the curriculum enabling students to acquire skills through a series of engaging activities accommodating various abilities and opportunities for extension. Students are able to access their text on a variety of devices and customize their text by adding own notes, drawings, audio recordings and highlighting text. Students also have access to linked digital resources (such as worksheets, factsheets and scaffolds) directly from the relevant page.