The new Australian HPE curriculum: A case of/for gradualism in curriculum reform?

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Overview

- Gradualism
- HPE curriculum-as-text directions
- Case of/for gradualism

UQ Pitchdrop experiment
1927 — ongoing
Gradualism...

- The policy of seeking to change something or achieve a goal gradually rather than quickly or violently (policy)
- A theory maintaining that two seemingly conflicting notions are not radically opposed but are part of a gradually altering continuity (philosophy)
- Seen as a middle way between reformism & revolutionism (politics)
“This is no time for cooling off or to take the tranquilising drug of gradualism.”

Martin Luther King, 1963

“We can therefore very easily become hostage to incrementalism – it is our natural default position.”

Paul Keating, 2011
“Where utopianism is advanced through gradualism rather than revolution, albeit steady and persistent as in democratic societies, it can deceive and disarm an unsuspecting population…”

Mark Levin, 2012
Physical education

Health education

Managing relationships

Games & sports

Nutrition

Coping with stress

PDHPE

Outdoor education

Home economics

Sports science

PDHPE

Traffic education

Physical activity

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Physical activity

Biophysical concepts

Understanding movement

Cultural understanding

Understanding movement

Movement systems

Sport systems
Futures orientation
Healthy school environment
General capabilities
Cross-curriculum priorities

Strengths-based
Educative
Health literacy
Critical inquiry
Movement
Futures literature: Education

- Schools will **guide learning**
- Orientation to **lifelong learning**
- Learning will be shaped by connections & partnerships
- Teachers will be **knowledge brokers**
Futures literature: Health

- Health will take a **preventive focus**
- **Predictive medicine** & interventions more widespread
- Emphasis on competencies for **health literacy**
  
  (e.g. *A Healthier Future for All Australians*, 2009)
Futures literature: Sport

- Sport grows as **globalised entertainment**
- Development of sport policy framework — participation & high performance
  (e.g. *The Future of Sport in Australia*, 2009)
- **Personalised and lifestyle sports**
Futures orientation
Healthy school environment
General capabilities
Cross-curriculum priorities

Strengths-based
Educative
Health literacy
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Movement
Educative

Focus on educative outcomes of learning area

- HPE is part of school curriculum for learning
- Cannot address &/or be accountable for all/ever-changing health & performance priorities
- Value knowledge, understandings & skills that lay a foundation for transfer across movement contexts, health issues, building relationships.....
Coates: compulsory sport a missing link in medal evolution

Caroline Wilson
Published: 15/8/2012 - 3:01AM

The Sydney Morning Herald

School sport feel the heat of lost Olympic dreams

Andrew Stevenson
and James Robertson

SPORT will not be included as a mandatory element when the new national school curriculum for health and physical education is introduced in 2014.

Instead, as a nation seeks ways to repair its dented sporting pride, the question will be left to state education departments and private school systems.

Australia's Olympic chief John Coates has blamed the federal government's failure to make sport compulsory as one of the reasons behind a disappointing Olympics.

SPORT is compulsory in virtually every NSW school, prompting Premier Barry O'Farrell to tell those wishing to turn Enigma of blame on NSW schools to point them somewhere else.

But Steve Georgakis, a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney and the author of Youth Sport in Australia, says a bad situation is set to get worse. "It's there because it's a bludgeon for many teachers and also for many students as well. It's a way of filling in an afternoon of school time. They may as well not be there at all but in 2014 it's going to be a lot worse," Dr Georgakis predicted.

But, when it comes to watching television, it seems Australian children are up there with the best, with a new study finding almost 60 per cent of children watch more than the recommended maximum of two hours television each day.

Growing up in Australia, a longitudinal study of children, found 46 per cent of six-year-olds watch more than two hours TV each weekday. On weekends, the figure rises to 52 per cent. One-third of eight-year-olds watch six hours of TV over the weekend.

"The evidence is convincing that a high TV viewing kid is going to be less physically active and play less organised sport," said Professor Jo Salmon of the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at Deakin University.

Dr Georgakis said Australia needs a system that supports grassroot sport. "We need to institutionalise and value sport in the education system, promote a mass sport model for all and then you can identify gifted and talented students and give them a pathway in which they can excel," he said.

Two leading principals say sporting bodies need to lift their games when it comes to schools.

"I'm always amazed the state and national bodies aren't coming into our schools and seeing what we are doing. I would have thought that would be a priority for them," said Roger Davis, the principal of Westfields Sports High. "They should be coming into the schools, especially the sports selective high schools, and telling us this is the direction we are going this is the way we want your coaches to be coaching."

Stuart Hogan, the headmaster of Riverview and the chairman of GPS Headmasters Association, agreed. "No one is talking to us at all," he said. "Unless we see them out and play them it's not going to happen."

School sport under fire

Andrew Stevenson

From Page 1
Strengths-based

Take a strengths-based approach

• Shift emphasis from “why are you sick/ill/unhealthy/inactive?”

→ “why are you healthy/active?” (salutogenic model)
Aaron Antonovsky
Strengths-based

- Salutogenesis — health & origins
- Shifts the balance of learning, resources etc from deficit & prevention → what works well? what do we have to build on?
- Recognises the importance of context
- Individuals, communities & societies have resources (assets) to optimize
Movement

Value learning in, about & through movement

- *Movement* is central to HPE
- Movement is both *content & a medium* for learning
- Movement competence should be acquired early & across a *range of physical activities*
- Forms of movement have *value beyond health*
Develop “health literacy”

- Lifelong *navigation* of health information & systems
- Skills to access, understand, apply, evaluate, communicate, generate, ... information to promote own & others health, wellbeing & physical activity

Dimensions of health literacy

- Functional
- Interactive
- Critical

(Nutbeam, 2008)
Health literacy

• Values the role of education in achieving health & wellbeing

• Connects to socio-ecological models of understanding health, physical activity etc.

• Helps students’ empowerment & understanding structural barriers
Critical inquiry

Include critical inquiry approach

• Provides some direction to content & pedagogy
• Asks questions of all knowledge
• Recognises that being & staying healthy & active is shaped by a range of factors beyond the individual’s control

Achieved within:

.... a healthy school context
Futures orientation
Healthy school environment
General capabilities
Cross-curriculum priorities

Strengths-based
Movement
Educative
Critical inquiry
Health literacy
Intellectually, the HPE Shape Paper is speaking to challenges of...

- adeptness at lifelong learning
- neoliberalist agendas for schooling/HPE to solve societal problems
- health inequalities
- alienation of many (young people) from movement cultures
HPE curriculum structure

Two strands:

• Personal, social & community health
• Movement & physical activity

Bands

— Foundation
— Years 1 – 2
— Years 3 – 4
— Years 5 – 6
— Years 7 – 8
— Years 9 – 10
## HPE notional time . . . 2 hours/week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning area</th>
<th>Notional time for curriculum writers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2130 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>1700 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>880 hours</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>840 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>420 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>420 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>640 hours</td>
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HPE curriculum structures: some see revolution moreso than gradualism?!  

... observations with/from practitioners

- structural changes viewed by some stakeholders as threatening
- learning entitlement design of 2 hours HPE/week
- challenge to school timetabling & resource allocation
- challenge to teacher identity
- ... as well as new knowledge, understanding & skills
The case for gradualism

...as inevitable

- “belief in the stable state is strong and deep in us”
- “Language about change is for the most part talk about very small change, trivial in relation to a massive unquestioned stability.”
The case for gradualism in curriculum reform

... as appropriate

• “Like many other organizations, the culture of schools is not naturally innovative. Yet, attempts to change schools that do not take the characteristics of teachers and schools into account cannot succeed.” (Karen Seashore Lewis, 2006, p.19)

• Curriculum change aided by (in part):
  - compatibility with existing teacher beliefs, interests & practices
  - teachers, systems & stakeholders input into document creation
  - documents are accessible to teachers & inspire reform
Is the HPE Australian Curriculum a case of gradualism in curriculum reform?

As with beauty, gradualism is in the eye of the beholder

... perspectives vary across systems, schools, providers, leaders, teachers, academics...
Would Fritz Duras have supported the direction of HPE?

- Commitment to education and/with health
- Lifelong, interdisciplinary learning
- Values learning both in and about movement
- Values action, advocacy & building community assets

Thank-you