

# Implementing Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education in New South Wales, Australia, primary schools

## Implementando el deporte, la actividad física y la Educación Física en las escuelas primarias de Nueva Gales del Sur, Australia

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**Abstract.** A renewed focus on Physical Education in New South Wales primary schools has the potential to act as an intervention that has positive long-term implications for the whole population. The introduction of physical education (PE) as part of the National Curriculum means the role of PE in Australian primary schools is now open for renewed attention. The rise of an international obesity epidemic means that the role of PE in primary schools has the potential to make a positive impact on public health outcomes. There could be significant long term savings from well-organized PE programs in primary schools delivered by teaching staff educated in quality physical education. In addition there is also an historical and emerging body of research which links physical activity to academic performance. However not all teachers in primary schools have the skills or life experiences to effectively teach PE. In order to achieve these outcomes we posit that the use of a Game Centered Teaching approach and the use of an underlying pedagogy have the potential to provide more meaningful experiences for students and teachers. In order to implement a Game Centered Teaching approach we advocate the use of specialist PE teachers rather than outsourcing the delivery of PE in schools

**Keywords:** Physical activity; physical education; primary schools; pedagogy; quality teaching; game centred teaching.

**Resumen.** Un emergente nuevo enfoque de la Educación Física (EF) para la Educación Primaria en Nueva Gales del Sur, Australia, tiene el potencial de generar una forma de intervención que puede traer consigo positivas consecuencias a largo plazo para toda la población. La introducción de la EF dentro del Currículo Nacional va a provocar que se preste una renovada atención sobre el papel de la EF en las escuelas primarias australianas. El incremento de la obesidad como epidemia internacional abre la puerta para que la EF en las escuelas primarias contribuya positivamente a la mejora de la salud pública. En este contexto, unos buenos programas de EF para la educación primaria, desarrollados por profesorado formado para impartir una EF de calidad, pueden dar lugar a beneficios significativos a largo plazo. Por otra parte, hay también un importante corpus de investigación, pasado y presente, que vincula la actividad física al rendimiento académico. No obstante, no todos los docentes de educación primaria poseen los conocimientos ni la experiencia que les permita impartir una EF de calidad. Con el fin de lograr los resultados esperados, proponemos un enfoque de la Enseñanza Centrada en el Juego (*Game Centered Teaching*) y la subyacente pedagogía porque tienen el potencial de proporcionar unas experiencias más significativas para estudiantes y profesores. Para poner en marcha dicho enfoque, abogamos porque los responsables de su desarrollo en las escuelas sean los docentes especialistas en EF –y no personal subcontratado externo–.

**Palabras clave.** Educación Física; actividad física; escuela primaria; pedagogía; calidad de la enseñanza; enseñanza centrada en el juego.

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## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of physical education (PE) in Australian primary schools is not consistent across all states. The delivery of PE remains the prerogative of each state government, however there is now a National Curriculum which outlines the delivery of PE in all primary schools. The recent history of PE in Australian schools has also contributed to the confusion relating to its place in and about education (Lynch, 2015a; Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). However, a raft of recent research outcomes in the areas of public health, cognition and pedagogy have created a new imperative for a heightened focus on the role of PE from the early years of development (Lynch, 2015a; Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). The repurposing of PE also creates a lens to examine not only the quantity of physical activity and its outcomes, but also the quality of PE in primary schools. The new place of PE and physical activity in schools may also counter previous attitudes regarding it as a diversion from real learning in classroom teaching (Gordon, Dyson, Cowan, McKenzie, & Shulruf, 2016). In this context, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the academic literature which supports the need for quality PE experiences in Australian primary schools.

## 1. PUBLIC HEALTH AND EXERCISE

The Lancet Medical Journal, as part of the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics, established *The Lancet Physical Activity Observatory* (LPAO) to examine worldwide trends in physical activity and its repercussions. They found that:

...a third of adults and 80% of adolescents around the world do not reach recommended levels for daily physical activity (30 min and 60 min of physical activity of moderate-to-vigorous intensity per day for adults and adolescents, respectively). Physical inactivity was shown to be responsible for 5.3 million deaths per year worldwide. If inactivity decreased by only 10%, half a million deaths could be averted every year (Hallal, Martins, & Ramírez, 2014, p. 471).

The international movement towards healthy cities and the view that highly urbanised areas affords people an “urban advantage” is now being questioned given the rise of non-communicable diseases associated with the escalation of obesity and lack of exercise (Rydin et al.). In a recent announcement by the New South Wales (NSW) state government to promote a healthy lifestyle it stated that, “*more than half of adults and almost a quarter of children are overweight or obese in NSW it’s more crucial than ever to make healthy the new normal*” (New South Wales Government, 2015). Hence, the government urges its citizens to make “*simple food and activity changes*” to ensure they become healthy. Furthermore it qualifies this by outlining the current impact on tax payers and steps that could be taken to remedy the situation.

Overweight and obesity costs the NSW economy around \$19 billion annually, while chronic disease is estimated to be responsible for 80% of the total burden of disease in Australia. In contrast, healthy eating and physical activity are key factors in maintaining quality of life and preventing diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, stroke and some cancers across all life stages. (New South Wales Government, 2015)

Governments and policy makers need to be innovative and to be open to opportunities that contribute to the overall health and well-being of citizens, especially primary school students (Salmon, Arundell, Hume, Brown, Hesketh, Dunstan, & Crawford, 2011). The early development of children should be considered as part of the urban planning goals so that healthy outcomes such as the long-term benefits of exercise are encouraged,

the social and affective outcomes of movement are part of a healthy life and the negative impact of obesity are minimised. The introduction of additional in situ opportunities for movement in primary schools years is imperative to life participation in physical activity. This is especially important given that participation in sport outside school is not an option for all students and does not necessarily meet the minimum requirements for movement and exercise (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014; Schranz, Olds, Boyd, Evans, Gomersall, Hardy, & Tomkinson, 2016)

It is difficult to ignore the benefits of sport and physical activity as it is universally acknowledged *“to be an important part of healthy functioning and well-being”*. However more importantly *“the full scope of its value is rarely appreciated”* (Bailey, Hillman, Arent, & Petitpas, 2013, p. 289). Participation in sport and physical activity from a biophysical standpoint has demonstrated that regular and sustained participation maintains a healthy weight and physical fitness (Hallal et al., 2014). These attributes are significant contributors to a healthy life and need to be established in the formative years.

The current trends in international research indicate that there has been an increase in morbidity and mortality due to obesity, heart disease and type II diabetes (Bailey et al., 2013). More concerning is the trend that, *“1 in 3 to 5 children in the Western world is overweight or obese”* (p. 289). This gives rise to the prospect that; *“for the first time in history children in some western countries have a shorter lifespan than their parents due to non-communicable diseases”* (p. 290). There is a strong link between engagement in physical activity and improved cognition in children (Sibley & Etnier, 2003; Telford, Cunningham, Fitzgerald, Olive, Prosser, Jiang, & Telford, 2011; Telford, Telford, Cunningham, Cochrane, Davey, & Waddington, 2013). There is also evidence that participation in regular exercise can reduce or even prevent depression (Teychenne, Ball, & Salmon, 2008). Furthermore, at the other end of the age spectrum, research from the study of elderly participants on the plasticity in the brain demonstrates that *“physical activity enhances cognitive and brain function, and protects against the development of neurodegenerative diseases”* (Kramer & Erickson, 2007, p. 342). A lack of physical activity in the early years may predispose people to neurodegenerative diseases as foundational concepts of physical activity and exercise have not been established in the development stages of life. This contributes to creating an additional burden on society that can potentially be minimised.

## 2. PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

In a society that is facing serious health issues, the importance of sport and physical activity in public primary schools is often neglected, despite the recommendations from the government and professional education associations (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014; Lynch, 2015a). Furthermore the Secretary of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, Dr. Michele Bruniges made the following statement in June 2015:

We recognize that the school experience is not *just* about academic achievement, but about the wellbeing of the whole child. We know, too, that being able to develop positive relationships, good health and self-esteem contributes to students enjoying school more and achieving more while they are there (Department of Education and Communities, 2015).

State governments have standards in place to ensure all children are provided with the opportunity to participate in physical education classes, but these are rarely met due to the absence of a specialist PE teacher in many public primary schools. Specialist PE teachers have the knowledge and skills to ensure all children are exposed to a quality sport and physical education program and have positive and worthwhile experiences (Lynch, 2015b). Children need the value and habit of lifelong physical activity to be established from a young age. In some cases this is achieved through family, but more often it relies on the school experience to ensure physical activity is embedded in their lives. Ideally both in school and outside activities are required to meet these goals (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014). Students deserve meaningful sport and physical activity classes that introduce a variety of movement experiences (e. g., sport, dance, aquatics and games) which set the foundation for lifelong physical activity. This is important from a health perspective and as a contributor to student learning, especially in disadvantaged or marginalized sections of the community (Basch, 2011).

Sport and physical activity through physical education is mandated to make up 6-10% of curriculum time, but this time allocation has been difficult to attain. Research has uncovered a range of barriers which impact on the amount and quality of PE and sporting programs conducted in primary schools. These barriers exist mainly because the delivery of PE usually relies on classroom teachers, who already have many other pressures placed upon them (Australian Government, 2014). With the introduction of

the My School website and the emphasis on standardised testing, a heavy emphasis has been placed on improving numeracy and literacy, and this pressure will continue to intensify as teachers strive to meet the needs of the new National curriculum. With this mounting pressure, it is common for a reduced focus to be placed on PE. Researchers have found that Primary teachers often omit the mandatory PE hours from their weekly schedule as a result of feeling pressured by the extent of the curriculum and their lack of experience and ability to teach the practical component of the HPE syllabus. Effective implementation also requires commitment and leadership at the school level. A specialist PE teacher would ensure that the importance of PE is not overwhelmed by other teaching and institutional requirements.

In a study among primary school teachers, it was found that many were unable to fit in the mandatory hours across all subject areas, with most participants admitting that PE was the first to suffer (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a, 2008b). There is a range of other factors impacting on teachers, these include their lack of confidence to teach PE, a lack of time, poor facilities, inadequate resources and low levels of interest in PE in general. The limited sporting resources available in primary schools, coupled with the lack of expertise to develop and execute lessons, continue to be an ongoing concern. On average, primary teachers complete about 10 hours of PE training in their initial teacher training. Many teachers are relying on their own school experiences with PE and sport, hence their own teaching of PE is a reflection of their memories, both good and bad, rather than from the knowledge gained in professional pre-service training (Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Morgan & Bourke, 2005). Specialized PE teachers complete four years of training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to provide our children with quality PE outcomes.

Teachers often struggled with the concepts of the traditional PE approach which is very skill based. The lack of confidence they feel in teaching skills and their feelings of inadequacy with their own physical prowess impact on their ability to provide quality teaching in this area. However, with the introduction of contemporary game centred approaches (GCA) to teaching in PE, such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and Game Sense (GS), there is an approach which is more enjoyable for both teachers and students and one that meets the standards of the quality teaching and learning framework (Light, 2008). Specialized PE teachers are confident and passionate about PE and continue to stay informed of trends as they emerge and only need to focus on one speciality area of teaching.

It is imperative that our children are encouraged to participate in physical activity, and that these experiences lead to a lifelong involvement in physical activity. As pointed out by Tremblay, Inman, and Willms (2000, p. 312), “the likelihood of being active as an adult is influenced by habits established during childhood”. Instilling positive experiences through physical education in primary schools would contribute to reducing many of the health issues currently faced in our society.

### **3. TEACHER TRAINING AND QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The limited exposure to PE education means preservice primary teachers only receive an introduction to PE (Warburton, 2003) and this is not sufficient to provide the generalist teacher with the skills and confidence to teach PE. Their own teaching of PE is a reflection of these memories, rather than from a well-developed knowledge base coupled with a refined understanding of pedagogical principles from professional pre service teacher education. This emphasises the need for quality PE lessons within the primary school setting. Schools must also ensure that teachers are provided with adequate and ongoing professional development because professional development is a necessity when trying to improve the classroom practices of teachers, and influence their attitudes and beliefs (Guskey, 2002).

Most preservice teacher education programs endeavour to ensure pre-service primary teachers attain a functional level of knowledge and skill to teach physical education. However, pre-service input in PE during teacher education courses does not have the capacity to counter their previous experiences at school or their personal views about PE, given the limited time frame afforded to pre-service education in PE (Sirna, Tinning, & Rossi, 2009). Whereas pre-service teachers who undertake specialised PE courses over a four year period gain a broader skill set and often place a higher value on physical education and with this comes greater confidence to teach this subject. Hence, PE lessons will be of a higher quality.

Quality teaching is an important factor in achieving equitable outcomes for all students. Educators need to ensure our students are engaged and encouraged to value and enjoy PE. This will help students see the connections between the benefits of participating in physical activity and the positive impact this has on their own lives. Engagement in PE is viewed as a multi-faceted construct which operates at three levels: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). On a general level,

cognitive engagement involves the idea of investment, recognition of the value of learning and a willingness to go beyond the minimum requirements. Affective engagement includes students' reactions to school, teachers and peers, influencing their willingness to become involved in school classes. Finally, behavioural engagement encompasses the idea of active participation and involvement in academic and social activities, and is considered crucial for the achievement of positive academic outcomes (Basch, 2011)

When translated into a physical education context, engagement occurs when all three facets come together. This occurs when students are procedurally engaged during PE lessons and beyond, they enjoy learning and doing PE, and they view the learning and doing of PE as a valuable and worthwhile experience. In a climate of increasing accountability expectations that teachers understand and demonstrate high quality teaching in Australia are reflected across a range of government initiatives. At a state level these include the New South Wales (NSW) Quality Teaching Framework (QTF), the Victorian 'Professional Learning in Effective Schools' guiding principles and the South Australian 'Teaching for Effective Learning' (TfEL). These are also evident at a national level in the 'Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership as a key strand of the cross-sector 'Smarter Schools National Partnerships'.

There is pressure on physical education teachers to demonstrate valuable academic learning. Any inability to respond with suitably high quality teaching widens the gap between physical education and the 'academic' curriculum, reinforcing the perception of it as a non-academic subject distant from the 'real' school curriculum. This then reduces physical education to justifying its place in the curriculum as a tool for fighting lifestyle diseases such as obesity when research suggests its potential for realising valuable intellectual learning through movement when appropriate pedagogy is adopted (Griffin & Butler, 2005; Light & Fawns, 2003).

As Australia implements our national curriculum there is a pressing need for high quality pedagogy that highlights the possibilities for learning through physical education. This isolation of physical education from the academic curriculum is exacerbated by the remarkably resilient, 'traditional' pedagogy for teaching the practical aspects of the curriculum that focuses on sport skills with relatively little attention afforded to intellectual learning.

In this section we argue that the teaching of PE is both an academic pursuit in its own right, with the need for cognitive requirements resulting in improved cognition and academic outcomes in other educational areas. We

believe a games' based approach affords us with this opportunity and is described in the next section.

#### **4. PEDAGOGICAL POSSIBILITIES AND GAME CENTRED TEACHING (GCT)**

The implementation of PE in schools has previously focused on the development of decontextualized motor skills through direct instruction before the introduction of game play. The emphasis on this approach to teaching sport in schools was questioned by (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) when they first proposed TGfU. To date there has been a narrow focus on alternative pedagogies such as TGfU to inform teaching of PE in the broader school environment (Kirk & Haerens, 2014; Pope, 2014; Tinning, 2015). Leading scholars in the discipline argue that attention to pedagogy can create more engaging environments that lead to lifelong enjoyment of sport (Kirk, 2009; Light, 2013; Tinning, 2015).

Game centred pedagogy such as TGfU offer the basis to establish high quality pedagogy in physical education beyond the teaching of skills for games. These approaches are more enjoyable for both teachers and students as the pressure on skill and technique focused PE is removed, giving non-specialists the confidence to provide a variety of experiences and allowing them to integrate other concepts (Light, 2012). Game centred pedagogy provides relevant and significant knowledge for students outside games and sport. GC generates an increase in expectations as to what it means to be physically educated and involves students learning about themselves, forming a personal identity and learning how to live in society.

Physical education teachers using a Game Sense or TffU meets the requirements of, the NSW Quality Teaching Framework (Light, Curry, & Mooney, 2014). In doing so they will also be able to provide high quality learning experiences for students and make a start toward ensuring physical education is a truly valuable educational experience in Australian schools. Learning to play any game involves a range of cognition including perception (pre-cognition), problem solving, decision-making and responding to cues (Kirk & MacPhail, 2002). They also provide opportunities for collaborative problem solving and the social interaction from which meaningful and lasting learning emerges (Light & Fawns, 2003).

A recent 2 year longitudinal involving 620 boys and girls in Australian primary schools highlighted the improved educational

outcomes of students participating in 150 minutes of exercise per week and resulted in improvements in numeracy and writing. The authors qualify their results on the basis that, “physical education (PE) taught by specialists contributed to academic development” (Telford et al., 2011, p. 368).

The use GC or TGfU approaches may also offer more time for students to physically move (Baker, Cobley, & Fraser-Thomas, 2009). As noted earlier, there are difficulties and challenges with traditional skill focused approaches in that children spend a lot of time standing around waiting for their turn rather than engaged in movement (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014). Time on task increases as does learning and is associated with engagement and motivation utilising game centred approaches.

The implementation of game centred teaching ,through teacher professional development, in a NSW regional primary school demonstrated improvements in skill, physical activity, decision making and perception (Miller et al., 2015).

Furthermore Basch (2011) claims that “health factors” significantly impact on the education of the young, especial those from minority populations who experience profound poverty. There are reciprocal causal relationships between health, education and poverty. These resonate with Marmots (2011) views about the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) of which education is an important component. The early stages of brain development require adequate sleep, diet and exercise. “The child who is well nourished, physically active, and well rested is likely to have advantages regarding cognition compared with the child with deficits in any of these areas” (Basch, 2011, p. 596). Given the time children spend in the school system and the limitations of organised sport to meet the physical requirements this affords opportunities for exercise in the day-to-day experiences of education and associated with important educational outcomes.

## **5. CHALLENGES**

What we are seeing more often in the school setting is the outsourcing of physical education to private organisations. Although we agree that these provide opportunities for students to participate when often they would have no PE, there are issues associated with employing external service provides to deliver PE within primary school settings.

The costs associated with outsourcing PE is of concern as students in low socio economic schools may not be in a position to afford this service. Therefore equity and equality are compromise or even lost. Schools and parents should not be put under financial pressure to meet the needs of a physical education curriculum that is already mandated as a part of a quality education. When considering cost implications, a specialised PE teacher could be shared among schools over the week, defraying the burden on individual schools.

We are educating students to function in a society where a lack of participation in physical activity is a major contributor to many prevalent health issues. PE has the stronger argument for specialisation due to the fact that PE contributes to improved holistic health, thus improving life expectancy, decreasing morbidity and providing a better quality of life for Australians. In the long term this would take some pressure of our health system. The primary years are vital for instilling good habits and values toward physical activity through quality physical education. As we see an increase in mental health issues, especially in children, we need to ensure the link between physical activity and health issues is recognised and promoted. There is no greater investment in our future education than to develop fully our children's social, emotional, physical, mental and environmental wellbeing, and overall health and attitudes towards life which could be achieved by employing specialist HPE teachers.

PE has the potential to enrich students' lives through sporting experiences, developing their skills and identifying students with particular, possibly hidden talents, or those requiring additional support. It allows students to improve their social skills and provides opportunities for teamwork. There is no better teaching and learning vehicle to assist the next generation with skills to combat prevalent issues such as obesity, bullying, peer pressure, depression and fundamental movement skills than through primary school HPE programs. With the implementation of the new National curriculum, the specialist teacher can focus only on PE and is best placed to meet the challenges that may arise through these curriculum changes.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

This paper has explored a range of factors that contribute to the health and wellbeing of children in our society. It has explored the necessity for

ensuring all children have an opportunity to participate in physical activity throughout their early schooling years. As we have shown this is a key contributor to improved health outcomes, wellbeing and increased participation through the life span. As each child is exposed to different opportunities through their family, our education system has a responsibility for ensuring each child is exposed to opportunities for participation in physical activity that are positive and frequent. An audit undertaken in NSW in 2012 clearly demonstrated that 30% of children in public primary schools are not meeting the mandated requirements for physical activity. We are yet to see a significant response to address this shortfall. Reference has been made to research that places concerns relating to childhood obesity, fitness levels of children and an increase in mental health issues in children. The recent press release from the NSW DEC Secretary recognises the importance of wellbeing and the research shows that physical activity participation plays a significant role in improved wellbeing (Department of Education, 2015). Yet there continues to be limited attention to improve physical activity outcomes for students in NSW public primary schools. The NSW audit undertaken in 2012 (audit office NSW, 2012) provided a number of recommendations that have received little or no attention. The research referred to in this article clearly articulates how a specialist PE program in primary schools could contribute to the wellbeing of children in both the short term and long term. This is supported by the National PE curriculum through its “Value learning in, about and through movement” acknowledgement.

Health and Physical Education is the key learning area in the curriculum that focuses explicitly on developing movement skills and concepts students need to participate in physical activities with competence and confidence. The knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions students develop through movement in Health and Physical Education encourages ongoing participation across their lifespan and in turn leads to positive health outcomes. Movement competence and confidence is seen as an important personal and community asset to be developed, refined and valued (ACARA, 2017).

Basch (2011) claims that “health factors” significantly impact on the education of the young, especial those from minority populations who experience profound poverty. There are reciprocal causal relationships between health, education and poverty. These resonate with Marmots (2011) views about the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) of which education

is an important component. The early stages of brain development require adequate sleep, diet and exercise. “The child who is well nourished, physically active, and well rested is likely to have advantages regarding cognition compared with the child with deficits in any of these areas” (Basch, 2011, p. 596). Given the time children spend in the school system and the limitations of organised sport to meet the physical requirements this affords opportunities for exercise in the day-to-day experiences of education.

No matter how well teachers are prepared to teach, no matter what accountability measures are put in place, no matter what governing structures are established for schools, educational progress will be profoundly limited if students are not motivated and able to learn. Particular health problems play a major role in limiting the motivation and ability to learn of urban minority youth. (Basch, 2011, p. 593)

Extending beyond wellbeing, physical activity has been demonstrated to improve educational outcomes both here in Australia and overseas (Basch, 2011). In the past place the of PE had been questioned and viewed as a release from more important learning delivered in the class room (Lynch, 2015a).

Independent and Catholic schools in Australia have recognised the importance of employing a specialist PE teacher in primary schools and it is imperative that the public system follows. The inclusion of specialist PE teachers in primary offers a unique opportunity to not just improve physical skills, reduce obesity and increase general movements patterns but more importantly contribute to improved cognition, a lifelong enjoyment of sport and a more inclusive life (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014; Lynch, 2015a).

## 7. CONCLUSION

A renewed focus on PE in New South Wales primary schools has the potential to act as an intervention that has long-term implications for the whole population. The public health argument reflects significant societal changes and has raised or heightened the potential of PE to be delivered to primary school students. A dedicated and well-resourced PE program in NSW primary schools establishes a lifelong appreciation for movement and physical activity, leading to good health and wellbeing throughout life (Tremblay et al., 2000). This is particularly important if not urgent given

both the currency of national and international research outlining the impact of non-communicable diseases on health and wellbeing. In addition participation in sport outside of school has demonstrated that it does not provide a level of participation required to meet minimum standards (Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2014). Research also demonstrates that important cognitive and education results are achieved from participating in well organised and delivered physical education programs. The original crisis that physical education found itself in many years ago has now been replaced with a renewed vigour for its capacity to engender a range of education and public health benefits. PE on its own without appropriate attention to pedagogy along with the adequate training of staff will not be able to deliver the reforms required for change outlined in the national curriculum. Existing teachers may not have the skills, motivation and deep pedagogical knowledge to deliver PE. Policy makers need to consider how PE is resourced in the future. There needs to be attention to either the appointment of specialist PE teachers or a dedicated coordinator within NSW primary schools. When the arguments are understood in their entirety the broader ideals of educating the child as posited by Dr Michele Bruniges below are achievable through a dedicated PE program.

There is growing international attention on what is termed 'character education' and its importance to wellbeing and behaviour, because there are personal traits young people need to develop so they can understand and contribute to the world around them (Department of Education and Communities, 2015).

Being physically confident and engaged will make a significant contribution to meeting these objectives.

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