

2013-07-31

Presentation of findings for West Australian government schools - a synthesis - How are primary education health and physical education (HPE) teachers best prepared?

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/6403>

10.13140/2.1.1482.6880

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

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Presentation of Findings

Western Australia Government schools – synthesis

Western Australian schools (total)

Total returned surveys	51
Total Western Australian government schools	51
% within state	100.0%

1. Which teachers are responsible for HPE in your school (eg. Classroom, specialist HPE, outsourced)?

Classroom teacher	8	(15.7%)
Classroom teacher/ Principal	1	(2.0%)
A generalist teacher in HPE role	3	(5.9%)
Specialist HPE teacher	22	(43.1%)
Classroom & specialist HPE	16	(31.3%)
Assistant Principal	1	(2.0%)

2. If HPE is outsourced please give details of what is outsourced and background/qualifications of the people who take the classes?

No details/Not Applicable	47	(92.1%)
Blueearth program	2	(3.9%)
Sporting organisations eg. Golf, tennis	1	(2.0%)
Dance Sport	1	(2.0%)

3. Do you prefer to have specialist HPE teachers in your school?

Yes	46	(90.2%)
No	5	(9.8%)

Summary of comments explaining why:

Within small schools (less than 100 children) many Principals stated that it was not possible to have HPE specialists due to their size and these schools were predominantly in rural, regional or remote locations; “My answer only reflects our context as we are a small isolated rural school. If the opportunity was there to share a PE specialist school I would jump for it!” and “The school is very small, with small student numbers and doesn’t warrant having a full time HPE teacher.” Therefore there was a much higher percentage of Principals in small schools who answered ‘no’ to this question (50.0%).

The comments supporting HPE specialists in primary schools were many with over 90% of Western Australian principals preferring to have a HPE specialist teacher in their school. The comments suggested that quality was provided through expertise, knowledge of the subject, priority of the learning area, skill development, motivation, safety, sport coordination and to enable a developmentally appropriate and consistent program. Also, it was mentioned that some classroom teachers are ageing which presents physical difficulties for implementing HPE classes.

4. If your school does have a HPE specialist teacher, do they have specific HPE qualifications

Yes	21	(48.8%)
No	22	(51.2%)
No details/Not Applicable	8	

5. On average how much time of PE (lesson) engagement do students in your school receive weekly?

None	0	
Half an hour	0	
1 hour	14	(28.0%)
2 hours	32	(64.0%)
3 hours or more	4	(8.0%)
No details/not applicable	1	

6. When employing staff, do you look at the university certificate/ testamur of potential staff?

Yes	28	(54.9%)
No	23	(45.1%)

7. When employing teachers do you peruse university transcripts of results?

Yes	22	(43.1%)
No	29	(56.9%)

8. As a Principal, would a course that qualifies teachers to be generalist classroom teachers and HPE specialists be of value?

No	1	(2.0%)
Maybe	5	(9.8%)
Probably	13	(25.5%)
Yes	32	(62.7%)

9. Would a testamur/ certificate that read “Bachelor of Primary Education (Health and Physical Education)” assist you with the employment of staff?

No	7	(14.0%)
Maybe	8	(16.0%)
Probably	19	(38.0%)
Yes	16	(32.0%)
No details/not applicable	1	

10. What are the key attributes of a good HPE teacher?

HPE subject knowledge & dev appropriate pedagogy	52 (mention)
Rapport /communication and management skills	33
Planning/ assessment and flexibility (organised)	29
Passion/ interest/ enthusiasm/ motivated/energy	24
Introduce a variety of physical activities/ skills	12
Liaises well with other staff, schools & parents (network)	8
Athletic/ fitness/ stamina/ active	7
Good teacher/ classroom	6
Relationship building	6
Commitment to school life	5
Cater for all learning needs & ages (empathy & support)	5
Team player/ team work/ collaboration	5
Engage students & fun	4
Innovative/ initiative	2
Role model for healthy living	2
Professional	2
Hard worker/ drive	2

Leadership	2
Advocacy for HPE	2
Willing to do extra curricula activities	1
Experience in teaching HPE	1
Inspirational	1
Expertise	1
Confidence	1
Fair	1

11. Are there any other details you would like to add on the issue of quality HPE experiences for children in schools?

Within small schools (less than 100 children) the supplementing comments relating to quality HPE included; “Good teachers with specialist skills are ideal. Not applicable to my school because of size at present” and “HPE experiences are to be age and skill appropriate.” These comments accentuated the benefits of having classroom teachers with a specialisation in HPE and the importance of developmentally appropriate HPE lessons. Furthermore, classroom teachers with a specialisation in HPE would assist small schools, who are often located in rural, regional and remote locations and do not have the option of a specialist HPE teacher.

Principals of medium sized schools (100-300 children) shared that schools should have an HPE specialist with knowledge of correct pedagogy for maximising participation, enjoyment and optimising a developmentally appropriate program. The health and holistic values of HPE were emphasised as too having sufficient facilities. The benefit of having classroom teachers with a specialisation in HPE was noted. “The best primary PE teachers, in my experience, are also or have been quality classroom teachers. Same skill set, different learning environment.” One Principal shared their difficulty in obtaining a HPE specialist within their school; “A school gets given a ‘teacher’ and if they have a specialist qualification that is a ‘bonus’.”

Principals of large schools (300-600 children) and very large schools (larger than 600 children) emphasised how pertinent it was to have HPE specialists with developmentally appropriate lessons. “A specialist teacher in the primary school is essential in PE.” One principal discussed the importance of Perceptual Motor Skills in the early years; “Focus on early development of core strength, hand/eye coordination, flexibility, strength, crossing mid line, balance etc.” Furthermore, many principals commented on support for good classroom teachers with a specialisation in HPE; “At my school we no longer employ specialists. In the first instance they must be an excellent classroom teacher, then a specialist. This improves their flexibility across the school.” The course was viewed as a strategy for enabling quality HPE in all schools; “Having a ‘double qualification’ would help with full time

employment because small schools may only have a part time HPE position; so being a generalist would add versatility.”

Small sized schools (less than 100 children) Western Australia

- 6 returned surveys

Total returned surveys	6
Total Western Australian government schools	51
% within state	11.8%

1. Which teachers are responsible for HPE in your school (eg. Classroom, specialist HPE, outsourced)?

Classroom teacher	4	(66.6%)
Classroom teacher/ Principal	1	(16.7%)
A generalist teacher in HPE role	1	(16.7%)

2. If HPE is outsourced please give details of what is outsourced and background/qualifications of the people who take the classes?

No details/Not Applicable	6	(100.0%)
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3. Do you prefer to have specialist HPE teachers in your school?

Yes	3	(50.0%)
No	3	(50.0%)

Comments explaining why:

Better understanding of physical development, appropriate and safe techniques, wider range of skills.

My answer only reflects our context as we are a small isolated rural school. If the opportunity was there to share a PE specialist school I would jump for it!

Confident – trained – know what they are doing.

The school is very small, with small student numbers and doesn't warrant having a full time HPE teacher.

To ensure quality and consistency of the programme

4. If your school does have a HPE specialist teacher, do they have specific HPE qualifications

Yes	0	
No	3	(100.0%)
No details/Not Applicable	3	

5. On average how much time of PE (lesson) engagement do students in your school receive weekly?

None	0	
Half an hour	0	
1 hour	1	(16.7%)
2 hours	5	(83.3%)
3 hours or more	0	

6. When employing staff, do you look at the university certificate/ testamur of potential staff?

Yes	1	(16.7%)
No	5	(83.3%)

7. When employing teachers do you peruse university transcripts of results?

Yes	1	(16.7%)
No	5	(83.3%)

8. As a Principal, would a course that qualifies teachers to be generalist classroom teachers and HPE specialists be of value?

No	0	
Maybe	2	(33.3%)
Probably	1	(16.7%)
Yes	3	(50.0%)

9. Would a testamur/ certificate that read “Bachelor of Primary Education (Health and Physical Education)” assist you with the employment of staff?

No	1	(16.7%)
Maybe	2	(33.3%)
Probably	1	(16.7%)
Yes	2	(33.3%)

10. What are the key attributes of a good HPE teacher?

HPE subject knowledge & dev appropriate pedagogy	6 (mentions)
Passion/ interest/ enthusiasm (children)	3
Planning/ assessment and flexibility (organised)	3
Introduce a variety of physical activities	2
Cater for all learning needs (empathy & support)	1
Rapport /communication and management skills	1
Build positive relationships	1
Fair	1

11. Are there any other details you would like to add on the issue of quality HPE experiences for children in schools?

Good teachers with specialist skills are ideal. Not applicable to my school because of size at present.

HPE experiences are to be age and skill appropriate.

Medium sized schools (100 – 300 children) Western Australia

- 10 returned surveys

Total returned surveys	10
Total Western Australian government schools	51
% within state	19.6%

1. Which teachers are responsible for HPE in your school (eg. Classroom, specialist HPE, outsourced)?

Specialist HPE teacher	4	(40.0%)
Classroom & specialist HPE	3	(30.0%)
Classroom teacher	2	(20.0%)
Assistant Principal	1	(10.0%)

2. If HPE is outsourced please give details of what is outsourced and background/qualifications of the people who take the classes?

No details/not applicable	8	(80.0%)
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We have a Bluearth Specialist

School is also involved with Bluearth – a program that promotes health and mental wellbeing. This program is in addition to the school's HPE program.

3. Do you prefer to have specialist HPE teachers in your school?

Yes	9	(90.0%)
No	1	(10.0%)

Comments explaining why:

Better skilled and prepared to spend time on better quality learning experiences.
Time is consistently set into timetable.

Like most areas teachers have preferences and to engage children in HPE the teacher has to genuinely love what they're doing.

They have the expertise!

Phys Ed (not Health) is better taught by specialists as they are more skilled and having a designated with specialists means that it happens.

They have greater knowledge of skills and sports.

Specific expertise & professional learning - Time to prepare specialist programmes and interschool sporting activities.

Consistent approach across school, forms of skills, able to co-ordinate carnivals & other interschool activities.

In depth knowledge & understanding of Health & PE

Organisation; skill development

4. If your school does have a HPE specialist teacher, do they have specific HPE qualifications

Yes	3	(37.5%)
No	5	(62.5%)
No details/not applicable	2	

5. On average how much time of PE (lesson) engagement do students in your school receive weekly?

None	0	
Half an hour	0	
1 hour	3	(30.0%)
2 hours	5	(50.0%)
3 hours or more	2	(20.0%)

6. When employing staff, do you look at the university certificate/ testamur of potential staff?

Yes	6	(60.0%)
No	4	(40.0%)

7. When employing teachers do you peruse university transcripts of results?

Yes	5	(50.0%)
No	5	(50.0%)

8. As a Principal, would a course that qualifies teachers to be generalist classroom teachers and HPE specialists be of value?

No	0	
Maybe	0	
Probably	1	(10.0%)
Yes	9	(90.0%)

9. Would a testamur/ certificate that read “Bachelor of Primary Education (Health and Physical Education)” assist you with the employment of staff?

No	1	(10.0%)
Maybe	1	(10.0%)
Probably	5	(50.0%)
Yes	3	(30.0%)

10. What are the key attributes of a good HPE teacher?

HPE curriculum knowledge & dev appropriate pedagogy	12 (mentions)
Rapport /communication and management skills	7
Passion/ interest/ enthusiasm (children)	6
Introduce a variety of physical activities/skills	5
Planning/ assessment and flexibility (organised)	4
Liaises well with other staff, schools & parents	2
Good teacher/ classroom	2
Cater for all learning needs (empathy & support)	1
Engaging & fun for students	1
Team player/ team work/collaboration	1

11. Are there any other details you would like to add on the issue of quality HPE experiences for children in schools?

If PE is fun – children will be keen to participate and hopefully this will flow into home/ community sport participation.

Without facilities it is very hard to teach some skills. Winter hinders everything as nowhere to be active

Our PE program consists of fitness, weekly sport and lessons. The quality of the program is dependent on teacher skill & interest.

Need to reiterate values component of HPE as well as competitive skills eg. Sportsmanship, acknowledging defeat, acceptance of healthy lifestyle

The best primary PE teachers, in my experience, are also or have been quality classroom teachers. Same skill set, different learning environment.

Unfortunately our allocation of staff system does not allow for ‘specialist’ in primary school. A school gets given a ‘teacher’ and if they have specialist qualification that is a ‘bonus’.

Large sized schools (300-600 children) Western Australia

- 25 returned surveys

Total returned surveys	25
Total Western Australian government schools	51
% within state	49.0%

1. Which teachers are responsible for HPE in your school (eg. Classroom, specialist HPE, outsourced)?

Classroom teachers	2	(8.0%)
Specialist HPE	12	(48.0%)
Specialist HPE & classroom teachers	9	(36.0%)
A generalist classroom teacher in HPE role	2	(8.0%)

2. If HPE is outsourced please give details of what is outsourced and background/qualifications of the people who take the classes?

No details/Not Applicable	23	(92.0%)
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We do use external organisations to provide variety and choice in option sports eg. Golf, tennis, b/ball, squash, archery
Dance Sport is outsourced. Dance Instructors with appropriate dance qualifications.

3. Do you prefer to have specialist HPE teachers in your school?

Yes	24	(96.0%)
No	1	(4.0%)

Comments explaining why:

Better organisation of HPE program, currently we have specialist teachers in other areas not HPE

Level of expertise, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm for the job

Program they provide. Organisation of all interschool, state championships, school swimming/ athletics carnivals, school sport, in term swimming

Context of our school is students are academic and culturally the families don't involve children in sports. HPE teacher targets a need for our students

They generally have better skills and knowledge to equip them for this specialist role.

Specialised Phys Ed skills, interschool sport

Data - WA Government schools' synthesis

Dr. Timothy Lynch – Monash University, Faculty of Education

Continuity of skill development from year level to year level. Greater focus on a variety of skills, games rather than favourites.

Curriculum knowledge, increased focus on PE, health & safety awareness, interesting activities across spectrum of PE, student/ teacher enthusiasm, increased skills development

PE teacher is consistent with skills, rules – useful for athletics. Some staff enjoy 'sport' but not necessarily weekly PE (skin (burn) implications)

More focussed at developing skills, techniques and coordination. Class teachers tend to engage more in 'games' without the skill development components.

Health encompassed social, emotional & physical health and this is extremely important in Primary Education. Physical Education provides vital opportunities to develop skills to act, commit, belong.

Skills are taught not just games played. One person responsible for reporting/ levels. Integral to building positive health and wellbeing skills and attitudes in addition to collaborative and team building skills coupled with physical activity

With an ageing workforce, many teachers are not up to doing the Physical Activity component. Also, quality lessons require preparation of equipment and the learning space, which is easier for a specialist.

It is too difficult to run a PE skills program and coordinate PE if you don't have a specialist.

Believe that there is greater commitment.

Develop a culture of physical activity, organise and promote extra curricula activities. They are able to focus on one element of the curriculum to a high level. This also develops a consistent and sequential element to the program (assuming they are good).

Better trained usually have superior skills in a particular sport.

Prefer a generalist teacher – greater flexibility in meeting school needs.

Physical Education relies upon willingness, dedication and expertise – Not all class teachers have these. Also, with one person you get continuity.

They are vitally important in building self confidence, team spirit, school spirit, and it is a key learning area (LA).

Knowledge/skill/ enthusiasm for the learning area

It ensures all aspects of Health and PE are taught systematically across the school

4. If your school does have a HPE specialist teacher, do they have specific HPE qualifications

Yes	12	(50.0%)
No	12	(50.0%)
No details/not applicable	1	

5. On average how much time of PE (lesson) engagement do students in your school receive weekly?

None	0	
Half an hour	0	
1 hour	6	(25.0%)
2 hours	16	(66.7%)
3 hours or more	2	(8.3%)
No details/not applicable	1	

6. When employing staff, do you look at the university certificate/ testamur of potential staff?

Yes	14	(56.0%)
No	11	(44.0%)

7. When employing teachers do you peruse university transcripts of results?

Yes	10	(40.0%)
No	15	(60.0%)

8. As a Principal, would a course that qualifies teachers to be generalist classroom teachers and HPE specialists be of value?

No	0	
Maybe	2	(8.0%)
Probably	9	(36.0%)
Yes	14	(56.0%)

9. Would a testamur/ certificate that read “Bachelor of Primary Education (Health and Physical Education)” assist you with the employment of staff?

No	4	(16.7%)
Maybe	4	(16.7%)
Probably	9	(37.5%)
Yes	7	(29.1%)
No details/not applicable	1	

10. What are the key attributes of a good HPE teacher?

HPE subject knowledge & dev appropriate pedagogy	25 (mention)
Rapport /communication and management skills	19
Planning/ assessment and flexibility (organised)	16
Passion/ interest/ enthusiasm/ motivated/energy	10
Athletic/ fitness/ stamina/ active	5
Good teacher/ classroom	4
Commitment to school life	4
Liases well with other staff, schools & parents (network)	3
Relationship building	3
Role model for healthy living	2
Cater for all learning needs & ages (empathy & support)	2
Professional	2
Team player/ team work/ collaboration	2
Introduce a variety of physical activities/ skills	2
Engage students & fun	2
Hard worker/ drive	2
Willing to do extra curricula activities	1
Experience in teaching HPE	1
Innovative/ initiative	1
Inspirational	1
Leadership	1
Expertise	1
Confidence	1
Advocacy for HPE	1

11. Are there any other details you would like to add on the issue of quality HPE experiences for children in schools?

HPE staff should not be isolated from other staff members. In a period of an ageing work force in teaching fit, active, younger teachers should be shining lights in primary schools.

A specialist teacher in the primary school is essential in PE.

Sports specialists coming to school compliment what is being done. Professional Athlete would be great but too expensive. Engagement and lots of equipment – FUN & VARIETY

Working outside the normal school day – extra curricula activities. Before and after school. Ability to develop relationships.

Good variety – provide challenges to focus an understanding of the self better.

Develop positive attitudes – keep persevering despite challenges.

Every primary school should have an HPE or PE teacher allocated in its staffing formula.

Training would be useful. In Term 2 we play Interschool sport (soccer, netball, football). In Term 1 we have a Swimming Carnival and do outside training. In Term 3 we do Athletics.

Focus on early development of core strength, hand/eye coordination, flexibility, strength, crossing mid line, balance etc. Then effective cooling techniques for older students. Need to link in with research on brain development, developing neural pathways, maximising participation of all, enjoyment, challenge etc.

Good knowledge of major & minor games/ dance/ gymnastics – sequenced to year level (typical expectations).

Having a 'double qualification' would help with full time employment because small schools may only have a part time HPE position; so being a generalist would add versatility.

My experience shows that an excellent generalist teacher with an interest in HPE can make an outstanding specialist.

At my school we no longer employ specialists. In the first instance they must be an excellent classroom teacher, then a specialist. This improves their flexibility across the school.

Behaviour management skills are a must.

A generalist classroom teacher with a specific interest in PE is applicable as the PE role is not full time and can vary from year to year.

Physical Education lessons should be very purposeful. It's about skill development through explicit teaching and then practise through games. There should be enjoyment in this process but deliberate development of all students.

I've worked with excellent HPE staff and poor HPE staff. They have so much potential to lift a whole school when they are excellent. Heartbreaking when they're 'slack' and uncaring!

Need to be capable in teaching protective behaviours, drug education etc.

I prefer subject specialists particularly in relation to specialist skills and knowledge required, but also for risk mitigation strategies

Very large sized schools (600 children and more) Western Australia

- 10 returned surveys

Total returned surveys	10
Total Western Australian government schools	51
% within state	19.6%

1. Which teachers are responsible for HPE in your school (eg. Classroom, specialist HPE, outsourced)?

Classroom teachers	0	
Specialist HPE	6	(60.0%)
Specialist HPE & classroom teachers	4	(40.0%)

2. If HPE is outsourced please give details of what is outsourced and background/qualifications of the people who take the classes?

No details/Not Applicable	10	(100.0%)
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3. Do you prefer to have specialist HPE teachers in your school?

Yes	10	(100.0%)
No	0	

Comments explaining why:

Collaborative planning, specialised testing & moderation, consistency of programmes

Qualified level of expertise

General teachers aren't keen to commit time to PE. The children gain a lot from a LA specialist. Trained HPE teachers are usually proactive regarding healthy lives

Expertise, networking time

Specialists know the 'rhythm' of the school and can take responsibility for interschool and intra-school programs

Knowledge & skills

Ensure students are receiving quality PE lessons across all aspects of the PE curriculum. Timetabled specific PE classes ensures students are getting correct allocated time with emphasis on skill building & application to participation in sport. They are trained, passionate and have a clear understanding of their role
 Better provision of programs
 They are valuable contributors to all school activities

4. If your school does have a HPE specialist teacher, do they have specific HPE qualifications

Yes	6	(75.0%)
No	2	(25.0%)
No details/Not Applicable	2	

5. On average how much time of PE (lesson) engagement do students in your school receive weekly?

None	0	
Half an hour	0	
1 hour	4	(40.0%)
2 hours	6	(60.0%)
3 hours or more	0	

6. When employing staff, do you look at the university certificate/ testimonial of potential staff?

Yes	7	(70.0%)
No	3	(30.0%)

7. When employing teachers do you peruse university transcripts of results?

Yes	6	(60.0%)
No	4	(40.0%)

8. As a Principal, would a course that qualifies teachers to be generalist classroom teachers and HPE specialists be of value?

No	1	(10.0%)
Maybe	1	(10.0%)
Probably	2	(20.0%)
Yes	6	(60.0%)

9. Would a testamur/ certificate that read “Bachelor of Primary Education (Health and Physical Education)” assist you with the employment of staff?

No	1	(10.0%)
Maybe	1	(10.0%)
Probably	4	(40.0%)
Yes	4	(40.0%)

10. What are the key attributes of a good HPE teacher?

HPE subject knowledge & dev appropriate pedagogy	9 (mention)
Planning/ assessment and flexibility (organised)	6
Rapport /communication and management skills	6
Passion/ interest/ enthusiasm/ motivated/ energy	5
Introduce a variety of physical activities/ skills	3
Liaises well with other staff, schools & parents (network)	3
Athletic/ fitness/ stamina/ active	2
Relationship building	2
Team player/ team work/ collaboration	2
Commitment to school life	1
Engage students & fun	1
Cater for all learning needs (empathy & support)	1
Innovative/ initiative	1
Advocate of & teaches healthy behaviours	1
Leadership	1

11. Are there any other details you would like to add on the issue of quality HPE experiences for children in schools?

Making consistent judgements. Sports carnivals, coaching.
 I am very supportive of good quality special learning for HPE teachers.
 Must come from strong research base with specific skills teaching. Fundamental movement skills taught from K. Whole body strength and fitness testing – teaching programs – testing. Exposure to different sports.
 Training in the area of PE also needs to ensure the basics of teaching is covered – Behaviour Management, student engagement.