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# Investigating the spiritual dimension in HPE.

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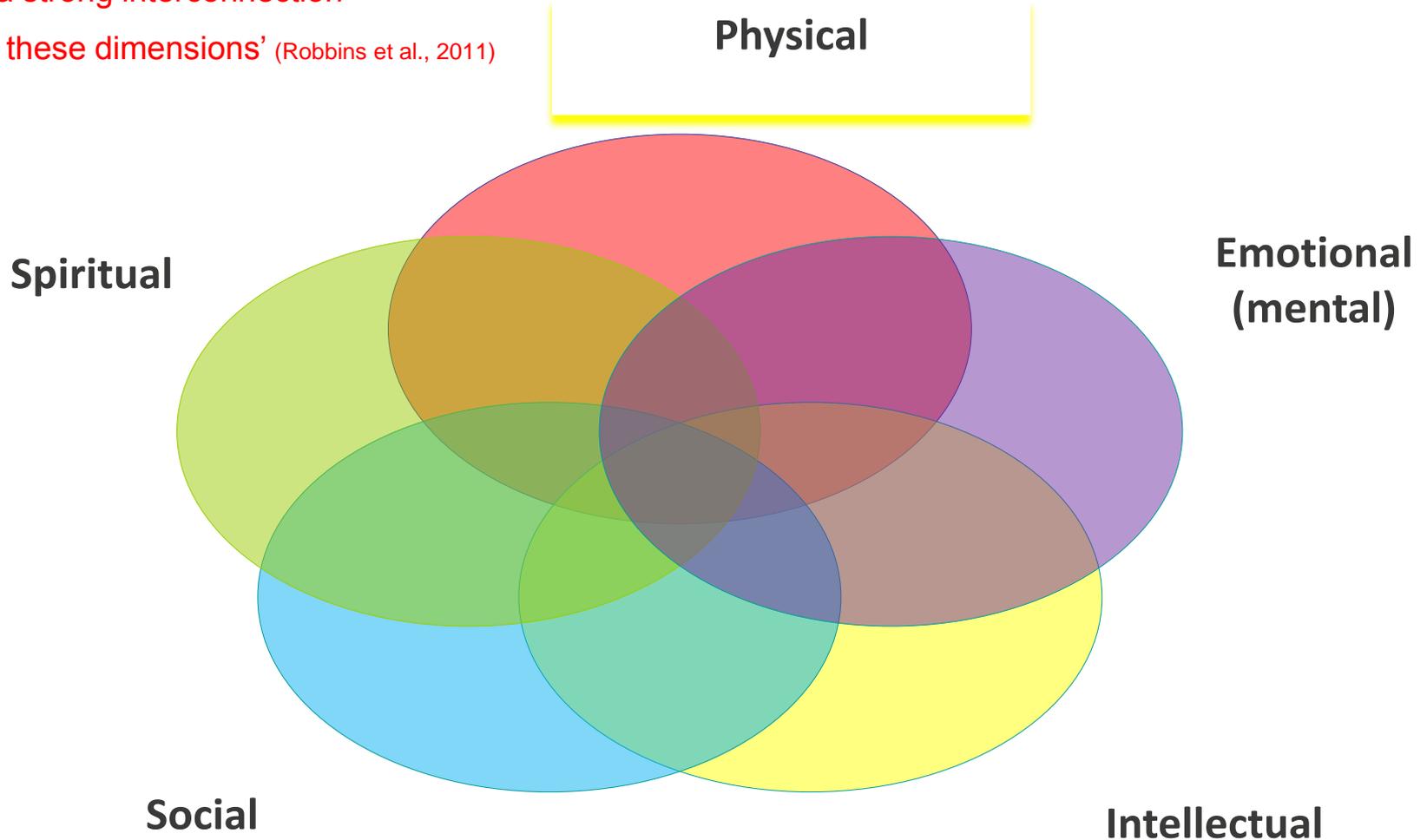
Education

# Investigating the *spiritual* dimension in HPE



# Dimensions of Health & Wellness

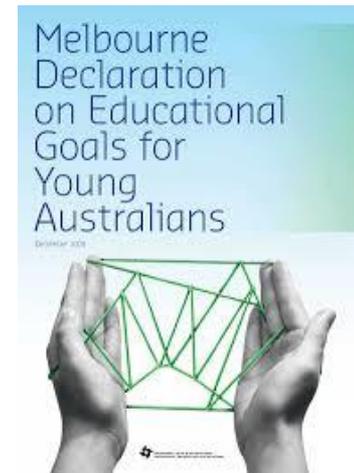
'there is a strong interconnection  
amongst these dimensions' (Robbins et al., 2011)



# Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

“Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, **spiritual** and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation’s ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4).

## ■ All schools



# Review of the Australian Curriculum

Final Report - Dr Kevin Donnelly & Professor Kenneth Wiltshire (October, 2014)

*“Indeed, in the context of the Melbourne Declaration’s aspiration that the national curriculum would enable students to understand the ‘spiritual and moral’ dimensions of life, there appears to be a distinct imbalance in the Australian Curriculum as these key aspects have been neglected.”*  
(p. 5)

# Review of the Australian Curriculum

Final Report - Dr Kevin Donnelly & Professor Kenneth Wiltshire (October, 2014)

*Melbourne Declaration – provides a range of answers when addressing the **purpose of education** and **why we have schools**, including the need:*

- To promote economic prosperity and innovation in an increasingly challenging and ever evolving global environment
- To equip students to respond to the challenges caused by the advent of the digital age and rapid advances in ICT
- To enable students to address complex environmental, social and economic pressures such as climate change
- To promote social and civic cohesion and equity within society characterised by disadvantage, diversity and difference
- To ensure that students are literate and numerate and that are introduced to the ‘key disciplines’
- To enable students to act with ‘moral and ethical integrity’ and to be in a position to best ‘manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being’

(p. 25)

# Review of the Australian Curriculum

Final Report - Dr Kevin Donnelly & Professor Kenneth Wiltshire (October, 2014)

“Indeed the whole question of **spiritual values** and **religion** seems to have been regarded as **too much of a hot potato**, with ACARA largely ignoring this element and most participants assuming it away as being confined to the particular learning area of religious education, or assuming it would just form part of a school-only curriculum.” (p. 91)

“Submissions had a **strong emphasis on the inclusion of moral and spiritual values** and religious and belief systems, especially Christianity”. (p. 117)

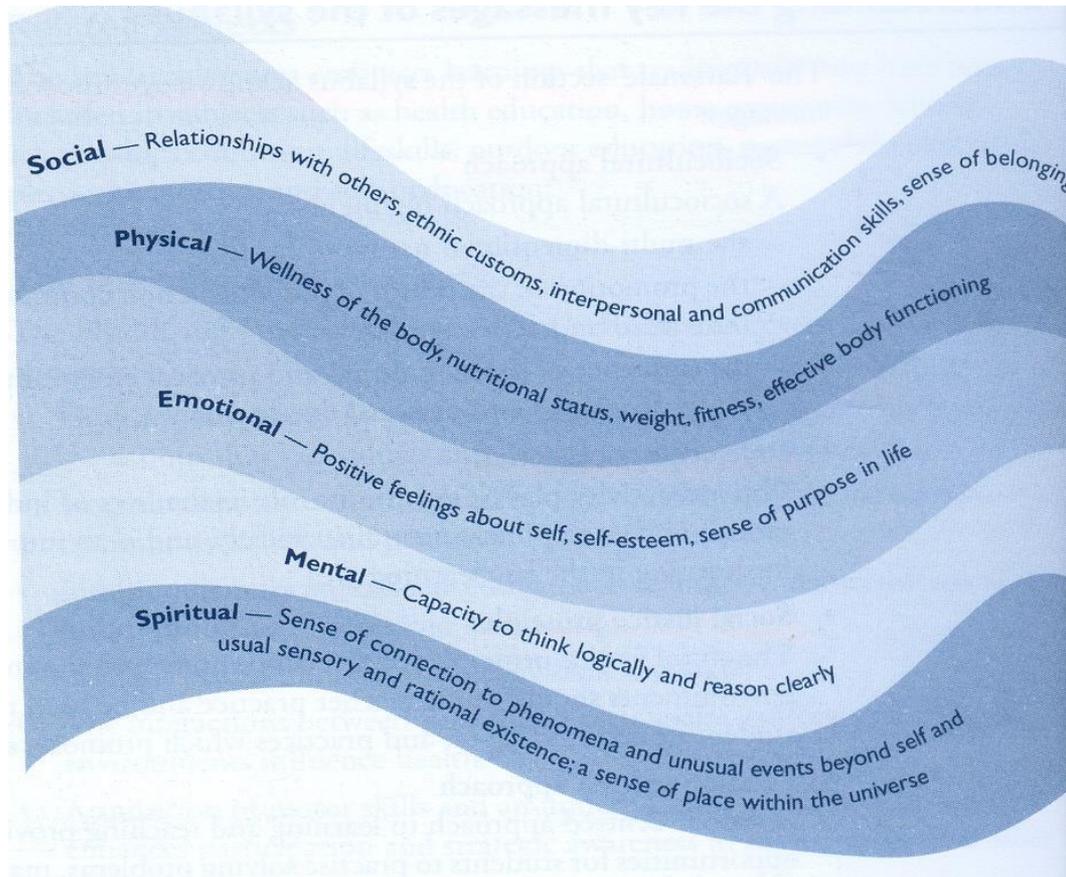


- What is spirituality?

# *Spirituality* defined...

- “a sense of connection to phenomena and unusual events beyond self and usual sensory and rational existence; a sense of place within the universe” (Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999a, p. 26).
- “the personal search for meaning and direction in life” (Robbins et al. 2011, p. 10).
- “In its purest sense, spiritual wellness involves cultivating beliefs, principles, and values that provide guidance and strength throughout all of life’s experiences” (Robbins et al. 2011, p. 10).
- There is a strong link between spirituality and one’s self-esteem (Robbins et al., 2011)
- This dimension may be connected to a religion, but it may not

# Sociocultural approach



## *Personal Definition*

**“... the bridge we take to awareness of the ultimate reality of our lives - the life force within and among us, seeking to bring love, peace and joy to us and our world. Some of us use the word ‘God’ to describe this”.**

***Neville Watson***

(Shane Lavery, Notre Dame University Australia, 2007)

## ***Spirituality* defined...**

- “has come to be understood in terms of the connectedness, or relationship an individual has with self, others, the world, and possibly with the Transcendent, named in the Christian tradition as God.” (Buchanan and Hyde, 2008, p. 312)

# ***Authentic Spirituality***

- **It is not about something additional or even new**
- **It is not meant to take us out of anywhere**
- **Rather, it gives depth, meaning and resonance to our daily life**
- **That is - all human experience has some, greater or lesser, spiritual value**

(Shane Lavery, Notre Dame University Australia, 2007)

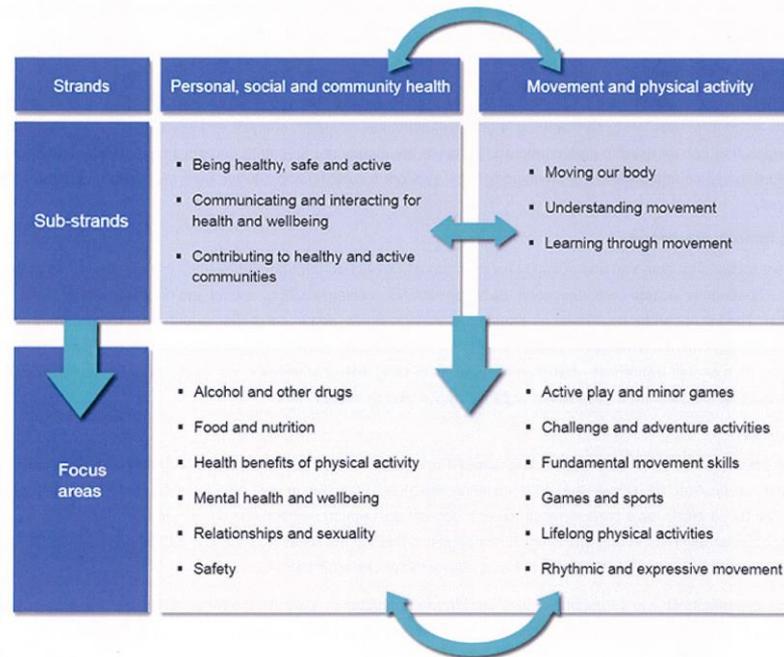
2 strands “are interrelated and inform and support each other” (AC:HPE, 2014)

## Overview

### Content structure

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.

Figure 1: Relationship of curriculum elements



# *Physical Education and Health*

- learning through movement
- ‘Education through movement’  
(Pangrazzi, 2001)
- Health/ PD- learning about well being  
for ourselves and others

# Holistic Development of Child

- Schools that purport to educate the whole child, as many do in their mission statements, must recognise that ***physical education is a crucial part of that education*** (Graham, Holt-Hale & Parker, 1998, p. 4).



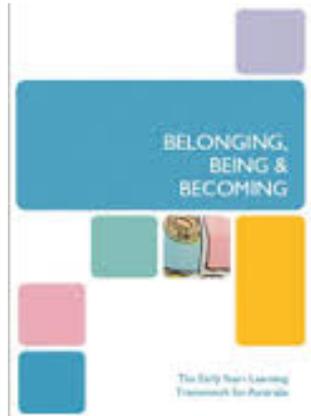
- 
- What does it look like in schools?

# *Spirituality* and the physical

- the *physical dimension* does offer unique opportunities and perhaps more so than others, for children in primary schools to experience a '*sense of connection*'



# *‘sense of connection’*





**Describe...**

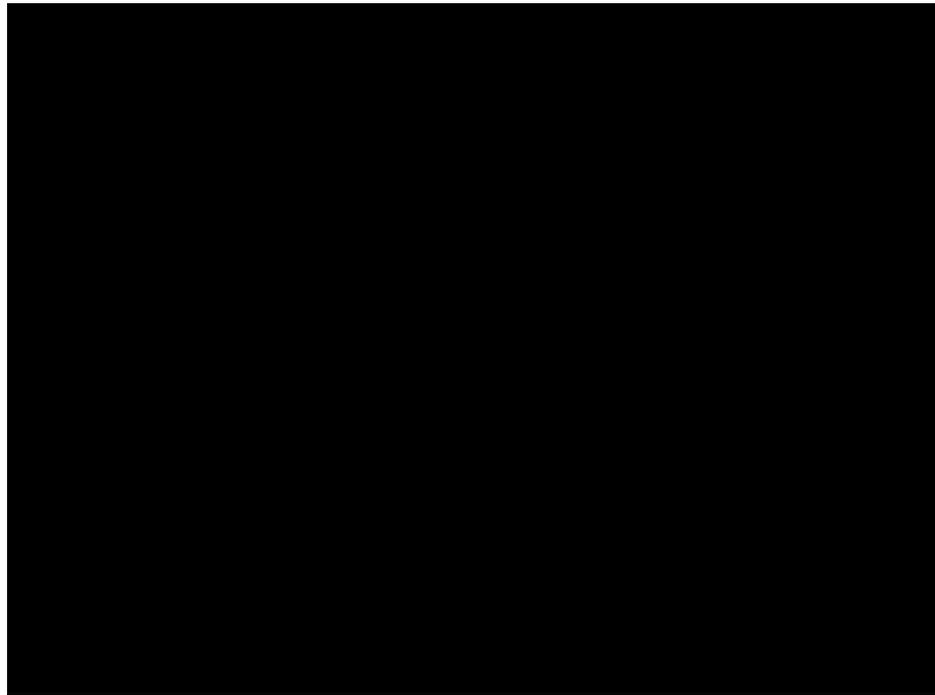
■ **Students' and  
school culture?**

# Children and school culture

- In **all** primary schools, physical learning and physical activities are valuable components of the students' and school culture.
  1. learning through movement amongst peers in class with *deliberately planned teaching* and learning experiences
  2. *free play* at lunch time
  3. playing inter or intra school sport (*organised sport*).



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- affiliated with the child's natural play structure (Grace 2000)



# HPE and Sport

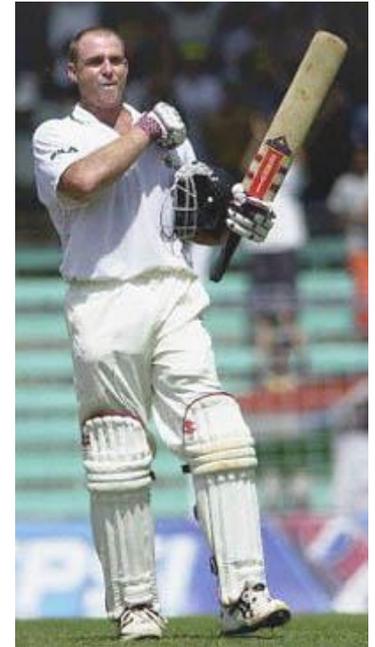
- Sport is a logical extension of the PE program  
(Commonwealth of Aust, 1992)
- “physical education began to be positioned towards the end of the 1940s as the ‘foundation stone’ for children’s participation in sport, as the site in which the skills required for sports participation should be developed, and for the first time making an explicit connection between school physical education and lifelong participation in physical activity” (Kirk, 2014).
- Sport & Sport Education fit under the umbrella term ‘Physical Education’  
(Tinning, Macdonald, Wright & Hickey, 2001)



# School culture

- *Christian* spirituality is the *essential link between faith and culture* (Gallagher 1997).
- The Centre for the Study of Sport and Spirituality (CSSS) in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at St. John University, York, England.

As sport is arguably the **most popular cultural pastime** of the western world, if not worldwide, it is hoped the work of the Centre can help foster a culture that emphasises the importance of the spiritual, moral and ethical dimensions of sport (York St John University 2007, 1).



- In Australian **culture** sport often connotes a **religious reference** (Lynch, 2004)



## *Sport is often related to religion*

-Many find it a comforting reminder of their faith in Public

eg. Matthew Hayden, Jason Stevens, Shaun Hart, Steven Heathcote, John Eales, Tim Horan, Wayne Bennett, Justin Langer, Rebecca Creedy, Nova Peris-Kneebone and Gary Ablett (Snr & Jnr).









**Link is often made with Christianity**

- Little has been written about sports and Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism or the hundreds of variations of these and other religions (Coakley, 2001).

# *Can sport relate to religion for us?*

- The role sport plays in religious revelation is not only experienced by famous, elite or professional sportspersons, but
- includes all participants of physical activities who are ***prepared to extend their faith into all aspects of their life.***



# Catholic Primary school culture

- Strong support for physical activities increasing opportunities to **experience God** has come from many key figures throughout the history of the Catholic tradition, including:
  - St. Paul,
  - Clement of Alexandria,
  - St. Dominic,
  - St. Thomas Aquinas,
  - Pope Pius II,
  - St. Ignatius,
  - Pope Pius XI,
  - Pope Pius XII,
  - Pope Paul VI
  - the late Pope John Paul II (Feeney 1995).



Evangelisation means **bringing the Gospel to bear upon culture - all culture**. Whether in the business world, the world of industry, of education, of politics and government – or the world of religion – **culture is one of the most necessary determining factors in any endeavour undertaken**. (Donovan, 1990, 115).

## PA - outstanding potential to develop Catholic qualities identified by Groome (Lynch, 2004).

- the sense of sacramentality (finding the infinite in the finite),
- feeling of community,
- appreciation of human potential,
- appreciation of fallibility,
- concern for justice,
- concern for the unfortunate,
- reverence for tradition,
- conviction that care should have no borders.



# ***‘feeling of community’***

- developed through ‘lifeskills’
- The social dimension of HPE includes the “relationships with others, ethnic customs, interpersonal and communication skills and sense of belonging” (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 1999b, p. 26).



# ***‘appreciation of human potential and fallibility’***

- HPE and sport can promote this quality better than other curriculum areas
- Sport and physical activities can enable a realisation of talents, strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and limitations, self discipline and improvement (Hoffman, 1992)



## *'reverence for tradition'*

- sports/ HPE and the Gospel message enhance and complete one another (Hoffman, 1992)



*‘care should have no borders’*

- The values of loyalty, fair play, generosity, friendship and a spirit of cooperation are all aspects of care (Hoffman, 1992)



# Catholic Primary school **Spirituality**

- Catholic education *recognises that all dimensions are necessary* for the full development of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. *Mind, spirit, and body* are joined in the profound unity of the human person (Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales 1993)
- Spirituality is *usually associated with the RE* learning area.
- “religious education *is one field of study* that can effectively address the complementarity between cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions of learning”... implying that spirituality adopting “a holistic approach to learning is *possible through all subject areas*” (Buchanan and Hyde, 2008, 310)
- “Christians, as other traditions, have *stunted and distorted children’s spirituality by religious education*” (Berryman,1997, p. 9)
- *spirituality is expressed outside of religion* in schools (Hyde, 2008)
- *community of the Catholic school* is *often taught informally* and within other KLAs (Malone & Ryan,1994)
- Post-modern experiential religious education approaches (Imbrosciano 2000) have resulted in *less focus on the Church doctrines* and *more on the spirituality of the people* who belong to the Church.

# Catholic Primary school Spirituality *cont*

- under the HPE umbrella, **physical education** sits alongside health education, outdoor education, home economics, **and RE** (Macdonald 2003; Macdonald and Glover 1997)
- As the world continues to change, so must the approaches and programmes in the search for balance and the **HPE KLA may hold particular significance and valuable spiritual experiences for children**
- contemporary spirituality where students' claim to be **“not religious but spiritual”** (De Souza, 2009, p. 181)



“Are not these athletic values the deepest aspirations and requirements of the Gospel message?” (John Paul II 1980, 10).



# Children's Spirituality

- needs to be given the opportunity to grow (Lavery and Hay 2004).
- spirituality is an essential part of child development (Hay and Nye 2006).
- Children's spirituality is defined as... “transformational, directive, and peer-relational which involves actively living by being innately connected to a natural source within the moral universe and affectively belonging with relationships that are interconnected within a child's culture and community” (Harris, 2007, p. 264)
- The concepts of **relationships, self, community, and culture** are recurring themes.
- In Health and Physical Education students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to support them to be resilient, to develop a **strong sense of self**, to build and maintain satisfying **relationships**, to make health-enhancing decisions in relation to their health and physical activity participation, and to develop health literacy competencies in order to enhance their **own and others' health and wellbeing** (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 2).

# What does it look like?

- Hyde (2008) identifies four characteristics of children's spirituality

1. **The felt sense** - involves physicality and bodily awareness

Young children often are unable to articulate verbally their thoughts; subsequently, they become “far more in tune with their physicality” using “non-verbal avenues, such as laughter, crying, play and the like”.

‘The challenge for those who work with children is to recognise that many of these activities could be experienced by children as spiritual.’

2. **Integrating awareness** - an emerging level of consciousness enveloping, or integrating, a previous level of awareness.

3. **Weaving the threads of meaning** - child drawing on her or his own sense of wonder as a means by which to make sense of the world and events from the many and diverse frameworks of meaning that are available.

4. **Spiritual questing** - children are seekers. They are actively searching for a sense of life's meaning and purpose

# Secular spiritual wellness behaviours developed by a child

- Develops an awareness of life verses death
- Develops a sense of the importance and expanse of life
- Begins establishing a value system
- Can distinguish right from wrong
- Begins showing compassion and forgiveness (Robbins et al. 2011, p. 556)



# In a Catholic Primary School...

- Are connections (HPE and RE) made by teachers and students?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RtZhtYe-GQ&feature=youtu.be>



## Children's possible spiritual connections... (CS2)

- *connectedness, or relationship an individual has with self, others, the world, or the Transcendent...*

“Um, you feel like you’re going to do it and like you’re not going to stop and it’s going to help you run and you’re not going to hurt yourself” (middle years CS2)

- *Working as part of a team*

“It’s better than individual, because like, if you like, if you make a mistake or something, there are people to help you out and stuff” (upper years CS2)

“Um, like what he said, there are people to help you out. But also if you do something wrong it is not just yourself who you do something wrong for, sort of. It is the team as well. So if someone blamed it all on you, the whole team can back you up.” (upper years CS2)

enjoyed experiencing “good team spirit” (upper years CS2)

HPE KLA physical activity strand helped “you feel better, about yourself and you have more self-esteem”. (upper years CS2)

# Children's possible spiritual connections... (CS3 MY)

- *They all agreed that HPE physical activities related to what they learn in Religion about treating others like Jesus did, sharing and cooperating.*

“Because He did help a lot of people. In HPE if people ask you, then you can help them. If they need your help you can be there.” (middle years CS3)

“my friend is not that good at soccer, [so] I give her a couple of chances. I show her how to kick” (middle years CS3)

“You explain it and like help them.” (middle years CS3)

“my younger cousin is not that good at shooting hoops, when she shoots it goes over the fence so I tell her to come closer and it helps her. As she improves she can move back again” (middle years CS3)

“There were two pre-schoolers and I taught them how to play soccer” (middle years CS3)

# Children's possible spiritual connections... (CS3 UY)

- *connectedness, or relationship an individual has with self, others, the world, or the Transcendent...*

“it tells us that you have to be kind, so not to be mean to other people who are not as good at sport as you. Also you need to be a good sport. Do not sought of say ‘Oh, I didn’t win’ and get all grumpy and walk away, or be mean to other people”. (upper years CS3)

“say ‘that was a good kick’ and encourage others” (upper years CS3)

- *Working as part of a team*

you “learn how to cooperate in games”. (upper years CS3)

“we know that we can do group work together, then in sport and PE we know we can do team work together” (upper years CS3)

- *We have different strengths and weaknesses*

“I’m good at basketball, swimming and shot-put. I’m not that good at long jump or high jump. I can’t really make high jump”

“I’m good at Tae Kwon Do, soccer and shot-put and I’m not good at high jump or long jump”.

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## Education

### Quality PE lessons have....

Quality instruction - is developmentally appropriate, progressive curriculum, sufficient sporting equipment/ facilities, choosing an appropriate pedagogy for the context.

1. ***Safe for all children.***
2. ***Inclusive*** – cater for diverse interests & abilities. All players can participate – have the skill levels to do this safely and for enjoyment.
3. ***Engaging*** – players participation is optimised. Waiting time is eliminated or minimal.
4. ***Enjoyment is prioritised.*** (Lynch, 2013)

# Being aware...

- They argue that physical education, in many cases, not only fails to achieve many of the outcomes it espouses under the rhetoric of enhanced health, fitness, skill and self esteem, but often exacerbates the very problems it seeks to overcome.
- They argue that where physical education is poorly or insensitively taught, it is more likely to have a negative influence on learners than a positive one (Tinning et al, 2001, p181).

# References

- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259202263\\_Investigating\\_Children%27s\\_Spiritual\\_Experiences\\_through\\_the\\_Health\\_and\\_Physical\\_Education\\_%28HPE%29](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259202263_Investigating_Children%27s_Spiritual_Experiences_through_the_Health_and_Physical_Education_%28HPE%29)
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