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Doctoral Thesis Examination Defence Seminar

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Dr. Timothy Lynch

- Teaching experience (Tertiary, Primary & Secondary)
- Education systems
- MEd-Physical Education & Health (Deakin University)

Doctor of Education (2002-2006)

An evaluation of school responses to the introduction of the Queensland Health and Physical Education (HPE) syllabus and policy documents (1999) in three Brisbane Catholic Education Primary Schools.

ICHPER.SD 1st Oceania Congress

Inclusion and equity in HPE
policy and practice – An
evaluation of school responses
within three Brisbane Catholic
Education (BCE) primary
schools

Policy

- 1991, Australian Education Council (AEC) recommended- statements and profiles (OBE)
- Based on key principles
Diversity, Social Justice & Support
Environments
- equitable sharing - nationally
consistent curriculum

Policy

- HPE history of:
 - discourses** -military, scientific, health & sporting
 - ideologies**- sexism, elitism, healthism, individualism, meritocratism & mesomorphism (hidden curriculum)
- ‘Crisis’ 1980s and 1990s
 - social and cultural forces
 - Qld (Walmsley, 1998)
- Senate Inquiry 1992
(supported in-house discussions)
- Devising of the National Statement and Profile

HPE Syllabus - Policy

■ Adopted socio-cultural approach

- recognises that students are influenced by physical, social, cultural, political & economic environmental forces

- underpinned by social justice principles

- HPE teachers task is to 'make' the healthy citizen

■ Critical, socially just pedagogy

- understanding new kids & new times

Catholic Schools

- Educate approx 20% Australian school students
- Approach – HPE greater relevance in Catholic Schools
 - Strong connections RE syllabus (faith component)
 - Physical – practical and social experiences that require living and reflecting upon Christian religious traditions and gospel values

Senate Inquiry Findings (1992)

Problems identified:

- Resources
- Time allocation
- Decline in children's skill levels & physical fitness

Present

- **Recent literature**

- HPE is failing

- **Programs**

- Building a Healthy Active Australia, Get Active
(bring about cultural change)

- **Change**

- technological advancements, social and
environmental pressures

Practice

- Raises question over the implementation of the socio-cultural HPE syllabus?
- Inclusion and equity in HPE practice?

HPE Syllabus

- 1996 BCE appointed HPE Co-ordinating Education Officer
- 1999 team of 3 curriculum officers supported implementation
- Constructed intersystemically (EQ, CEC, AIS)

HPE Syllabus

- **Implementation responsibility of each system**
- **BCE implementation 1999-2001**
 - Significant status (new syllabus & EB3)
 - 120 minutes release time per week
- **Whole School approach**
 - adjust syllabus to BCE school context

Brisbane Catholic Education

- Over 137 diocesan Catholic schools
- **Implementation Challenges** (1998), stated a commitment to:
 - **Social Justice**, resistant to inappropriate structures
 - **Participation**, access for all students
 - **Stewardship**, equitable use and distribution of resources
 - **Responsiveness**, reflect critically on teaching and learning practices

HPE Syllabus

- BCE Implementation complete?
 - Since 2001- no direct support (HPE officers, PD)
- Webster (2001) NSW primary schools
 - HPE taught by “generalist” teachers
- Pedagogy?

Context of the research

- Sparkes (1991)
 - superficial change
- Success
 - determined by teachers & students in classrooms
- Teachers and students FOCUS

Research Problem

How is HPE being taught in practice?

Research Purpose

Evaluate the implementation of the social justice principles that underpin HPE policy documents.

Research Questions

- *How is HPE taught?*
 1. *How are teachers implementing the social justice principles of the HPE curriculum documents?*
 2. *What readily accessible resources do schools have to assist with the implementation of Health and Physical Education?*
 3. *What are teachers' perceptions of the HPE Key Learning Area?*
 4. *What are children's perceptions of the HPE Key Learning Area?*

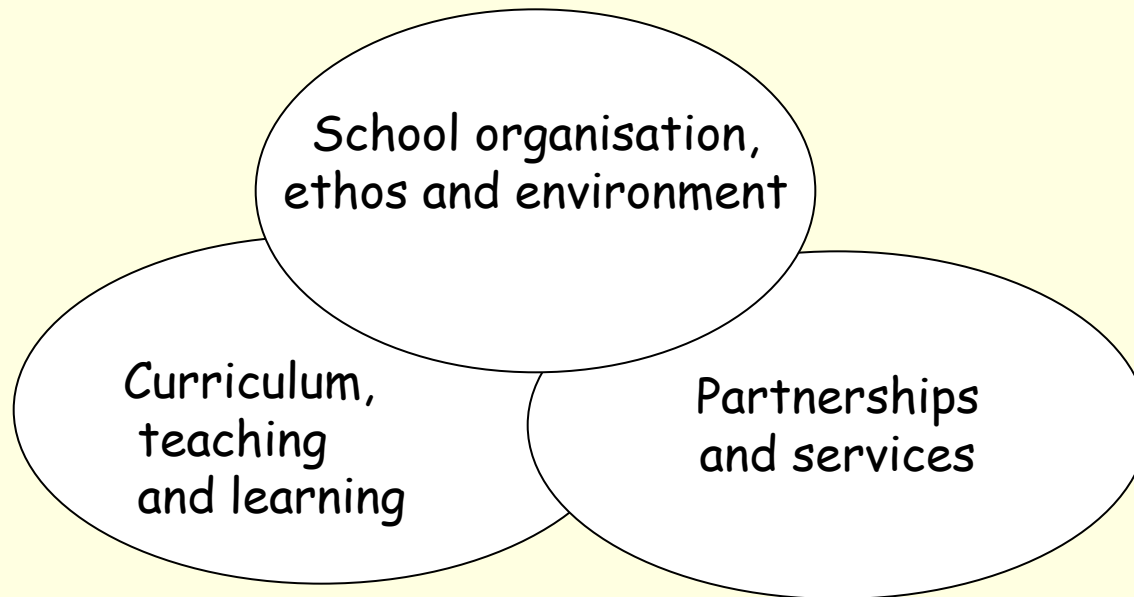
Research Question

- Analytical Question

-What implementation strategies are required to optimize social justice principles within HPE practices in BCE schools?

HPS model

- Scope of HPE considered **WHOLE**
- Enhancing the emotional, social, physical & moral well being of community members

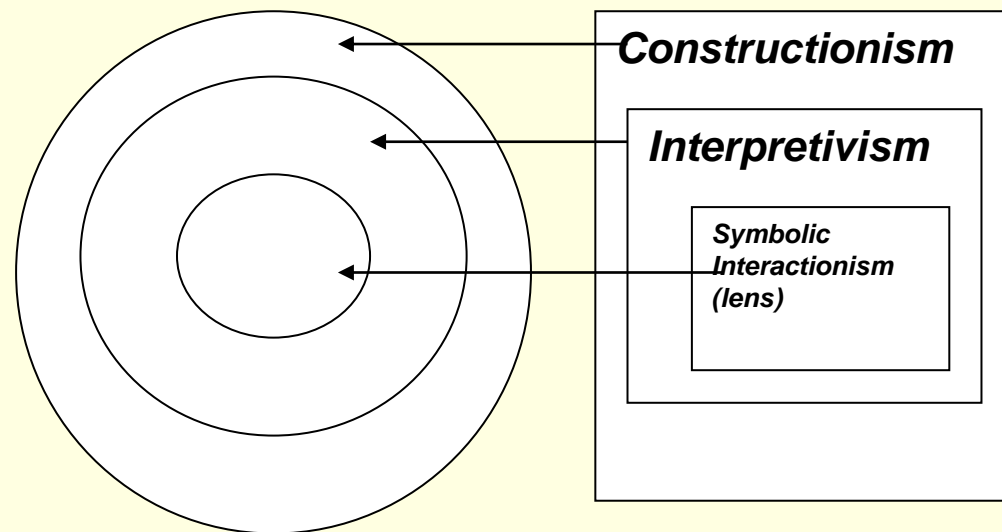


Research Design

- **Theoretical Framework**

Epistemology

Theoretical Perspective



Research Methodology

- Evaluative and multiple case study

- 3 BCE primary schools
 - small scale deep understanding
 - varying enrolment numbers, geographic location and socio-economic status

Participants & Data Gathering Strategies

- Data Collection Methods
 - Interviews; Semi-structured
 - Interviews; Focus group
 - Reflective journal
 - Observation
 - Document Analysis

Research Participants

Data Generating Strategy	Case Study One School (less than 200 students)	Case Study Two School (200-400 students)	Case Study Three School (over 400 students)	Total
Semi-Structured Interview (Teachers)	3	4	4	11
Interview Focus Group (Students)	18	24	24	66
Observations of Teacher	3	1	1	5
Observations of Students	65	81	83	229

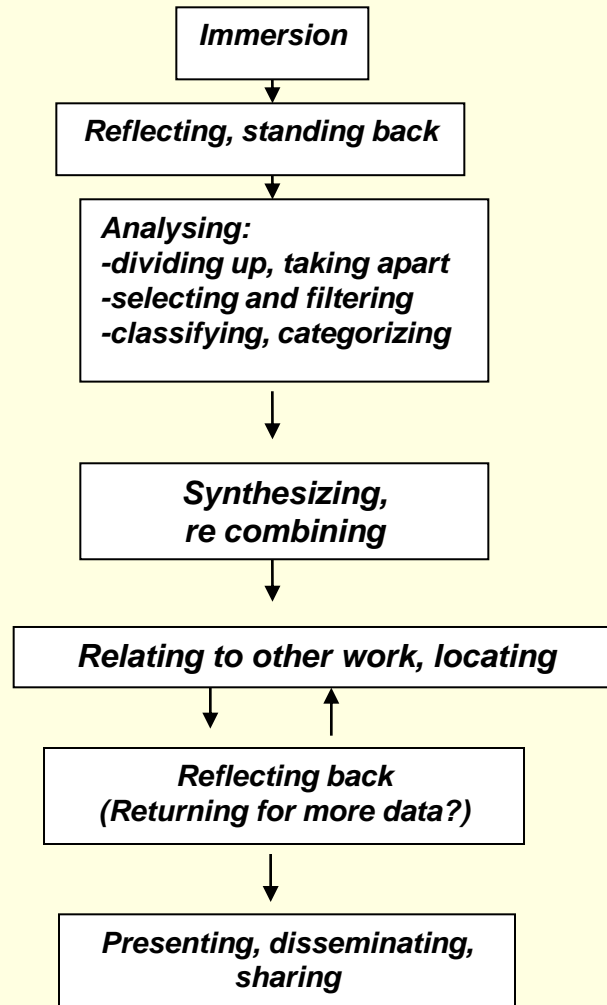
Analysis of data

- Narrative/ Descriptive report
- Analysis through Wellington's 6 staged 'Constant Comparative Method'
- Analysis is iterative

Process of data analysis

Stage 1	Analysis of each case study/ school using Wellington's table of analysis.
Stage 2	Narrative/Descriptive report given for each case study.
Stage 3	Cross case analysis again using Wellington's table of analysis.
Stage 4	Narrative/Descriptive report given for cross case study analysis.

General stages in making sense of qualitative data (Wellington, 2000).



Summary-Case Study One

(less than 200 students)

- All experienced teachers
- Only one had PD in HPE syllabus (no specialist training)
- Responsible for all 3 strands
- PA strand given most time
- No Whole School Program
- Concepts and skills were few and often repeated
- No PMP in early years
- All teacher participants agreed there were connections between HPE & RE curriculum
- Healthy living promoted through organisations visiting school; Life Ed van, Jump Rope For Heart, Dance Fever and sun safety-no hat no play

Summary-Case Study Two

(200-400 students)

- Well designed and implemented program (WSP)
- Experienced HPE specialist provided PA strand (at least 40 mins per week)
- PA covered were wide in scope & variety
- Lack of space was compensated by partnerships
- Classroom teachers responsible for Health & Personal Development strands (no WSP)
- Varying degrees of HPE PD
- All teacher participants agreed there were connections between HPE & RE curriculum
- Healthy living promoted by healthy food at tuckshop, no hat no play sun safety rule, Walk to School Program (QUT), Auskick, lunch time touch football & netball competitions

Summary-Case Study Three (over 400 students)

- Full time HPE specialist (one day release from teaching for sports coordination)
- Ample space, facilities, equipment & Health & PD resources
- Teacher participants had varying degrees of experience & HPE PD
- Teachers, including HPE specialist (who began after 2001) lacked knowledge & confidence implementing HPE (no PD)
- HPE specialists claimed qualifications were not evidenced within HPE practice or shared knowledge
- Early years teacher graduated recently from University without studying a HPE unit

Summary-Case Study Three (over 400 students) *continued*

- All teacher participants agreed there were connections between HPE & RE curriculum
- Who was responsible for strands?
- Specialist claimed to do a PMP –no students or teachers could verify this
- No WSP
- Students did not appear to be as interested as the teachers perceived them to be
- Students believed HPE reduced stress
- Healthy living promoted through visits from organisations: Life Ed van, Dance Fever, Jump Rope For Heart and sun safety rule no hat no play
- Teachers listed all 3 strands as areas requiring attention

Summary of Cross Case Analysis

- The degree of shift towards an inclusive, socially just curriculum as adopted by syllabus related to:
 - Students' interest
 - Teacher participants' experience, knowledge & confidence within HPE
 - School facilities, equipment & space
 - School partnerships & services within community
 - HPE specialist teacher?
 - WSP implementation?

Summary of Cross-Case Data Analysis Findings

School	HPE specialist	HPE specialist in-serviced in syllabus	Number of Classroom Teacher participants PD in new syllabus	Clear knowledge of who is responsible for the different strands	No extra cost involved (paying other organizations to implement syllabus)	Number of Classroom Teacher participants who evidenced HPE in book	Whole School Program
Case Study One	No	No	1	Yes	Extra Cost	1	No
Case Study Two	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	No	2	Yes
Case Study Three	Yes	No	2	No	Extra Cost	0	No

Comparison of Case Study School Resources and Facilities

School	Facilities and Space	Sporting Equipment	Teaching Resources (books, kits, videos)
Case Study One	Good	Sufficient	Poor
Case Study Two	Poor	Good	Good
Case Study Three	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

Comparison of Case Study school Student Participants' Interest in HPE

School	Teachers' perception of students interest levels in HPE	Number of students interviewed in each focus group	Number of Early Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		Number of Middle Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		Number of Upper Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		HPE specialist teacher
Case Study One	Medium	6	0	0%	2	33%	0	0%	No
Case Study Two	High	8	6	75%	3	37.5%	4	50%	Yes
Case Study Three	High	8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	Yes

Discussion

- Completion of syllabus implementation (2001)
 - not one of the case study schools working from a HPE WSP
- Case study 2 school PA WSP
- Communication
 - important for implementation
- Younger teachers
 - no HPE PD since 2001, not all students required to study HPE at University
- HPE specialists do not require qualifications or experience
- Quality lessons are not always implemented
 - negative influences on students' perception of PA

Discussion

- PA strand
 - allocated sufficient time
- Some schools rely on sporadic visitations from sporting organizations to implement the syllabus (often at additional cost to students)
- Case Study One school (no specialist teacher) was lacking resources and advocacy
- Case Study Two school overcame lack of space through developing partnerships and services within their community
- HPE specialist teacher release time for sports coordination was not equal

BCE Implementation Challenges (1998)

- Challenges have not been achieved within 3 Case Study schools
 - social justice, inclusive curriculum, resources, quality experiences

Conclusions

- Unequal allocation of teaching resources
 - equipment, facilities, HPE specialist teachers and HPE specialist teacher release time
- No HPE Curriculum Officers within BCE
 - responsibility has been devolved to school principal
- Appears syllabus implementation process support ceased prematurely
 - no WSP
 - teachers lacked understandings of practical ways to implement the social justice underpinnings of syllabus
 - Principals unaware of necessity of employing qualified HPE specialist teachers

Conclusions

- Obstacle – teachers needed to grasp OBE before embracing the socio-cultural approach
- Data generated suggests
 - not a matter of educating specialist teachers in new critical pedagogies but rather educating inexperienced HPE teachers in all HPE pedagogies and quality teaching practices
- Communication & effort is essential (3 strands)
 - gains more importance in absence of HPE Curriculum Officers
 - BCE-Principals-Teachers

Conclusions

- **Successful implementation is possible –Case Study Two**
- **Positive effect on students' attitudes**
- HPE specialist teacher used eclectic pedagogies as required (socio-critical and performance)
- Optimum time for children to learn & refine motor skills is in pre school and early primary – only Case Study Two achieved this (Prep begins in 2007)
- Present BCE system infrastructure suggests that the Catholic mission can only be achieved through RE (13 Vs 0)

Recommendations

- HPE needs to be embraced as a powerful medium (BCE) providing students with many practical & social experiences living & reflecting on gospel values
- Study limited by its small scale nature, recommended that a large research project be conducted

Recommendations

- Challenges Brisbane Catholic Education to rethink priorities and encourages provision of support at system level for HPE