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VICTORIA

AN INTRODUCTION TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS AND PRACTICES IN PRACTICAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION



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Introduction

Effective teaching embeds a plethora of pedagogical tools (skills, techniques, strategies, and methods) to establish a positive learning environment to facilitate high quality student outcomes. The practical teaching component of Health and Physical Education (HPE) presents a diverse range of situations and challenges combined with the unique ecologies of each school and context (primary or secondary). It is the intention of this resource therefore, to provide educators with an introduction to what we view are the essential teaching tools to support content that is practically presented within the HPE curriculum.



Working together effectively as a group

What you will find in this eBook

The eBook is broken into three key sections:

- 1. Effective instruction:** This section unpacks two key questions: what is a high-quality physical education (PE) program? and what is an effective physical educator? Unpacking this is key to understanding what our goals are as an educator.
- 2. Planning for effective instruction:** This section reflects on what must be considered and planned for prior to teaching. We unpack the influences of an educator's beliefs and values (vision), the importance of and how to plan, the influence of high impact teaching strategies (HITS), the purpose of assessment and the role of "connection through content".
- 3. Tools for effective instruction:** This section explores skills, techniques, strategies and methods to assist delivering effective instruction. We unpack the role of instant activities to start a lesson effectively, effective communication, safety, task presentation and task structure.

Effectively applying this resource

There is no 'one-size fits all' approach to delivering a perfect PE class. Each educator is at a different career stage and equipped with varying strengths and areas for improvement. Each school context, including community, students, teachers and environment is unique. We encourage educators to go through the content in this eBook and extract what is relevant to them and their context and expand further to their needs.

Section 1: Effective instruction

Teaching PE is complex, dynamic and unpredictable.

Whilst barriers to provide quality PE have not changed over time, they have evolved and become more complex in their own context (Benson, 2010). **PE must therefore be planned for with an awareness of these challenges, as well as be developmentally and instructionally appropriate.**

1.1 What is a high-quality, practical PE program?

As stated by the Department of Education and Training Victoria (DET, 2019), quality PE **“builds confident, happy and physically active kids. Children and young people who participate in quality PE develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to be active for life”**.

Quality PE involves:

- meeting minimum time for Physical Education for Foundation – Year 10;
- delivery of a Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education F-10 aligned teaching and learning program (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA, 2019);
- teachers who are competent and capable in physical education instruction; and
- a safe, inclusive and encouraging learning environment for students of all ages and abilities (DET, 2019).

Health and physical education is shaped by five interrelated propositions which guide high-quality PE. These are:

- **Focus on educative purposes:** Provide learning opportunities to practise, create, apply and evaluate the knowledge, understanding and skills of the learning area.
- **Take a strengths-based approach:** Support students to enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing through understanding what creates health and an active lifestyle rather than emphasising limitations to health and causes of disease.
- **Value movement:** Develop movement skills and concepts to participate competently and confidently in physical activity.
- **Develop health literacy:** Support students' ability to gain access to, understand and use health information and services in ways that promote and maintain health and wellbeing.
- **Include a critical inquiry approach:** Assist students to research, analyse, apply and appraise knowledge in health and movement field.

The **Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education** defines what students are expected to learn and sets out learning progressions, depicted as a developmental and sequential continuum from F–10. The comprehensive set of content descriptions and achievement standards enable teachers to plan, monitor, assess and report on the learning achievements of every student. **The ACHPER Victoria Curriculum Support Charts are designed to assist Victorian teachers in curriculum planning and organisation to facilitate a quality PE program.**

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO 2.0) is the continuous improvement framework for all Victorian government schools. FISO 2.0 has been redesigned to place learning and wellbeing at the centre of school improvement. When the core elements are integrated, students become happy, healthy and resilient, successful lifelong learner and active, informed members of just and sustainable communities (DET, 2022). As PE educators, we might consider how strengthening our practical PE program will contribute to student's wellbeing.

“Successful PE”, as stated by Graham (2004), **“implies that children learn and develop positive attitudes, that teachers derive satisfaction from their jobs, and that physical education programs are consistent with the overall focus of a school”**. There are many influential factors which determine this success, some of which may be identified as **institutional** (outside the teachers' control) or **teacher-related factors** (arising from the teachers' behaviour) (Morgan and Hansen, 2008). In the **Social Cognitive Theory**, Bandura (1986) notes the relationship between cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors. The table on the following page presents some pertinent considerations...

Table 1 Influential factors contributing to the unique ecology of each school

Students	Teachers	School and Community
<p>Readiness to learn – attitudes, values, beliefs and joy of movement.</p> <p>Student learning needs – How do the key outcomes of PE and school sport align to student’s physical, social, affective and cognitive development? (Bailey et al, 2009). Is the content differentiated?</p> <p>Student agency – do students have the power to direct and take responsibility for their learning, creating independent and self-regulating learners?</p> <p>Student Leadership Team – School Captains, House Captains and Student Council. What is their role?</p> <p>Student experiences – What physical activity opportunities are students exposed to?</p>	<p>Philosophy and value orientation (beliefs) What values of PE are embedded? Psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains? (Jewett, Bain & Ennis, 1995)</p> <p>Teacher experience – years, pre-service training (generalist vs specialist trained, primary experience vs secondary focus).</p> <p>Personal characteristics – How do we positively influence students? Facilitate a growth mindset? Realistic expectations? Facilitate enjoyment and a positive developmental environment?</p> <p>Teacher pedagogical knowledge – pedagogy and models-based practices.</p> <p>Teacher capacities and resources – What access to professional learning and resources are there?</p> <p>Instructional style – How is teaching and learning delivered? (<i>Spectrum of Teaching Styles</i>, Mosston and Ashworth, 2008).</p> <p>Knowledge of Victorian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Victorian Curriculum F–10, HITS and FISO.</p>	<p>Influence of parents, families and friends – What is the impact of family/cultural/social background?</p> <p>Local community – Access to sports clubs, recreational facilities and leisure programs.</p> <p>Cross-curricular opportunities – Can we embed PE as an inquiry-based approach with classroom programs?</p> <p>Inclusive co-curricular opportunities – What whole-school opportunities are present for movement to support PE?</p> <p>School grounds, facilities, access, demographics and location – How does this impact teaching and learning plans?</p> <p>School values, beliefs and policy – Is the PE mandate met?</p> <p>School culture and value of movement – Is the PE mandate met? Is there a crowded curriculum present? How is PE valued across the whole school? Does this require considerable negotiation, lobbying and strong leadership? How are lessons delivered?</p> <p>School budgets – What is the budget?</p> <p>Equipment availability – amount and type available?</p>

1.2 What is an effective physical educator?

“The ability to become an effective physical educator is in the hands of each person – it is a choice” (Martin, 2004, p.52).

Educators need to know how to do “the right thing, in the right way, at the right time and for the right reason(s)” (Graham, Holt/Hale & Parker, 2004, p.118). Teaching can sometimes be referred to as a symphony orchestra, in which the teacher ‘conductor’ brings together various pieces of the orchestra to blend in harmony. **Effective educators can orchestrate teaching skills and develop lessons that are engaging and beneficial to all ages and abilities.** Knowing what to teach (declarative knowledge), when and why you are teaching it (conditional knowledge), when to teach something and subsequently how to teach (procedural knowledge) facilitates effective practice.

Educators should utilise a range of instructional styles to most suitably meet the intended outcome of the lesson or learning experience. The Spectrum consists of 11 teaching styles (Styles A–K), beginning with Style A – Command Style, where the teacher is making all the decisions with minimal student input, to Style K – Self Teaching Style, where the student is making the decisions. These styles are set up on a continuum where the level of responsibility given to students from teachers gradually increases. When choosing a teaching style, it is important to understand that one style is not better than another style. The content, students, learning intentions and desired outcomes, student safety and the teaching environment are among the many factors which influence the approach you take to your teaching on any given day. An effective educator knows that two classes within the same school and learning the same content may require completely different approaches to teaching.



Educators effectively collaborating during team planning

Table 2 – The Spectrum of Teaching Styles and practical PE examples

Style	PE Examples
A – Direct	Teach students how to enter and exit the water safely when beginning a swimming unit.
B – Practice	Teacher demonstrates an overarm throw and then has students practice the skill in a pre-determined activity, such as throwing bean bags at targets on a wall.
C – Reciprocal	Students are provided with a criteria sheet for a particular skill or game strategies. Students provide feedback to one another on their performance, based on the criteria.
D – Self-check	Students use a video analysis app to analyse their skill performance using set criteria prepared for them by the teacher.
E – Inclusion	Cooperative rallying in Badminton Entry Level 1: balloon and hand, Entry Level 2: racquet and balloon, and Entry Level 3: racquet and shuttle.
F – Guided Discovery	Plan a series of tasks which direct students towards the pre-determined answer, such as providing students with a variety of different throwing equipment and asking students to identify which piece of equipment travels the furthest and why.
G – Convergent Discovery	Provide a problem with one solution, such as in an overarm throwing activity, students might explore which body position supports a greater throwing distance. In these discovery activities students could explore different positions culminating in the most desirable e.g., seated facing forwards, kneeling facing forwards, standing forwards and then standing side on.
H – Divergent Discovery	Provide a problem with multiple solutions, such as in a game sense unit, pose a challenge that directs students to identify the various strategies that could be used.
I – Learner Designed	Students pose their own questions and seek to find the answer, such as students creating own game using a list of provided task constraints, as well as a focus question for students playing to develop a strategy around to be successful.
J – Learner Initiated	Students devise their own plan of learning, such as a personalised fitness plan to improve health related fitness components/ensure they are meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines.
K – Self-teaching	Students take full responsibility for their learning, such as a VCE extended investigation.

Adapted in line with the famous business management book *The 7 habits of highly effective people* (Stephen Covey, 1989), Leann Tyson Martin (2004) came up with *7 habits of highly effective physical educators*. A 'habit' was defined as "the intersection of knowledge, skill and desire" and the research paper suggests focusing on the first habit before applying the next, as to some extent each habit is a prerequisite of the one before. The habits identified were:

1. **Be proactive** – Take responsibility for behaviours and responses to positively influence, driven by values and principles that are important as this brings alignment and perspective, focus on the controllable.
2. **Begin with the end in mind** – Have a clear vision and set of values for PE as well as your own personal vision/mission statement. Identify what is deeply important to define yourself as an effective educator. Have explicit learning outcomes and in everything you do consider how well the task is supporting the meeting of these outcomes.
3. **Put first things first** – The first two habits are prerequisites for this. Identify and prioritise short-term and long-term goals. Purposefully spend time developing the connections and 'operations' in your program. Say 'yes' to things that support your personal mission and no to things that do not.
4. **Think win-win** – A cooperative environment when everyone feels positive about resulting decisions. Considerations for others allows educators to celebrate victories and succeed together.
5. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood** – Empathetic listening and seeking to understand another's perspective allows us to make better, more informed, decisions.
6. **Synergise** – Momentum in a group of people. Synergy requires trust, openness, receptivity, empathetic and respectful communication. This results in a win/win environment. Each educator must understand each other's needs and desires.
7. **Sharpen the saw** – Taking care of one's physical, mental, social/emotional and spiritual dimensions. Learning new things and developing connections.

Effective educators engage with **The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers** (The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop their professional knowledge, practice and engagement. As stated by AITSL, 'the standards are a public statement of work that constitutes teacher quality' (AITSL, 2017). Effective teaching skills come from good planning, experience, and regular updates of one's instructional abilities (Metzler, 2005 p.142).

Students who experience positive outcomes in practical PE lessons experience feelings of joy, satisfaction, safety and self-accomplishment. They are more likely to remain active, develop resilience, strong teamwork and leadership skills and problem-solving skills.



Setting up effective demonstrations using clear markers and boundaries for safety.

Section 2: Planning for effective instruction

“Teaching is governed by a single unifying process: decision making” (Mosston and Ashworth 2008: 8).

Experienced classroom educators new to teaching practical PE might begin by considering the similarities and differences between teaching practical PE and teaching in a classroom. **The Venn diagram below highlights that while there are differences, there are also just as many (if not more) similarities that allow educators to transfer these practices to the PE environment with greater confidence.** This process also brings awareness to what educators may need to modify to adapt to the new environment if classroom trained/not PE specialist trained.

Graphic 1 Venn diagram of similarities and differences between teaching practical PE and teaching in a classroom

