

BOOK REVIEW

Teaching Physical Education in Primary School



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Teaching Physical Education in Primary School. An Integrated Health Perspective

by Janet L Currie Victoria,
ACER Press, 2013, \$39.95, ISBN: 9781742860923

This is a 'must read' for all Primary Physical Education Specialists, Principals and those intending to become a Physical Education Specialist. It truly states the full role of our position and contains a wonderful 'pat-on-the-back' to all who teach P.E. As I read the first few chapters my thoughts were "yes, that's right, uh huh, wow – here is someone who really understands the job we do". Nowhere else have I ever recalled such a complete summary and perspective from 'our side' of education!

Currie writes to confirm that we really do foster and develop the whole child. We enhance and encourage competence, control, success and good emotions while providing safe, age-appropriate and inclusive programs. She acknowledges that we have to have happy and safe environments for students to try new movements, make mistakes, try again and in turn, gain confidence through every positive situation we present. Our lessons provide development with students being able to understand how to co-operate, be tolerant, respect each other, how to resolve conflicts and display virtues of honesty, respect, fairness and understanding in so many different areas. Every person needs to learn how to win and lose gracefully. This is all part of our day's work and we all plan to do this for every student in our lessons every week.

The content is relevant for beginner to experienced P.E. Specialists and

principals and classroom teachers would also gain much from reading this book. Every chapter is thorough with a logical, consistent structure to follow. Every introduction leads well into the following relevant information, wrapped up with a concise conclusion and helpful reflective questions and further reading. This enables easy and clear reading for everyone.

Useful topics include understanding the needs of children and how to consider these in our P.E. Programs. Health topics dealing with obesity, asthma and other childhood medical conditions are discussed as well. The overview of knowledge on each illness, management for each and suggested teaching considerations are excellent in assisting us all to understand more about and manage our teaching with these conditions.

The sections on skill development and effective instructions and feedback are discussed in a manner for all to gain something useful. Apart from ensuring all students attain the basic skills of balance, running, jumping, catching, kicking, P.E. teachers also need to combine these skills into sequences to obtain a mastery of complicated routines to include them in games of netball, soccer (football), athletics and gymnastics to name a few. Currie takes the reader progressively through the Cognitive (beginner, introductory), Associative (intermediate) and Autonomous (automatic, mastery)



phases of skill learning and performance, using relevant examples and applications wherever possible.

Our Duty of Care as P.E. teachers is surrounded by legal issues and safe planning. The concepts and steps for risk assessment and management are well covered. This useful chapter lends a reminder for all P.E. Specialists to read and 'brush up' on this relevant area. Class management and helpful tips around maintaining discipline and teacher control revolves around essential principles about the ways we should communicate with our students. Again, Currie gives great examples to assist with many issues we encounter on a day to day basis.

A useful chapter for refreshing our awareness for our students is Chapter 6, Sports injury prevention and basic sports first aid. This is a reminder that we are responsible for many areas in our role and a heightened awareness in injury knowledge is worth our

attention. Even though we do not have x-ray eyes, we do consider we present super-human abilities to be respected Physical Education Specialists by our peers, students and school community. This chapter gives us a reminder to be aware and alert with all injuries presented.

Within all teaching environments we need to implement inclusive strategies in our classes. Areas covering low motor ability, behavioural challenges, disinterested, or unmotivated students, gender issues, gifted and talented, varied intellectual capacities and understanding levels are all included as part of our day. Currie's information and tips listed here are worthwhile.

Something that I would have thought could be considered is a section explaining the Australian School Sport program for Primary students and staff. Interschool sport is the next step for many students from their learning experiences in Physical Education. We teach the children not only basic motor skills, but sport skills, match skills, tactics and leadership. Students take these to Interschool Sport at the District level and upon selection can represent their Region and State. As teachers, we too can progress through our sport specific representative areas as officials. Managers, Coaches and Convenors at each level are a major asset for our schools and students. The times spent at District,


Regional and State Championships are wonderful opportunities for personal development and networking with peers. And regardless of our aspirations to be district or regional officials, the workload of coordinating interschool sport usually falls on the P.E. Specialist.

Health and Physical Education Specialists do have varied expectations. Some are required only to teach the skills and games component and others are required to include the full health curriculum. Nutrition and how the whole school implements this can be dealt with in an integrated or 'stand alone' way. Chapters 8 and 9 definitely give each reader plenty of guidance on how to approach nutrition within your school. Take time to read the information and present an effective and positive model to your students and staff.

This is a wonderful book which will give each reader knowledge and insight into the role and expectations

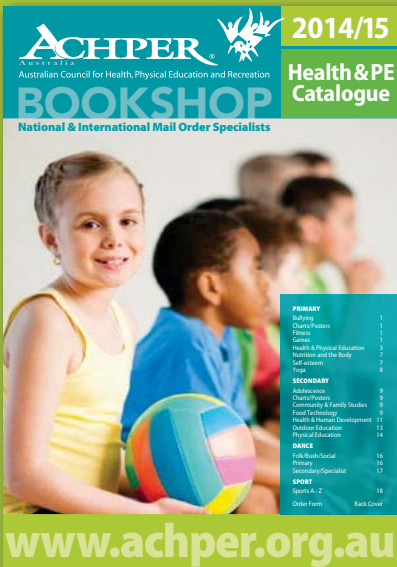
as a Primary Physical Education Specialist. It is well written and takes you on a pleasant journey to understand that our role is a special one for us as teachers, for every student and, not to forget, for our peers and the school community. As I remember, and as do from others I have spoken to – if you ask any adult to recall a memorable event from their Primary school years – they will most likely recall something involving a sporting event. With this in mind, Janet L Currie has included just about everything you will need to ensure that every P.E. lesson is special for every child you teach.

Every Primary Physical Education Specialist should purchase 3 copies. One for you to read, another to present to your Principal and the third, to be presented to the next Physical Education Practice Teacher you have in your school. This book should be recommended reading for all to truly appreciate and understand the role we have as Physical Education Specialists.



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