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Module: Professional Development and Practice

Module Code: SHSS4062

Personal Evaluation – to support your academic progress please complete the section below BEFORE submitting your work.									
What do you consider to be the best aspects of this work?	My diverse range of sources used								
Which aspects do you consider could have been improved in this piece of work?	The efficiency of finding and referencing my sources								
What have you found most satisfying whilst undertaking this submission?	That a lot of things I believe about physical education have been proven and backed up but data and experts								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Learning	GRADE							
		Poor 0-25%	Unsatisfactory 26-39%	Satisfactory 40 – 49%	Good 50 – 59%	Very Good 60 – 69%	Excellent 70 – 85%	Exceptional 86– 100%	%
Essay content and quality of resources used	1								30%
Referencing within the essay	1								20%
Correctly constructed reference list	1								20%
Structure of essay and clarity of writing	1								30%
It is expected that students will present work that is proof read, correctly referenced and adheres to the Assessment Checklist . Therefore a range of 0 – 10 marks will be deducted for non-completion of any of the points on the checklist below .									

Discuss whether Physical Education should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

This report provides an overview of recent research and articles relating to the planned change of status of physical education in the school curriculum. It discusses the importance and potential benefits of increased physical activity and nutrition, the absence of a clear definition of physical education and finally the introduction of “progression steps” and “what matters” statements in the new curriculum.

It is generally acknowledged by head teachers and parents that physical education is the subject that suffers the most in secondary school when it comes to exam pressures with schools preferring to take them out of the lesson to give them extra maths or English lessons. Research indicates that physical education is just as important as these subjects as in some cases it can be the difference between growing up and living with cardiac diseases, obesity and many more preventable diseases and growing up and living a healthy and active life (Welsh Assembly Government Social Research Department, 2011). If we can get the children in primary schools to enjoy and continue to participate in physical education could this lead them to growing up healthier and active.

Firstly, Baroness Grey-Thompson was the chair of The Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group in 2013 and was tasked with providing a report and recommendation to the Welsh government on how to develop the roles of schools in increasing levels of physical activity in children and young people. They provided one single recommendation to the

Welsh Government in order to increase physical activity in children. ‘Physical Education becomes a core subject in the National Curriculum in Wales’ (Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, 2013). The report also goes on to suggest that by implementing this plan that it would allow children and young people to access a better quality of physical education, potentially making Wales the leading force in the UK for physical activity levels. The report also goes on to cite another Welsh Government report, this time based on the effects of obesity and alcohol have on the NHS (Welsh Assembly Government Social Research Department, 2011). Hale states that “Obesity is estimated to cost the NHS in Wales over £73 million, which increases to nearly £86 million if obese and overweight people are included”. The reports together suggest that if we can get more children and young people active within schools that potentially we could help the NHS in years to come with a decreased amount of obese and overweight accessing the service due to weight related issues.

Following on from Baroness Thompson and the report's findings, Dr Sharhad Taheri and his team decided to see if a major part of obesity in young people came from technology, especially technology use during evening time. The research shows that the less time these young people sleep during the evening time are more likely to become obese or overweight than those who get more sleep (Action Medical Research for Children, 2015). Dr Taheri later goes on to say that in adults a slight change in diet and nutrition can almost counteract the lack of sleep. A way this could be incorporated, if the same could be done for young people, is educating the young people on diet and nutrition. This is already part of the Welsh national curriculum for key stage 2 and 3 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, pp12-16). Potentially by following our curriculum by teaching our children and young people on the benefits of healthy eating and drinking habits as well as the emphasis on physical activity in the curriculum. Harris (2005) states that “Rather than seeking to merely ‘make children fitter’, schools have a more important educational role to play in relation to health and activity”. He is suggesting that schools need to educate the students more upon health benefits and the importance of both physical activity and nutrition and surely the subject of Physical Education is in the best place to deliver this.

Capel (2000) identifies that there is no definitive answer to what physical education as a subject is defined as. She also goes on to suggest that because we don’t have a definition for PE that we just list activities but by doing this we are wrong. Capel (2000) states that “In physical education, activities are the means of achieving its aims. Teachers purposefully select one activity over another in order to achieve a particular aim”. This suggests that physical educators know what they aim to achieve within this subject and they can decide using their expertise the best method to go about and achieve that aim, whether the aim is within the affective, cognitive, physical or social domains. Capel also cites The Department for Education and Employment and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1999) where they state that

“Physical education develops pupils’ physical competence and confidence, and their ability to use these to perform in a range of activities. It promotes physical skilfulness, physical development and a knowledge of the body in action.”

This description of physical education seems to identify the physical domain as the main aim of physical education, which Whitehead (2013) seems to suggest while saying the subject is “educative in that it develops the embodied potential of the learner”. This statement is broader and it could fit into each domain which still suggests that the aim for physical education is still up to the individual physical educator.

Carrying on from this, the Association for Physical Education (AFPE) stated in their health position paper in 2015 that “Physical education is the planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time and which is delivered to all pupils”. The paper describes what is involved during a timetabled lesson, which they called “learning to move (i.e. becoming more physically competent) and moving to learn (e.g. learning through movement, a range of skills and understandings beyond physical activity, such as co-operating with others)” (AFPE, 2015). This again links to the Physical and Social domains mentioned earlier. This suggests that even though there is not one encompassing definition and aim for physical education that there is a consensus that physical education should be aiming to hit the domains even if there is disagreement on how we reach the aims.

The paper cites additional benefits of physical education in schools by stating that if children and young people aged 5-18 have a good quality of physical education that give them access to continuous participation of physical activity has health benefits including improved cardiovascular fitness, potential loss of body fat and the maintenance of a healthy body. The paper also reports that if the level of regular physical activity continues during and after this age that it could potentially lower the risk of chronic illnesses and diseases as well as the mortality from these diseases. The paper cites a report completed by the chief medical officers of the four home countries done in 2011, this report gives guidelines on physical activity guidelines for children and young people aged 5-18, the report states “All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours per day”. For some children and young adults this is not achievable making physical education even more important for them compared to others who will have the opportunity to achieve these guidelines without physical education lessons.

The new curriculum for Wales in physical education that is due in 2022 has changed direction as it will move away from key stages and into “progression steps” and “what matters” statements. The first what matters statement is “Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits” (Welsh Government Education Wales, 2019). This what matters statement echoes what has been stated and backed up by numerous medical and academic studies. The first achievement outcome of progression step 1 is “I can move in different ways, and can choose to take part in active play on my own and alongside others”. The only logical subject to be able to demonstrate that achievement outcome would be physical activity, understandably there are a few achievement outcomes physical education may struggle to achieve such as “I can protect myself from disease, illness and infection”. But this is still achievable through physical education if we think creatively and maybe link this to a nutrition lesson which can be based around physical education.

To conclude physical education has a major impact on the lives of children and young people not just during their school years but as the reports and research above show a high quality of physical education can have lifelong health and well-being benefits and should be valued compulsory part of the school curriculum. Especially with the structure of the new curriculum physical educators can not only teach children and young children lessons that are beneficial during school years but also life lessons outside and after school which is what having a quality education is all about.

Word count-1502

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