

2

AIMS OF PE

Margaret Whitehead

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided you with a broad overview of the role of the PE teacher and of the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to fulfil this role successfully and with confidence. Among the topics discussed were issues concerning the aims of PE and how your teaching can promote the achievement of these aspirations. This chapter looks specifically at the aims of PE. It is important to be clear about aims as these are the foundation for planning schemes of work, units of work and individual lessons. Detailed guidance on planning is covered in Chapter 3. Aims influence both the content and the teaching method you select in your work with pupils. You will probably want to return to Chapters 1 and 2 regularly throughout your initial teacher education (ITE) course to remind you of what you are aiming to achieve in PE.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- understand the terms aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes (ILOs);
- appreciate the relationship between overall educational aims and the aims of PE;
- differentiate between aims of and justifications for PE;
- appreciate that aims of PE are of two types: those unique to the subject and those that are broader educational aims shared with other curriculum subjects;
- understand that aims, objectives and ILOs influence your design and delivery of lessons.

Check the requirements for your course to see which relate to this chapter.

DEFINITIONS AND BROAD PURPOSES

You will hear the words *aims*, *objectives* and *ILOs* frequently in your ITE course and beyond. These terms are different statements of intent and serve a number of purposes:

- they identify what you intend the pupils will achieve;
- they guide how you will teach, informing your scheme/unit/lesson planning;
- they provide a benchmark against which to assess pupil learning, thus informing you whether your planning and teaching achieved the desired ILOs.

Aims therefore give your work direction in purpose, guidance in planning and focus in assessment. These functions can be understood as essential, if looked at broadly in terms of a journey you are to make. In planning and carrying out a journey you need to know where you are going, how you are going to get there and how you recognise that you have arrived. All are important in teaching.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)

Aims and objectives

Aims and objectives are the basis for educational planning. *Aims* provide *overall purpose and direction* and therefore relate to more general intentions. A school has long-term aims or purposes. You should be able to find these in your placement school documentation. There are aims for the curriculum as a whole, for example, those identified by the government in England within the Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003) policy. In addition there are aims set out for each subject such as in the Importance Statement in the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) 2007 (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), 2007a). Aims and objectives become more focused and precise the shorter term and closer to the point of delivery they become. Therefore, aims become more specific from education, to school, to curriculum, to subject. Aims of education specify what should be achieved over a period of time, for example, for the time pupils are required to be at school. They offer general guidance about the purposes of, and outcomes from, education, rather than defining any specific achievements, whereas the aims of a subject such as PE, although still long-term aspirations, are more specific.

The *aims* or purposes of a subject form the starting point for devising *schemes* of work. Typically schemes of work span a whole year or phase of education. Units of work refer to a shorter period of time such as half a term or a term. While schemes characteristically have aims, *units have objectives*. Objectives are more specific purposes and intentions. Thus, objectives are building blocks or stepping stones which, when put together, result in the achievement of an aim(s).

Intended learning outcomes (ILOs)

As indicated above, longer term schemes of work have aims and these generate the objectives of constituent units of work. However, neither aims nor objectives can be used directly to help you plan a particular lesson. They need to be broken down into 'operational' segments, each with a more specific focus. These become ILOs for individual lessons. Aims and objectives are the intended end products of, respectively, the scheme of work or unit of work, whereas ILOs identify what pupils should achieve in a specific lesson. For example, an aim of a PE scheme of work might be to initiate pupils into playing a competitive game. An objective of a unit of work derived from this aim could be

for pupils to be able to play a 5 v 5 game in, e.g. hockey. An ILO of a lesson within this unit could be that pupils understand and can demonstrate the roles of attack and defence in a 5 v 5 situation in hockey. ILOs describe what pupils should be able to do, know or understand at the end of a lesson. They are usually included at the start of a lesson plan and are introduced by a statement such as ‘by the end of the lesson pupils will be able to’. They are fundamental aspects of a lesson plan as they challenge the teacher to devise specific learning activities in the interests of their achievement. In addition, ILOs focus the pupils’ and teacher’s attention during the lesson in that they are likely to generate individual tasks, initiate key teaching points and be the focus of pupil assessment. Furthermore they are the ground against which you evaluate the success of a lesson.

AIMS OF EDUCATION, A SCHOOL AND A SUBJECT

Unit 7.1 in Capel, Leask and Turner (2009) considers aims of education in some detail. It is suggested that you refer to that unit now for background information. It would be useful at this point to read the aims of the whole school/curriculum in your placement school. Any school aims are likely to reflect the current broad philosophy underlying a country’s overall education philosophy. In England and Wales, for example, the National Curriculum requires a broad and balanced curriculum in schools. The key aims of the National Curriculum (QCA, 2007a) are for all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
 - confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
 - responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.
- (QCA, 2007a)

Chapter 14 considers the role of PE in achieving these broad aims. At this stage, however, it is important for you to realise that you are one of a team of people in school all working to common educational aims or aspirations. Each subject should make a contribution to achieving these aims and each teacher should ensure that all planning and delivery of teaching in their subject is firmly grounded in these aims. Both the material covered in lessons and methods of engaging pupils in their learning can make valuable contributions to achieving these aspirations.

AIMS OF PE

PE has taken a number of forms since its inclusion in the school curriculum in the late nineteenth century. Early forms of PE were called drill and physical training (see Davis *et al.*, 2000). The term PE was introduced in 1945 when the then Department of Education took over responsibility for the subject from the Ministry of Health. Since its introduction into schools the subject has worked to achieve a variety of aims. For many years those teaching PE were free to select the specific aims towards which they worked. Early aims included promoting health, improving discipline and developing loyalty and teamwork. A list of aims gathered from surveying teachers’ priorities is given in Figure 2.1.

Now carry out Task 2.1, which encourages you to reflect on the list in Figure 2.1.

Task 2.1 **Prioritising aims of PE**

Study the list in Figure 2.1 and identify the four aims that you feel are the most important to achieve in PE. Compare this list with that created by another student teacher, discussing and defending your different priorities. Record this debate and put the notes in your professional development portfolio (PDP).

- develop physical skills;
- develop self-esteem and self-confidence;
- introduce every pupil to a wide range of activities;
- ensure pupils continue with physical activity after leaving school;
- develop creativity and inventiveness;
- produce world class athletes;
- provide activity to keep youngsters off the street and away from crime;
- teach pupils the role of physical activity in stress prevention;
- promote joint flexibility and muscle strength;
- teach respect for the environment;
- teach pupils to handle competition;
- develop social and moral skills;
- prepare pupils to be knowledgeable spectators;
- teach pupils the place of sport/dance in UK (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish) culture;
- open up possibilities for employment post-school;
- promote health – freedom from illness – especially cardiovascular health;
- promote physical growth and development;
- develop perseverance;
- promote emotional development;
- provide enjoyment;
- win inter-school matches and tournaments;
- ensure pupils are alert to safety at all times;
- provide an area of potential success for the less academic;
- ensure every pupil has sufficient time to become proficient at a particular sport;
- develop water confidence to promote personal survival;
- develop aesthetic sensitivity;
- enable pupils to express themselves through movement;
- promote cognitive development;
- develop good posture and approach a mesomorph build, neither overweight nor underweight.

■ **Figure 2.1** Aims of PE to which teachers have aspired

Nowadays, however, in England, the National Curriculum spells out what each subject should aspire to achieve. This is set out in an Importance Statement. Teachers are expected to design work and teaching approaches to realise the aims inherent in the Importance Statement for their subject and to assess pupils in respect of achieving these aims.

The Importance Statement in the NCPE 2007 (QCA, 2007a) can be found in Chapter 13. Aims for PE arising from the Statement are that pupils should:

- enjoy and succeed in many kinds of physical activity;
- develop a wide range of skills and abilities to use tactics, strategies and compositional ideas;
- think about what they are doing, analyse situations and make decisions;
- reflect on their own and others' performances and find ways to improve them;
- develop confidence to take part in different physical activities;
- learn about the value of healthy active lifestyles;
- be able to make informed choices about lifelong physical activity;
- develop personally and socially;
- be able to work on their own and in groups and teams;
- be able to take on different roles and responsibilities;
- learn how to be effective in competitive, creative and challenging situations.

See Chapter 13 for further details of the NCPE concerning the Concepts and Processes developed from the Importance Statement that should guide the work of PE teachers.

Recommendations in the NCPE become more specific in referring to Key Stages of learning. For example, in relation to Key Stages 3 and 4 (that is for work with pupils from 11 to 16 years) the guidelines spell out more specific aims and purposes of PE. These are for pupils to:

- become skilful and intelligent performers;
 - acquire and develop skills, performing with increasing physical competence and confidence, in a range of physical activities and contexts;
 - learn how to select and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas to suit activities that need different approaches and ways of thinking;
 - develop their ideas in a creative way;
 - set targets for themselves and compete against others, individually and as team members;
 - understand what it takes to persevere, succeed and acknowledge others' success;
 - respond to a variety of challenges in a range of physical contexts and environments;
 - take the initiative, lead activity and focus on improving aspects of their own performance;
 - discover their own aptitudes and preferences for different activities;
 - make informed decisions about the importance of exercise in their lives;
 - develop positive attitudes to participation in physical activity
- http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/Secondary_PE/?view=get (2009).

There are three important points to be made about the aims listed above. These relate to the range of aims that are aspired to, the difference between aims and justifications and the inclusion of two distinct types of aims – those unique to the subject and those shared with other curriculum subjects.

The range of aims for PE

The range of aims presented in the NCPE at Key Stages 3 and 4 can seem very daunting. However, it has always been the case that numerous aspirations have been identified by

PE teachers, as can be seen from Figure 2.1. Attempts have been made to rank or prioritise aims but little consensus has been reached. In this context, to help you see the way forward and avoid being overwhelmed by too many aims it is useful to approach the issue from a slightly different perspective. This can help the multitude of aims to fall into place. The question at the heart of the issue is ‘What would you hope would be the end result of PE in school?’ Put simply the answer could be that you would want all your pupils to be *physically educated*. Task 2.2 asks you to discuss what being physically educated might mean.

Task 2.2 Defining what is meant by being physically educated

Discuss with another student teacher how you would describe a physically educated person. In other words what knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes would you expect to find in a physically educated person? Write a brief description and then consider how the aims of the NCPE (in England) or the aims of PE in your country or school are designed to help pupils achieve this goal. Keep this description in your PDP, possibly reviewing it periodically throughout your course.

It is likely that your description includes reference to physical skill and to enthusiasm to participate in physical activity. It might also include the ability to work with others in an activity context and to have some grasp of the importance of physical activity to health.

An alternative overall aim for PE has been suggested as the development and nurturing of physical literacy. A brief definition of physical literacy reads: ‘As appropriate to each individual’s endowment, physical literacy can be described as a disposition, evidenced through the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the lifecourse’ (Whitehead, 2010). There has been growing interest in, and acceptance of, this concept not least because establishing physical literacy promotes participation in physical activity by every individual throughout the lifecourse. Working to achieve physical literacy in PE not only aims to produce a physically competent individual but, importantly, to motivate all to continue with activity, at an appropriate level, into adulthood and old age. Task 2.3 challenges you to consider how the aims of the NCPE (in England) or the aims of PE in your country or school might help pupils to become physically literate.

Task 2.3 Relating PE aims to physical literacy

Discuss with another student teacher how far the aims of the NCPE (in England) or the aims of PE in your country or school might foster the development of physical literacy. Compare these notes with the notes from Task 2.2 and debate how far physical literacy is achievable in today’s schools. Put these notes in your PDP.

For further information about physical literacy see the website www.physical-literacy.org.uk. Consideration of the relative merits of aspiring to physically educate or to foster physical literacy is a key task at the end of this chapter.

Physical literacy is not the only relatively new concept being discussed by physical educationists. For example, some advocate a focus on *sport education* rather than PE. (See Chapter 14 for discussion of this approach to teaching.) The article on this issue by Kinchin *et al.* (2001) is thought provoking and challenging. Task 2.4 suggests that you read this article and compare your views on the ideas it presents with those of another student teacher.



Task 2.4 **Sport education**

Read the article on this issue by Kinchin *et al.* (2001). Discuss your perceptions of this approach with another student teacher. Identify opportunities and potential problems in following a sport education approach in PE. Put your notes in your PDP.

Physical literacy and sport education each arise from taking a particular perspective on PE, its priorities, potential, and its role in education. Other writers have put forward different views and their philosophies are well worth reading. Carry out Task 2.5 to appreciate some other perspectives on PE.



Task 2.5 **Considering other philosophies of PE**

Read Chapter 1 in Macfadyen and Bailey (2002) 'Thinking about Physical Education in the Secondary School' and record areas in which you agree or otherwise with the views of the writers. Discuss your views with another student teacher. Put your notes in your PDP.

Over time you develop your own views on the aim or aims at the heart of PE. In other words you arrive at your own philosophy of PE. As you discuss this with colleagues you will be expected to justify your opinions. The next section looks at issues surrounding values and justification of PE.

Aims, values and justifications

Statements about the aims of PE are often confused with values of, and justifications for, the subject. This is partly because they often contain very similar material. However, there is a subtle difference between these concepts which needs to be appreciated.

There are always three potential questions:

- First, why are you engaging pupils in a task or activity?
- Second, what is the value of the task/activity?
- Third, can you justify why you are of the opinion the task/activity is of value?

Aims, objectives and ILOs provide the answer to the first question. For example if asked 'Why have you designed this unit to enable pupils to progress from 2 v 2 to 5 v 5 situations in a competitive team situation?' The answer here could be to achieve the objective of developing teamwork.

The second question in this case might be 'What is the value of developing teamwork?' The answer here could be to enable pupils either, sometime in the future, to play the full game, or to promote social development.

A follow-up question could be 'Can you explain why learning to play a full game/promoting social development is valuable?' That is, what is your justification for attention being given in education to achieving this goal(s)?

In the first case the answer could be that participating in a full game gives pupils confidence to continue to be involved in a competitive activity after they leave school, thus providing a worthwhile use of leisure time which can also promote health. In the second case the answer could be that social skills are essential to effective collaboration throughout life, particularly in the workplace.

It is useful at this stage to read Chapter 1 in Capel, Breckon and O'Neill (2006) and carry out Activities 1.1a and 1.1b. Activity 13.3 is also useful. Task 2.6 challenges you to identify, articulate and debate the value of and justification for some of the aims and purposes of the NCPE.



Task 2.6 **Justifying aims**

Working with another student teacher, each select a different aim from the NCPE Key Stage 3 and 4 aims listed above and each prepare an argument to identify and justify its value in an educational context. Now engage in a debate, with each student teacher in turn 'playing devil's advocate' in relation to the justification for the aim supported by the other. Keep these notes of your deliberations and put them in your PDP.

It is very important that as a PE teacher you can identify the value of achieving the aims of the subject, that is, to be able to justify its inclusion in the curriculum, and can engage in a debate as to the educational worth of the values claimed. There can be little dispute over a reference to an aim in respect of your answering the question 'Why are you engaging pupils in this type of work?', however anyone could challenge you about the value of an aim. For example, while most people could not argue with you when you identify that the ILO of a particular lesson is to enable pupils to create a gymnastics sequence, some people might ask what is the value of pupils achieving this outcome. In this situation you would need not only to cite, for example, the fostering of creativity as valuable, but also justify your belief in the value of developing creativity in young people.

Two distinct types of aims

An analysis of the numerous aims and aspirations of PE set out above reveals that they are of two types. One type is concerned with aims that are unique to PE, aims that no other subject area could achieve. The other type identifies broader educational aims that are shared with other curriculum subjects. Task 2.7 asks you to recognise these two different types of aims.

Task 2.7 **Recognising two types of aims**

Using the list of aims from the Key Stage 3 and 4 documentation (QCA, 2009) identify those that are unique to the subject and those that are shared with other curriculum subjects. Carry out the same exercise with the aims listed for PE in your placement school. Discuss your lists with your tutor and put these notes in your PDP.

There is wide debate about how far PE can achieve both the broader aims of education as well as the subject-specific aims. As outlined in Chapter 10, it is suggested that while content tends to focus more on PE-specific aims, the way that teaching is conducted, that is your teaching approaches, can be instrumental in achieving broader aims. It is recommended that early in your development as a PE teacher the principal aims, objectives and ILOs for you to focus on should be those that are unique to PE (for example, for pupils to develop a range of physical skills and succeed in many kinds of physical activity). At this stage, ILOs for lessons that are concerned with the material of the subject provide a focus for your early planning, enable you to check that you understand the material you are teaching and form the criteria against which you judge the success of your lessons and against which your teaching is judged by others.

It is, however, important to remember that PE can and should, indeed is required to, in England, contribute to the broader aims of education and as soon as you have mastered the achievement of the subject-specific aims you should start to address some of the broader educational aims shared with other curriculum subjects (see Chapter 14 'Wider role of a PE teacher'). While broader educational aims may not be your first priority in learning to become a PE teacher, there is no doubt that you have a responsibility as a teacher to address overarching educational aims such as Personal Learning and Thinking Skills as described in Chapter 14. Indeed it is the potential of PE to realise some of these broader goals that has contributed to PE being retained in the curriculum. However we are open to the challenge to prove that we can, in fact, deliver these wider aims, and this must be a serious concern for the profession. There are two important points to be made here – one reassuring and the other challenging.

It is very good to know, through the work of the QCA in England, that there is growing evidence that PE can make a significant contribution to broader aims of education, such as developing self-esteem, improving attitudes to learning and behaviour throughout the school day. You are recommended to visit the QCA website to access this information (www.qca.org.uk/pess).

However, the challenge with respect to this achievement is that, while we undoubtedly *can* be successful here, this only occurs if we tailor our planning and teaching appropriately. Physical educationalists are sometimes guilty of claiming a great deal for the subject, but have little evidence that these aspirations have been achieved. Work planned to achieve subject-specific aims such as skill improvement does *not* automatically deliver broader aims. The significant variable here is *how* we teach and *how* we engage pupils in their learning. If we claim, for example, to promote self-esteem, foster creativity or develop social skills, our planning and teaching must be designed with this in mind. For example, a PE lesson does not promote self-esteem unless tasks that are set are within the grasp of pupils, and the teacher is positive and encouraging. Again work in dance does not automatically

develop creativity nor does participation in football necessarily improve social skills. For dance to develop creativity pupils must have the necessary movement and choreographic skills and knowledge, and be given time and opportunities in the lesson to experiment and use their imagination. For involvement in football to promote social skills it is essential for teams to plan, compete and evaluate together, with the teacher encouraging exploration and discussion, with everyone in the group included in these debates. See Chapter 10 for further discussion of teaching approaches to achieve aims, objectives and ILOs.

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

The aims of education and schooling and more specifically the aims of curriculum subjects, including PE, used in the placement schools in which you work provide guidance about what you are aiming to achieve. In this chapter you have been introduced to the range of aims of PE and alerted to the two different types of aims: those that are unique to PE and those that are broader and are shared with other curriculum subjects. The difference between aims and justifications has been discussed and the importance of your being able to articulate the value of work in PE has been outlined.

The aims of the PE curriculum used in your placement schools should guide your decisions about objectives for units of work, ILOs for lessons, as well as the selection of appropriate content and teaching approaches. Early in your development as a PE teacher the principal ILOs for you to include in your lessons should be those that are unique to PE. At this stage, aims identifying the mastery of physical skills and the effective participation in physical activities provide the focus for your planning, teaching and assessment. As you master the challenge of planning units of work and lessons focused on achieving subject-specific ILOs and as you gain experience and confidence, you can start to address some of the broader aims of the PE curriculum. As explained above, achieving these broader aims depends to a considerable degree on how you teach, that is how you engage pupils in their learning. We suggest that you return to this chapter at different points in your ITE course and consider its content in detail towards the end of your course, when you have mastered the basic teaching skills and can reflect on the aims of PE and what it means to physically educate pupils.

Check the requirements for your course to see which relate to this chapter.

Task 2.8 asks you to critically examine the concept of physical literacy and to write a short piece setting out the benefits or otherwise of adopting the concept of the rationale behind all work in PE



Task 2.8 Physical literacy and PE

With reference to the website www.physical-literacy.org.uk and *Physical Literacy Throughout the Lifecourse* (Whitehead, 2010), consider the value or otherwise of adopting this concept as the rationale behind all work in PE throughout the years of schooling, possibly constructing a SWOT grid. This is a square divided into four equal squares, headed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (See this book's website for an outline grid; www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415561648). Write a paper of 2,000–3,000 words and discuss this with your tutor. Keep the piece in your PDP.

FURTHER READING

Bailey, R., Armour, K., Kirk, D., Jess, M., Pickup, I. and Sandford, R. (British Educational Research Association (BERA) Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy Special Interest Group) (2008) The educational benefits claimed for physical education and school sport: an academic review, *Research Papers in Education*, 24 (1) March: 1–27.

This detailed paper looks at the research into the benefits of PE, specifically physical, affective, social and cognitive. The article below is a shorter version on the same theme.

Bailey, R. (2006) Physical education and sport in schools: a review of benefits and outcomes, *Journal of School Health*, 76, 8: 397–401.

This article explores the scientific evidence that has been gathered on the contributions and benefits of PE and sport in schools for both children and for educational systems.

Capel, S., Breckon, P. and O'Neill, J. (2006) *A Practical Guide to Teaching Physical Education in the Secondary School*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

This book contains a useful chapter on aims of PE and some simple observation instruments.

Capel, S. and Piotrowski, S. (eds) (2000) *Issues in Physical Education*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

A wide-ranging text which includes a debate on issues surrounding aims of PE. Chapter 1 looks at 'Aims as an issue in PE' and covers topics such as extrinsic versus intrinsic aims and the use of PE as a means to achieve broad aims or as an end in itself.

Whitehead, M.E. (ed.) (2010) *Physical Literacy Throughout the Lifecourse*, London: Routledge.

This book sets out the background and application of the concept. Further information and papers can be found on the website: www.physical-literacy.org.uk.