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**Teaching Health & Physical Education in contemporary Australian school  
education: Rethinking teachers curriculum and pedagogical work**

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## **Abstract**

Traditional approaches to teaching Health and Physical Education (HPE) in schools have been characterised by content structured around popular sports and recreational activities and teaching approaches that have focused on the development of prerequisite skills (techniques) and tactics and strategies. More recently in some school contexts, approaches such as *Teaching Games for Understanding* (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) and *Sport Education* (Siedentop, 1994) have challenged traditional approaches to teaching HPE. However, in contemporary school education in Australia, the role of HPE has been redefined and expected to contribute to more generic outcomes for schooling (Brooker & Clennett, 2006a, b). The purpose of this paper is to explore the ways in which teachers' curriculum and pedagogical work is being redefined and to suggest how teachers might be better prepared to respond to teaching HPE in new times and in new spaces.

## Introduction

In the book, *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*, Hargreaves (1994) suggested that society is in a “major sociohistorical transition period from modernity to postmodernity” (p. 23) and that such changes have posed significant challenges for schools and teachers. One of the markers of the transition is the emergence of a “knowledge society” which has the capacity to “process information and knowledge in ways that maximise learning, stimulate ingenuity and invention, and develop capacity to initiate and cope with change” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3). What are the implications for schools and teachers? Hargreaves argued that as “catalysts” of the knowledge society, teachers must build a new professionalism where they:

- Promote deep cognitive learning
- Learn to teach in ways they were not taught
- Commit to continuous professional learning
- Work and learn in collegial teams
- Treat parents as partners in learning
- Develop and draw on collective intelligence
- Build a capacity for change and risk
- Foster trust in processes (2003, p. 24)

Increasingly, the capacities for a knowledge society are being reflected in the expected outcomes from schooling and identified in contemporary school curricula documents. One example is the emergence of outcomes of schooling being characterised as “Essential Learnings”. Such learnings downplay the traditional discipline based structure of the curriculum and focus on more generic outcomes. Such curricula have implications for the ways in which teaching and learning is organised and conducted in schools.

Against this background, this paper draws on a small case study of the experiences of three teachers involved with the implementation of a contemporary curriculum in one school in one Australian state, Tasmania, to explore the struggles that teachers engage with, in moving their practice from teaching in a traditional curriculum structure to teaching based around generic essential learnings. In doing so, it identifies ways in which teachers’ curriculum and pedagogical work is being redefined and puts forward ideas about the future preparation of teachers to meet the demands of contemporary teaching.

The context for the study is the repositioning of a Health and Physical Education curriculum to meet the outcome of a Key Element, *Maintaining Wellbeing*, one of four Key Elements in the *Personal Futures* Essential Learning. *Personal Futures* was one of five Essential Learnings that defined the contemporary Tasmanian curriculum (Tasmanian Department of Education, 2003). Data for the study were collected from interviews with three HPE teachers at one school.

### **Health and Physical Education in the contemporary schooling context**

In the contemporary Australian school curriculum context, the HPE learning area is being called upon to serve many and diverse purposes. Across Australia, there is a growing trend to structure school curricula and pedagogy, at least in the compulsory years of schooling, around the promotion and development of more generic educational outcomes, rather than those that have a specific discipline or learning area focus. To illustrate these curriculum trends, the following discussion focuses on developments in two Australian states: *Essential Learnings Framework* (Tasmania Department of Education, 2002) and *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2006).

In Tasmania, the curriculum is structured around a framework which identifies five Essential Learnings: *Thinking*; *Personal Futures*; *World Futures*; *Social Responsibility*; and *Communication*

(Tasmania Department of Education, 2002). Each Essential Learning is further articulated by Key Elements, 18 in total. The Key Element most directly associated with the HPE learning area is *Maintaining Wellbeing* (MW) located in *Personal Futures*. The scope of the MW Key Element is defined by the following Outcome: “Understands the interdependence of the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing and knows how to make wise choices and contribute positively to the overall wellbeing of others” (Tasmania Department of Education, 2003). It is anticipated that through *Personal Futures* students will learn to be self-directed and ethical people, having a positive vision for themselves and their future, acting with moral autonomy and contributing to constructive futures for themselves and others (Tasmania Department of Education, 2003). The ELF requires HPE knowledge to be applied in an interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum. The Tasmanian ELF curriculum is aimed at preparing students in state schools for a better life beyond schooling and reflects a paradigm shift towards a more relevant school curriculum. Also, with the introduction of the ELF into Tasmanian schools opportunities have arisen that encourages the development of contemporary teaching and learning practices.

### **Curriculum, teaching and learning for a contemporary curriculum**

Traditionally HPE teachers have spent most of their curriculum time on topics associated with “skill development for play and sport”, “physical fitness”, “movement skills”, and “physical recreation”, in both primary and secondary schools (Hunter, 2003). Therefore, if HPE is to create learning experiences for students within a contemporary curriculum there needs to be a shift in pedagogy from teacher-directed to student-centered, including an emphasis on “teaching for understanding”, personal investment, group decision making and problem solving to give students a sense of ownership and control of their learning experience (Kinchin & O’Sullivan, 2003). The traditional sport ideologies and teaching practices which focused on skills and drills, embraced by a number of HPE teachers, will be in conflict with a new curriculum and with recent educational theories, and may be difficult to overcome. Contemporary pedagogies propose “thinking” and a “teaching for understanding.”

### **Teaching and learning for an Essential Learnings Framework**

Underpinned by a “teaching for understanding” philosophy (eg. Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), the Tasmanian Department of Education (2002) have identified the following principles of learning and teaching as being supportive of the contemporary Essential Learnings Framework:

- Learning is a process of making meaning in the world
- Learners are unique and determine their own learning
- Learning depends on being able to connect prior knowledge, perceptions or patterns of experience to new experience or new information and contexts
- Learning is profoundly influenced by social relationships
- Learning is more effective when information is embedded in purposeful and meaningful experiences
- Learning is enhanced by learners being aware of how thinking and learning occur
- Learning is demonstrated when learners can apply their understandings in new situations in flexible and thought provoking ways
- Learning is complex and non-linear

In a similar vein, the development of an essential learnings curriculum (Victorian Essential Learnings) by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (2004) was supported by the following set of “Principles of Learning & Teaching P-12” (Victoria Department of Education & Training, 2004)

- The learning environment is supportive and productive.
- The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation.
- Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program.

- Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.
- Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.

Such conceptualisations of learning and teaching are reflected in Hargreaves (2003) suggestion that teaching for the knowledge economy “fosters and thrives” on the following characteristics: creativity; flexibility; problem-solving; ingenuity; collective intelligence; professional trust; risk-taking; and continuous improvement (p. 29). In referring the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the electronic and ecological era where schools are expected to promote lifelong learning and be the focus of collaborative learning communities, Bennett and Cooper (1991) cast teachers as facilitators, assisting students to explore, construct and consume knowledge.

### **Curriculum, teaching and learning for HPE in a contemporary curriculum**

HPE has many connections to the learning outcomes in the ELF framework; HPE contributes to thinking, experiential learning, interdisciplinary studies and authentic learning experiences which make connections between the student and their personal future as well as with the broader global context. HPE significantly contributes to human development. From a physical point of view, it endeavours to enhance the development of cognitive, physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional skills by learning in, through and about movement (Cone, Cone, Werner & Woods, 1998).

Recent developments in pedagogical approaches to the HPE area are also supportive of the ELF framework. The last decade in Australia has seen considerable emphasis placed on reform to the subject area of HPE in the school curriculum. There has been a need to enhance the quality of learning outcomes for school students, particularly in the area of higher order thinking skills (Tinning, Macdonald, Wright & Hickey, 2001). One such example is the adoption of a *Teaching Games for Understanding* (TGfU) (also referred to as *Game Sense*) (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982, as cited in Kirk, 1989) approach to teaching physical activity, an approach which moves away from the emphasis on skill development towards an understanding of the nature of the game and how it is played. The TGfU approach is supportive of the “teaching for understanding” philosophy which underpins the ELF and the *Thinking EL*.

Thinking is an essential part of the TGfU approach as it focuses on the development of strategic and tactical knowledge, with the acquisition of skills playing a supportive role to these understandings. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) have suggested that “teaching for understanding” aims at having students explain, interpret, and apply, while showing insight from perspective, empathy, and self knowledge” (p. 64). Alongside the physical and social development through movement, TGfU pedagogy promotes complex problem solving and the transfer of concepts and principles to other physical activity situations. Students are engaged in the learning process as they discuss team tactics, strategy, and work out new plays for different conditions. The HPE teacher can integrate higher order thinking without detracting from physical activity (Light, 2001).

An important implication of this approach is the promotion of more authentic learning for students through the marrying of theory and practice, a view which is supported by Jewett, Bain and Ennis (1995) who state, “We believe that the designing of a curriculum, or a physical education program, is a practical activity that is based upon a set of beliefs about the role of education in society, that theory and practice are inseparable” (p. 1). For this reason we need to go beyond “learning as cognitive” and “learning as motor” to promote an understanding and practice of learning as a *social* process and an understanding that knowledge and its status is accordingly *socially constructed* (Hunter, 2003). Reid (1998) argued that knowledge is expressed not only in words or symbols but also in actions. The practical form that knowledge can take can be represented in a physical education class. By encouraging *Thinking* (EL) within HPE lessons students are being encouraged to think ethically, use their problem solving and decision-making, inquiry and reflective skills. As a

result, they become more motivated and involved in physical education (Banks & Ayers, 1993). The learning outcomes that HPE can build through physical movement and health knowledge within the EL's may determine its educational status for the future.

The challenge to teachers is to question their current teaching practices and to find ways in which the values, purposes and outcomes of a contemporary curriculum (ELF) can be incorporated into their teaching practices. Such engagement will provide new challenges for many HPE teachers, as they will be required to work across disciplines and to collaborate with colleagues from other learning areas.

### Results

The data were generated from interviews with three HPE teachers in one school around the theme of how HPE teachers are working with the ELF document and the ways that it is impacting on their practice and the HPE learning area. Two teachers taught in the middle school (5-7 years) and one in the secondary (8-10 years).

#### Teachers understanding about the ELF in relation to the HPE learning area

All three teachers were aware that their teaching was being impacted on by the introduction of the ELF. However Teachers (B and C) commented on not being too sure about the implementation of the ELF and the HPE learning area. When questioned specifically about the language in the documents there was hesitation by all three teachers as they admitted to not having much knowledge of what was in the ELF document and how it was to be used in HPE. Despite, having some knowledge of the language of the ELF document and was able to provide some explanation of what the *key element outcome* and *performance guidelines* were, Teacher A suggested that teachers had not been given enough knowledge on how to implement the ELF. At the time of the interviews Teachers A and B had some knowledge of the Standards but their understanding of assessment was not clear. Teacher A expressed concern about the weighting of results from HPE in assessing when it came to protocol consensus, a process, which involves teachers coming together to collaborate on which standard the student will be assessed. The teachers were not clear whether the results for a student who was judged at Standard 5 in HPE but at a lower level in other areas, would be fairly represented in the student's final result.

Nevertheless, the teachers expressed tentative confidence in implementing the ELF into HPE. One admitted to not being confident but was not worried and was prepared to work with the "flow". Teachers agreed that they could work with the ELF and (possibly surprisingly given their uncertainty about the ELF expressed above) could not see any significant change being made to the teaching of HPE. This was exemplified by Teacher B who commented how "...I think HPE lends itself nicely to the framework... the (existing) HPE core curriculum was on track to meeting students needs before the ELF" and another who commented that, "I think that the HPE programs will change subtly" (Teacher A). Teacher A made reference to the strands *Thinking* and *Personal Futures* as being the easiest to relate to HPE but at this stage had not made an effort to look at the other three strands (*Communicating*, *Social Responsibility* and *World Futures*).

Teachers B and C did not see the ELF taking anything away from traditional sporting programs but Teacher A pointed out that it depended on what schools were already doing, on what was being taught and how but possibly there would be small changes to traditional sport programs. For example, as one teacher pointed out: "... sports programs definitely will change because when you are teaching just sport that's focused purely on playing the game where as the ELF it is more about the tactics of the game or the social togetherness of a team sport" (Teacher A). Two teachers (A and B) expressed some concern about the level of physical activity which the student's would engage in if HPE was not a separate subject discipline. However they commented on how it was up to how the school and teachers worked with the ELs. Teacher A discussed the topical issues of childhood

obesity as making an important contribution to maintaining a focus on the importance of HPE within the curriculum.

The reasons for their level of understanding of ELF were discussed. Teacher C pointed out that there was a lack of specific support given to the HPE learning area within the whole school structure of professional learning (PL) in relation to the document. The PL sessions in the school reflected more valued subjects (such as science and maths) and left the specialisation subjects music, LOTE, art, HPE and drama to apply the knowledge appropriately. It is worthwhile to note at this point that the school had not received any PL on assessment. Assessment was an area of confusion and unknown to all the teachers. Finally teacher C suggested that more PL was required for HPE staff on how to implement the ELF, specific to their teaching area. Teacher A further indicated that it was up to the HPE staff in school clusters and across the districts to push to have HPE as a key component in the ELF.

Teacher C believed that enough time had been given to change teaching practices but more time was needed to implement the document. An alternative view was given by Teacher B who felt that enough time had not been allocated for change in teaching practice or implementation. The point was raised that on a full teaching load (28 lessons a week) it is doubtful that there is adequate time available for planning and implementing (Teacher A).

#### **Using concepts embedded in the ELF in the HPE learning area.**

All three teachers expressed that important concerns for the future were assessment, integration, and pedagogy including “teaching for understanding” and “thinking.” Teacher A commented that HPE needs to be included in the assessment of all the strands and not just *Personal Futures*. Also the school needed to improve the implementation of the ELF to allow for appropriate assessment. The biggest concern was the lack of discussion about cross curriculum or interdisciplinary studies.

There was a mixed response from the teachers towards “teaching for understanding” and “thinking.” All three teachers referred to thinking in their discussion about teaching. However, one teacher (C), admitted that they did “not understand it very well” and another teacher (B) replied “don’t know” to questions about the meaning of higher order thinking for learning in HPE and how it might be used in teaching HPE. The “thinking” in HPE was achieved with a more tactical and strategic approach applying *Teaching Games for Understanding* (TGfU) and *Game Sense*. Teachers A and B have used the TGfU approach to support their teaching in these areas. Teacher C had used “teaching for understanding” but was unsure of any particular models that they had used or had been suggested at the school. Teachers B and C were unsure how to use higher order thinking but Teacher B was aware of its connection to TGfU. Teacher A explained:

I think higher order thinking is when I can teach a skill such as a method, say bringing the ball up the court as a team. If we can teach a skill there and they can apply it to another game and another game and then into a different setting, basically, learning a skill then applying it and the understanding to apply it to a different context

Another teacher (C) suggested that “We will start to ask a lot more questions, “Why did you do that?” “Why could you do it?” “How could you do it differently?” It was also pointed out that thinking in HPE will develop:

I think it is at the point where we have to make the students aware that they are thinking in HPE, a lot of them come to class asking “what game are we playing today?” and earlier on in the year I was telling them we were doing thinking. They would say “This isn’t thinking it is PE” But they need to learn that elements of what we do in regards to the understanding

thing where I am thinking about applying different skills or a gymnastics lesson where we are getting them to think about safety measures and things like that. (Teacher A)

By encouraging “thinking” within HPE lessons students are being encouraged to think ethically, use their problem solving and decision-making, inquiry and reflective skills. Teacher A stated that “I can see that as we become more and more familiar with the ELs through *Personal Futures*, *Maintaining Wellbeing*, and *Thinking* it is something we can all be doing in HPE, not just planning for it but making the students aware that we are doing it.”

The notions of integration and an authentic curriculum, two other key concepts embedded in the ELF, were referred to by one teacher in a discussion about HPE and the ELF:

... we use different methods of inquiry to teach various things, for example (in) maths they might use maths to teach an area in algebra... design a new swimming pool for GT (name of town) and so they go and design the swimming pool... what skills are we going to need to know about area, volume of water this and that. That way... the skills can be applied to a real life situation (Teacher A)

However, none of the teachers had engaged in any significant collaborative work with teachers from other learning areas, which was explained by one teacher in the following terms: “Probably just trying to get my own head around the ELF and how that is going to apply to HPE. Once I get my mind comfortable with where that direction is heading then I will try and apply it into other contexts” (Teacher A).

### **The impact of the ELF on HPE teachers and teaching**

There was a general understanding of what was expected of the teachers with respect to implementing the ELF. It was pointed out by Teacher A that “how as a school, teachers were working hard to implement the Essentials (ELF) and professionally, it was up to teachers to push themselves”. One impact on HPE teachers was expressed through uncertainty about where HPE was going to fit in. As stated by Teacher A “...HPE strongly supports *Personal Futures*, but how can it represent and work with the other strands?” Another concern expressed was related to the pressure to produce unit plans (Teacher C).

In relation to how the teachers thought the students will respond to the ELF, all three agreed that the student’s did not really know what was happening. One teacher (A) stated that “Maybe next year when the assessment changes, they might be concerned” and it was another teacher’s (B) perception that the students were unaware of the ELF: “I am not even sure they (would) have even noticed if you said ELF.”

All three teachers expressed the view that the introduction of the ELF would have little or no impact on their beliefs about HPE. One teacher noted, “No things will stay pretty much the same” (Teacher C) and another thought that that they might “subtly change” (A). Teacher B stated “I think HPE lends itself beautifully to the ELF, it won’t change much.” However, all of the teachers at the time of the interviews were at a stage of implementing and making adjustments to HPE under the ELF.

The introduction of the ELF had served as a means for teachers to think more about their teaching practice. All three teachers made reference to a change in their pedagogy. Teacher A stated that “...my teaching is now more student-centred than teacher driven...that it was no longer traditional teaching of skills and drills and checklists.” In response to a question about changes to their teaching practice, it was pointed out that

I have had to think a lot more about what I am teaching... it has made me use questioning a whole lot more as part of my teaching... it has changed it slightly, a bit more student centred as opposed to teacher driven. (Teacher A)



This view was supported by another who indicated that incorporating the ELF into their teaching “makes me think about what I’m doing... (I) keep questioning myself” (Teacher B). It was interesting to note that that limited teaching experience was seen to be an advantage in terms of confidence about changing their teaching practice: “I have confidence with in just because I haven’t had a massive amount of teaching experience... I haven’t got any preconceived ideas or conceptions about what should and shouldn’t be, so I can come in fresh and use the ELF appropriately” (Teacher A). However, limited teaching experience also served another purpose: “I don’t want to have to change too much of my prior knowledge.”

### Discussion

This study sought to explore how teachers perceive the process of change in implementing the ELF through the HPE learning area. Through the teachers’ discussions there were indications that they were trying to implement change with limited knowledge of the ELF document in relation to the HPE learning area. The study highlighted that the three teachers were at different stages of their understanding of the ELF document. The responses of the teachers from the interviews tended to reflect their willingness to try and understand the ELF document and its relationship to HPE but as the findings indicated, participants had a hard time understanding the requirements of the curriculum change. All participants acknowledged the lack of specific HPE professional learning as a frustration to their understanding and progress. It has been established in previous research (Fullan, 1993) that support is required for the implementation of change.

All teachers in the study expressed their willingness, determination and commitment to try and embrace the ELF into their teaching and learning. An unexpected finding was the minimal concern about integration and HPE. At the time of the interviews there had been no attempt to integrate HPE with any other subject areas. In response to what support had been offered for HPE integration, the teachers’ answers discussed the minimal attempts to provide for professional learning integration and planning. Results suggested that minimal effort had been made by the school to provide professional learning, to make HPE part of integrative studies. This may suggest that teachers still view HPE as a separate subject discipline and something for the ‘too hard basket’ to integrate with other subject areas. There has been very little written that focuses on interdisciplinary learning with additional emphasis on active, concrete, practical learning experiences with human movement as the central core (Cone et al., 1998). This view is also supported by Brooker, Carlson and Hunter, (1999) as they reported “very little research addresses the notion of integration within the HPE field...” (p. 1). Only Teacher B who was teaching in the classroom provided discussion on some HPE integration.

To encourage HPE teachers to make sense of change are to provide adequate PL in their subject area. Assessment and integration were identified as the biggest concerns. An increased focus on assessment and integration within the learning area of HPE should be considered. Greater emphasis on the area of integration which is consistent with the ELF curriculum is essential for HPE and other subjects. The removal of subject boundaries is the ultimate outcome for the ELF curriculum. Consequently this could have an effect on the physical engagement of HPE. Further research designed to measure the amount of physical activity in the ELF under *Personal Futures* is strongly recommended. This would allow HPE teachers working with the ELF to create a curriculum with innovation and change to enable the development of a deeper understanding and higher order thinking for their students while supporting their learning area of physical activity and health. At present in the ELF document under *Maintaining Wellbeing* there is only one performance guideline that mentions the involvement of physical activity. The immense potential for learning through movement requires further recognition within the ELF document. However, the teachers in the interview did not perceive the values or beliefs they hold of physical activity being threatened under the ELF.

The teachers in this study demonstrated their knowledge about the links of TGfU with the pedagogy of “teaching for understanding” and “thinking.” Subsequently, the HPE specialist teachers have assumed responsibility of contributing learning experiences that connect to the ELF curriculum. This role for some has occurred prior to the ELF as they commented on the past Health and Physical Education Core Curriculum (Tasmanian Department of Education, 1998) ‘relating nicely’ (Teacher B) to the ELF. The implications of this point are that the importance of HPE specialist teacher and the importance of the HPE curriculum within schools are often undervalued and the learning and teaching potential of this learning area are often not fully utilized. This was evident in the interviews as there was a sense of being left out of integration attempts by other teachers and PL.

The relationship between “teaching for understanding” and “thinking” in recent times has become more significant due to the curriculum models addressing physical education for ‘everyone’ (Tinning et al. 2001). Underpinning the design of these curricula was an educational belief that too much emphasis was being placed on skilled performance and competition in physical education, resulting in non-inclusive and elitist practices often driven by sport ideologist HPE teachers. The findings revealed that “teaching for understanding” was an area of pedagogy that the teachers were confident in developing. The use of TGfU as a pedagogy was significant for all the teachers in achieving “thinking” and “teaching for understanding” in the curriculum. The underpinning use of “thinking” in TGfU was discussed by all teachers, in particular by Teacher A as having an active role in student’s decision making and transference of knowledge from one skill or game situation to another. Students will be required think about and solve complex problems on their own, supporting more meaningful and enjoyable learning. Educators will need to provide them with the skills to synthesize, analyse and make solid intellectual connections (Russell, 2001). Ultimately HPE is to improve student’s involvement in physical activity which might lead to a healthier lifestyle.

Curriculum innovation brings significant challenges for teachers. One of these challenges is to question their current teaching practices and to find ways in which the values, purposes and outcomes of a contemporary curriculum (ELF) can be incorporated into their teaching practices. It must be acknowledged that the level of the HPE teacher’s involvement in a curriculum innovation is grounded in his or her own value system and based on their subjective assessment of what will benefit them in relation to their investment (Sparkes, 1990). Also, for the ELF to be successful, teachers need to understand the framework and how it can be developed through their particular learning area and in collaboration with other learning areas.

With curriculum reform, the challenge for teachers is to question their current teaching practices and to find ways in which the values, purposes and outcomes of a contemporary curriculum (e.g. ELF) can be incorporated into their teaching practices. It is interesting to note in this study that the resistance to change was minimal as all teachers were taking on the challenge to try and implement the ELF into HPE. A possible explanation for this “compliance” was the perception that the new curriculum would bring little challenge to their beliefs about HPE. As supported by the literature, governments have the power to introduce curriculum change however the success of curriculum reform is reliant on the acceptance and genuine commitment of the teacher (Sparkes, 1990; Tinning et al, 2001).

The teachers in this study were positive about the possible benefits of the ELF, these included learning benefits for students, for example understanding the skill relationship between different games and teaching benefits which included being able to team teach. The teachers also expressed concern, as they were not aware of what the future changes of the curriculum were going to involve. While the ELF has the support of the HPE teachers in this study it is important that the teachers are encouraged to cooperate and support each other to maintain momentum. As supported by (Tinning et al. 2001) the involvement of a supportive educational environment is integral to the successful

implementation of any curriculum. It will be through the HPE teacher's ability to interpret the ELF and develop the curricula which will determine the success of the curriculum on the student's learning outcomes.

The ultimate outcome of any curriculum offering should be to improve the educational experience of teachers and learners as Tinning et al. (2001) state, "...it is ultimately up to the teacher as to whether curriculum change or reform will live or die" (p. 229). The parameters of curriculum decision making at the school level usually reflect tightly defined and controlled outcomes (Tinning et al., 2001). Macdonald (2003) explained that curricularists have the knowledge and experience to implement meaningful curriculum change, however the goals and processes of change are narrowly proscribed by existing structures, resources and traditions, with the result that schools always fall short of meeting the needs of young people and their communities. Russell (2002) also referred to the needs of young students, "a student may ask: Do you know what to teach me? Do you know what I need to learn? And do you know how to teach me? Are you confident that you can design a curriculum which will equip me to live in my world?" (p. 5). The curriculum should be seen as evolving and dynamic, adjusting to social, political, technological and cultural changes to meet the learning needs of students.

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