

How HPE teachers understand the HPE Curriculum-

The socio-critical, socio-cultural, humanistic
muddle

Background

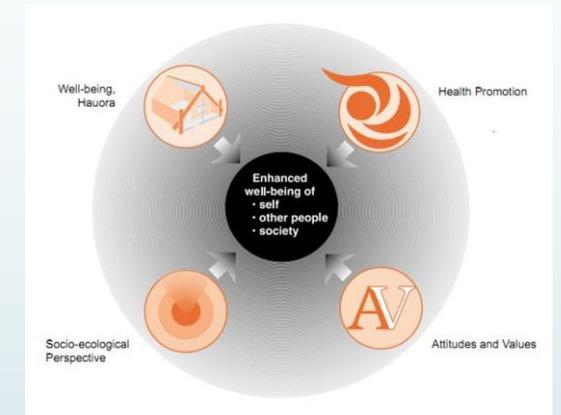
Started my training in 1999 at University of Canterbury and CCE and graduated in 2002.

B Ed PE camp 2001



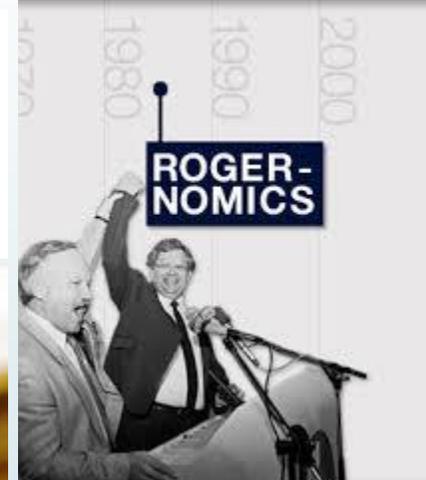
Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum, (1999)

Ian Culpan, one of the two main HPENZC writers, suggested that the HPENZC moved from being a very functionalist view of the subject to a complex socio-critical view of PE (Culpan, 1998)



Why the Change?

- ▶ Loosing our place in the NZ Curriculum Framework (1993).
- ▶ The threat of neo-liberal policies in education (free-market, decentralised schooling).





What do we know?- 1987 Physical Education syllabus

The 1987 Physical Education syllabus contained three major components;

- Physical growth and development
- Motor skill development
- Personal and social development (DoE, 1987).

➤ Image of 1987 syllabus



The Change

The new Curriculum:

“attempted to...

move towards the concept of total wellbeing...

capture the potential of physical education in a far more comprehensive and holistic manner by examining all aspects of movement culture...

address a critical learning dimension that has been absent from other curriculum documents...

engender debate on healthism discourse, [and] encourage greater integration and balance between the social and physical sciences (Culpan, 1998, p. 7)”



Critical Pedagogy in PE



Evans (1990) highlighted how and why critical pedagogy was necessary in physical education when he suggested that:

“we have to consider that what passes for physical education in schools is also a social construction, and as such is inevitably a site of struggle over values and different conceptions of how the body, the individual and society ought to be, a contest in which individuals and interest groups may not all have the same opportunities or power to make their voices heard (p142)”.



Critical Pedagogy in PE

Tinning (1997) argued that if physical educators were to claim being a human service field, we need to:

- ▶ Move away from a performance discourse which focuses on scientific knowledge and methods to improve the human body.
- ▶ Move towards more of a participation discourse which is concerned about physical education that increases people's willingness to participate in the movement culture in a positive way that benefits society (Alexander, Taggart and Medland, 1993).



What did I do to find out?

- ▶ This study used qualitative methods.
- ▶ The research questions focussed on exploring how PE teachers understand and create meaning from the curriculum document and how their interpretation of the document translates into practice.
- ▶ Six participants were selected for this study through purposive sampling. The participants needed to be familiar with the socio-critical perspective of the HPENZC. Three participants were male and three were female. There was also a good variety of teaching experience.
- ▶ Data were collected through semi-structured interviews.

Findings- Use and Understanding of HPENZC

- HPENZC was visible in official planning but not always in practice
- Some teachers struggle to understand HPENZC
- Technical vs Critical: A battle of beliefs about the purpose of PE



Findings- Use and Understanding of Socio-critical Pedagogy

1. Critical pedagogy's in HPE is –
 - Catering for students' wellbeing / hauora
 - The promotion of lifelong physical activity
 - Challenging assumptions
2. Socio-critical pedagogy is a health education pedagogy

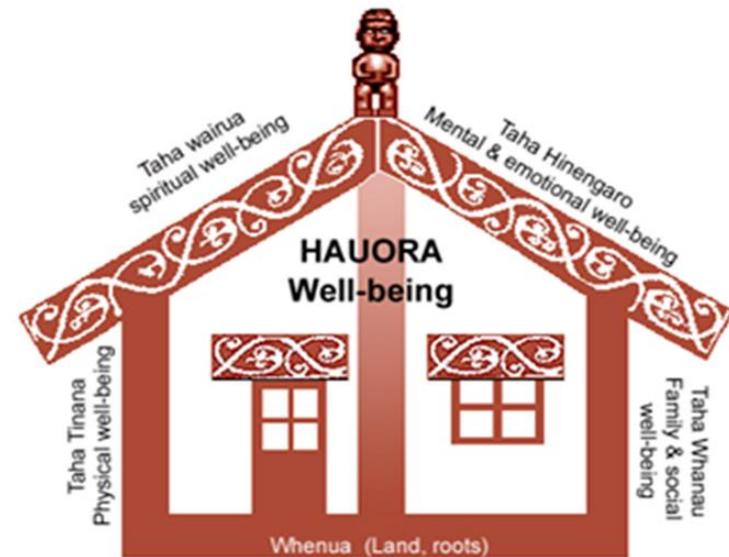
Te Whare Tapa wha



Critical pedagogy's in
HPE is –
catering for students'
wellbeing

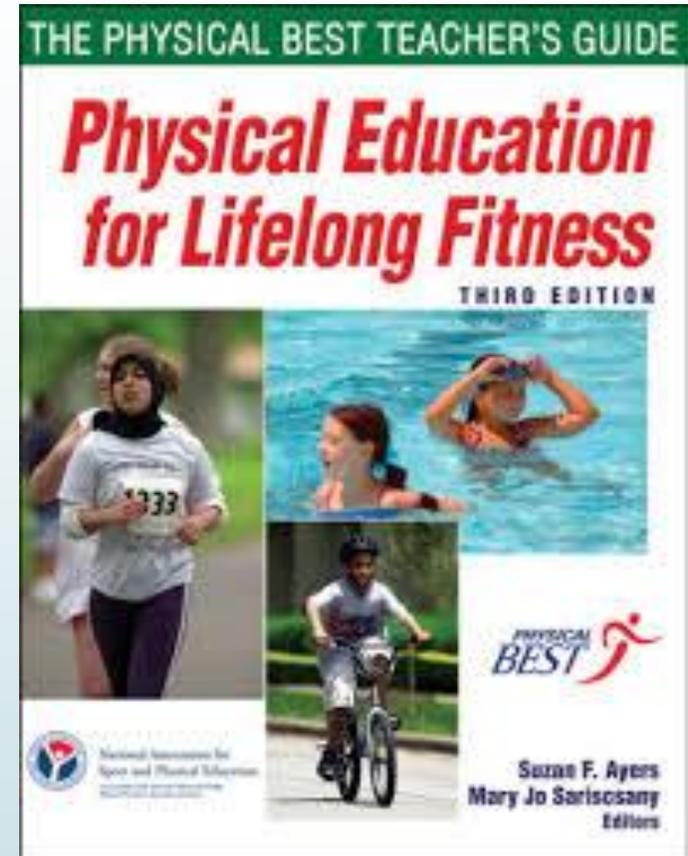
"in everything that I do I use hauora as a guiding principle...hauora [is] a concept that personally I'm really passionate about. I think that it should be taught in more than just PE."

Te Whare Tapa wha



Critical pedagogy's in HPE is – The promotion of lifelong physical activity

One participant was asked about the purpose of PE, she stated that she wanted to develop “*lifelong learners in physical activity*”. She wanted to help students get “*involved in physical activity rather than just organised sport*”.



Critical pedagogy's in HPE is- challenging assumptions

... I would just acknowledge difference, celebrate difference, challenge stereotyping, create an environment where boys are happy being [who] they are, where they are and without feeling they have to behave, or act a certain way, just because of the way they look or who they are....

"To challenge. To just challenge assumptions that we have and to challenge norms [so] it's ok if you don't fit this perfect little box that seems to be getting smaller and smaller."





Socio-critical pedagogy is a health education pedagogy

When asked for examples of when they use a socio-critical approach, examples came from:

- ▶ ... wellbeing and sexuality
- ▶ ...*nutrition topic*
- ▶ *when we look at bullying,*
- ▶ *drugs and alcohol education or sexuality education*

One participant tried to blend their approach in both HE and PE

When asked if he could think of how he shows a critical approach in a PE lesson one response was, "*what would it look like in a PE context? [pause] Not off the top of my head in some ways.*"

So what does all this mean?

- The practices of some teachers represent more liberal humanism rather than socio-critical perspectives.
- There is confusion and lack of clarity amongst the participants as to what socio-critical pedagogy entails.
- This could be due to the ambiguity of the language of the HEPNZC.





Humanism rather than Critical pedagogy

- ▶ Although a focus on wellbeing and lifelong physical activity moves away from the physical health related fitness discourse that has dominated the movement culture for the last 30 years (Colquhoun, 1990), it does not challenge structural constraints.
- ▶ While it could be argued that supporting students to maintain lifelong involvement in physical activity is enacting change, the focus is on individuals. It is also not clear how this focus is taking into account the constraints of social structures.



Challenging assumptions and critical thinking is only the beginning

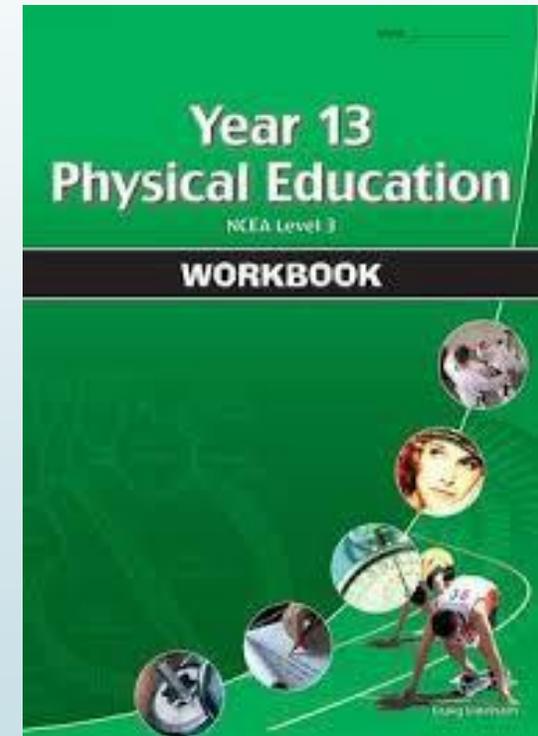
- ▶ A deconstruction of knowledge is only the beginning and must be followed up with social change to create new ways of understanding. If norms are only challenged, this could be seen as just analytical, or critical thinking, not necessarily critical pedagogy, as it does not call one to action (Burbules & Burk, 1999).

Critical pedagogy has become synonymous with critical thinking

NCEA PE assessment guidelines (NZQA, 2011) specify critical examination which alludes to evidence gathering to replace poor assumptions with more grounded assumptions regarding phenomena rather than changing philosophies that produced those norms in the first place.

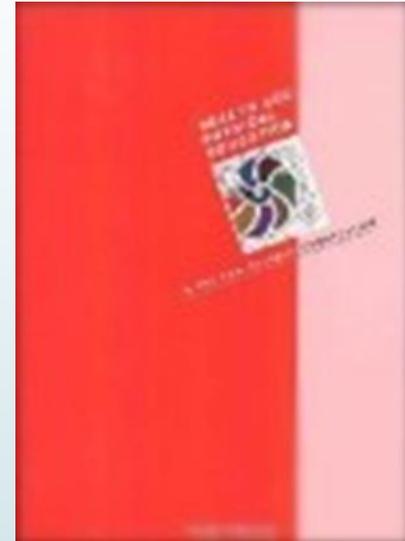


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Ambiguity of the language of the HEPNZC

While Culpan & Bruce (2007) claim that the HEPNZC has critical intentions, it is difficult to find language of critical pedagogy in the curriculum document. The language typically associated with critical pedagogy such as emancipation, social justice, socially critical and taking action are hard to find in the document.



Functional/ Technical

Humanistic/Holistic

Socio-Critical Pedagogy

B1 Movement skills

- Acquire and apply complex motor skills by using basic principles of motor learning

A1 Personal growth and development

- Describe *physical, social, emotional, and intellectual processes of growth* and relate these to features of adolescent development and effective self-management strategies.

D1 Societal attitudes and values

- Investigate *societal influences on the well-being of student communities*.

B3 Science and technology

- Investigate and experience ways in which *scientific, technological, and environmental knowledge* and resources assist in and influence people's participation in regular physical activity

A2 Regular physical activity

- Experience a range of personally enjoyable physical activities and describe how varying levels of involvement *affect well-being and lifestyle balance*.

D2 Community resources

- Investigate community services that support and promote people's wellbeing and *take action* to promote personal and group involvement.

A3 Safety management

- Investigate and practise safety procedures and strategies to *manage risk situations*.

D3 Rights, responsibilities, and laws

- Identify the *rights and responsibilities of consumers* and use this information to evaluate health and recreational services and products in the community.

A4 Personal identity

- Investigate and describe the ways in which individuals define their own identity and *sense of self-worth and how this influences the ways in which they describe other people*.

Functional/ Technical	Humanistic/Holistic	Socio-Critical Pedagogy
	<p>B2 Positive attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills and <i>responsible attitudes</i> in challenging physical situations. 	<p>D4 People and the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and evaluate aspects of the school environment that affect people's well-being and <i>take action</i> to enhance these aspects.
	<p>B4 Challenges and social and cultural factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and experience ways in which people's physical competence and <i>participation are influenced by social and cultural factors.</i> 	
	<p>C1 Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify <i>issues associated with relationships</i> and describe options to <i>achieve positive outcomes.</i> 	
	<p>C2 Identity, sensitivity, and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of how <i>attitudes and values relating to difference influence</i> their own safety and that of other people. 	
	<p>C3 Interpersonal skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a range of <i>interpersonal skills and processes</i> that help them to make safe choices for themselves and other people in a variety of settings 	

Critical Pedagogy is in Health

“what would it look like in a PE context? [pause] Not off the top of my head in some ways.”

- ▶ It is possible that socio-critical pedagogy is easier to enact in HE because teaching HE is relatively new for a good proportion of PE teachers in New Zealand.
- ▶ With the advent of the new combined curriculum in 1999 that aligned HE and PE, PE teachers were gradually called upon to teach HE in schools, largely to do with convenience of staffing (Weir, 2009).





To conclude

- ▶ The participants in this research suggest that there has been a shift from a technical performance based approach to a more humanistic, although not necessarily a critical, pedagogy.
- ▶ Because of the ambiguity in the language, teachers still need to make the conscious choice to interpret the curriculum in a critical way for critical pedagogy to have the desired impact on students.
- ▶ Socio-critical pedagogies are more likely to be used because they are imbedded in the beliefs and values of individual teachers rather than because they are foregrounded in HPENZC.

The future

In discussion with Richard Tinning regarding the development of HPENZC Culpan (1998) indicated that:

...it is at the teacher development, pre-service, in-service levels that real change can occur. As with all curriculum and practice, one must pose the question: to what extent can it improve physical education practice in the field? ... Indeed the future must be characterised by the need for scholars, curriculum developers, practitioners and the community to connect with each other so that new curriculum initiatives are relevant to the times.



The future

Culpan (1998) suggested that a socio-critical approach to HPE would help to make PE more relevant to 21st Century learners. However, what this means is unclear:

- ▶ It could mean easily measureable outcomes such as the number of young people choosing HE or PE in senior school increases
- ▶ Greater levels of physical activity within our population.
- ▶ A more informed, critically aware movement culture in New Zealand that shows greater levels of equality and social justice.





Glossary of the Muddle

- **Socially critical /Socio-critical pedagogy:** term used in HPE academic literature to refer to critical pedagogy.
- **Humanism:** Humanism originates from a social psychology theory made popular by Maslow (1958) and Rogers (1961) that focuses on individual self-actualisation.
- **Holism:** Miller (2010) described holistic education as education of the body, spirit, as well as the mind.
- **Socio-cultural:** content that considers social and cultural factors that influence physical activity.
- **Functionalist:** PE plays an important socialising function in developing desirable attributes in citizens. Functionalist theory rarely focuses on the negative aspects that can occur in sport and PE and is not concerned about changing society, but how to maintain the status quo (Collins & Waddington, 2000)