Physical Education New Zealand discussion statement on the recently released updated HPE Scholarship performance description.

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Nb. This statement is reflective on the discussion prepared and disseminated by Jenny Robertson (Feb 2018), so should be considered alongside this document.

In response to Issue 1: Unpacking the HPE performance standard.

1. The change in title from physical education to health and physical education, must reflect the learning area, as it is interpreted in the NZC (2007). In these regards, Jenny’s analogy, using science as an example is quite appropriate (p1). However, by separating the subjects completely into silos, it could also be viewed as a misunderstanding of how these subjects can, and do integrate. HPE does comprise PE, HE and aspects of HEc, which are technically three unique subjects, however it would be a shame to lose sight of how HPE can be taught with a high level of integration and application.

2. There are major contradictions in the wording of this performance standard that Jenny has raised articulately (p2). These need consideration and clarification as soon as possible.

3. It is useful to revisit the philosophical positioning of ‘in, through and about’ to understand why it cannot simply assimilate to ‘health’ or ‘home economic’ contexts. This is in support of Jenny’s comments on (p6) of her discussion.
   a. The HPE learning area is, and should be, interpreted holistically and with respect to the four underlying concepts; Hauora1, Health promotion, Socio-ecological perspectives and Attitudes and values that underpin quality teaching practice. This inherently links PE, HE and HEc. Philosophically and

1 Hauora is a Maori philosophy of health unique to New Zealand. It comprises 4 dimensions of health: Taha tinana (physical well being), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional well being), taha whānau (social well being) and taha wairua (spiritual well being).
historically, the underlying concepts are based on ontological positioning and human development (Culpun, 2004). This was to challenge the likes of the Education Act in 1877 that employed hegemonic and functionalist paradigms, placing importance on obedience, discipline, and societal improvement through a sense of morality. Which, influenced a core curriculum in the 1940’s to reinforce gender based, British, white, middle class work orientated needs (O’Neill, 2004).

b. Therefore, in light of the statement above, it is appropriate to assume that all three areas are influenced heavily by criticality, humanistic positioning and meaning-making within a context of wellbeing. Therefore, there can be a clear synergy between the independent subjects that comprise HPE and in practice this is often evident.

c. However, ‘in, through and about’ (Arnold, 1979) is significant for physical education, not specifically a health or a home economics context. This is because this term derives from Arnold’s (1979, 1994, 1998) three categories of movement meanings (primordial, contextual and existential). The three dimensions identified by Arnold: Learning ‘in’, ‘through’ and ‘about’ movement has informed much of New Zealand’s physical education practice (Culpun, 1998, 2000, 2004) in connection to holistic interpretation of sport and physical activity. The depth of this philosophical thinking aligns with Shields & Bredemeier (1995) and The European Commission (1999a, 1999b) advocation of physical education that fosters Freire’s early theory of education as a process of becoming ‘fully human’ (Freire, 1968; Glass, 2001).

d. This philosophical thinking is sport and movement specific, where sport is seen to allow individuals to become people, is necessary for personal fulfilment and social functioning; and is an intrinsically valuable practice that is unique in its demand for co-operative endeavour and personal virtue (Arnold, 2004; Kretchmar, 2005).

e. In light of this, ‘in, through and about’ may not be the most appropriate wording for a specific health or home Ec topic of scholarship for example.

4. A statement on ‘bio-physical’.

a. Bio-physical is specific to physical education and could, but does not inherently relate to either a health education or home economics context. For example, The Internal Assessment Resource for Physical Education Level 2 (Achievement Standard 91328 version 2) that requires students to: ‘demonstrate understanding of how and why biophysical principles relate to the learning of physical skills’ outlines that: “For the purposes of this assessment, biophysical principles may include: i. functional anatomy, for example: the movement of bones at joints by major muscles and the description of the joint action
ii. biomechanical principles, for example: stability, levers and projectile motion, inertia, force, force summation, momentum, balance, centre of mass, and basic performance appraisal

iii. skill learning, for example: types of practice, stages of learning, and factors affecting learning

iv. sport psychology, for example: self-talk, visualisation, mental rehearsal, routines, arousal control, goal setting, confidence, and concentration” (Retrieved from TKI, 2018).

Connections that could be made in a health or home economics setting could relate to aspects of psychology, however you will note that in examples defining ‘bio-physical’ to the HPE community - these concepts are supposed to be drawn from sport psychology. Therefore, to use these in a health or home economic context could be seen as requesting unauthentic, contrived and laboured connections. Again, it is important here to not ignore the potential and possible of integration, if the selected scholarship topic warranted it.

5. In light of the comments above, the comments that Jenny Robertson makes about trying to achieve the performance outcome description as it currently stands are insightful and warranted here (p3).

“The repeated use of ‘and’ across the outcome description is open to interpretation. On one hand, including everything where there is an ‘and’ would likely require students to be completing specialist courses in HEd or HEc, and PE to cover that much territory – far more that the specification requirement that “evidence to support the report may be drawn from one major unit of work or multiple units of work in a Level 3 course, provided they are linked and integrated to generate a coherent body of material”. (Robertson, J. Unpublished discussion document, 2018, p3).

Students that are unable to make sense of the learning areas in ways that contextualise them authentically and contextualise to make learning relevant, will view the learning as ‘detached’, isolated and irrelevant (Stevens, 2017). In light of this, you could state that a scholarship performance standard that restricts authentic learning opportunities, albeit unintentional, will never achieve its intended purpose of higher order thinking and critical evaluation.

In response to Issue 2: The nature of a report.

6. There is merit in retaining ‘critical evaluation’ rather than keeping ‘critical analysis’. Students are required to critically evaluate at Level 8 of the curriculum for example, Achievement Objective L8 A1 personal health and development states: “Critically evaluate a range of qualitative and quantitative data to devise strategies to meet their current and future needs for well-being”.
Jenny draws attention to this (p3). Therefore this level should and can be expected of a student sitting scholarship. The comments Jenny makes (p10) in her discussion are pivotal here. If it is to be an evaluation, then this lends itself more towards a report format, however more guidance is needed to support students and leaders of scholarship with the creation and presentation of a report.

**Recommendations and final comment.**

7. Consideration should be given to having three scholarship standards in the individual contexts within the learning area to prevent confusion, misinterpretation, or the completion of work that is unauthentic or contrived. If only one scholarship standard is decided upon, then distinction between the subjects needs to be an option. The wording of the standard must reflect this, by specifically giving options to students using terminology such as ‘or’ not ‘and’. The decisions made here, need consideration and consultation, specifically around the wording and the meaning of the terms used.

8. The subject associations could be consulted for their expertise to ensure the performance standards are measuring quality performance in the appropriate subject areas within the learning area. PENZ would be very willing to assist with this process.

9. There is an appreciation for this attempt to include health education and home economics more inclusively in the scholarship performance standard.
   a. Anecdotally, it was becoming a common issue for the completion of the report – students having to use relevant, but ‘acceptable’ topics.

10. Clarity around the performance standard as a report is needed.
   a. Further to this, examples of reports are still needed, including other ways of submission, than the singular format that currently exist. Anecdotally, both students and teachers are fearful of submitting something other than an ‘essay’ as they have no measure of what this could look like. There is too greater risk on their part to submit something ‘creative’ or ‘abstract’ for fear this will not meet the standard.
References:


