EXPLORING CHALLENGES IN AUSTRALIAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM PAST AND PRESENT

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Abstract
Australian physical education (PE) is experiencing its second national curriculum reform attempt, with schools around the country at various stages of exploration and implementation of the Curriculum for Health and Physical Education (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2014). This paper explores some of the challenges in physical education curriculum implementation past and present. The PE teacher is explained as the key architect of curricula at the school level and therefore the challenge of new curriculum implementation is not so much in the ‘rolling out’ of the artefact but in developing the subject expertise of PE teachers to be able to bring to life the curriculum expectation in the situated realities of the everyday pragmatics of the PE teacher. Principally, I argue the PE teacher must see their role as that of educational designer.

Key words: Physical education, sport, games, design, models

Introduction
The purpose of this paper is to explore two recurring discourses, the problematisation of an historically common physical education (PE) method and curriculum reform in the context of a new curriculum; in this case the Curriculum for Health and Physical Education (ACHPE) (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority ACARA, 2014) implementation. In setting out the arguments in this paper Emmel’s (1979) question to whether PE could resolve “the significant degree of contradiction” reflected in practitioners values and actions so that PE could successfully ‘stand on its own feet’ at the XII Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACPER) Conference, is recalled (Emmel, 1979, p. 42). Considering that challenge further, we can also ask whether the delivery of PE and the design of PE programs in schools has substantially changed since Mutton (1981) expressed his concerns about the teaching status of PE to a committee of inquiry into PE and sport in schools. Mutton concluded that vague notions of playing games and sports are no longer adequate attitudes to Australian PE. Literature suggests however, that there is little evidence of change aside from initiatives largely isolated to the individual teacher and occasionally a school being driven to change by a lead teacher, and there is not change that is evident more broadly through the Australian PE community of practice. This will be explored in more detail later in the paper.

In writing this paper, an historical ontology is assumed whereby there is a ‘reality’ that is captured. This is a reality shaped over time into social structures that are taken as ‘real’. In the case of PE, this ‘reality’ is captured in the PE crises discourse of Kirk (e.g. 2006; 2010) and descriptions of PE as historically grounded in the order, routine and compliance typical of its origins as physical training and gymnastics. It is also captured in the critical theorising about a subject historically at the margins of the educational intentions of schooling, such as by Kirk and Tinning (1990), Kirk (e.g. 1988) and Tinning (e.g. 2010). This is not an entirely new argument. For example, Scott and Westkaemper (1958) suggested that the school subject called PE developed from an “unappreciated, unwanted appendage of the curriculum” (p. xii). A common theme in critical theorising is that PE has been about schooling for a certain type of citizen,
variously described as “healthy, compliant yet productive citizens” (Kirk, 1988, p. 135), or in other words ‘busy, happy, good’ (Placek, 1983). Assumed in this theorising is a common PE method (Metzler, 2011).

From the nineteenth century objective of keeping young people morally and physically trained, physical activity during curriculum time evolved towards intellectual objectives such as knowledge and understanding, and developmental objectives like physical, social and emotional ‘growth’. A recognised program of study called PE emerged. It is beyond the scope of this paper to outline that history, and readers are directed to (for example) Kirk (2010) for an overview of the history of the subject development. What will be concentrated on in this paper is a consideration of the description of PE by researchers since Emmel (1979) called for reform to resolve the rhetoric and reality of Australian PE.

**Historical Ontology - A Common Physical Education Method**

The term PE Method is taken from Metzler (2011) who explained an historically common form of PE pedagogy typified by a directive style of student-teacher interaction and a largely repetitive drill practice learning experience as the ‘PE method’. Tinning (2010) described this pedagogical expression as demonstrate-explain-practice (DEP). The primacy of student demonstration of replication of fundamental and sport specific technical or mechanical models of movement led Kirk (2010) to describe this expression of PE as sport-as-sport techniques. With regard to the Australian context, Alexander (2008; 2013) summarised the problematisation of PE existing in a dominant programming format labelled as ‘multi-activity’ (MAP), where individual units of work are not long enough to teach substantive skill competency while the teacher curriculum plans cover lots of forms of physical activity but lack coherent complexity as the content is unrelated and frequently disconnected. It is suggested that the content of PE curricula frequently lacks coherence to what is available to students in their community and ‘life beyond the school gate’ (Drummond & Pill, 2011). Alexander, Taggart and Medland (1993) invoked Crum’s (1993) assertion of a self-reproducing failure of PE to suggest Australian PE teachers lacked ‘teaching perspectives’. By this Alexander et al. (1993) meant that PE was characterised by practices such as the grading of students on perceptions of effort and compliance and not demonstrations of evidence of learning and learning content of substance.

When questioned about the posited shortcomings of PE, teachers blame the attitude of students or the school for providing insufficient time for PE while few blame the construction of PE itself; however, it is the PE teacher that designs and enacts the PE experience. PE teachers should examine what they put forward as programs of learning and what students engage with as a consequence. Emmel (1979) drew attention to this when he suggested: “physical educators have always had a great deal to complain about; particularly regarding the lip service which has been paid to Physical Education by governments and educational decision makers. Unfortunately we have always tended to blame outsiders, and have been reluctant to introspect in case we might discover that some of our grievances are self propagated” (Emmel, 1979, p. 70)

A participant in MacDonald’s (1995) research commented that PE teaching was not taken seriously within Australian schools, and it is seen to be a ‘Mickey Mouse’ subject. In the Australian context, something is said to be ‘Mickey Mouse’ if it is a bit weak, lacking strength. Placing this in a recent historical perspective, it is suggested that the claimed benefits of PE have not matched the reality of the experience (Hickey, 1994). This is because many students leave compulsory PE after eleven years of Foundation-to-Year 10 compulsory PE having learnt what they can’t do rather than what is possible (O’Connor, 2006) due to long identified programmatic deficits in a MAP program design and a behaviorist teaching orientation. Alexander (2013) has gone as far as to assert that many Australian school HPE programs keep ‘secrets’ from outsiders:

1. Due to MAP they struggle to show confirmation of PE’s evidential contribution to motor skills development;
2. Due to substantially directive and practice style pedagogy emphasising technical reproduction of stylised sport specific movements they don’t develop game performance (as this requires a conceptual-tactical focus uncommon in many MAPs);
3. That while often tested, they don’t develop fitness due to the dominance of drill and practice style tasks that invoke low levels of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA).

Pascual (2006) captures the common belief that education is a process that encapsulates the notion of transformation (in the sense of improvement) in every area (or ability) – the cognitive, emotional, motor/movement, social, by means of experiences and valuable activities, with the aim of performing better. However, it may not be unfair to suggest that the PE critical theorising positions the historically common PE Method as an example of what Wiggins and McTighe (2007) called hands-on without minds-on activity orientated teaching - leading to claims that PE as an educative endeavor is historically more rhetoric than reality in many Australian school settings.

It is little wonder then that not so long ago Australian PE was considered to be in a state of crisis and quality decline with children’s skill level and physical fitness waning (Commonwealth of Australian, 1992; Tinning, Kirk, Evans & Glover, 1994; Dinan-Thompson, 2009). A recent study suggests similar skill level and physical fitness declines continue to be of concern (Rudd, 2015). Further, Penny, Emmel and Hetherington (2008) wrote of the marginalisation of Australian PE in education policy and curriculum development, an issue not unique to Australia (Hardman, 2008). Sheehy (2011) suggests that globally, PE faces the common problem of marginalisation because assessment of students commonly does not demonstrate the educative benefit of a PE program, the grading of students is often different to the system of assessment used in so called ‘core’ subjects, and PE teachers are not good at informing parents of how PE is different from what the parent may have experienced when a student.

It is acknowledged that PE teachers derive personal and professional identity from a sense of belonging to their subject (Banfield & Brown, 1996) and a need to feel competent (Hellison, 1977), and that PE is often taught by teachers sharing a common background evidencing success in sport and games, and this may contribute to the struggle to envisage alternative curricula. This is why it is interesting to note Curtner-Smith and Meek’s (2000) finding that specialist PE teachers from non-traditional PE backgrounds place a greater emphasis on learning (Curtner Smith & Meek, 2000). However, it is Ennis’ (2008) opinion that developing the curricular coherence that leads to substantial learning outcomes requires more pedagogical expertise than most PE teachers possess (Ennis, 2008). It appears that like elsewhere in the world, Australian PE teaching struggles for legitimacy (Stolz, 2009).

Fishburne and Hickson (2005) advised that if the concerns about a common PE method are accepted, then it is PE teachers who have the responsibility to change. Therefore, having positioned the concerns about Australian PE teaching’s struggle for legitimacy (Stolz, 2009) I will now briefly consider what teachers are instead being told about how to teach PE in contemporary times before considering the challenge of reforming practice presented by the ACHPE.

**Contemporary Messaging - What Are Australian PE Teachers Being Told About How to Teach PE?**

Three of the common ‘directions’ for PE teaching existing in the literature suggested as assisting engagement with the emerging curriculum challenge that is ACHPE implementation are; constructivist perspectives, Arnoldian concept of PE, and Models Based Practice.

**Constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning**

The ACHPE is designed with constructivist teaching and learning perspectives. Generally, within contemporary ‘constructivist’ perspectives on teaching and learning, teachers are being advised to develop a teaching and learning praxis that I summarise here in three parts. 1. Identify the desired achievement standard, competency or outcome; 2 List essential questions that will guide the learner to
understanding; and 3. Focus on descriptions of evidence of learning. It is anticipated that this will lead to a coherent curricular with clear distinctions between big ideas, essential questions and content. There will be a visible connection between educative purpose and learning experiences. Content is thus (in theory at least) selected because it enhances the sense of curriculum purpose and meaning for students (Pill, 2007).

PE teachers are also being told that possibly the most ‘powerful’ factor in students learning within the influence of the teacher is explicit teaching (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Hattie, 2003; Rosenshine, 1986). Explicit teaching is characterised by unambiguous instructional design and delivery, and is not be confused with a direct or practice teaching style (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). Explicit teaching involves coherent scaffolding to guide learning and clear statements about the purpose, function and requirement for what is being learnt. PE teachers should tell students about big ideas and essential questions, performance requirements, and evaluative criteria before instruction commences. Students should be able to describe the goals (big ideas and essential questions) and performance requirements of the unit or course. The learning environment should have high expectations and incentives for all students to come to understand the big ideas and answer the essential questions. Using teaching approaches informed by constructivist learning theory to teach for understanding using a pedagogical emphasis such as guided participation (Mascolo, 2009) should not be confused with the need for having clear expectations for what students should be doing, and establishing with students clarity of expectations and options for responses within a set of clearly communicated expectations. Constructivist informed ‘student-centred’ teaching does not abdicate a teacher from being clear or having clear and explicit expectations for performance.

An Arnolodian concept of PE
The principles and guidelines for the Australian national curriculum development state that a hallmark of the curriculum is deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications (National Curriculum Board, 2009). In conceptualising PE within the ACHPE (ACARA, 2012) an Arnolodian construct of learning in, through and about movement (Arnold, 1979) is evident. This construct posits PE as multi-dimensional and as such substantially more than physical activity accumulation and/or the accumulation of experiences with movement forms. Expressed initially as “value learning in, about and through movement” (ACARA, 2012, p. 4), together with four other propositions, the inter-related dimensions of learning in, through and about movement are positioned to guide the philosophical, practical and pragmatic pedagogical and design matters concerning implementation of the ACHPE physical education component in Australian schools. The ACHPE expresses its Arnolodian construction as learning encompassing three strands; 1. Moving our body; 2. Understanding movement; and, 3. Learning through movement (ACARA, 2015).

Models based practice
Reflecting the pedagogical demands of the United Kingdom national curriculum, Curtner-Smith, Todorovich, McCaughtry and Lacon (2001) suggested that teachers would need to shift from an almost exclusive use of direct ‘teacher-centred’ pedagogy. We can hypothesise a similar shift will be suggested as necessary in Australia to bring the pedagogical demands of the ACHPE towards achievement of the curriculum standards. How then does the PE teacher determine a pedagogical ‘model’ to enable them to design and enact curriculum for student accomplishment of the curriculum achievement standards? Currently, PE literature seems to be suggesting ‘models based practice’ (MBP) as the answer to the design and enactment question, as well as addressing questions as to the educational value of PE (Kirk, 2013). A model of PE identifies tight alignment between learning outcomes, educational design and pedagogical enactment, and subject content. This alignment is posited as providing a ‘blueprint’ for teaching practice as design and enactment will either align with the distinctive features of the model, or not (Metzler, 2011).
Several well-research PE models do exist (Kirk, 2013). I argue that three models seem particularly suitable to the ACHPE and its propositions, to shape the design of the PE curriculum within a learning area amalgam called HPE. The first of those models is the Sport Education model (SEM) (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2012). It is possibly the most theoretically and pedagogically developed and justified of all the MBP (Kirk, 2013). The model aims for competent (tactical + technical skills), literate (understand history + culture, ritual, tradition of sport, engagement in personal and social skill learning) and motivated (enthusiastic) sport participants. It has been shown that the SEM offers beyond the common ‘PE method’ a broad range of additional learning experiences, such as the development of social skills and critical consumerism, and for girls, lower-skilled and non-participating students a gain in important benefits in terms of participation and learning outcomes. The research evidence suggests higher levels of student engagement (enthusiastic participants), and the SEM has been successfully applied beyond team sport to outdoor and adventure activities, gymnastics, swimming, and athletics (Hastie, 2012; Penney, Clark, Quill & Kinchin, 2005).

The third model that appears well suited to the expressions of student learning in the ACHPE is Health Promoting PE, particularly within the curriculum aim of valuing learning through movement and the curriculum’s intention for Health Education and PE to be interwoven where possible. Fundamentally important in the ACHPE is learning to value a physically active life. Educating through movement in the ACHPE should lead students to value and practice appropriate physical activities that enhance health and wellbeing now and in the future. The ACHPE suggests that this is best achieved where the subject intentions of Health Education and the subject of PE are integrated where possible within the learning area of HPE (ACARA, 2015). Examples of well-developed health promoting models of PE include Corbin & Lindsay’s (2007) Fitness for Life, positive youth development through sport (Danish, 2004), and Healthy Active Kids (Australian Institute of Sport, 2015).

**New Challenges - Implementing a New Curriculum Framework and Educative Reform**

The MBP ‘blue prints’ (Metzler, 2011) concept for PE teachers seems to imply that PE teachers lack the capacity or subject mastery to be educational architects and subject knowledge brokers. It provides limiters on the range of learning outcomes, content coverage and pedagogy and it is not too far a slide for PE teaching and content questions to become about adherence to the tenets of the model and not about the intended student learning standard described for students in the curriculum document. Most of the research into MBP appears to occur without reference to student achievement of prescribed curriculum outcomes or standards at benchmark reference levels. The research is about the validation of the model as an alternative to the common PE Method. However, there is a well held belief by some that Australia PE curriculum and pedagogical reform at the ‘classroom level’ is necessary and MBP is the path to that reform.

Some have suggested a re-imagining of PE as Health Promoting PE to accomplish an integrated HPE that moves away from, for
example, a sport-as-sport techniques emphasis. It could also be argued that unlike sports, which when taught well evidence a cognitive complexity (think about the way a tennis player couples information as perceptual judgment and anticipation in reading the play in a time-compressed performance context to a complex motor response in order to meet a momentary configuration of play) and ethical notions such as equality, fairness, rule-abiding action are necessary, and educationally valued characteristics that are not usually explicitly taught in health promoting PE where individualised health activities are often accentuated. Maybe, as some PE philosophers have argued, these health promoting physical activities are valuable but not educationally valuable because they lack what might be called cultural significance or cultural capital (McNamee, 2005). However, I suggest that the health promoting model of PE has a place in the integration of health messaging and healthy behaviours to achieve both ‘health education’ achievement standards and/or their integration within PE units of work.

The ACHPE continues a shift from teacher-centred curricula grounded in an ‘objectives’ perspective predicated on teacher assumptions to implementation of a competence-based curriculum via student achievement standards begun by the curriculum profile for Australian schools (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). This movement in Australia is consistent with global educational reforms that have seen most OECD countries promote a shift from curricula grounded in ‘objectives’ to curricula grounded in competencies and standards (Hardman, 2001; Kirk, 1993, Klein, 1997; Tinning, 2001; Macdonald, 2003). However, history has shown that a new curriculum document of itself is not sufficient to bring about change as the PE Method still dominates. Brooker and Clennett (2006) suggested that frequently, new curricula has “limped along in the shadow of old knowledge and past practice and was never brought to full bloom” (p.12), leaving new directions and pedagogical imperatives marginalised in the curriculum-making process. Macdonald (2003) cautions that nationwide curriculum reform agenda can be a ‘chookhouse’ that returns to its normal routine after a flurry of chaotic activity. Changing curriculum requires altering teacher thinking to change what teachers do in their curriculum making and pedagogical expression of that design.

The challenge to be a content expert speaks to the important role of domain knowledge in the curriculum and pedagogical practice of teachers. Expert teachers are more likely to challenge students to master rather than to perform, to engage rather than participate, and to set challenging goals rather than encouraging students to ‘have a go’ or ‘do your best’.

It is recognised that student attitudes to PE are influenced first by the teacher (Hellison, 1995; Silverman & Subramaniam, 1999), then by the school setting (Cothran & Ennis, 1998) and third by the structure of the curriculum as it creates the educational climate (Cothran & Ennis, 1998; Martinek, 1996/2000; Piéron et al., 2001). Subject experts are more comfortable in their pedagogical duties and in accommodating a greater range of learner abilities. Subject experts have amassed a large quantity of knowledge that provides a framework for attending to what matters. They have a deeper understanding of higher-order principles basic to their discipline. Subject experts translate their expertise into pedagogical activities in ways not accessible to non-experts. Expert teachers are concerned with engagement while less/non-expert is more focussed on content (Schempp, Manross & Tan, 1998). However, the organisational centre for most PE programs remains content, evidenced by the way most PE teachers typically recall content when asked to recount how they plan for teaching (Haerens, Kirk, Cardon & Bourdeaudhuij, 2011). It needs to be noted that generally, students report enjoying participating in classes which they perceive as more serious and consequential (Hastie et al. 2011).

What teachers know, do and care about is powerful in the student learning equation. Expert, as opposed to experienced teachers, have more understanding of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of student success and so are more proficient in creating environments for student learning. Expert teachers are more likely to challenge students to master rather than to perform, to engage rather than participate, and to set challenging goals
rather than encouraging students to ‘have a go’ or ‘do your best’ (Hattie, 2003). I argue that the challenge to move from the margins involves the PE teacher being able to clearly define their program outcomes and how the program outcomes are measured, and are willing to hold programs and PE teachers accountable for effective teaching. To remove PE from the margins of educational discourse is less about the development of new curricula, and more about moving from the ‘thinness’ of some curriculum accounts of PE that are little more than a list of activities with ambitions (teacher objectives) for students to have fun, be busy and be good. If PE is to move ‘from the margins’ to be fully supported, physical educators must be able to clearly define their program outcomes and how the program outcomes are measured, and be willing to hold programs and PE teachers accountable for effective teaching (Rink, 2013). I argue that PE teachers need to see themselves as educational designers.

**PE Teachers as Educational Designers**

Sparkes (1991) argued that change involves transformation of beliefs, a position also supported by Fullan (2001). This inevitably involves the loss of previously held beliefs and views, which is hard (Fullan, 1982). The process of leaving behind habits of being, and creating new habits which can be translated into practice based on what PE teachers are currently told about how to teach within the context of a new curriculum artefact while setting out student performance standards to result from the teaching is a large ambition. What might happen if PE teachers considered ‘yesterday’s practice’ was for ‘yesterday’s students,’ and instead considered that students today are radically different to last century’s students, and how their early engagement in digital games contrasts to the order, control, compliance and replication expectations of the common PE Method?

Prenksy (2005) challenges all educators to think of themselves as educational designers. Just like the games and sport common to PE, online and digital games are a goal-directed and competitive activity participated in within a framework of agreed rules establishing the constraints on behaviour in the game (Lindley, 2003). Gee (2003) suggests the challenge facing digital game designers is to have players learn something that takes a long time to master, is hard and complex, and yet to enjoy it. I argue that is the same challenge PE teachers face in enacting the curriculum.

Gee (2003) suggests that the designers of popular digital games use good learning principles supported by research in the cognitive sciences, as digital games are in fact knowledge-centred environments – a similar view of sports as knowledge-centred environments exists in skill acquisition literature referencing the ecological systems perspective of sport as a non-linear dynamic system. Digital game play, however, may be encouraging young people into play in different ways from that valued in enactment of the PE Method. Gee (2005), for example, asserts that digital game designers deliberately use research from the cognitive sciences on discovering how to engage players in order to learn and enjoy it. These principles include:

- Players engage through an environment where they act through their commitment to a strongly formed and appealing identity;
- A context for interaction exists in which nothing happens until the player makes a decision, after which the game or another player in the game reacts;
- Games permit players to be co-designers by virtue of the decisions they make during gaming;
- Risk taking is encouraged by lowering the consequences of failing, with failure seen as an opportunity to gain feedback about the progress of skill mastery and game understanding;
- Players commence by customising a game to fit their learning and playing styles - players thus feel a real sense of control over what they are doing
- The problems players face are sequenced in order of difficulty, so that solutions to earlier problems are well understood, enabling the development of knowledgeable decision making when confronted by harder problems at the next level;
- Games pose a set of challenges and let players solve those challenges with repetition through variation until solutions are routinised,
with new challenges only then presented and able to be pursued;

- Play is the basis for game interaction and so the game mostly provides information when the player is ready for it and can use it - games therefore situate meaning in the context of the action of the play;
- Games remain motivating by synchronizing with a player’s perception of achievement in the game;
- Games encourage players to think about the relationships between players, the objects within the game and the objectives of the game;
- Games encourage players to explore thoroughly before moving on and thus good game design supports players in their play before they are competent
- Players engaged in multi-player games each choose an identity with specialised skills and functions, which each player then makes available to the team, and
- Players develop team affiliations through a common endeavour or quest.

The list of educational design principles suggests that the experience of digital gaming provides players with self-regulated interactivity, initiative, and control of learning through a balance of customisable and structured progressions with ‘just in time’ feedback or tuition options (Adams, 2010; Bates, 2004; Gee, 2003; Hopper, 2009; Salen & Zimmerman, 2004). In comparison, the traditional instruction model of the PE Method with MAP design is based on unsubstantiated assumptions about games and skill learning, skill development and the promotion of activity participation (Trost, 2004). I am not in any way arguing that games and sport as the content of the PE curriculum lead to the educational thinness of PE, rather, that it is the persistence of design and pedagogical emphasis on reproduction that compromises PE on what it claims to be – an educative enterprise.

Thinking like a game developer means planning carefully before delivery (Kapp, 2011). Careful planning is the foundation upon which good digital games are built to provide players with good learning (Gee, 2003, 2005, 2007), meaning that teaching that is guided and organised by principles empirically confirmed by research provides effective and deep learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Gee, 2009). Using game designer as a metaphor (Keramidas, 2010) for PE curriculum design, PE teachers would 1. Purposefully use play to feed learning intentions; 2. Encourage immersion through challenge, engaging student curiosity and capacity to customise the play experience; 3. Design play within the boundaries of action (or constraints) for the challenge point of the students; 4. Recognise and reward player achievement; and 5. Provide students with quantifiable outcomes, which Adams (2010) called victory conditions and mastery conditions (Pill, 2014).

Conclusion

The design work of the school PE program is the jurisdiction of the PE teacher as it is they who are the active curriculum architects, making content selections and choosing its pedagogical expression. I am therefore suggesting that, as I stated earlier in the paper, the ACHPE of itself will not change the form or function of PE in schools. Competing alternatives for the form and function of PE exist, with sport, health promotion and educative discourses, in their own way trying to shape and position the identity of PE. The ACHPE appears to offer the potential for the design and enactment of curricula that will be different to the ‘traditional practices’ that were spoken of early in this paper as it is an opportunity to challenge the common pedagogical perspectives of PE. In this paper, I have suggested that it is PE teachers’ subject mastery and therefore the teachers’ capacity to be explicit with and about matters related to the expected student learning which will be located within any reform movement existing with the ACHPE implementation. However, I have also proposed that the challenge of reforming curriculum and pedagogical practice is not one of curriculum documentation reform but of the development of PE teachers as content experts who think like educational designers.

This paper has highlighted that Australian PE has long been positioned by critical theorists as somewhat generally lacking in meaningful educative realities due to two factors: the absence of content coherence in the dominant of
the MAP model and the teaching perspectives of PE teachers. I have summarised three of the common ‘directions’ for PE teaching existing in the literature that could assist engagement with the ACHPE and local curricula that departs from the thinness of MAP without real curriculum coherence in content or complexity - Constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning, an Arnoldian concept of PE, Models Based Practice, and Education through movement. The ACHPE contains inviting possibilities through which to advance the practice and status of Australian PE; however, it is PE teachers and not the curriculum document who continue to be the key players in the realisation of the possibilities.

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