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## **A New Format for Research Matters**

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### **Background**

afPE's Research Committee has recently been established and, on behalf of the Committee, I'd just like to take this opportunity to update you on a few developments. Most notably in this edition, these relate to some important changes to the format of Research Matters.

Broadly, the purpose of the Research Committee is to advise and guide the strategic development of research, on behalf of the Association. As part of a much broader remit (such as establishing a research strategy, identifying major research priorities, building a research community, and developing links between research and practice), one key aspect of the committee's work involves liaising with the editors of afPE publications to encourage opportunities for research publication and exposure of afPE policy priorities.

To date the Research Committee has met twice (and will continue to meet a minimum of twice per year) and comprises 6 members, all of whom have research experience and a keen interest in research in physical education. The meetings have been clearly focused on the areas identified above and I am pleased to report that progress is already being made on a number of levels. One particular example relates to agreeing changes to the format of Research Matters. Research Matters, under the broader agenda item of afPE publications (including Physical Education Matters), was addressed at our most recent committee meeting. This came about following preliminary discussions with Liz Taplin, the editor of the journal, who kindly and subsequently joined us at the meeting to explore a number of possible options for changing the format and broadening the scope of this section of the journal. Based on the discussions, a draft paper was prepared proposing a number of changes which was then circulated to committee members plus Liz for comment and approval.

### **The New Format**

As a result of the above process, the following was agreed:

- 1) That the content and scope of Research Matters should be distinct from other 'research' journals in the area and aim to:
  - engage and keep afPE members up to date with key national and international research developments and findings that are relevant to physical education policy and practice
  - provide an opportunity for more afPE members to engage with and contribute to Research Matters (as authors, reviewers, practitioners, researchers, students)

- support afPE members in establishing, conducting and sharing/ disseminating their research, and in particular strive to support less experienced researchers.

2) That the above be achieved by:

- accepting a wide range of **research-related articles/papers** for consideration for publication that range in:
  - length (e.g. abstracts, reports, short articles (1000-2000 words), as well as the standard longer articles (3000) words), and
  - type (e.g. empirical studies, reviews, opinion or individual case study articles).
- including **'Research News'** (national and international) as a regular item (e.g. with news about new publications, research reports, papers or debates, research opportunities, relevant web sites, forthcoming research seminars/conferences, conference reports/summaries etc).
- including a **'Research Questions'** section (e.g. which identifies/encourages research on certain topics, answers members research-related questions, invites members to communicate with each other over research areas of common interest).
- specifically encouraging **practitioner-based research** (i.e. which links theory to and has clear implications for practice) and contributions from students, teachers/schools, which could cover any of the above.

### **The Future**

Research Committee members are excited about the potential of the new format for Research Matters and, in collaboration with Liz Taplin, will share responsibility for informing, quality assuring, and making regular 'short' contributions to this section of the journal. This will include, for example, providing updates of the committee's work. We also hope that as afPE members, you will welcome the new format and the scope this affords and find the content interesting, helpful and relevant to your work.

In this respect, we invite you to submit contributions for consideration for inclusion in Research Matters relating to any of the ideas presented in 2 above. For instance:

- Do you have any research-related work you'd like to see published?
- Do you have any research news to share?
- Do you have any burning research questions?
- Do you want to make contact with and share ideas with researchers with the same or similar interests?
- Do you know any students, teachers/schools who are engaged in research (and particularly practitioner-based research) who might wish to publish their work?

If the answer to any of the above is yes, then we look forward to receiving contributions soon! Alongside these changes of course, and depending on the level of interest shown, we will be reviewing the policy, procedures and guidelines for contributions, and the review process for material for publication. We will keep you informed of any changes but in the meantime, please continue to send your submissions to:

Liz Taplin ([editor@afpe.org.uk](mailto:editor@afpe.org.uk))

In addition, we'd be keen to hear if you have other ideas for the future development of Research Matters. Please feel free to e-mail your ideas to either myself ([l.a.cale@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:l.a.cale@lboro.ac.uk)) and/or Liz.

Finally, and in an effort to progressively move towards the new format, you will see that included in this issue is an article that focuses on and presents a selection of the abstracts from the poster presentations from the National Annual Conference in July, which sits alongside the more standard type of research article. Authors of the posters have kindly granted permission for their abstracts to be published and to be contacted about their research. This represents a clear, initial step towards building an active afPE research community.