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## Promotion and female PDHPE teachers in the NSW DET

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**PROMOTION AND FEMALE PDHPE  
TEACHERS IN THE NSW DET**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
for the award of the degree of**

**DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION**

**from**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

**by**

**LISA NEWHAM**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**2002**

***One can never consent to creep when one feels an  
impulse to soar***

(Helen Adams Keller, 1880 - 1968).

## **DECLARATION**

This thesis is submitted in accordance with the regulations of the University of Wollongong in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctorate of Education. The work carried out in this thesis was carried out by myself and has not been submitted to any other university or institution.

Lisa Newham

2002

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate career and promotional opportunities of female teachers of personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE) in the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training (DET). This research firstly established that there was a disparity between promotion positions for women and men in the NSW DET and that this disparity was significant. Secondly the research clearly identified a number of barriers to promotion women in PDHPE in the NSW DET.

In 1979 a report published by the NSW Anti Discrimination Board predicted that by 1990 there would be no women principals in secondary schools, even considering the arrival of anti discrimination legislation. Whilst this is not the case it does however indicate a legitimate claim for concern in relation to promotion and women in NSW secondary schools.

The participants in this study were male and female teachers whose background was in the key learning area (KLA) of PDHPE in NSW DET secondary schools, district offices, curriculum directorate, state offices and board of studies. PDHPE itself is an area which may be considered to be marginalised and therefore women in this area have factors to contend with that are peculiar to this KLA.

The data collection and analysis drew largely on quantitative methods and also involved open questions which allowed for some supporting qualitative information. The main tool of data collection was a comprehensive questionnaire. Archival data was also collected from the NSW DET and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and information and data from the literature and other research were also used. The main type of analysis involved percentage comparisons and chi square and qualitative analysis involving identifying themes and trends which supported the quantitative information.

The study found that there was a significant difference between the number of male and female PDHPE teachers in promotion positions within the NSW DET. A number of predisposing factors of women who had gained promotion was identified including that they were less likely to see child care, child rearing and family duties as an issue for them and less likely to be the primary carers of children. They were predominantly permanent full time workers, less likely to believe they had the same chances for promotion as men, less likely to be married than men and more likely to gain promotion at a younger age than men.

By investigating this area, recommendations have been made in relation to ways and means of breaking down the barriers to promotion for women in teaching generally, and more specifically for those women who teach in the marginalised KLA of PDHPE. This research, while being specific to the NSW DET, may in fact be useful for other educational bodies, in other states, and in other countries, as there is likely to be common ground amongst institutions and systems.

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