

CHAPTER 5

Global Community Partnership Research

Abstract This chapter investigates a successful teacher education programme in the UK, awarded ‘Outstanding’ by England’s Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Furthermore, the success of the programme was explicitly contributed by established partnerships with nearby schools. This course, at the time, was not offered within Australia. This study offered valuable insight into a successful primary teacher education programme/course, illustrated good practice, and subsequently, offered possible improvements to the preparation of pre-service primary teachers in Gippsland, Australia.

This research investigates a successful teacher education programme in the UK; awarded ‘Outstanding’ by England’s Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted). Furthermore, the success of the programme was explicitly contributed by established partnerships with nearby schools. The Bachelor of Education (Hons) Primary (PE) course was specifically designed to develop generalist primary classroom teachers with a specialisation in PE. This course, at the time, was not offered within Australia; however, national curriculum reform has ignited a renewed interest in the health and wellbeing of children beginning in the early years of education, and subsequently, course designs that enable this. A qualitative, interpretive study using a case study methodology was

adopted. Methods engaged included semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, observations, and document analysis, and participants included all course lecturers. This study offered valuable insight into a successful primary teacher education programme/course, illustrated good practice, and subsequently, offered possible improvements to the preparation of pre-service primary teachers in Gippsland, Australia.

INTRODUCTION

It is argued that the key learning area for children's health and wellbeing, HPE, be a priority in the recent Australian national curriculum reform:

to provide ongoing, developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to practise and apply the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to maintain and enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing. (ACARA 2012, p. 4)

The implementation of HPE from the early years of primary school increases the likelihood of holistic lifelong health and wellbeing. An issue greatly valued by governments responsible for costs involved with wellness of citizens, the influence of hypokinetic diseases, and the strong connection physical activity has with optimal health and quality of life (Corbin et al. 2011; Robbins et al. 2011; Mackenroth 2004; Howard 2004). The purpose of the HPE learning area is to “offer experiential learning, with a curriculum that is relevant, engaging, contemporary, physically active, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate” (ACARA 2012, p. 2). However, the HPE learning area has had a history of barriers that have impeded quality delivery within all Australian Primary schools, which Sloan suggests has also existed in schools internationally (2010).

‘In-house’ discussions of crisis at HPE conferences and in journals 20 years ago led to a Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia 1992) into the state of HPE within Australian Education systems. The ‘crisis’ was experienced at an international level also (Dinan-Thompson 2009). The findings in the report by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts (Commonwealth of Australia 1992) confirmed the ‘in-house’ discussions of crisis (Dinan-Thompson 2009). The Senate Inquiry found that there was in fact a decline in the opportunities for quality HPE in Australian schools, although paradoxically there was unanimous support for the learning area. The problems were mainly with resources and the time allocation to the key learning area which resulted

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