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Editorial

Thomas Quarmby & Annette Stride

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Editorial

In 2003, Professor John Evans noted that increasing ‘health interests’ had entered schools and begun to influence the ways in which physical education teachers thought and acted. Indeed, this influx of health discourses shaped what was taught (and how) in physical education, ultimately blurring the lines between two previously distinct curriculum areas (physical education and health education). At the time of writing this editorial, ‘Health and Physical Education’ (HPE) is prominent in the United States (US), Canada, and various nations of the United Kingdom (UK). In Wales for instance, physical education has been integrated into the broader area of health and wellbeing and, whilst no longer having its own curriculum, is now one of a number of subject areas that informs the delivery of the new Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) (Gray et al., 2022). This new learning area includes developing physical health, mental and emotional wellbeing, and healthy relationships. Moreover, Lynch and Soukup (2016) note that nations such as New Zealand and Australia have a distinct HPE curriculum, while Singapore has physical education with an explicit focus on health education embedded within it. This increasing emphasis on the connection between physical education and health ensures the introduction of this section is particularly relevant and timely.

For instance, following the Covid-19 pandemic, an increased emphasis has been placed on the importance of physical health, with schools in particular incorporating this as a key educational aim. Specifically, physical activity – delivered through PE – has been identified as highly beneficial for reducing disease and enhancing overall health. This focus on health and wellbeing provides an opportunity for thinking about HPE differently and for educators and practitioners to explore innovative ways of promoting healthy active lifestyles both within and beyond the school context. It therefore presents an opportunity to consider how to do things differently. Schools internationally are being asked, now more than ever, to cater for the physical, emotional and social health needs of children and young people, which subsequently increases HPE’s profile within the overall school context.

Hence, this section of Cogent Education – ‘Physical and Health Education’ – seeks to engage with our global community including those working across the social sciences, physical education, health, sport and physical activity – though a prominent focus needs to be on education. Specifically, this might consider pedagogy, policy enactment, curriculum design and delivery, teacher education and the lived experiences of young people from a diverse range of backgrounds. As such, some of the key global challenges that scholars might seek to address include:

- Physical education and health in a post-Covid environment
- The role of initial teacher education to support teachers to work with complex and diverse learners
- Culturally responsive teaching in health and physical education
- Co-constructing policy and curricula with diverse student cohorts
- The future of physical education
- Experiences of physical education for marginalised young people
- The value of physically active learning as health promotion in schools
- The changing nature of the physical education profession

This new section of Cogent Education therefore offers an exciting opportunity to engage with these and other topics in novel ways. In fact, a key objective of ours – as we launch this section – is to

diversify the voices we hear from on this and similar topics. As such, we wish to encourage scholars from far and wide to publish their work in this Physical and Health Education section. We invite original submissions that provide insights into the emerging challenges and that offer theoretical, empirical, conceptual, and/or methodological contributions to developing knowledge and understanding in the collective field of HPE. As Senior Editors, it is our sincere pleasure to invite dedicated physical and health educationalists from around the world to use this platform to publish their work and extend our understanding of the field.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Thomas Quarmby, PhD, is a Reader in Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy in the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. His research interests include the role of physical activity and sport for youth from socially vulnerable backgrounds and trauma-aware pedagogies in physical education.

Dr Annette Stride is a Reader in Physical Education in the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. Having undertaken her undergraduate degree in Sport and Recreation Studies at Staffordshire University, followed by a Masters in Sport Management at Sheffield University, Annette worked in sport and further education before embarking on her PhD. Her PhD explored the ways in which gender and ethnicity intersect to influence the PE and physical activity experiences of a group of South Asian, Muslim girls. Annette has continued to work with groups often marginalised within PE, sport and physical activity contexts and considers issues of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and aging on participation and engagement.



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