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Exploring Religious Education and Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area Connections in Primary Schools

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Abstract: This study explored if connections were made by teachers and students in schools between religious education (RE) and health and physical education (HPE) key learning areas (KLA). The research was conducted within three Brisbane (Queensland, Australia) Catholic primary schools of varying enrolment size. It is argued that within Catholic education, the HPE curriculum documents are strongly connected to the RE curriculum material (Lynch 2004). The spiritual dimension of the HPE curriculum is defined in the syllabus as the "sense of connection to phenomena and unusual events beyond self and usual sensory and rational existence; a sense of place within the universe" (Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999, 26). The three strands of HPE: personal development; developing the concepts and skills for physical activities; and promoting the health of individuals and communities can all be affiliated closely with the RE curriculum. Furthermore, under the HPE umbrella, physical education sits alongside health education, outdoor education, home economics, and RE (Macdonald 2003; Macdonald and Glover 1997). In primary schools, physical learning and physical activities are valuable components of the students' and school culture. Christian spirituality is the essential link between faith and culture (Gallagher 1997). Hence, it is logical that the learning area for "learning in, through and about movement", HPE, may offer opportunities for Catholic schools to develop Christian spirituality usually associated with the RE learning area. As Buchanan and Hyde (2008, 310) share, "religious education is one field of study that can effectively address the complementarity between cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions of learning". Qualitative research investigating RE development through HPE learning experiences was conducted. Participants included teachers and students from the three respective schools. The research concluded that well implemented quality inclusive physical activities within HPE lessons increased participant's connections between the two key learning areas.

Keywords: Religious Education, Health and Physical Education, Spirituality, Primary Schools, Catholic Education

Introduction

Literature and curriculum documents make strong curriculum connections between Religious Education (RE) and Health and Physical Education (HPE) learning areas in schools. As Christian spirituality is the essential link between faith and culture (Gallagher 1997), it is logical that the Key Learning Area (KLA) for 'learning in, through and about movement', Health and Physical Education (HPE), offers opportunities that increase Christian spirituality through movement, skill and physical fitness where God's influence and design are apparent (Catholic Education Commission – NSW 1993). While support for the physical dimension increasing opportunities to experience God has existed throughout the history of the Catholic Church, it is only recently that religious educators have drawn "attention to the interface between religious education and other disciplines" (Jackson 1990; cited in Goldberg 2004).

In exploring school responses to the presence and strength of any such link in practice it was necessary to understand the relevance of major underpinning themes:

- Curriculum connections
- Spirituality and HPE
- Acknowledgement of connections within Catholic Education

Curriculum Connections

It can be argued that strong connections can be made between the HPE and RE curriculum documents, more so than other key learning areas. The RE Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) document materials promote a Gospel-oriented community. The RE Learning Outcomes

document states that RE “consists of two distinct but complementary dimensions, namely an educational dimension and a faith formation dimension” (BCE Archdiocese of Brisbane 2003, 1). The educational dimension refers to the RE program, often taught in the classroom, where as the faith dimension refers to the community of the school. The community of the school is often taught informally and within other key learning areas (Malone and Ryan 1994). Therefore RE documentation and curriculum materials evidence the need for quality teaching in all key learning areas and aspects of a Catholic school.

Spirituality is prevalent in the BCE Religious Education Years 1 to 10 Learning Outcomes guideline document (2003). Within this curriculum document the RE key learning area is organized into four strands: Scripture; Beliefs; Celebration and Prayer; and Morality. Spirituality sits within the ‘Celebration and Prayer’ strand; “Spirituality is expressed in contexts within and beyond Christianity” (Brisbane Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane 2003, 13). In the Queensland HPE curriculum documents the spiritual dimension of the HPE curriculum is defined in the syllabus as the “sense of connection to phenomena and unusual events beyond self and usual sensory and rational existence; a sense of place within the universe” (Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999a, 26). The three strands of HPE: enhancing personal development; developing the concepts and skills for physical activities; and promoting the health of individuals and communities can all be affiliated with the RE curriculum (Lynch 2004). Under the HPE umbrella, physical education sits alongside health education, outdoor education, home economics, and religious education (Macdonald 2003; Macdonald and Glover 1997).

The HPE strand *Enhancing Personal Development* is an essential curriculum component embedded in RE. “Within the Catholic Christian tradition, personal and social development focuses on the lifelong journey towards wholeness as a person created in the image of God and one who contributes to the common good” (Brisbane Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane 2003, 60). Furthermore, HPE recognises the various dimensions of health, which develops the students’ physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual growth (Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999b; Hutton 1999).

Spiritual and Physical Development

The connection between the physical and spiritual dimensions is evidenced by the recent establishment of The Centre for the Study of Sport and Spirituality (CSSS) in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at St. John University, York, England.

As sport is arguably the most popular cultural pastime of the western world, if not worldwide, it is hoped the work of the Centre can help foster a culture that emphasises the importance of the spiritual, moral and ethical dimensions of sport (York St John University 2007, 1).

Similarly, in Australian culture sport often connotes a religious reference (Lynch 2004). Sport as a medium for learning is directly related to HPE, as it is a logical extension to the physical education program (Commonwealth of Australia 1992). Strong support for physical activities increasing opportunities to experience God has come from many key figures throughout the history of the Catholic tradition, including St. Paul, Clement of Alexandria, St. Dominic, St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Pius II, St. Ignatius, Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, Pope Paul VI and the late Pope John Paul II (Feeney 1995).

It is argued that physical activities have outstanding potential to develop Catholic qualities identified by Groome (Lynch 2004). Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College, Thomas Groome (2002) identifies eight distinctive Catholic qualities:

- the sense of sacramentality (finding the infinite in the finite),
- feeling of community,

- appreciation of human potential,
- appreciation of fallibility,
- concern for justice,
- concern for the unfortunate,
- reverence for tradition,
- conviction that care should have no borders.

The late Pope John Paul II encouraged “the new evangelization must not only be new in content but also in method” (Tinsey 2002, 11). Donovan elaborates:

Evangelisation means bringing the Gospel to bear upon culture - all culture. Whether in the business world, the world of industry, of education, of politics and government – or the world of religion – culture is one of the most necessary determining factors in any endeavour undertaken. (1990, 115).

The potential for HPE as an opportunity for evangelisation is recognized by the Church, the late Pope John Paul II when instituting a sports department, employed the metaphor of physical activities as “a new playing field for the Church’s efforts to reach its flock” (d’Emilio 2004, 10). Earlier, the Pontiff also stated that “the Church approves and encourages sports [physical activities] seeing in it a form of gymnastics of the body and of the spirit” (John Paul II 1979, 4). He also questioned, “Are not these athletic values the deepest aspirations and requirements of the Gospel message?” (John Paul II 1980, 10).

Physical activities in Catholic primary schools through the mediums of the HPE physical activity strand and sport, have the advantage that is affiliated with the child’s natural play structure (Grace 2000). This is most important as “the early physical learnings form the basis for all other learnings” (Kealey 1985, 1). This affiliation has been successfully exploited to nourish children’s spirituality through Godly Play method (Berryman 2009; Hyde 2010) and drama (Grainger and Kendall-Seatter 2003).

Acknowledgement of Connections within Catholic Education

Spiritual development through HPE may lack acknowledgement within Catholic education. Carr (1988) proposes that in schools faith and culture is rarely reflected on and Bezzina and Wilson argue that the integration of values across the school curriculum in Catholic schools is largely underdeveloped (1999). Donovan suggests that we “sometimes become so mesmerized by our culture that we can block entrance points, those very openings through which the gospel is trying to enter into our lives” (1990, 93). Physical activity which includes play is a natural part of a child’s life and is imperative within their world, their culture. Shimabukuro (1994) also supports this notion of developing spirituality through physical experiences, arguing that the teaching of religion needs to be personal and experiential for students where Jesus comes alive, that is, through entering their world.

Christian spiritual dimensions can permeate learning through physical activities in the HPE curriculum, for students who are prepared to extend their faith into all aspects of life (Lynch 2004; Catholic Education Commission – NSW 1993). Although it is argued that HPE presents many practical experiences which require living and reflecting upon religious traditions and gospel values (Lynch 2004), it is not clearly articulated or promoted and hence, spirituality is often only associated with the RE key learning area in Australian Catholic Schools.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether connections between HPE curriculum documents and RE curriculum material are made by teachers and students in practice.

Research Design

Within the constructionist paradigm, an interpretivist study was conducted and more specifically the interpretivist study employed symbolic interactionism. The methodology chosen to construct meanings through capturing the context of each school was 'evaluative' and 'multiple' case study (Merriam 1998). The sites for the three case studies involved: one small sized BCE primary school (less than 200 students); one medium sized BCE primary school (200 - 400 students); and one large sized BCE primary school (over 400 students). The three case studies were selected as representative of their different demographics, pertaining to their size as measured by enrolment numbers, their geographic location and their socio-economic status.

Credibility of the study was achieved by employing triangulation, the process for using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning (Stake, 1994). The multiple perceptions were obtained from observing and interviewing a variety of participants. The methods engaged so as to enable precision of details within the chosen theoretical framework were interviews: semi-structured and focus group, reflective journal, observations and document analysis. The participants were teachers and students from the respective schools. HPE specialist teachers were key participants to interview. If the school did not employ a HPE specialist then the sports coordinator/HPE lead teacher was interviewed. These key participants together with three classroom teacher representatives, one from the early years, middle years and upper years of the school respectively, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview.

There were three focus group interviews for the student participants within each school/case. One focus group with representatives from a class in the early years, one with representatives from the middle years and one with representatives from a class in the upper years of the school. Maximum variation representation (Glasser and Strauss 1967) involved "identifying and seeking out those who represented the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest for the study" (Merriam 1998, 63). A maximum variation representation process was employed, by means of a questionnaire, to select four student representatives with a high interest level in physical activities (two boys and two girls) and four student representatives with a low interest in physical activities (two boys and two girls). The questionnaire results were confirmed by each focus group's respective classroom teacher. As Case Study One school had a total enrollment of less than 200 students, there were fewer students in each sample class from which to choose student representatives. A maximum variation representation process was used, by means of a questionnaire, to select two students with a high interest level in physical activities (one boy and one girl), two students with little interest in physical activities (one boy and one girl) and two students with medium interest in physical activities (one boy and one girl) (Table 4). All interviews were conducted by the researcher.

Analysis of Data

An interpretivist data analysis strategy employed for the purpose of this research study was narrative/ descriptive analysis. Each individual case was analysed using Wellington's (2000) simplified version of the 'Constant Comparative Method for Analysing Qualitative Data' (Figure 1) and was described. Cross-case analysis was presented at the end of the analysis of each case. Repeating the same analysis process, Wellington's stages (Figure 1) were used to analyse the data across the case studies. All data findings, of individual case study schools and cross-case analysis were reported using a narrative/ descriptive report (Table 1).

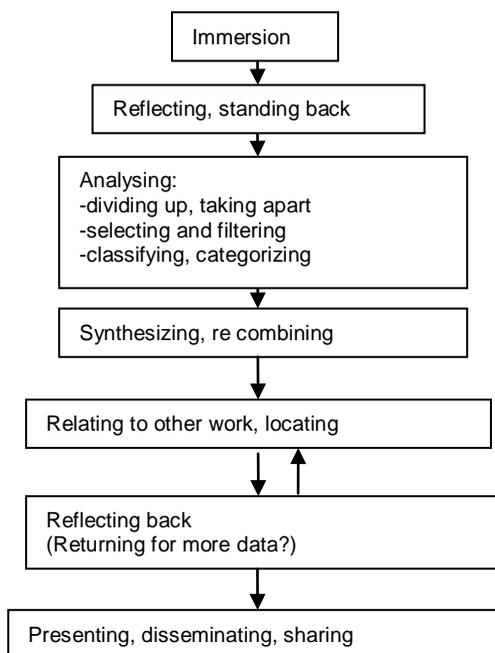


Figure 1: General Stages in Making Sense of Qualitative Data
 Source: Wellington 2000

Table 1: Process of Data Analysis

Stage 1	Analysis of data for each case study/ school using Wellington’s table of analysis.
Stage 2	Narrative/Descriptive report given as an analysis for each case study.
Stage 3	Cross case analysis again using Wellington’s table of analysis. This time analyzing whole stories or story sections.
Stage 4	Narrative/Descriptive report given for cross case study analysis.

Units of meaning were formed, coded, and categorized with other similar units. Table 2 illustrates a copy of a coded semi-structured interview transcript.

Table 2: Coding of Interview Transcript

Interview Transcript		Coding
I	Do you find the things you learn in Religion relates to HPE physical activity lessons?	-Gospel values -tolerance and understanding -cooperation -acceptance
P	It tells us that you have to be kind, not be mean to other people who are not as good at sport as you. Also to be a good sport, don’t say ‘Oh I didn’t win’ and get all grumpy and walk away or be mean to others.	

The process of analysis formed an audit trail and is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2 for students’ and teachers’ perceptions.

Process of Analysis: How Does Religious Education Connect to HPE?

STAGE 1 *Data Generation, display and reflection.*

Participants	Data Generating Strategies
Students	Questionnaire Focus Group Interview Observations of lessons Reflective Journal
HPE specialist teacher/ HPE lead teacher	Semi-structured Interview Observations of lessons
Classroom teachers	

STAGE 2 *Data Coding and Distillation.* Themes from Data Gathered.

- crowded curriculum	- Personal Development	- hidden curriculum
- curriculum connections	- What happens in PE lessons	-can draw stronger links
- cooperation and games	- enjoyment with others	- incidental learning
- Gospel values	-Issues of inclusiveness	- intentional planning
- self esteem	- consideration	- leadership
- make students aware	-tolerance and understanding	-acceptance

STAGE 3 *Generation of Key Themes.* Data Themes from Stage 2 Categorised.

- Gospel values	- curriculum connections	- inclusive activities
- Personal Development strand	- incidental learning	- intentional planning

STAGE 4 *Story Report and Conclusions*

All teacher participants and the majority of students from all three Case Study schools agreed that there were strong connections between HPE and the Religious Education curriculum. The connections were made mainly through the Personal Development strand (teacher participants) and also through the promotion of Gospel values in the Physical Activity strand (student and teacher participants). Teacher participants suggested that this often occurs unconsciously and unintentionally. Implementation of quality physical activity lessons increased positive connections.

Figure 2: Description of Data Analysis for Teacher and Children’s RE Connections through HPE

Ethical Issues

There were two ethical clearances that were granted before this interpretive research was conducted. They were an ethical clearance from Australian Catholic University, which involved a presentation of a research proposal to the University Research Projects Ethics Committee; and from Brisbane Catholic Education. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity were assured during the study as pseudonyms were assigned to protect the privacy of the participants and schools.

Presentation of Findings

Summary of Case Study One School (Less than 200 Students)

Case Study One school did not have a HPE specialist teacher and the teachers were responsible for all three strands of the HPE curriculum. The teacher participants were all experienced teachers, with at least 10 years teaching experience. None of the teacher participants had specialist training in HPE and only one had received professional development in the Queensland HPE syllabus. There was no Whole School Curriculum Program (WSCP) for HPE (Table 3) and concepts and skills were few and often repeated. All teacher participants within Case Study One school agreed that there were connections between HPE and the Religious Education curriculum. Teachers shared that the students had medium interest in physical activities, which was reinforced through observations and focused group interviews (Table 4).

Kate (pseudonym) stated the HPE curriculum “connects with Religious Education through cooperation and games” and Jody (pseudonym) concurred saying that you “can’t help the incidental learning which occurs [between HPE and RE], and you need to go with this each time”. Kevin (pseudonym) strongly agreed stating that “there is a link, certainly between HPE and RE, yes. We could draw stronger links than there are already”. Kevin added that at his previous school the strong link was evident between the two learning areas because the Assistant Principal - Religious Education and the school counsellor taught a great deal of the Personal Development strand. The student participants in the upper years of the school also agreed that during physical activities they “used gospel values”.

Table 3: Summary of Cross-Case Data Analysis Findings

School	HPE specialist	HPE specialist in-serviced in syllabus	Number of Classroom Teacher participants professionally developed in HPE syllabus	Clear knowledge of who is responsible for the different strands	Classroom teacher responsible for Religious Education and HPE Personal Development and Health strands	Number of Classroom Teacher participants who evidenced HPE (Personal Development and Health) in book	Whole School Program For HPE physical activities
Case Study One	No	No	1	✓	✓	1	No
Case Study Two	✓	✓	2	✓	✓	2	✓
Case Study Three	✓	No	2	No	✓	0	No

Table 4: Comparison of Case Study School Student Participants' Interest in HPE

School	Teachers' perception of students interest levels in HPE	Number of students interviewed in each focus group	Number of Early Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		Number of Middle Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		Number of Upper Years student participants whose favourite subject was HPE		HPE specialist teacher
Case Study One	Medium	6	0	0%	2	33%	0	0%	No
Case Study Two	High	8	6	75%	3	37.5%	4	50%	Yes
Case Study Three	High	8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	Yes

Summary of Case Study Two School (200 – 400 Students)

Case Study Two school appeared to have a well-designed and implemented Physical Education curriculum program which both teachers and students believed to be important, beneficial, and enjoyable. The school had a HPE specialist teacher who was responsible for the physical activity strand and the classroom teachers were responsible for the Health and Personal Development Strands (Table 3). Furthermore, there was a Whole School Curriculum Program for the physical activities strand. All teacher participants felt that the HPE specialist offered a wide range of physical activities and sports within the school which were perceived as a school strength. For this reason teachers shared that the students' had high interest in physical activities, which was reinforced through observations and focus group interviews (Table 4).

All teacher participants believed that the Personal Development strand of the Queensland Health and Physical Education syllabus connected well with the Religious Education curriculum. In the early years Kim (pseudonym) found that Personal Development ties in well with "Social Studies and Religion". She referred to both Religious Education and Personal Development when teaching "how we treat others and getting on with people with our gospel values and our emotional state". Kim used the resource book, *Friendly Children, Friendly Classrooms* (McGrath and Francey 1991) to assist her in teaching related curriculum.

In the middle years, Sean (pseudonym) believed that Personal Development that occurs in the HPE Physical Activities lessons related to the Religious Education curriculum and Gospel values. However, when questioned about whether such a link existed, he replied "I think in the hidden curriculum, yes. Whether teachers are aware of it? No". Sean further explained:

You can only ensure that people are planning for those sorts of outcomes in religion when you're actually using religion as the base and then making a real attempt to be true to seeing how PE applies to that. I think that it can be artificial and superficial if it wasn't planned to do it that way, then you're just hoping for the best, that somehow a Catholic school is adding a spiritual component. I think it has to be true to an intended desire to plan with that in mind.

In the upper years, Lucy (pseudonym) thought "Personal Development does seem to fit in well with some of the RE [Religious Education] outcomes". The teacher participants believed that both key learning areas encouraged self-belief, awareness of others and empathy. The upper years' student participants believed that the Health and Physical Education key learning area

physical activity strand helped “you feel better, about yourself and you have more self-esteem”. The students also stated that they enjoyed team sports “working together and good team spirit, it is fun to know that you are having fun with other people in the group”. Within Case Study Two school the HPE curriculum was developmentally appropriate and subsequently, the program was very popular amongst the student participants.

Summary of Case Study Three School (over 400 Students)

Case Study Three school had a HPE specialist teacher who was responsible mainly for the physical activity strand. The four teaching participants had varying degrees of teaching experience. The teacher participants who had begun teaching in the BCE system within the last five years were not familiar with the information in the HPE syllabus. They had not received in-service training within this learning area and indicated that they lacked confidence implementing it. This included the specialist HPE teacher. Furthermore the beginning years’ teacher had no development training within HPE and there was no Whole School Curriculum Program for HPE. All teacher participants reported that the HPE learning area was very valuable and students appeared to enjoy HPE physical activities. However, the students did not appear to be as interested in the key learning area as the teachers perceived them to be (Table 4).

All teachers agreed that there were connections between HPE and the Religious Education curriculum. Alicia (pseudonym) stated that she found it connects:

a little bit, but they [early years children] probably need that connection made for them. We do lots of role playing as well and we would be role playing [situations] when we are outside in the playground or when we are playing this game.

Bianca (pseudonym) said that she “looks at Personal Development in Religion time”. Veronica (pseudonym) added that there are definite connections between Personal Development and religion and also that “‘Personal Development’ is a big part of the RE [Religious Education] curriculum”. The HPE specialist, Naomi (pseudonym) believed that “being a team member, on a team, you’re doing all types of values, you’re showing respect, cooperation and leadership”. The middle years and upper years’ student participants believed that the Gospel values that they learnt in Religious Education related to HPE physical activity lessons. The middle years and upper years’ student participants thought that you learn to cooperate in HPE lessons by “working as a team” and you “learn how to cooperate in games”. Consideration is promoted, “my friend is not that good at soccer, [so] I give her a couple of chances. I show her how to kick”. Tolerance is another virtue that is experienced and promoted, “There were two pre-schoolers and I taught them how to play soccer”. As well, an appreciation of human potential and acceptance is promoted through realising that at times in HPE some are better than others in certain activities. As one upper years participant said, “I’m good at Tae Kwon Do, soccer and shot put and I’m not good at high jump or long jump”. The learning area HPE through the physical activities strand enables promotion of the quality of concern for the unfortunate, “It tells us that you have to be kind, not be mean to other people who are not as good at sport as you”.

Summary of Cross Case Analysis

All teacher participants and the majority of students from all three Case Study schools made connections between HPE and the Religious Education curriculum. The teacher participants made these connections between Religious Education with the Personal Development strand and the Physical Activity strand of the HPE curriculum materials. Whereas the student participants associated the connection mainly through the Physical Activity strand. The students who identified strong connections were from Case Study school Two and Three. They therefore had a specialist HPE teacher and regularly participated in HPE physical activity lessons.

Discussion

Teacher participants from all three BCE Case Study schools agreed that there were strong connections between HPE and the Religious Education curriculum. This supports the literature which suggests that the HPE learning area draws strong connections with the RE curriculum (Lynch 2004). It is also argued that religious values can infuse learning in the HPE curriculum for young physically-active students, particularly in Catholic primary schools (Lynch 2004). In particular classroom teacher participants shared that they made the strongest connections within the Personal Development strand, while HPE specialist teacher participants identified strong connections through the physical activity strand, the respective strands these teachers implemented. Furthermore, the teachers expressed that the connections should be articulated and consciously planned for to increase success. This would involve extending the faith formation dimension within the Religious Education curriculum documents. It was suggested that illumination and practical guidance for teachers will enable efficacy in implementation. This is supported by Carr (1988) who states that in schools faith and culture is rarely reflected on. The data gathered supported that HPE presents many practical experiences which require living and reflecting upon religious traditions and gospel values (Lynch 2004), essential aspects of the Religious Education dimensions; educational and faith formation.

The students made strong connections between the two learning areas mainly through the gospel values in Religious Education and the physical activity strand within HPE. This was a significant connection made by the student participants which evidence development of Groome's (2002) Catholic qualities. Both the Gospel values and Groome's qualities were connected by the children and yet paradoxically teacher participants indicated that they were not articulating this connection and some teacher participants even suggesting that this was an area requiring more attention.

In the Case Study schools with a specialist HPE teacher, Case Study Two and Three, where the implementation of physical activities was regular with weekly lessons, students shared more spiritual experiences through the physical. They were allocated more time for physical activities and offered more opportunities to make the essential link between their faith and culture (Gallagher 1997). Furthermore, the data generated suggests that a Whole School Curriculum Program for HPE increases the likelihood of quality experiences for the children in schools. This resulted in enhanced student interest; a positive effect on students' attitudes towards physical activities and spiritual connections (Table 4). Also, specialist teachers are associated with quality delivery of all dimensions of HPE which includes the spiritual dimension (Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999a).

Conclusion

The Physical activities and Personal Development strands are major aspects in the children's culture as they are part of their everyday. Hence, HPE should be embraced in every Catholic school as a powerful medium which can provide students with many practical and social experiences living and reflecting on the Catholic tradition and gospel values (Lynch 2004). Spiritual development through HPE is recognized by the secular Queensland education system and its need is accentuated in the Catholic system with the growing role of providing students with an experience of Church (Lynch 2004).

Such a vision is supported by the late Pope John Paul II who stated that sport is "a new playing field for the Church's efforts to reach its flock" (d'Emilio 2004, 10) and asks, "Are not these athletic values the deepest aspirations and requirements of the Gospel message?" (John Paul II 1980, 10). Data gathered supports that physical activity in Catholic primary schools through the medium of the HPE learning area has great potential for developing the eight distinctive Catholic qualities identified by Groome (2002) (Lynch 2004). Children experiencing

Gospel messages and Catholic qualities enable curriculum connections, and the development of spirituality that is identified within both the Religious Education and Health and Physical Education key learning area curriculum documents. Data suggests that this potential could be capitalized by assuring HPE curriculum is delivered in a quality manner. The data gathered within this research suggests that quality HPE is increased through primary schools having a Whole School Curriculum Program for HPE and a specialist HPE teacher.

While St. John University, York, England has made pro-active changes to acknowledge the link between faith and culture and specifically the rise of Christian spirituality through physical activities, this does appear to be an area that can be articulated and further developed within the research schools. All Catholic schools must recognize within practice that physical activity and physical education is a crucial part of an holistic education, school's culture and a powerful medium for linking faith to the children's context. Thus, successfully promoting opportunities for Christian spirituality which is identified within both RE and HPE curriculum documents. Connections made between RE and HPE curriculum documents within this study are supported by teacher and student participants in practice which renders an area worthy of further exploration. As this research study was only a small scale sample the data generated was limited by its nature. Hence, it is recommended that a large scale research project be conducted to ascertain verisimilitude of findings pertinent to other schools within this education system and others, within Queensland, Australia and globally.

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