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Building a Community of Collaborative Inquiry: A Pathway to Re-imagining Practice in Health and Physical Education

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Abstract: On-going critiques of existing practices in primary schools focus on the ability of generalist teachers to deliver quality Health and Physical Education (HPE). As well, there are concerns regarding the influx of outsider providers in school spaces and the potentially damaging body pedagogies and practices that are pervading education settings. Our interest is in how these issues contour teachers' practice, what this might mean for diverse learners in schools, and what processes support classroom teachers to re-imagine and practice HPE in ways that celebrate and meet the varied needs of students. In this paper we draw from a collaborative ethnographic action research project with four primary school teachers and three university lecturers. In particular, we explore the pathway that supported both academics and teachers to re-imagine HPE in two primary schools in Aotearoa-New Zealand. We direct attention to three key processes: the importance of identifying teachers' and students' preconceptions of HPE and the pedagogies employed; the need for ongoing, critical dialogue and questioning about current orthodoxies and classroom practices; and the momentum provided by the enunciation of a shared ethos or philosophy of HPE. These are proposed to have been fundamental to our subsequent endeavours to re-imagine classroom HPE in ways that met the needs of diverse learners. We conclude that innovative, inclusive programmes and practices in HPE are possible when teachers and researchers work collaboratively, and teachers increasingly 'drive' both the research and the change process in their own classrooms.
Keywords: health and physical education; primary schools; school-university partnerships, collaborative action research

Our Context

Over the past decade, international critiques of health and physical education (HPE) curriculum and pedagogical practices in primary schools have become commonplace. A range of issues have been targeted in this analysis, including the lack of confidence and competence in teaching HPE expressed by primary school teachers (DeCorby, Halas, Dixon, Wintrup, & Janzen, 2005; Faucette, Nugent, Sallis, & McKenzie, 2002; Hart, 2005; Morgan & Bourke, 2005). There has been concern about the quality of pedagogical approaches deployed in primary school-based HPE including the overuse of teacher directed pedagogies (Graber, Locke, Lambdin, & Solmon, 2008; Griggs, 2008; Sloan, 2010), and questioning of the sheer volume and nature of (H)PE initiatives and policies reaching into schools currently (Macdonald, 2011; Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2008 ; Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2009; Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011). Furthermore, several scholars have pointed out that opportunities to promote holistic notions of wellbeing are diluted by virtue of the restrictive and narrow visions of corporeal health increasingly promulgated via public health 'initiatives' (Evans, De Pain, Rich, & Davies, 2011; Wright & Harwood, 2009).

In the Aotearoa-New Zealand context, similar issues are noted in academic scholarship. Penney, Pope, lisahunter, Phillips, & Dewar (2013) and Gordon, Cowan, McKenzie & Dyson (2013) report on the reluctance of New Zealand primary school teachers to engage in the HPE area due to a lack of personal confidence in regards to the learning area, and the challenges associated with making sense of HPE amidst a constantly shifting policy context (Petrie & lisahunter, 2011). The proliferation of programmes, resources and initiatives provided by external providers has also drawn critique, with one New Zealand study noting over 124 outside programmes and personnel being available to schools in the Waikato region alone (Petrie, Penney, & Fellows, in press). Furthermore, a mandated prioritisation of literacy and numeracy in New Zealand primary schools (Tolley, 2009, October), together with a nationwide reduction in time allocated during initial teacher education time for the HPE learning area (Dyson, Gordon, & Cowan, 2011; Petrie, 2008) only serves to intensify concerns about whether the holistic and socio-critical models of health and wellbeing promoted in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) are currently being realised. The aforementioned commentaries raise important questions about what is going on in the name of HPE currently in primary school settings and how best to build beyond critique to promote change at the level of classroom and school practice. Exemplars of innovative processes and practice that address some of the concerns raised above, or support school communities to move beyond traditional ways of thinking about and practicing HPE are not evidenced in New Zealand literature.

This paper endeavours to make some inroads into addressing gaps in understandings about what change might entail and more specifically, what processes support primary school teachers to think and act differently in relation to HPE in their classrooms. We begin with an introduction to the research project *Everybody counts? Understanding health and physical education in the primary school* (Petrie et al., 2013), and the methodological underpinnings of this collaborative practitioner inquiry-based research project. Drawing on examples from the first three phases of this four-phase project we highlight the key research processes that have assisted us all to re-imagine HPE in the primary school context. In doing so, we signal a potential route others may take if they are committed to promoting sustainable, inclusive, and innovative practice and change in HPE.

Our Project

The research project *Everybody counts? Understanding health and physical education in the primary school* involved four teachers from two primary schools, and three university researchers from two universities, and was undertaken between January 2011 and January 2013. Our research was made possible with funding from the *Teaching and Learning Research Initiative*, a government fund designed to enhance links between educational research and teaching practices to improve outcomes for learners. The project provided time and funding for the university partners and teachers to work together both in the two schools and offsite to achieve four key aims. These were:

- Building knowledge about current practice, including an audit of the local/national health environment and descriptive case studies of our two partner schools (phase one);
- Expanding repertoires and reconstructing practice, as we considered the ways diverse learners' needs may be addressed in HPE (phase two);
- Imagining, implementing and evaluating innovative HPE practices that work for teachers and students (phase three)
- Exploring how to sustain and spread re-imagined approaches to HPE beyond the teachers and classrooms involved in the project to the wider school community and to different school sites (phase 4 – not discussed in this paper).

Participants

The mix of researchers and teachers was drawn together as each brought different and complementary knowledge and experience to contribute towards the goal of understanding both the "inside-out" and "outside-in" (Darling-Hammond, Hightower, Husbands, LaFors, Young & Christopher, 2003) perspectives of health imperatives and teaching and learning HPE in primary school settings.

The two schools involved were selected as they had long-established partnerships with the University of Waikato (Hamilton and Tauranga, New Zealand), and afforded opportunities to work in contexts that are culturally diverse. The Hamilton school had a 2011 roll of approximately 617, with a high number of transient students. Over 50 nationalities made up the student population, 37% of whom identify as Māori, 9% Pacifica, 9% South East Asian, 9% African and 29% European. In contrast the school located in Tauranga had a roll of 503, 44% are Māori, with a further 51% Pākehā (New Zealand of European Descent). Eleven other ethnic groups are also represented in the school population.

All teachers from both schools were provided with an initial overview of the project. Two teachers from each school, with support from their respective principals, expressed a desire to participate in the project. The academic partners had no role in determining what teachers participated as it was thought that it needed to be a school and individual teacher decision. The four teachers, Joanne (pseudonyms have not been used in this paper. Our partners are recognisable through the TLRI research webpages and are happy to be recognised for their contribution to this project), Deirdre, Joel (Year 5/6 teachers), and Shane (Year 3/4 teacher) each had different reasons for getting involved and also had varied levels of interest towards teaching HPE. Year 6 is the final year of primary schooling in the New Zealand school system. Students start school at the age of five, so students would generally be 10 years old in a Year 6 class, and seven years old as Year 3 students.

Collectively the teachers acknowledged, during the second year of the project, that they had seen it as an opportunity to enhance their capacity to understand their own practice

and afforded them the chance to engage in a research relationship with researchers who they believe could work collaboratively with them.

The academic partners, and authors of this paper, were all members of the New Zealand HPE community and collectively interested in young people, HPE, health and exploring ways that moved beyond critiquing current practice towards practicing in ways that made a difference. Each brought individual strengths to the team, which are evidenced by their previous research.

The teacher members of the project team contributed to the collective sense making of the study and the process, and were central to the material foregrounded in this paper. This paper has been developed based on the research teams collective conversations but in respect of teacher workloads has been written by the three university partners. Therefore, when the term we is used in the paper, unless otherwise stated, we are talking about the project team as a collective.

Collaborative Practitioner Inquiry

In coming together as a research team (teachers and academic partners) we viewed our work as a process of "collaborative knowledge building by practitioners in the university and the field" (Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, Mockler, Ponte, & Ronnerman, 2012, p. 1) as we systematically investigated problems that mattered to us all. For us, our practitioner inquiry demonstrates collaborative rather than individual problem posing, problem solving and meaningful dialogue, and theorising about our own work and the assumptions we draw. As is evident below, these characteristics were integral in each of the phases of our project, further underscoring the emergent and iterative nature of collaborative research (Paulus, Woodside, and Ziegler, 2008). Our work is underpinned by "the assumption that inquiry is an integral, not separate, part of practice, and that learning from practice is an essential task of practitioners" (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006, p. 509). Additionally, our deliberate establishment of a community of reflective inquiry meant that the research process was organic, systematic and participatory; driven by the shared desire to collaboratively explore what HPE practice that was inclusive for diverse students might look like in each of the four primary school classrooms.

We began the research guided by a shared commitment to exploring innovative practice in HPE, the possibilities and potential of what this might end up looking like in each of the classes was not predetermined in any way. Like Paulus et al. (2008, p. 233), we also considered it difficult to "…know what you want to know" and in our case do *before* entering the milieu of the four classrooms. Complementing this open-ended agenda was an avowed commitment to challenging traditional notions of whose knowledge counts, especially in relation to research and/or professional learning programmes. Previous experiences of the project team, as teachers and research participants, suggested that HPE 'expertise' is the domain of the secondary school or tertiary 'specialists', with primary school teachers' perspectives and knowledge often marginalised. For our project therefore, teachers' expertise in teaching and the daily workings of class and school communities was considered to be essential 'insider-knowledge' for classroom based research, while university researchers' expertise in research in HPE was seen to complement what the teacher practitioners contributed. While as Fraser, Henderson, & Price (2005-2006, p. 59) note, "capitalising on both sets of expertise means that 'expert positions' will be taken from time to time" by each partner, neither expertise was considered to have more value or legitimacy.

As part of facilitating this process, Marg and Kirsten - two of the university partners became weekly 'interlopers' in the teachers' classrooms and school community for

approximately a morning a week. This enabled the university partners to gain a more nuanced appreciation of the daily complexities and workings of each teaching and learning environment.

Research team meetings (eight days per school year) brought the team together for dialogue and reflection. Each teacher had access to a further eight days each year of teacher release to allow time to cogitate, plan, develop resources, meet individually with one of the university partners, or do whatever was deemed necessary to support their grappling with the research, the teaching, and the changes the project began to have on their thinking and practice.

A commitment to collect data without impinging on teachers' workloads, while simultaneously ensuring minimal disruption to the teaching and learning programmes of the classroom, meant that university partners and teachers were the principal collectors of data. Most data collection occurred as part of the classroom programme. With the exception of initial interviews of both teachers and students in phase one and follow-up interviews in phase three that were carried out by the university partners, data were collected as teachers went about their daily work, and when university partners were in school each week. This took the form of: school documents; formal and informal journaling (teachers, students, and university partners); class blogs; student work; resources; professional development materials and advertising materials provided to the school; and team meeting transcripts and emails that had been on-going throughout the research.

Analysis, for us, was cyclical, ongoing, occurred collaboratively, privately and across both informal and formal sites. Analytic activity did not simply happen in relation to 'data' collected, nor at specific times in the project. Rather, our analytical work took the form of oral inquiry (Cochran-Smith &Lytle, 1993) during the social interactions that occurred at team meetings and through shared electronic conversations. Analysis emerged from the collective understandings and sense-making of all members of the project team as we examine contextual variations, multiple meaning perspectives and draw on our wide ranging experiences.

A Process for Re-imagining HPE

Sharing concrete examples of what new pedagogies and activities teachers were using, or what they do differently with their class each day is not the focus of this article, and is only one way in which we could catalogue our findings. Sharing such findings no doubt offers ideas for things other teachers could do differently and potentially adds to the kete (Māori word for basket) of tools, strategies or activities they may adopt. However, what appears more important, given the extensive critiques of practice and the paucity of examples of strategies to support generalist teachers to adopt innovative approaches to primary HPE, is to share the processes or steps we collectively engaged in that supported us to reimagine HPE and to think about how to 'do differently'. In doing this, we acknowledge that this is a process that worked for us. What it looks like for others and the outcomes that individual teachers and school communities might come to if they were to follow a similar process would and should look different and responsive to their own context. With this caveat we share our process.

Identifying Preconceptions

Those familiar with socially critical debates around the notion of an obesity epidemic have little difficulty understanding how public discourses on fatness shape how people come to know and understand themselves. Evans et al. (2011), Evans, Rich, Davies, and Allwood (2008), Gard (2011) and Welch and Wright (2011) have pointed to the discriminatory, moralising and pernicious ways obesity discourse can work to narrow perceptions of what counts as good health. Others have explored the ways obesity discourse can breed anxiety, guilt and shame in young people whose body mass indexes exceed the *norm* (Burrows, 2011). For the teachers and communities in this study, however, these kinds of critiques were not necessarily easy accessed. Rather, the idea that all children are at risk of becoming obese and that eating better and exercising more are the keys to unlatching a slimmer future is the prevailing 'truth' circulating. In turn, narrowly conceived notions about what health entails and what kinds of bodies are healthful were reinforced in everyday HPE practices and through ascription to medicalised views of health (Evans et al., 2011).

Prior to engaging in our joint project each of the four teacher partners had been exposed to some literature (Burrows, 2008; Burrows, Wright, & McCormack, 2009) that raised concerns about the ways in which obesity discourses shape young people's dispositions and practices around health, during either their initial teacher education (ITE) or, for Jo, as part of an in-service professional learning initiative. However, it was evident that engaging in the literature did not necessarily change the way these teachers thought about health or obesity. The initial teacher interviews and our collective discussions implied that their ITE programmes had afforded the four teachers little support to think and/or speak critically about the current orthodoxies that shape language, pedagogies and programmes that reinforce particular messages about bodies and being healthy. What was surprising for us (the university partners) was that the teachers, all of whom were passionate about the wellbeing of their students, did not appear to be cognisant of the potential impact narrow and prescriptive notions of wellness could have on their students.

Personalising the Issues

One 'unplanned' data collection exercise, appears to have been the catalyst for major shifts in the way the four teacher partners viewed health/wellbeing, their role as a teacher, and the potential of HPE. During all the initial 20 student focus group interviews (March/April, 2011) students liberally used the terms healthy and unhealthy in their descriptions of what they understood about looking after themselves. Subsequently, Shane, was working on descriptive writing with his Yr 4 class (May, 2011), and the decision was made to have students practice this literacy task whilst expanding on the terms healthy and unhealthy. Successively the other three teachers also did a similar activity, linking it to their classroom programme either as a literacy task or as part of an activity about Venn diagrams.

As the four teachers read/saw their own student's narrow conceptions of health and bodies, the issues became personalised. Teachers indicated that their common sense understandings about health and the nature and content of their current HPE programme were challenged as they heard/read the stories for the children from their own classes. The evoking of feelings in response to student views triggered extensive dialogue when we were together, as teachers needed to process their thoughts and concerns. As we collectively looked across data from all four classes, the teachers, and to a lesser extend we (the university partners), were surprised and somewhat alarmed by the dichotomies that were evident in the students' views. Teachers' comments reflected this, for example Jo stated, "What being healthy to

them, is quite surprising. As in, if you have a bigger body than someone else you are unhealthy… they perceive slim or skinny as being healthy" (June, 2011 meeting). As Deirdre acknowledged,

> "I suppose we are getting desensitised, we hear it (students talking about other bodies) so often that it just slides past. We pick it up when it is set in a context or if you hear 2 children talking about somebody like that right by you, but a lot of the time it just slides past. You don't even.... it's part of the way they speak about each other. It's just accepted" (June, 2011 meeting).

It appeared that this one activity heightened the teachers' care and concern for the children they taught, and raised their consciousness about the potential impacts narrow views of health may have for how students view themselves and others. Suddenly for these teachers, students' reflecting judgemental, moralistic, and potentially self-deprecating views about health was an issue that unsettled them.

Teachers appeared to need to process their thinking and through dialogue make sense of their 'new' realities as they desired to do differently and respond to questions they had begun to ask of themselves. These included: what am I/ we doing that might contribute to *my* children thinking about being healthy and unhealthy in such narrow ways?, what might it be like to be a child in my class/our school who doesn't really 'fit' these views of being healthy?, and what could we do differently in HPE? Dialoguing such questions became central to moving on.

Dialogue: Understanding the Current Orthodoxy and Creating Change

As part of our research and learning community, and through open, non-judgemental and honest dialogue, we together were able to draw on our different expertise (classroom, children, obesity discourses, pedagogy, HPE curriculum) to interrogate these questions during our June 2011 meeting. While the teachers brought in-depth knowledge of their children, school and community, the university partners brought understandings of the literature to the conversation. In contrast to the 'academic' and theorised discussions that may play out when talking to researchers in the field about children's perspectives on health or what would constitute better practice in primary schools, we (the university partners) were challenged to make the ideas present in journals and other academic publications accessible by de-jargonising the content and concepts, and by talking about what it meant in terms of how we might think about practice. By relating theory to every-day teaching practices, and by treating teaching and the work of teachers as theorising, we collectively endeavoured to avoid privileging so-called 'high theory'.

The process of questioning current orthodoxies and classroom/school practices appeared to bring a heightened sense of consciousness about the multifaceted factors that influence to students' perceptions of bodies, health, nutrition. Deirdre commented to the team that "it has been a complete mind shift", whilst Shane began noticing the subtle messages about food and bodies played out in friends and families' homes and in the stories children told at sharing time. He reported how one five year old had told her teacher that she loved dancing and danced for hours at home, and that her mother had told her she should keep doing it as it would help her lose weight. It became apparent through our discussions that we all contribute to how children make sense of food, bodies and health through the language used, the in-class activities chosen, and when we as teachers do not to challenge or disrupt the public discourses and of representations of body image abundance within popular culture that bombard children and young people everyday.

It did not take long for the teachers to become somewhat adamant in their desire to do differently, initially as personal activists in relation to public discourses and secondly in their role as teachers. The became committed to ensuring students, regardless of age, were prompted to question what they were seeing and being told, and in doing so become more critical consumers of 'knowledge'. Subsequently this became the tipping point for rethinking the role the HPE curriculum in their classrooms could play.

Identifying What We Stand For

Through the process of dialogue about the data (interviews, children's work), school case studies, media and national health environment audit, we were collectively adamant that the children in the four classrooms (and their colleagues in schools) needed to develop knowledge and skills associated with four big ideas (developed during a meeting in November, 2011). Firstly, and prominent in our thinking, was the need to support students to develop informed critical literacy about health. This centred on challenging students to question how health is represented and presented to them by the media, family, public, and schools. In doing so there was a desire to disrupt the westernised cultural practices that play out in school settings and in doing so regulate students understandings of their own and others health, body, food intake, participation in physical activity, and the messages they 'received' from public and personal sources.

Secondly, we wanted to ensure that students (and colleagues longer-term) recognised that health was not only about the physical. While *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) draws on Durie's (1994) *Whare tapa wha* holistic representation of health from one Māori perspective, the students' testimonies had highlighted that concepts of being healthy were limited to the physical (hand washing, brushing your teeth, eating the right foods, and formal exercise). As a result, teachers viewed it as essential to develop learning opportunities that supported student social, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing in order to best contribute to students' development in their classroom and beyond the school gates.

Thirdly, and linked to the previous big idea, was the need to encourage students to move beyond notions of physical activity that are premised on fitness, sport (predominantly western/traditional ball sports) and games. For our group, being physically active was not only about the mechanistic and functional, but also promoting broad understandings of and purposes for moving, being, and doing. In practice this meant encouraging moving for pleasure and skill development, in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and allowing students to recognise and appreciate that walking the dog on the beach; playing games with their families; using a Wii; flying a kite and so on *count* as physical activity (not just running and traditional sports).

Finally, there was a real sense of needing to teach interpersonal skills more explicitly. The four teachers, and their colleagues at their respective schools, all did teaching about getting along with others at the beginning of each year as part of their focus on building a class culture. This focus on the interpersonal was continued throughout the year as they reinforced particular ways of behaving appropriately towards others through the rewards systems in some of their classes. However, in reflecting on students' interaction both in and out of the classroom and the students' interview comments that highlighted an understanding of the rewards scheme as being about keeping the teacher "happy" and getting the reward, teachers recognised that much of the teaching of interpersonal skills was superficial. There was a recognition that there was a need to do "more than talk" about these things and instead

support students to be "transferring and applying" their interpersonal skills in class, in the playground, and beyond the school gates.

In a sense, the process of analysing and dialoguing the data and coming to a new philosophical place had been about us all being provided with an opportunity to develop personalised curriculum that was grounded in knowing for ourselves what the issues were for the students and community in each of the two contexts. The research process provided the time and space for teachers in particular to think differently, to embrace change based on their own understandings, and as a result take ownership as curriculum writers.

To this end we collectively developed an ethos (available at http://www.tlri.org.nz/tlri-research/research-progress/school-sector/every-body-counts-understanding-health-and-physical), based on a series of what we coined 'touchstones' that we could continue to go back to as we moved to planning for learning.

Having co-constructed the overarching new philosophy, that would in theory completely disrupt what HPE would look like in these four primary school classrooms, Shane simply suggested that he couldn't do this and call it 'PE'. He was conscious that his students, other teachers, the school senior management and parents consider physical education to be going out for a game, sport, or running and health happened in blocks of time which inhibited teachers ability to do health differently. So after much reflection and discussion HPE became Everybody Counts (EBC). It is not with in the scope of this paper to detail how changing a name changes everything (see Cosgriff, Petrie, & Burrows, 2013, for further discussion of this), however, we argue that changing the name provided an opportunity for us all, and especially for the teachers, to both think more 'freely' and practice HPE in ways that had meaning for the learners and school communities we were part of.

"Doing Differently"

Having worked through a process that allowed us each individually and collectively to be confronted philosophically, the challenge of 'doing differently' in classrooms and school contexts was in front of us. Collectively we were flummoxed by questions about what learning like this looks like in classrooms. This was the most challenging point in the project so far. While we were passionate and had a strong desire to 'do differently', the uncertainty and lack of answers was unsettling yet necessary. Regardless of the wealth of shared expertise, at this point we could have stopped but the collective partnership and trust in each other allowed us to work through this and come up with some ideas to get started.

It is not within the scope of this paper to describe everything that we attempted. More detailed accounts of some of the ways we have been thinking and 'doing differently' have been shared elsewhere (Cosgriff et al., 2013; Devcich, 2013; Duggan, 2013; Keown & Petrie, 2013; Naera, 2013; Petrie et al., 2013). However, it is important to share the processes and some initial moves we collectively engaged in as we moved from reimagining what HPE could look like in practice to actually enacting it as part of everyday practice.

The starting point, at the beginning of the second year of the project, centred on how we could begin the school year so that from day one practice would be different, and HPE would be based on our EBC philosophy. While the original intent was that each teacher, with whatever support they deemed necessary, would devise their own teaching and learning programme and activities, the group decided to try some similar approaches with variations to reflect each individual's personality, teaching approach, and the needs of their students. This meant the teachers would be able to compare how things went and share ideas, in essence realising their own research agenda within the bigger project. In the first school term (Feb-April 2012) teachers elected to do more explicit teaching of interpersonal skills as part

of a focus on establishing a positive classroom culture. This included changing the ways they went about getting to know their classes, adopting alternative ways of managing classroom (mis)behaviour, exploring holistic notions of wellbeing, and celebrating the diversity of children in each class. Driving the decision-making and planning was a sense that if they got to know their students better, and beyond the superficial, then students' needs would be better able to be met.

In this initial stage of trialling innovative practice, the challenge for the teachers was not so much finding novel activities but as they put it, "using the same activities but doing them really differently" (Shane, May meeting 2012), whilst at the same time challenging notions of what it was to be active, and beginning the process of opening students' eyes to the world of movement. Much of the emphasis was on teaching differently alongside teaching different things - not only changing what was taught but how it was taught. This meant transferring many of their general pedagogical skills (Keown & Petrie, 2013; Petrie, 2010), including questioning, ability grouping, and designing student centred-inquiries, into the HPE/EBC context. Alongside these developments was a significant and central shift toward a focus on planning for learning as opposed to planning for activity. This is where the planning process begins with a focus on what the teacher *and* the students identify as a learning need, and then seeking the most appropriate activities to support the development of this learning (Devcich, 2013).

During 2012 and still currently, the teachers continue to 'do differently' and explore notions of HPE that support students to see and be in the world differently. There is no doubt that to do so take times and commitment amongst the ongoing pressures of an education system that at times appears to be focused on deprofessionalising the work of teachers. To this end we, as the university partners, acknowledge the tenacity and enduring desire of our teaching partners as they strive to make a difference for their students.

Reimagining Practice – a Collaborative Process of Inquiry

We realised during this process, that much of what we were doing was reflective of the "Teaching as Inquiry" approach discussed under the heading "Effective Pedagogy" in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 35). This concept has become a fundamental frame through which we have collective conceived the change in practice, and in itself offers a tool that potentially supports all teachers to engage in their own cycles of practitioner research.

While, some will query the depth of change, or ask if the same would be possible with a different group of teachers or on a bigger scale questions, we firmly believe that a key to the shifts in thinking and practice evidenced in this research is that it has *not* been based on the premise that teachers are told the answer/s by the 'experts', who had already critiqued the discursive resources that they believed had shaped teachers practices in HPE. As our analysis suggests, and the process outlined in proceeding sections indicates, innovative thinking and practice is inevitably premised on:

- A thorough understanding of what the current orthodoxy is;
- Recognising that embracing change may require a re-configuring and/or re-naming 'fixed' concepts, such as HPE;
- Accepting that thinking about, let alone doing innovation requires time - time to talk, think, discuss, and imagine what HPE may or may not become.

Central to this is fully acknowledging teachers as experts in their own right, and in doing so the research process has meant that there has been a reshuffling of roles for our group. The university partners became co-teachers, resource suppliers, and sounding boards for new

ideas, and the teachers became both the generators and collectors of data, practitioner researchers, and activist professionals. By drawing on our shared expertise and creating respectful partnerships, we all have been able to interrogate teaching and learning, and acknowledge the complexity and the impacts of interactions between people, ideas, tools, and settings over time (Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, Río, & Alvarez, 1995). In doing so we have taken the time to grapple with the discomfort of not knowing, engage in reflective dialogue, talking and dithering, and come to a place of reconfiguring and reimagining HPE together.

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