

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL SECTION ON BODIES IN MOTION: SPORT, HEALTH, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

CLIVE C. POPE AND TONI BRUCE

*Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
The University of Waikato*

Tena koutou katoa

It is our pleasure to present this special section entitled "*Bodies in Motion*". As the title suggests, this area of interest encapsulates many affiliates of research in the movement culture. As people become involved in purposeful physical activity we should continue to question and try to deepen our understanding of this important aspect of our cultural life. In addition to the numerous forms of movement, it is also important to explore and describe the nature and importance of movement throughout the lifespan. Reflections on "*Bodies in Motion*" bring to mind contexts marked by diverse activities, individualized meanings, ambiguous motives and numerous social issues. It is our hope that this section will promote interest and further inquiry.

At a similar time to the launching of this journal, the Department of Leisure Studies was established within the School of Education. The first cohort of 120 students commenced their degree programme in 1993. Over the ensuing decade we have seen the continued development of courses and qualifications at undergraduate and postgraduate level. More recently physical and health education have amalgamated with sport and leisure to form what is now the Department of Sport and Leisure Studies. Courses are now offered in areas that include sport, recreation, dance, the outdoors, physical education and health. The new department continues to support a growing research culture at national and international levels. '*Bodies in Motion*' is a celebration of that diversity and development marked by articles from within Aotearoa New Zealand and countries beyond.

Four guest commentaries open this section and each presents a view on 'the state of play' of physical education in schools both within this country and in Australia. Bob Stothart offers his reflections after a career as a leader in the field. He warns of the tentative position physical education now holds within education. While physical education can be a conduit to many physical activity forms, Bob believes the potential of such a connection has not always been fully realized. This issue was recently highlighted by our Minister of Education.

In the second commentary, Richard Tinning follows the connection theme and presents three pertinent issues as dots that are in turn linked to form a picture

of contemporary health and physical education. Richard warns of the risk associated with trying to do too much and the need for teachers to be more realistic about their mission as purveyors of the subject.

Doone Macdonald advocates for evidenced-based practice in health and physical education as a strategy to promote good practice within school curriculum. Against a backdrop of increasing change, Doone argues that health and physical education must be prepared to justify its position within education and that will only occur when well-informed decisions are made.

The final commentary from Alan Ovens endorses the issue of change and its effect on the lives of teachers in schools. Alan relates his experiences as a regular observer of life in the gymnasium and classroom and highlights the complexity of the job in these 'new times'. Alan stresses the need for continued support for teachers in schools through professional development relating to curriculum and pedagogy. Such support has not always been apparent.

This year the Sport and Leisure Studies Department was awarded two professorial appointments and, in keeping with tradition, the two inaugural professorial addresses appear within this section of the journal. Bevan Grant's inaugural address focuses on the misconceptions often associated with physical activity in later life. This issue is especially relevant as this country enters a period of social and structural change and unprecedented growth in the demographic of those beyond 65 years. Such a shift has implications for leisure and Bevan offers some thoughts on this interesting phase of the lifespan.

In the second professorial article, Doug Booth addresses how historians are looking toward new ways of contextualizing and theorizing history. Attention to the assumptions tied to how history is viewed can reveal a shift from traditional views of history toward addressing the complex relationships between past and present. Doug illustrates such shifts using examples of historical material with a sporting theme.

Brendan Hokowhitu challenges physical education and health curriculum initiatives, both past and present, as disempowering for Māori. He shares four areas that physical educationists must face if an appropriately inclusive curriculum is to be part of any future change. To illustrate why such challenge is necessary, Brendan deconstructs past curricula and the relationship between physical education and tikanga Māori.

Paul Whitinui addresses the importance of kapa haka as a vehicle to address the reported underachievement of Māori students. Recent developments in NCEA have helped to promote kapa haka as a culturally responsive learning intervention. Teachers who embrace kapa haka may also need to reflect on who they are as New Zealanders and how such an innovation should be addressed.

Another challenge is presented to teachers by Margaret Scratchley who invites teachers to seek the views of children as worthwhile contributors to what and how health is taught in schools. Margaret reminds us that the different values and attitudes held by children and adults highlight the need for consultation. Her findings reveal children's views on health and how these views inform practitioners.

Ben Dyson and Kevin Strachan investigate the ecology of cooperative learning within a physical education setting. Their analysis of two classes reveals the relevance of cooperative learning as a viable tool to promote student learning. Improvement in teaching may be advanced through an awareness of the interplay between management and instructional systems as well as student social systems.

The authors reveal how an ecological analysis can enhance the teaching learning process.

The notion of cooperation is also part of Donna Little's article that examines the perceived benefits of competition and cooperation held by leaders from a variety of physical activity settings. Her study highlights how cooperation was underutilized and often misunderstood by participants in this project. Donna advocates for a better balance between competition and cooperation as components of activity programmes. Such a consideration has implications for future leader training.

Martha Bell explores the notion of physicality and femininity. Her interviews with women reveal the significance of 'physical moments' that are interpreted as defining events of lived experience. The apparent contradictions of femininity and physicality have significant implications for educators and researchers.

Richard Light utilizes a *Game Sense* instructional model as a tool to enhance youth sport coaching environments. Interviews conducted by Richard reveal the coaches' personal and professional experiences with the model. In particular, this model presented a significant challenge to the beliefs and practices of coaches and any change would require creative and sustained strategies.

Holly Thorpe explores the world of snowboarding and, more specifically, the "embodied boarder" as a phenomenon among contemporary youth. Holly places the snowboarder under the microscope by analyzing clothing, language and posture as cultural forms. This article reveals how the body can be a tool in the production and maintenance of social groups and the relevance of such examination to understanding today's youth culture.

In their analysis of media coverage of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, Emma Wensing, Toni Bruce and Clive Pope highlight the national preference for winning and the emerging tension between participatory and professional sporting models. The authors question whether there is room for both models in future sporting directions in this country. They also examine the apparent reluctance by the New Zealand public to surrender traditional sporting values.

One issue that is universal to sporting contexts is that of the parental supporter. Rachel Saunders presents a narrative that typifies many sporting communities in this country. Her story illustrates the nature and influence that significant adults can have on young people within sport contexts. This narrative will ring true for many readers and highlights how many apparent rituals and routines should never be taken for granted by adults.

Karen Barbour draws on feminist research to explore how knowledge can be constructed by individuals and groups based on lived experience. She argues for 'embodied ways of knowing' as an alternative to traditional epistemologies that have dominated Western thought. Karen discusses how an intentional focus toward movement as a way of knowing can help promote appreciation and understanding of movement within educational settings.

Jennifer Waggoner reflects on her experiences as a dancer. Her personal narrative highlights her passion for dancing and the physical and emotional effects of her struggle to make her body fit the thin ballet ideal. 'The impossible dream' reveals many sacrifices and issues that young people often face.

Taken together these articles present a variety of perspectives on *Bodies in Motion* and demonstrate how the various constituents of movement culture can provide insightful portraits of this diverse aspect of education.

Copyright of *Waikato Journal of Education* is the property of *Waikato Journal of Education* and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.