

Teaching literacy in PDHPE in Year 7

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Chapter 1: The literacy demands of PDHPE

Literacy in PDHPE

Consider the following scenario.

It is period 2 on Friday and a Year 7 class is having a PDHPE lesson. They are continuing work on a growth and development unit.

Teacher: Last week we were discussing the changes which happen to us during puberty. Who can remember what some of those changes were? We'll list these *changes* on the board. Who would like to start?

Sam: We fight heaps with our parents and want to be with our friends.

Teacher: We sure do! We say we experience *social changes*. (*The teacher writes social changes on the board*).

Hamed: We get hair and other things happen to our body.

Teacher: Yes. Can anyone remember the word we use to describe these types of changes?

Lee: *Physical*.

Teacher: Terrific. (*The teacher writes physical changes on the board*).

In this brief transcript of a lesson, it can be seen that the teacher is supporting the students' learning in a number of ways. The teacher:

- activates prior knowledge and understanding
- provides a visual record of the students' responses
- makes explicit links between the students' current understanding and terminology specific to PDHPE.

This scenario demonstrates that there is no need to isolate the teaching of literacy skills from the teaching of PDHPE. Here, the teacher is addressing PDHPE content as well as introducing and encouraging the use of specific terminology and providing key messages related to the topic being studied.

In PDHPE lessons, we use a variety of stimulus materials including written, spoken and visual texts. Written texts are the materials that students are required to read and understand to be able to participate in a lesson. Spoken texts are instructions, explanations, descriptions or other orally presented information that students interpret as they listen. Visual texts can be demonstrations, videos, diagrams and charts which are frequently used in classroom practice. Literacy involves students being able to interpret and create a range of texts successfully.

As teachers, we draw from a wide range of experiences and understandings of the subject content when presenting information to students. Often the language we use is very subject-specific. There may be an expectation that students understand the meaning and purpose of the language used. By using literacy strategies in PDHPE, teachers are supporting the notion that specific content can best be learned if students have the required skills to comprehend the meaning and purpose of the texts used to deliver the content.

It is important to recognise that there is a direct relationship between a student's literacy skills and success in PDHPE. The development of students' literacy skills through experiences in PDHPE is vital. Students experiencing difficulty with speaking, listening, reading and writing will also have difficulty in managing the content of PDHPE. By incorporating literacy strategies into units of work, students will have opportunities to develop literacy skills enabling them to experience success in PDHPE. This approach suggests that planning for literacy needs to be inclusive, rather than seen as something additional or extra that teachers need to do. It is important to remember that we are all teachers of literacy.

On the following page are some examples of the types of literacy skills students need to demonstrate in order to be successful in PDHPE.

Speaking

- articulate ideas
- interact and communicate with others
- use appropriate PDHPE terminology
- discuss ideas
- narrate stories
- express opinions
- argue constructively
- offer explanations
- express knowledge and understandings
- negotiate with others

Listening

- listen to the ideas and opinions of others
- listen for information
- understand discussions, instructions and speeches
- identify main ideas and supporting details
- recognise meaning
- respond appropriately to oral stimuli
- recognise points of view of speakers
- listen to take notes

Literacy in PDHPE**Reading**

- recognise PDHPE terminology and its meaning
- read for a variety of purposes
- read from a variety of sources
- extract and organise information
- follow written instructions
- analyse information
- relate and link knowledge and understandings
- identify and locate appropriate resources
- skim a text to determine general content
- scan a text to locate specific information
- read to summarise information
- recognise author's viewpoint, bias and stereotyping in texts

Writing

- express ideas in written form
- use PDHPE terminology appropriately
- write for a variety of purposes and audiences
- use a variety of written text types
- express a point of view and support with examples
- describe and explain various phenomena related to PDHPE
- present an argument
- construct an information report
- devise a set of explicit instructions that involve sequential steps
- record information clearly
- organise written information from a variety of sources

We are no longer simply teachers of the content and knowledge in relation to our subject. We also have a responsibility to develop specific literacy skills and positive attitudes in students.

Defining literacy

Literacy is a word that has many meanings. For example, we might describe someone as being “computer literate”. Here, being “literate” means having an understanding of computers and their functions. Literacy, then, can exist in a range of contexts, each implying “understanding” and “comprehension” of a particular context.

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.

All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare, but also for Australia to reach its social and economic goals.

*Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy,
Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991*

This book gives teachers a broad range of strategies that will support and enhance students' literacy skills in the PDHPE key learning area. The focus of the material is to demonstrate how to go about teaching literacy in a systematic and explicit way so that teaching PDHPE content is not obstructed by students' inability to read and write appropriately in the subject.



Chapter 2:

A continuum of literacy development

A functional view of language

In NSW schools, all literacy activities are based on a functional view of language, which emphasises the way language is used to make meaning.

Language enables people to do many things. It enables them to share information, to enquire, to express attitudes, to entertain, to argue, to reflect, to construct ideas and to make sense of the world. This view of language is concerned with the way people use language in a variety of social situations. Any of these language exchanges, whether spoken or written, formal or informal, are called *texts*.

A functional view of language shows the ways in which the particular language choices we make in any situation influence, and are influenced by, the people involved, the subject matter and how the message is transferred. The roles and relationships existing between the speaker and the listener, or between the reader and the writer, influence the words which will be used and the ways in which the text will be structured.

It is important to recognise that the purpose and subject matter of the text will influence the language choices made. For example, in a text about the skeletal system, you would expect to see language which describes and explains and specific terminology, such as muscle and vertebrae. In a text analysing composition and performance you would expect to find language which instructs and specific terminology such as direction, space, level and quality.

A functional view of language takes account of how language has evolved to meet our needs. The language we use has evolved within a culture which has particular beliefs, values, needs and ways of thinking about the world. Our language is shaped by these cultural factors and in turn helps to shape the culture. For example, in the English language we have only one word that means *snow*. This word covers all different weather conditions. The Inuit people have more than ten different words to describe and define the word *snow*. Their culture requires them to be able to define the word *snow* more distinctively because their survival could depend on what weather conditions are prevailing.

Primary experiences

During their primary years, students will have been involved in a wide range of literacy experiences across all key learning areas. They will have been engaged in talking, listening, reading and writing for a range of purposes. These purposes would have led them to become familiar with a variety of text types. These texts can be grouped together, based on the features that they have in common. The identified text types are:

- *Narrative:*
a text that entertains, amuses or instructs, for example, a story based on an experience of working with others in a team building experience.
- *Discussion:*
a text where arguments for and against an issue are presented, for example, discussing the pros and cons of using condoms as a means of contraception.
- *Explanation:*
a text that explains how or why something occurs, for example, explaining how the different energy systems work.
- *Exposition:*
a text that persuades by arguing one side of an issue, for example, presenting an argument about legalising drug use in the community.
- *Procedure:*
a text that instructs how to do something, for example, outlining the steps involved in a jazz ballet sequence.
- *Recount:*
a text that retells a series of events, for example, describing the way decisions were made in a particular situation.
- *Report:*
a text that classifies or describes something, for example, writing a report about changes to the body during adolescence.
- *Response:*
a text that responds to an artistic work, for example, preparing a response to a viewed gymnastics sequence.

In Year 7 PDHPE, students should have the opportunity to use a range of text types which reinforce their primary experiences.

Initially, students will examine text types as individual entities and develop their skills and confidence with each of them. Higher order tasks that require students to incorporate the features of several different text types provide a challenging progression.

Consider the following task.

Identify five processed foods which you can buy or which you have at home. Describe the additives in each of the food products and discuss the health benefits or risks for each product.

Let's think about what this task is actually asking the students to do.

1. *Identify five processed foods.* This requires students to:
 - examine a number of processed food products
 - determine which products they will select.
2. *Describe the additives in each of the products.* This requires students to:
 - locate information on the packaging
 - read and interpret the information on the packaging
 - research the types of additives currently available
 - refer to a list of information which describes each of the additives
 - select the information on the label about the additives and reorganise this information to match the research and the selected food product.
3. *Discuss the health benefits or risks of each product.* This requires students to:
 - provide information about the effects of the additives
 - demonstrate an understanding of issues related to additives in foods
 - identify good and harmful additives in foods
 - make a recommendation or conclusion for each product selected.

When setting tasks such as the example described, it is important that you are clear about the purpose of the task and what you expect students to produce. This must be clearly explained to the students. To successfully complete the task, students need to have been previously supported in presenting information in the way the teacher is asking. For further success, the students must also understand the marking criteria which will be used to evaluate their efforts.

Developing the continuum

When developing Year 7 units of work, you need to take into account the prior learning experiences of your students. Year 7 students have had a wide range of experiences in PDHPE. Examples of this can be found in the *K-6 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Formal Consultation Draft Syllabus and Support Document*, Board of Studies, 1992. A further means of finding out the primary experiences of students is to contact the feeder primary schools for a copy of their school scope and sequence plan for PDHPE. This information is invaluable for targeting student needs and providing a continuum of K-10 learning outcomes.

Similarly, to develop stage-appropriate material, it is also necessary to consider the literacy skills and experiences of the students. Teachers need to acknowledge prior literacy experiences in primary school.

Some examples of the literacy demands of PDHPE outcomes in primary school are as follows:

- Students communicate effectively with each other.
- They describe and explain issues relating to their health.
- They describe and explain reasons for using tactics in a game situation.
- They present an argument with confidence.
- They express how they feel.
- They use negotiation skills in a variety of contexts.
- They form opinions based on an examination of relevant information.

In high school, the literacy demands of students in PDHPE become more sophisticated. By Year 10, students are expected to:

- use a variety of appropriate communication skills in a range of contexts
- explain, describe and justify the consequences of a variety of lifestyle decisions and choices
- explain, describe and provide instructions related to a variety of movement sequences and performances
- identify, explain and argue effectively from an informed viewpoint about lifestyle issues and concerns
- use appropriate PDHPE terminology in oral and written contexts, with confidence and consistency.

Through the development and teaching of subject-specific literacy skills in Years 7-10, students will be better prepared for the more complex demands of courses offered in the senior school.



Chapter 3: Assessing, planning and programming for explicit teaching

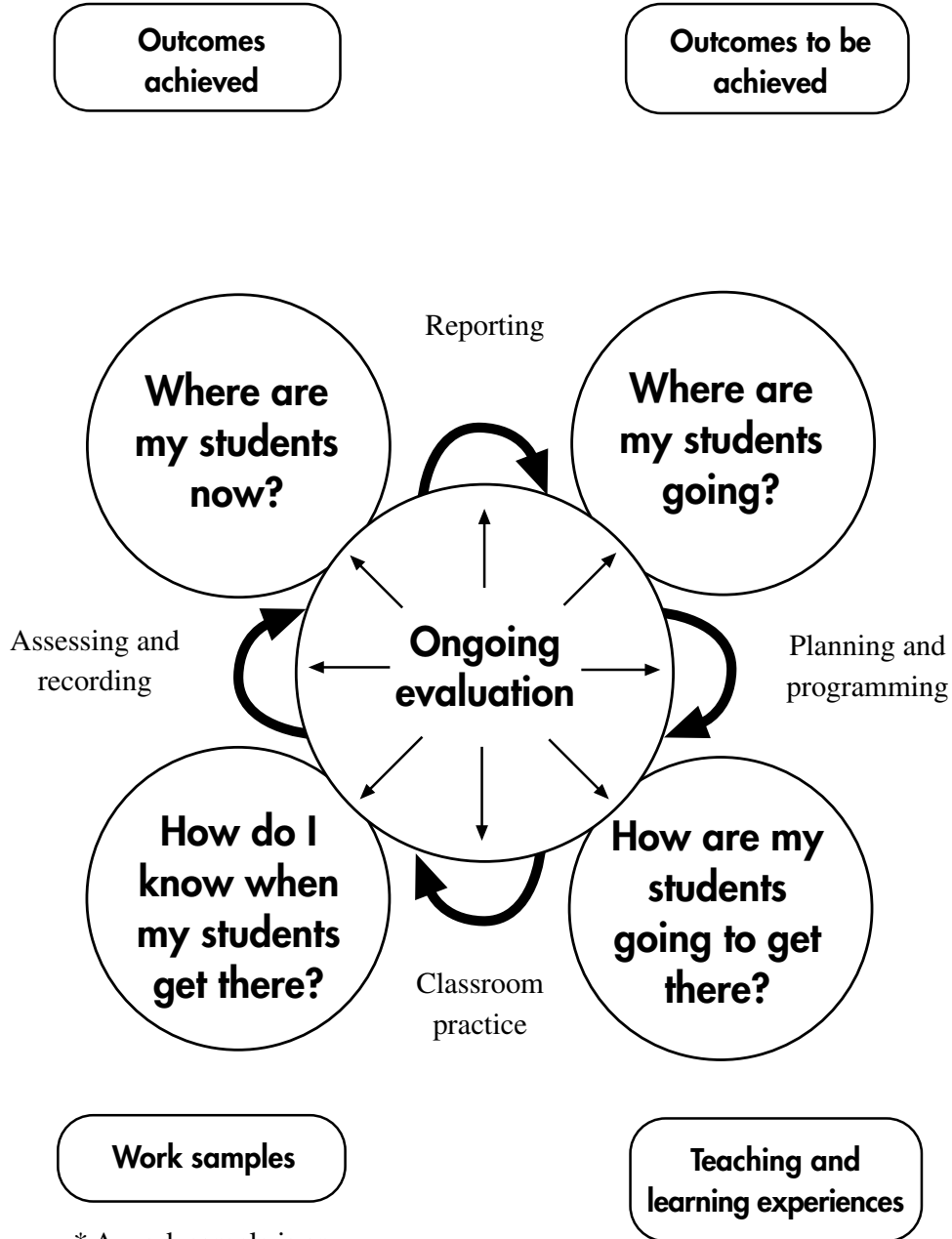
The teaching and learning cycle

When planning and programming for PDHPE, teachers need to determine what skills, knowledge and understandings their students currently have.

Identifying student needs usually occurs in the initial stages of planning. Planning is an integral part of the total teaching and learning cycle and assists teachers in selecting appropriate activities, content and assessment strategies.

The diagram on the following page is a typical teaching and learning cycle which teachers work through when planning, programming and evaluating their work.

The teaching and learning cycle



* A work sample is any demonstration of student achievement

Where are my students now?

The teaching and learning cycle suggests that judgement is needed before any unit is taught, to enable the setting of realistic and achievable outcomes. This judgement can be through formal or informal assessment.

There are many ways in which we can collect information about our students' literacy achievement. These include:

- contacting primary schools. Primary schools can provide a wealth of information about students' literacy achievements and experiences. By developing links with local feeder primary schools, we can begin to identify experiences in PDHPE and literacy. To support a K-12 continuum in PDHPE we must recognise all prior learning experiences.
- the ELLA results, which provide information about students' skills in reading, language and writing, for both individual students and year groups.
- assessment strategies. Teachers constantly make judgements about students' achievement and decisions about the need for further support, extension, or consolidation of outcomes. Examples of assessment strategies include tests, projects, assignments, reports, worksheets, diaries or journals.
- support teachers. Find out about students' level of achievement from ESL teachers, who can provide advice on using the ESL scales as a tool for assessment, as well as for planning and programming.

The ESL scales support teachers in making judgements about ESL students' achievements and language learning needs.

The scales are a supplement to syllabus documents, and to any curriculum support material, such as teaching units. The ESL scales enable teachers to recognise and articulate the progress their ESL students will make as they develop proficiency in English.

It is also important for teachers to use a tool such as the ESL scales to ensure that the second language learners are not incorrectly diagnosed as "failed literacy learners". Problems of second language acquisition may be incorrectly diagnosed as a learning difficulty, which might result in inappropriate or misdirected support.

Support teachers learning difficulties (STLDs) can provide advice about alternative or additional teaching strategies to assist students experiencing difficulties. They are able to diagnose particular learning difficulties and suggest programs and procedures for addressing students' needs.

Formal assessment tasks are only one way of making judgements about students' progress. Much assessment takes place informally in the classroom. Informal assessment strategies can provide valuable information.

There are many ways in which we can collect informal information about students' literacy progress. These include:

- observing students at work. For example, are students able to select appropriate resources for a research topic? Can students follow a set of oral instructions?
- generating anecdotal evidence, such as talking to students and other teachers, or observing and listening as students talk to each other. Is there a specific purpose evident in their talk? For example, can they ask questions or give instructions?
- observing students completing class activities when outside the classroom, such as in the library or undertaking computer activities.
- analysing work samples, such as student performances, written work or oral presentations.

Where are my students going?

When we select learning outcomes for a unit, we are identifying what it is the student should be able to do at the completion of the unit. To select appropriate outcomes, we need to have some information about the skills which the students demonstrate before we teach the unit. This will enable us to select suitable teaching and learning strategies.

How are my students going to get there?

To achieve PDHPE outcomes and improve the literacy skills of students, we need to be explicit and systematic in our approach.

This requires us to be responsible for:

- ensuring clear presentation of materials and tasks
- providing students with clear and concise descriptions of the teaching strategies being used
- using a variety of examples and modelling procedures
- selecting appropriate tasks and texts
- monitoring students' progress
- correcting errors and providing positive feedback on students' progress
- providing links between content and strategies
- teaching in achievable steps
- providing challenging tasks which allow students to progress and refine their skills
- providing frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate learning and the development of skills.

Implications for the systematic teaching of literacy skills in PDHPE requires us to be responsible for:

- having a clear understanding of the skills that are to be taught in each unit
- having clear perceptions of when and where it is appropriate to teach those skills
- developing a range of teaching and learning strategies
- monitoring student progress
- providing clear instructions to students as well as opportunities for students to discuss the purpose of tasks
- including opportunities which allow “modelling-practising-doing.”

How do I know when my students get there?

We use a variety of assessment strategies to help make judgements about whether or not students demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process as it provides us with valuable information that can be used to improve the quality of our work. Assessment information can be recorded in a variety of ways, depending upon the intended audience for the information.

The evidence of achievement of PDHPE outcomes is the demonstration of what a student knows and can do. To successfully achieve PDHPE outcomes, students will also be demonstrating a range of literacy skills. For example, for students to demonstrate they have achieved the stage 4 outcome, *explain key facts and opinions related to lifestyle issues*, they may be required to:

- give an oral presentation to the class on a major lifestyle disease
- critically analyse media articles relating to diet, nutrition and weight loss
- write an article discussing the banning of smoking in all public places
- debate the issue: *Alcohol advertising should be allowed to help fund health care costs.*

Clearly, many activities which we select as assessment tasks have a very strong literacy base. For students to be able to demonstrate the achievement of the outcome, sound literacy skills are required. Therefore, we need to plan systematically for the development of literacy as part of our normal teaching practice.

Taking it further

When making judgements about student achievement, PDHPE teachers could use the following checklist of indicators of literacy development. The examples shown in the right hand column provide teaching and learning experiences which could be used to help develop students' literacy skills.

Speaking and listening				
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Useful teaching strategies
<p>When students talk, do they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use pauses and breaks appropriately? • create a point of view? • articulate clearly? • ask questions when questions are required? • make statements when statements are required? • match the purpose of their talk to what they say? <p>When students listen, can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall facts that have been discussed? • retell stories and information in their own words? • respond appropriately to directions and tasks? • demonstrate understanding of instructions? 				<p>Have you tried:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • linking new skills and information to previously learned skills and information? • providing clear expectations of student performance? • giving specific and direct instructions? • providing instructions as students progress through the stages of complex tasks? • building students' memory for directions and instructions by gradually increasing their length and complexity? • checking for clarification and understanding after giving instructions or information (for example, having students repeat the instruction or describe what they are to do)? • giving students sufficient time to process and act on verbal instructions or information? • teaching students listening skills by asking them to: listen for something specific; develop listening rules; participate in activities in pairs, groups and as a whole class? • providing background information and discussion before requesting students to discuss topics? • encouraging students to sequence their ideas when speaking (retell stories, instructions, steps to learning a new skill)?

Reading				
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Useful teaching strategies
<p>When students read, do they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know where to start and which direction to follow? • know what to do at the end of a line or paragraph? • recognise when meaning is lost and self-correct? • follow flow charts and diagrammatical sequences? • respond to common punctuation marks? • recognise common words? • recognise difficult or technical words? • comprehend what is being read? • recognise the author's viewpoint and whose interests are represented or not included? • locate important information? • highlight key facts, themes or ideas? • summarise and rephrase important points? 				<p>Have you tried:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activating background knowledge prior to reading the text to facilitate comprehension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) using questioning to identify relevant knowledge (b) building field knowledge (content) through talking, listening, reading and writing activities (c) focusing discussion of texts on the major themes central to the text and how they relate to the written text (d) discussing pictures, diagrams, graphs etc. that illustrate the main ideas of a text? • commencing with easier texts and progressing to more difficult texts? • avoiding excessive use of unknown words? • teaching technical or subject-specific vocabulary prior to reading the text? • previewing a text with students before reading it? • using questioning to encourage students to discuss how the text seeks to position the reader? • requesting students to follow the reading of others by pointing or using a sheet of paper to reveal a line at a time? • providing opportunities to read texts containing words that have been the focus of a lesson? • practising strategies such as locating factual information and finding main ideas? • encouraging the development of summarising and retelling skills?

Writing				
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Useful teaching strategies
<p>When students write, do they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write to achieve a specific purpose? • write in a variety of text types (for a variety of purposes)? • use sentences correctly? • use paragraphs appropriately? • spell simple words correctly? • spell complex and technical words correctly? • use punctuation accurately and with variety? • plan and edit their own writing? • edit the writing of others? • use the appropriate structures and language features typical of the text types that they are writing? 				<p>Have you tried:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing appropriate field knowledge prior to writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) building on prior knowledge and experiences (b) providing a range of written, spoken and visual sources related to the field (videos, computer software, newspapers, magazines, diagrams, graphs, reference materials) (c) demonstrating how to use dictionaries, encyclopedias and other information sources? • developing students' knowledge of text types relevant to PDHPE? • displaying models and discussing features of relevant text types? • explicitly teaching the structure and language features of the texts students are to write? • explaining and modelling expectations using sample texts? • providing opportunities for guided writing practice? • providing appropriate feedback for students about their writing? • allowing time for independent writing practice? • providing opportunities for students to become familiar with technical language? • providing scaffolds for students' writing tasks (and limiting the detail provided in the scaffold as students become more confident in their writing)?