

Introducing Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility into physical education

The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model is a values-based sport and physical activity pedagogical model that has been used by practitioners around the world in a variety of settings such as physical education and community sport programmes (Lee & Choi, 2015; Walsh, Veri, & Willard, 2015; Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016). When used in physical education TPSR simultaneously promotes teaching and learning around both social and personal development and physical education curriculum goals. TPSR focuses on students achieving five major goals (often described as levels). These are described as respect (Level 1), participation and effort (Level 2), self-direction (Level 3), caring and leadership (Level 4) and transfer of the various goals to other contexts (Level 5). A TPSR-based lesson generally begins with relational time where teachers build relationships with their students and encourage learners to establish and build relationships with each other. This is followed by a group awareness talk where teachers focus students' learning on the group goals for the day, both TPSR and physical education related, and outline what will be covered in the lesson. The physical activity content of the class is then taught using a variety of pedagogical approaches designed to generate learning around the physical education curriculum and the TPSR related goals. These pedagogical approaches include giving students choices, peer teaching, cooperative activities and allowing students to increasingly take responsibility for their learning. The class concludes with a group meeting and reflection time where students provide feedback on the lesson, reflect on the goals of the day and their own behavior during the lesson in relation to these goals. This time is also used to discuss the transferability of these lessons to their family, school, and community settings (Hellison, 2011; Hellison et al., 2000).

TPSR has a strong connection with social and emotional learning (SEL), an area that has become more visible in curricula internationally over recent years with Scotland, Singapore, New Zealand and the USA as examples of countries which have identified SEL as central to their vision of learning into the future. In many of these countries, physical education has been identified as an important learning area for achieving SEL and TPSR, when implemented well, has been found to be effective in doing so (Gordon, Jacobs, & Wright, 2016).

Australia has also identified SEL through the Australian Curriculum in the Health and Physical Education learning area's sub-strand of "Communicating and Interacting for health and wellbeing" (Australian Curriculum, 2015) and the General Capability of Personal and Social Capability where the writers note that,

In the Australia Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, students work independently and collaboratively in movement- and non-movement-based activities to develop personal and social skills as well as an awareness and appreciation of their own and others' strengths and abilities. (General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, 2015)

Health and Physical Education in the Australian Curriculum has been shaped by the identification of five interrelated propositions informed by a strong and diverse research base for a futures-oriented curriculum. It should be noted that all five propositions are aligned with the goals of TPSR. TPSR has a *focus on educating* students around SEL, it is fundamentally a *strength-based approach* and it *values movement* both as a means to generate teaching and learning around personal and social responsibility and for the inherent value of improved movement competence. The development of understanding around personal responsibility for health is aligned with *Health literacy* and the encouragement for students to take action to promote personal health and the wellbeing of others. A high fidelity TPSR programme also engages students in *critical inquiry processes* which are central to learners developing understanding of the contextual factors that influence their lives and impact their decision making around health and wellbeing. Readers who are interested in exploring the five propositions will find greater detail through the following link:

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/health-and-physical-education/key-ideas>.

A similar situation exists in New Zealand where the New Zealand Curriculum supports TPSR through the key competencies, which include managing self and relating to others, and the essence statement for physical education which states that students:

Through learning and by accepting challenges in health-related movement contexts, students reflect on the nature of well-being and how to promote it. As they develop resilience and a sense of personal and social responsibility, they are increasingly able to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to the well-being of those around them, their communities, environments, and society. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 16)

The experiences of New Zealand physical education teachers introducing TPSR into their

teaching is generally positive with a national survey finding that many teachers continued to use the model over a number of years. The teachers found TPSR led to more successful teaching and learning in physical education, improvement in the students levels of responsibility while at the same time improving the culture of the classroom (Gordon, Thevenard, & Hodis, 2011).

For teachers considering introducing TPSR into their classrooms there can be, understandably, some level of trepidation. Two USA based studies give insight into the process. In the first study seven undergraduate students participated in a college evaluation course designed around Hellison's TPSR Model. The students had little to no pedagogical background and no experience with TPSR. All students described themselves as knowledgeable and competent in physical activity. The course met twice a week for fifteen weeks. Initially, the students were assigned to read Hellison's (2011) *Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Through Physical Activity* along with guided discussion questions. In addition, the students were introduced to the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (TARE) (Wright & Craig, 2011) which was used to help the students become more familiar with the terminology and components that should be observed during a TPSR lesson. Using the TARE, the students watched and coded a mock TPSR lesson that had been previously recorded and validated. The students also participated in a typical TPSR lesson that was led by the instructor prior to planning their own lessons. The students explained that the combination of these activities helped to build a better understanding of TPSR and helped prepare them to implement their first lessons with middle school aged students.

The students taught five TPSR based lessons in a middle school, located in a rural area with a high amount of poverty. For the first lessons, the seven college students were divided into groups of two or three and co-taught a TPSR-based lesson to 20-30 middle school students. Changes were made for the remaining lessons due to the lack of management skills and the limited amount of learning taking place. For the rest of the lessons, the college students taught individually in a station-organized format. Each college student prepared a five to seven minute lesson using the TPSR daily format with shortened awareness talks and group meetings. To end the session, the middle school and college students came together for a large group meeting and self-reflection. The group meeting discussion at the end of the session also improved with more students honestly sharing their opinions and experience. On many occasions Hellison has commented on the importance of starting small and always

keeping things simple. In this study the college students learned first-hand the importance of small and simple.

The findings from this study suggest that learning and implementing TPSR is a “messy” process. Becoming knowledgeable is only step one; implementing a sound TPSR-based lesson and programme takes time and practice. When asked to rate his/her understanding of TPSR, one student stated, “It’s one thing to know the model. I can explain TPSR and TARE. However, it’s really hard to emphasize and teach the levels (goals) to the kids, especially when they don’t do it every day.” It was also evident that consistent exposure to the model is important and expecting the middle students to show significant changes in behavior in five sessions was unrealistic. As practitioners, one needs to dedicate sufficient time and resources to develop a supportive learning environment to assist students in becoming personally and socially responsible leaders in and outside of the programme.

Another study examined TPSR implementation with a group of 8 experienced physical education teachers at two different schools. The teachers participated in a year-long professional learning programme aimed at integrating TPSR into their physical education curriculum. The first phase of the professional development included a workshop on the philosophical foundations of TPSR led by well-known scholars in the area. Following the workshop, each teacher had the opportunity to reflect on ways that TPSR may align with their curriculum. During this reflective process, teachers had an opportunity to answer the question “what’s worth doing?” (Hellison, 2011) in their physical education programme. Four teachers chose not to emphasize TPSR based on their preferences for a more teacher-centered approach. The other four teachers decided that they did value TPSR and opted to engage in a continuing professional development process.

The TARE instruments (Wright & Craig, 2011) were used to guide the professional development process. Teachers were trained to use the observation instrument and the TARE Post-teaching Reflection (Wright, 2016) was used to assist teachers in reflecting on their own lessons. The four teachers successfully used the TARE instruments to integrate TPSR into their teaching strategies while remaining empowered to decide how TPSR fitted into their school culture. Periodically, a TPSR researcher visited the school to conduct an observation which was then compared to the observations and reflections of the teacher. The TARE tools generated practical data that led to several formal and informal conversations. This research suggests that for some teachers, providing space and time for TPSR implementation along with meaningful data may enhance a TPSR professional learning programme for in-service teachers (Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015).

134 While there are challenges for teachers considering introducing TPSR there have been
135 many teachers who have previously done so successfully. For teachers who are considering
136 introducing TPSR into their practice the following suggestions, based on other teachers'
137 experiences, are offered.

- 138 1. Teachers should ensure that they have a good knowledge of TPSR before
139 implementing the programme. This includes an understanding of, and an affinity
140 to, the philosophy that underpins the model, an understanding that will help
141 ensure that the implementation is more than a superficial presentation of the
142 levels. The resources identified previously will allow teachers to gain this
143 knowledge.
- 144 2. When developing programmes based on TPSR, teachers give careful
145 consideration to the pedagogical approaches used in the activity segments of the
146 lesson. A successful implementation of TPSR requires students to have
147 opportunities to practice decision-making and to be personally and socially
148 responsible. This means that the classes must be structured in ways that supply
149 these opportunities. It is important, therefore, that appropriate pedagogical
150 approaches be implemented to allow this to occur.
- 151 3. When introducing TPSR start with a single class. The programme can be
152 expanded as confidence builds. It is also suggested that teachers start with a
153 movement context which they have full confidence in teaching.
- 154 4. Ideas that have been successfully implemented with TPSR classes should be
155 tried with other classes without necessarily implementing the full model. This is
156 done with an understanding that this is not a high fidelity implementation of
157 TPSR but rather an opportunity to share good teaching practices with other
158 students.
- 159 5. The importance of the transfer of learning to other contexts should be clearly
160 identified as an important outcome and taught carefully and overtly. This should
161 be explicit, occur right from the start of the implementation and be consistent.
- 162 6. Serious consideration should be given to introducing and teaching the goals as
163 being independent rather than as being cumulative. While accepting that treating
164 the goals as cumulative levels has become the norm for many teachers,
165 implementing TPSR as independent goals offers many potential advantages.
166 These include introducing goals when appropriate for the students, removing the
167 belief that four goals need to be met before transfer can be considered and that

168 there is a hierarchy of goals where leadership/caring, for example, is of a higher
169 order then respect, self-directed learning or effort.

170 7. Be aware that the research has shown that most teachers feel unsure at times
171 about what they are doing, especially in the initial stages of any implementation.
172 Teachers should remember, however, that this uncertainty tends to ease as the
173 teacher and the class gets familiar with TPSR. (Gordon, 2010a)

174 We believe strongly that TPSR offers a valuable way to enrich the physical education
175 experiences of students. It is ideally suited to meet the goals of contemporary physical
176 education and the needs of students as they prepare to live in a rapidly changing world. To
177 help teachers interested in introducing and/or further developing their teaching with TPSR
178 Rick Baldock and Barrie Gordon are forming an Asia–Pacific group that will be aligned with
179 the USA based TPSR Alliance. We would encourage readers to contact either Barrie or Rick
180 via email for further information and to visit the TPSR alliance website.

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183 Resources

184 When implementing a new pedagogical approach in Physical Education, educators can
185 enhance their work by using evidence informed approaches. When considering TPSR, a rich
186 source of evidence can be gleaned from a number of sources including:

- 187 • Hellison, D. (2011). Teaching personal and responsibility through physical activity
188 (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- 189 • Hellison, D., Cutforth, N., Kallusky, J., Martinek, T., Parker, M., & Stiehl, J. (2000).
190 Youth development and physical activity: Linking universities and communities.
191 Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- 192 • The TPSR Alliance website (<http://www.tpsr-alliance.org/>): A comprehensive
193 reference list for the Teaching of Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) Model
194 that was updated in 2016. The latest version is available at [http://www.tpsr-](http://www.tpsr-alliance.org/reference-list)
195 [alliance.org/reference-list](http://www.tpsr-alliance.org/reference-list).
- 196 • The ACHPER Active + Healthy Magazine: In 2016 the Magazine devoted a special
197 issue to the TPSR Model. Dave Walsh edited the issue with a number of excellent
198 contributing writers. The special edition of the magazine (which is free to ACHPER
199 members) can be accessed at: [https://www.achper.org.au/associationnews/special-](https://www.achper.org.au/associationnews/special-magazine-issue-teaching-personal-and-social-responsibility)
200 [magazine-issue-teaching-personal-and-social-responsibility](https://www.achper.org.au/associationnews/special-magazine-issue-teaching-personal-and-social-responsibility).

- The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (JOPERD): In 2016 JOPERD released a special issue devoted to the TPSR Alliance as a community of practice.

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- Wright, P. M. (2016). Improving TPSR implementation with a structured post-teaching reflection tool. *Active and Healthy Magazine*, 23(2/3), 12-17.

245 Wright, P., Jacobs, J., Ressler, J. D., & Jung, J. (2016). Teaching for transformative
246 educational experience in a sport for development program. *Sport, Educatiion and*
247 *Society*, 21(4), 531-548.
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