

# Physical Literacy in NSW schools - transcript

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Question: What is Physical Literacy?

Renee West, PDHPE Advisor, NSW Department of Education and Communities: Physical literacy is defined by Margaret Whitehead, the founder of physical literacy as "the motivation, confidence physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity at an individually appropriate level throughout life. Individuals who are physically literate have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to lead healthy lifestyles for themselves and also assist others in acquiring these skills. Physical literacy is not a capability that is achieved at a particular time and then persists throughout life. Each individual will be on their own individual physical literacy journey with twists and turns and setbacks along the way.

Dr. Richard Keegan, University of Canberra: So physical literacy, it starts with the joint consideration of ability and propensity to move, capacity to move effectively, overlaid with motivation to move and influence your environment and the confidence that you are able to and you will take on new challenges. Wrapped in with all of that is valuing it and thinking that it's important and not just kind of a frivolous thing, that isn't maths or English so move on.

Question: What do we know about levels of physical activity, health and wellbeing in Australia?

Dr. Richard Keegan: Which ever survey you take, whichever measurement tool you use, you tend to find in Western populations, Australia included, we're not sufficiently active to retain our health.

Professor David Lubans, Priority Research Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition University of Newcastle: While it's not clear if young Australians are less active than they are in previous generations, there are some strong trends that have emerged. First is that we know that rates of active transportation to school have decreased over time. Fewer young people are walking or riding their bike to school than ever before. We also know that young people are spending less time outdoors playing and more time engaged in recreational screen time. Now this is a real concern for our society. We also know that physical activity levels decline dramatically during adolescence, particularly with adolescent girls. So finding ways to provide young people with the skills and attributes that's going to help prevent this decline which we often see carried into their adulthood, is very important endeavour.

Julie Horningold, Brighton Le Sands Public School: Well our main aim is that students develop a positive attitude towards physical activity. So we're encouraging that positive attitude through physical education and sport.

Corey, student Wheeler Heights Public School: It's not about winning, it's about having fun and learning new skills and games.

Selena, student Lidcombe Public School: It's really fun and enjoyable and it's all for a good cause. It's for your body and you become fit so it's a win-win situation.

Professor Anthony Okely, University of Wollongong: Regular participation in physical activity which is defined for school-age children of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity each day has been linked with a range of health benefits that cover most areas body including cognitive development, social development physical development.

Professor David Lubans: Being active can help reduce anxiety and depression. We know that young people are active high levels of self-esteem and a better quality of life.

Cindy Waldock, Teacher Wheeler Heights Public School: So it increases each child's ability to concentrate in class. They are more focused when we come back from a PE lesson. So I think it in then spills over into other KLAS, the benefits of children being able to focus, stay on task, be engaged in what they're doing.

Priscella Wright, Teacher Wheeler Heights Public School: It's about, they are really settled if we go and do something in the morning before we start. They come in and are ready to learn and ready to go. So thats the best part for me.

Dr. Richard Keegan: Knowing that we're actually able to cope with physical challenges and create changes in the world, either through moving objects or interacting with people or whatever it might be. If we're able to through our movements and through our interactions with the world's actually influence it and get what we want, it tends to make us happier.

Mel Currie, Teacher Brunswick Heads Public School: They feel that they can achieve at sport and I think that will encourage them as adults to join sport, whereas if they lacked those skills and we don't teach them in Primary School, sport isn't going be as much fun in high school. So you start to get an image that it's not a fun thing to do which lifetime life long wise, is going to have a fairly big impact on what they do to keep themselves healthy and what um habits they pass on to their kids.

Emily Rossington, Teacher Tumut Public School: They have greater confidence in these sports and you hear children say "Oh I didn't even know I could play this game, I'm good at this" and then I think they're more willing to try and join into a local competition because they have realised oh I have tried that at school, I can do it and so they're more likely to play sports out of school. I think that's a great value when students can feel good about themselves and think well I'm gonna get myself into a team, whereas before they may not have.

Sheryl Bruffey, Principal Budawang School: The benefits are just enormous. Our parents just love it when their kids are physically active during the day. They sleep better at night time. They wake up in a happier mood. They're better behaved during the day and the parents get to have some time to themselves. They can play with their siblings. You know the benefits of teaching a child how to ride a

tricycle, for example means that suddenly they can be involved in activities that they were excluded from prior to that. Teaching a child how to play on play equipment in a park and how to interact appropriate with other children in a park. That can make the difference between a good day out for a family and a disaster. When you're physically active your serotonin levels are higher. Which means that our children are less likely to suffer from depression, and depression is a real problem for people with a disability especially when they can't voice their issues. So being able to get out in the community, meet other people, make sure that you're, um, building up your serotonin levels, those things are really vital.

Professor David Lubans: Through the friendship networks that have developed through sport and certain physical activities, young people develop resilience that is going to provide them with the foundation for which their mental health will be established.

Question: Why is physical literacy important?:

Professor Anthony Okely: Physical literacy is important because just as reading, writing, vocabulary, comprehension are essential for developing literacy there are basic or fundamental skills that are essential to becoming a physically active person or a competent mover.

Renee West: Unsatisfactory early experiences of physical activity can create children, and adults, who are both unable and unwilling to attempt physical activity. A more inclusive and holistic approach to planned physical activity is required, with an equal focus on movement proficiency, motivation and confidence to move and appreciation of the value of moving.

Professor David Lubans: Our society has changed. There's no question that it's much easier to be sedentary now and providing young people with the knowledge and skills to be active now for the rest of their lives is of utmost importance.

Dr. Richard Keegan: If we can offer them fulfilling opportunities to move and engage with the world they won't all lead to sufficient activity to be healthy but they will lead to happier people, more motivated people. People who feel capable and more likely to go out and do activities.

Question: Where does physical literacy fit in NSW schools?

Professor Anthony Okely: Given that children spend a lot of their time in schools, we should be trying to look at how we can use that time effectively, how we can train teachers and provide them with the resources and the skills that they need to be able to identify physical literacy skills within the students. And then how they can take steps to try and improve those skills amongst their students and move them along the continuum to becoming more proficient and competent movers.

Renee West: In New South Wales we see physical literacy as a capability that can be developed through PDHPE, school sport and across other contexts for physical activity and movement based learning. Physical literacy is not an alternative to physical activity, physical education or school sport. It's not in competition with physical education or school sport. Physical literacy is developed and supported through effective planned physical activity such as PDHPE and school sport.

Professor David Lubans: I think physical literacy fits everywhere in the New South Wales schools. It's not just about physical education or school sport. It's about what we offer at recess and lunch time. What's offered after school and also how involved parents to promote physical activity. Whether that's through homework or through home-school interactions.

Dr. Richard Keegan: One version of physical literacy is to create not just individuals who are physically literate and value movement but cultures that are physically literate and value movement. And that's why it's really important to come at this from education perspective in invest in our future. So we want that physically literate culture as well as a physically literate individual at the end of our education.

NSW Government Education and Communities, Public Schools NSW

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