Every child deserves ‘professional’ PE teachers and sport coaches

Kathleen Armour
When we need to solve a difficult problem that requires specialist expertise...what do we do?
Call a professional!
SO...

1. What is the problem to be solved that requires specialist expertise?
2. What is a profession?
3. What does it mean to be a professional PE teacher/sport coach?
4. How could ‘sport and exercise pedagogy’ help you?
Section One
The Problem to be Solved
Inactive lifestyles

In PE and youth sport we claim to educate pupils for lifelong engagement in physical activity...

...something is not working!
Older adults & physical (in)activity in England:

Data from the Health Survey for England: obesity prevalence is 28% in men and 37% in women aged 65-74 years, and 26% in men and 27% of women 75 years or older...African-Caribbean and South Asians have higher rates of central obesity and obesity-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease...ethnic minorities experience significantly greater risk for a range of physical and mental health problems as compared to their white counterparts...and suffer higher rates of morbidity and premature mortality.
Despite the widely reported benefits of physical activity, the majority of adults and many children across the UK are insufficiently active to meet the previous recommendations. There are clear and significant health inequalities in relation to physical inactivity according to income, gender, age, ethnicity and disability.
Is more PE the solution? Yes...and No

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrLne6YVaBQ&feature=youtu.be
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsXYZ8WCU2Q&feature=fvwrel
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6psaOZeIb8
Youth voices...

‘We do the same thing [in physical education] every week, over and over exactly like there’s no difference...’

(Amy, 5th grade primary school student, McMahon, 2007).

‘PE didn’t make me good at anything. It just made me realize how slow I was and how fat I am....I really dreaded it because I could never do a push-up [or] a curl-up...’

(Lucas, young adolescent boy, Trout & Graber, 2009)
‘Well we’re not the best and we aren’t in the important school teams. If you’re in one then ... You know it’s like Mr. Evans does the football team and he spends the lesson with the good players and he’s not bothered about us’ (Andy)

(young physically disabled boy, Fitzgerald, 2005)

‘I have lots of hobbies: they are skipping, football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, swimming, and chicken limbo. My favourite hobbie [sic] is swimming. We go swimming during school time’

(early adolescent girl, Collier, MacPhail & O’Sullivan, 2007)
Section Two
What is a Profession?
Definition of a *profession*?

'A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to high ethical standards and uphold themselves to, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised, organised body of learning derived from education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and these skills in the interest of others.

‘a well developed, readily available continuing education program [CPD] is the hallmark of a true profession’
PE teachers and CPD?

Alfrey *et al* 2012:

Survey – 112 PE teachers + interviews

Over 50% no health knowledge or training

Confusion, misguided confidence, sport and fitness ideologies.


Teachers identified sport skills, health and social development as key outcomes of their PE programmes

Little professional development in health or social development
Sport coaches and CPD?

Jones and Wallace (2005): coaches are disillusioned with professional development programmes, which they criticise as being ‘fine in theory’ but divorced from reality.

CPD Problems...

- Limited large-scale research
- Attendance model of learning
- CPD link to impact on final target learner?
- Time and management Support for CPD
- More effective evaluation procedures
- Authentic CPD settings
- The prevalence – and problems – of informal learning

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences
PE/coaching - CPD problems...

- Very small research base
- Findings mirror the wider CPD literature
- Traditional CPD design rarely meets the needs of diverse learners
Section Three
What does it mean to be a professional PE teacher/coach?
Client focused
Takes professional responsibility
Continually updates knowledge and skills
Evidence-based
Accountable
Professional PE teachers are LEAD LEARNERS
What about sport coaches?

Taylor & McEwan (2012)

‘From interprofessional working to transprofessional possibilities: the new age of sports coaching in the United Kingdom’

PE teachers should work with coaches!
Quiz: Are you a professional PE teacher/coach

✓ Are you truly client-focused?
✓ Do you take professional responsibility?
✓ Do you continually update your professional knowledge?
✓ Is your practice best-evidence-based?
✓ Are you willing to be held accountable?
Do you get the support you need from other professionals?

What about researchers and academics...?
There is a lot of exciting research in our field...e.g.

- Urban high school girls’ sense of relatedness and engagement in PE (Shen et al 2012, USA)

- Development of junior high school students’ fundamental movement skills and physical activity... (Kalaja et al, 2012, Finland)

- Sport pedagogy and questions about learning. (Quennerstedt/Ohman (in press, Sweden)).
The research/theory/practice GAP

**RESEARCH/THEORY**
- Single discipline
- Published in numerous single discipline journals
- Focus is research
- Professional publications not valued

**PRACTICE**
- Multi/interdisciplinary
- Schools have few journal subscriptions so not accessible (open access?)
- Focus is practice so time is a problem
- ‘Pure’ research not valued
Section Four
Sport and Exercise Pedagogy (SEP)

Closing the gap...
What is SEP?

- A new sub-discipline informing teaching, coaching and exercise instruction

- An education science that focuses on the quality of individuals' learning experiences in physical activity through the life-course, and across sport, physical education and exercise settings

- Transcends traditional teaching/coaching/exercise instruction professional boundaries
SEP places individuals and their life-course learning in physical activity at its core
What SEP is not

- *Not* replacing the academic study of ‘physical education’ or ‘coaching’

- *Not* suggesting all research should be interdisciplinary

- *Instead* SEP adds to what already exists by focussing on what practice settings *share*
Why SEP?

- Practice is always interdisciplinary

- “the learner should be approached...as a whole person who participates in school as well as in many other practices”

Akkerman and Van Eijck (2013: 60)
SEP focuses on synthesising knowledge from other sub-disciplines to inform the pedagogical encounter. The pedagogical encounter is defined as that moment where a teacher, coach or instructor seeks to support a learner in sport, physical activity or exercise settings.

- Our sub-disciplines, including pedagogy, are insular

- We need ‘integrative perspectives’ to address the problems caused by increased specialisation....from multidisciplinary to cross disciplinary and ultimately interdisciplinary

BUT HOW?
‘Pedagogical Cases’
What is a pedagogical case?

(i) a case narrative created jointly by the chapter authors and describing key features of the young learner

(ii) perspectives from three sub-disciplines identifying and explaining classic and new research from their fields that could be used to support this learner; and

(iii) a final section written by the lead pedagogy academic using pedagogy research to integrate the other sections into guidance for maximising learning in the pedagogical encounter.
Examples of Cases

- ‘Sophie’: Five year old female, motor delay and overweight, physical activity and health, motor development, physiology, pedagogy.
- ‘Deshane’: Eight year old male, Black American, motor development, cultural studies, health promotion, pedagogy.
- ‘Rob’: Eleven year old male, elite sport, contextual perspective/psychology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, pedagogy.
In summary...

Sport and Exercise Pedagogy...and Pedagogical Cases...can help to close the GAPS...
...to support professional practitioners to help their clients in physical education, youth sport and lifelong physical activity settings.