

QUALITY ASSESSMENT
TO SUPPORT THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
PHYSICAL LITERACY
SKILLS IN HEALTH AND
PHYSICAL EDUCATION



This statement of principles was developed by Ophea and the Ontario Association for the Support of Physical and Health Education (OASPHE), the Ontario subject associations for Health and Physical Education (H&PE).

ABOUT OPHEA

Established in 1921, Ophea has a long and credible history related to health promotion in Ontario schools and communities. Ophea is frequently sought out by government, non government and private sector organizations to address needs pertaining to school health, curriculum and health-specific topics. Ophea champions healthy, active living in schools and communities through quality programs and services, partnerships and advocacy and is led by the vision that all children and youth value and enjoy the lifelong benefits of healthy, active living.

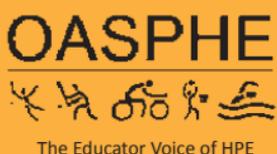
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ABOUT OASPHE

OASPHE provides a strong voice to advocate for the development and delivery of quality curriculum in Health and Physical Education. In addition to this, OASPHE has a mandate to provide support and leadership for Health and Physical Education leaders with the aim to provide students with opportunities to develop the skills to make a lifelong commitment to daily physical activity and make healthy lifestyle choices.

For more information visit www.oasphe.ca



GOAL OF A QUALITY HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The goals of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum focus on supporting students in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to be active and healthy throughout their lives.

These include:

- Learning and applying personal skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Critical and creative thinking skills
- Learning how to develop and improve their own personal fitness
- Acquiring the movement competence needed to participate in a wide range of activities

Through opportunities to develop fundamental movement skills and apply movement concepts and strategies in a broad range of activities, students acquire the knowledge and skills that “will enable them to enjoy being active and healthy throughout their lives.”¹ As students apply these skills in an integrated holistic manner, connected to their everyday experiences, they will develop the physical literacy needed to lead healthy, active lives.²

ASSESSING PHYSICAL LITERACY

Assessment plays a critical role in providing educators with evidence of student achievement of the expectations of the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum. Effective assessment requires careful planning. “Teachers develop appropriate and effective instructional strategies to help students achieve the curriculum expectations as well as appropriate methods of assessing and evaluating student learning.”³

This position paper provides educators with:

- A common understanding of the purpose of assessment and evaluation in a Health and Physical Education context
- A shared understanding of the concepts of Physical Literacy and Personal Fitness and their shared role in supporting students being physically active across their lifespan
- Provincial assessment key messages to guide educators in selecting assessment methods and tools for the purpose of gathering evidence to improve students’ learning

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE ONTARIO HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Instruction and assessment in Health and Physical Education in Ontario schools is grounded in both the seven fundamental principles of Growing Success and the five fundamental principles in Health and Physical Education. “The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.”⁴ Assessment within the school context is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving curriculum expectations. Assessment data collected is also used by educators to inform their instruction. This process is accomplished through the use of assessment methods (e.g., observation, conversations, student products) and tools (e.g., descriptive feedback, checklists, rating scales, rubrics and peer and self-assessments). In addition, students play a key role in providing evidence of their learning over time as they develop their physical fitness, apply the living skills and develop their physical literacy. For example, through conversations students may provide evidence of an understanding of their own strengths and areas that need improvement, the ability to set goals, develop personal fitness plans to achieve these goals and assess and monitor the development of their personal health-related fitness over time. Similarly, through their performance in a variety of games, students are able to demonstrate their understanding and application of transferable movement skills and strategies and their ability to communicate and interact positively with others.

PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENT KEY MESSAGES

The following key messages provide educators with guidelines for the appropriate use of assessment methods and tools within the Health and Physical Education program with the aim of assessing the degree to which students are achieving the curriculum expectations and planning for instruction to adjust their instruction based on the results of the assessment.

1

Physical and emotional safety is a precondition for effecting learning in Health and Physical Education.

1. Educators must be sensitive to the environment in which the assessments occur to provide one that promotes success for all students. "In health and physical education, students are learning new skills and participating in a physical environment where there is inherent risk. They are learning in a public space where others can see them explore, learn, succeed and make mistakes. It is critical that teachers provide a physically and emotionally safe

environment for learning by emphasizing the importance of safety in physical activity, treating students with respect at all times, being sensitive to individual differences, following all board safety guidelines and providing an inclusive learning environment that recognizes and respects the diversity of all students and accommodates individual strengths, needs and interests."⁹

2

Assessment is an educational process for the purpose of improving student learning.

2. Throughout the assessment process educators and students learn together. "The use of assessment for the purpose of improving learning and helping students become independent learners requires a culture in which student

and teacher learn together in a collaborative relationship, each playing an active role in setting learning goals, developing success criteria, giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress and adjusting learning strategies."¹⁰

3

Assessments should engage students in learning, provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning over time and provide meaningful information for educators to make informed instructional decisions.

3. The seven fundamental principles of Growing Success focus on ensuring educators implement assessment practices that result in rich and meaningful learning. To ensure that assessments are valid, reliable and lead to improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that: are

aligned with the learning goals; are fair and equitable, are differentiated to support all students; are varied in nature, administered over time and provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate the full range of their learning."¹¹

4

Physical fitness assessment results/scores should not be used as a grade.

4. Baseline measures should be used to help students interpret the results, set individual goals and monitor changes in their health related fitness over time. Performance results should not be directly related to grades. For example, the number of push-ups a student can complete should not translate into their grade. "Through experiential learning, students gain an understanding of the importance of regular physical activity and its relationship to developing

and maintaining health-related fitness. Students learn not only what to do to develop personal fitness but also why to do it and how to do it appropriately and effectively... In addition, students will be involved in assessing their own health-related fitness levels, setting goals and developing personal fitness plans to achieve their goals."¹²

5

Assessments should be used to support the development of Living Skills.

5. Living Skills is a core component of the Health and Physical Education curriculum as it empowers students to develop skills that are transferable to multiple components of their daily life. "Children and students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to

reach their full potential in the future. Their sense of well-being supports their learning because it makes them more resilient and better able to overcome challenges. Ontario's education system needs to help students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being and become healthy, active and engaged citizens."¹³

6

The assessment of Body Mass Index (BMI) is not the role of the educator.

6. Physical Literacy assessments should focus on the health-related and skill-related components of physical activity. "It is not recommended...that fitness assessments completed in the class setting include the measurement of body composition. While Health Canada's Canadian Guidelines for Body Weight Classification in Adults contain useful information about the health risks associated with being overweight or underweight, they are not a reliable guide to measuring or interpreting the body mass index of young people

under 18, as they do not account for variability due to factors such as growth spurts, race, or athletic pursuits. Proper training and experience are required to conduct accurate assessments and to interpret data. Discussions about body composition should be approached with sensitivity. Adolescents – whose bodies are still developing – need to be aware that healthy bodies come in a wide range of sizes, shapes and weights."¹⁴

7

Assessments used should be inclusive, student-centered, personalized and consistent throughout the year.

7. It is important that Health and Physical Education programs are responsive to the range of abilities and interests of students and help all students develop physical literacy.

Teachers should focus on:

- providing student choice of tasks to gather information and/ or demonstrate their learning (e.g., cardiovascular assessment: choice of 12 minute run, step test, beep test;)
- allowing students to have input into the order and pace at which they perform the task;

Examples of questions educators should ask themselves include (see the 2015 Health and Physical Education):

- "Are program activities and instruction differentiated to provide all students with relevant and engaging learning experiences, so that all students can experience success?
- Do students have numerous opportunities to improve their skills through practice and physical exploration?
- Are students given opportunities to make choices and to adapt the boundaries and level of challenge of activities, type of equipment used, group sizes, and other features?
- Are individual students experiencing the optimal degree of challenge in their learning, with tasks that are not too difficult and not too easy?"^{15 16}

The Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum

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The above graphic from the 2015 Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum illustrates the importance of a holistic, integrated approach supporting students to develop their physical literacy.⁷

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THE OPPORTUNITY: ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL TO ENHANCE HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIVING

Effective assessment, used appropriately in a variety of settings, can be useful in supporting students in developing the knowledge and skills to be physically active, to make healthy choices and to encourage lifelong participation in physical activity to lead healthy active lives.

Effective use of assessment can:

- Increase opportunities for students to acquire the knowledge and skills that lay a foundation for lifelong healthy, active living
- Contribute to the professional development of educators and provide those educators with an additional resource to support their students' acquisition of physical literacy;
- Increase knowledge and understanding among parents
- Help to inform policy, investment and programming at the school board and government level

Students' health is a shared responsibility across education, physical activity providers, public health and involvement from students, parents and families. Students live, play and learn in their communities. Communities must work together to improve child health. A comprehensive approach to helping students' become physically literate will create healthy communities and reduce or eliminate the broader social and health disparities that affect child health.⁸

Physical Literacy in the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum is defined as:

“Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.”

- Physically literate individuals consistently develop the motivation and ability to understand, communicate, apply and analyze different forms of movement.
- They are able to demonstrate a variety of movements confidently, competently, creatively and strategically across a wide range of health-related physical activities.
- These skills enable individuals to make healthy, active choices that are both beneficial to and respectful of their whole self, others and their environment.”⁵

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL LITERACY

The following are some examples of what physical literacy may look like in a Health and Physical Education classroom:

- Students participating in the creation of a movement sequence for a cultural dance
- Students participating in a net/wall game practicing offensive skills and strategies
- Students participating in a fitness circuit, selecting stations based on personal health-related fitness goals

PHYSICAL FITNESS IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical fitness is an important component in the overall development of physical literacy. Supporting students in learning how to develop their own personal fitness helps them establish a fitness level necessary to participate in a wide variety of activities in multiple environments. Within the Ontario curriculum, the emphasis of learning is on the health-related fitness components that directly impact health and well-being and contribute to optimal health. Optimal personal fitness combined with active participation provides opportunities for students to develop their movement competence and confidence in a holistic manner thereby becoming more physically literate. “Learning in health and physical education is integrated because the connections between the various elements of the program – active living, movement competence, healthy living and living skills – are always recognized. Understanding these connections provides the foundation for health and physical literacy, overall well-being and lifelong healthy, active living.”⁶



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