

# **The impact of targeted professional development on teachers' perception of their confidence and ability to implement the physical education curriculum**

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## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

The issue of teacher confidence and ability to implement the physical education curriculum has been the subject of considerable attention in recent years. Principals, teachers and stakeholders consistently highlight the need to support teachers to advance their content knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical knowledge relevant to physical education. However, many classroom teachers teaching physical education find it challenging to fully grasp the intent of the conceptual framework underpinning physical education.

### **Aim**

The aim of the research project was to investigate to what extent targeted professional development could impact on primary school teacher's perception of their confidence and ability to implement the Health and Physical Education Curriculum?

### **Participants**

Participants were from a semi-rural Southland (decile ten) primary school on the outskirts of Invercargill. The professional development programme involved nine teachers with six female teachers opting to be involved in the research project.

Age range: 25-54 years.

Teaching experience: 3-14 years, with an average of 9.4 years' experience.

### **Interviews and questions**

Each teacher was interviewed before and after the professional development programme (February and December). Individual interviews took approximately 45 minutes to complete and were carried out at a time arranged by the school. The research utilised a case study approach using open-ended interview questions.

### **The Professional Development Programme**

The professional development took place over the year and involved multiple visits to the school and the classroom. The programme involved briefings at staff meetings, demonstration lessons in participant classes with guided observations, workshops where ideas/methods related to pedagogy, curriculum, planning and resources were introduced, individual teacher lesson observations and feedback sessions. Two cycles were completed throughout the year.

### **Summary**

In this cohort of teachers, targeted professional development throughout the year significantly improved teacher perceptions related to their confidence and ability to teach the Health and Physical Education Curriculum.

*"I would not have given you that answer at the beginning of the year – the PD has made me change – every part of that PD has made a difference"*

*"As I understand it more I value it more and more"*