



Seizing the Moment: Can *Game Sense* Further Inform Sport Teaching in Australian Physical Education?

Sauter sur l'occasion : Game Sense peut-il faciliter l'enseignement du sport dans le cadre des cours d'éducation physique en Australie?

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Australia is progressively implementing a national curriculum for grades Kindergarten/Pre-school to Year 10. The need to foreground sport teaching and learning in school settings as part of this curriculum development was highlighted by the recent Australian Government report, *The Future of Sport in Australia* (Australian Government, 2009). The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (2010) has also indicated that student participation in quality physical education and sport will be a priority when the physical education curriculum is developed. As the Australian Government's *Future of Sport in Australia* report (2009) has recommended an improved status for sport in physical education when the national physical education curriculum is developed, it is timely to consider what place a teaching approach such as *Game Sense* could play in achieving this outcome. I suggest a more obvious emphasis on learning through a pedagogically progressive model for sport engagement is offered by *Game Sense*. Therefore, the purpose of this article will be to discuss how *Game Sense* (Charlesworth, 1994; den Duyn, 1996), an Australian approach to sport teaching and learning in school settings similar to *Teaching Games for Understanding*, may contribute to an emerging national curriculum. An overview of the development of *Game Sense* will lead to a consideration of its merit as a model for quality sport teaching.

*L'Australie est en voie d'implanter des programmes-cadres nationaux (jardin /maternelle à 10^e année). Un rapport publié par le gouvernement australien en 2009 intitulé *The Future of Sport in Australia* souligne la nécessité d'intégrer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du sport en milieu scolaire à ces programmes-cadres. Le Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (2010) a également indiqué que la participation des élèves à des cours d'éducation physique et sportive de qualité constitue une priorité dont il faudra nécessairement tenir compte tout au long des travaux d'élaboration des programmes-cadres d'éducation physique. Puisque le rapport du gouvernement australien recommande de rehausser le statut du sport en éducation physique dans les nouveaux programmes-cadres nationaux, il convient de réfléchir à la place d'une approche pédagogique comme celle de *Game Sense* dans l'atteinte de cet*

objectif. L'auteur est d'avis que Game Sense permet de mettre l'accent sur l'apprentissage en proposant un modèle pédagogique de participation sportive progressive., L'article examine en quoi Game Sense (Charlesworth, 1994; den Duyn, 1996), une approche australienne axée sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du sport en milieu scolaire semblable à celle d'Apprendre et comprendre par le jeu pourrait s'intégrer aux nouveaux programmes-cadres. Un aperçu du processus d'élaboration de Game Sense aidera à faire ressortir ses mérites comme modèle d'un enseignement sportif de qualité.

Introduction

This discursive article will consider the potential of *Game Sense* as a pedagogical curriculum model that can inform quality sport teaching in Australian physical education. Sport is one of the physical activity/movement forms of the Australian physical education curriculum (Department of Education and Children's Services [DECS], 2004). The Australian Sports Commission (n.d.) defines sport as *a human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill which, by its nature and organisation, is competitive and is generally accepted as being a sport*. It is not the purpose of this paper to propose that sport is the only content or most appropriate content for physical education. Alexander (2008) however, indicated that sport has increasingly been the forgone subject matter of physical education, while Penney, Emmel and Hetherington (2008) concluded that sport is central to Australian physical education. Veal and Lynch, (2001) explained that sport is deeply entrenched in the Australian psyche and has substantial influence on the shaping of Australian culture. Highlighting the important role sport plays in daily social life Burstyn (1999) (cited in Coakley, Hallihan, Kackson & Mewett, 2009) commented that "the rituals of sport engage more people in a shared experience than any other institution or cultural activity" (p.12). The cultural and social contribution sport makes to Australian society means that sport has a legitimate place in the newly formed national physical education curriculum.

The recent Australian Government report, *The Future of Sport in Australia* (2009), noted that Australian schools have a historical role as sites where students are introduced to sport and where pathways to community sport are established. Not surprisingly then, the teaching of sport and sport related games are positioned as integral components of Australian physical education programs (DECS, 2004). Both sport skill development and sport teaching have been identified as the major content of secondary school physical education (Department of Education, Training and Employment [DETE], 2002). Sport is also recognised as a form of "knowledge and understandings" within Australian physical education curriculum documents (DECS, 2004, p. 9). It would appear that a consideration of a national physical education curriculum for Australia must consider the purpose of sport and the sport teaching emerging from it.

Internationally however, a tendency to present physical education as largely non-contextual, culturally irrelevant experiences lacking in educative meaning has been commented upon (see, for example: Laker, 2002, 2003; Siedentop, Hastie & Mars, 2004; Wallhead & O'Sullivan, 2005). Evans (2004) and Pigott (1982) have suggested that "ability" in physical education has been narrowly defined around textbook techniques, effort and compliance. Such a restricted

conceptualisation of ability limits the potential educative impact of sport in physical education (Siedentop, 1994).

This argument is also evident in Australian physical education literature, where the planning and enactment of sport related physical education curriculum has been described as a conservative practice based on pedagogical habit anchored to a “multi-activity” (Alexander, 2008) curriculum model. For example, Brooker, Kirk, Braiuka, & Brangrove (2000) indicated that traditional sport teaching in physical education is an obstruction to sport learning for many students. Alexander, Taggart & Thorpe (1997) also positioned ability-orientated instruction as an impediment to good sport teaching. Light and Georgakis (2005) asserted “that traditional approaches to teaching games and sport are incapable of meeting worthwhile educational outcomes and continue to alienate and marginalize the less skilled and less confident students” (p. 1). The dominance of “textbook” technique instruction packaged in a multi-activity curriculum continues to provide only surface learning¹. Moreover, it is inequitable, as a focus on physical competencies (while marginalising cognition and thinking) highlights for many students what they cannot do, while excluding them from meaningful and enjoyable experiences (Chen & Light, 2006; O’Connor, 2006; Pill, 2007).

Emerging from a review of Australian physical education literature is the notion that the act of sport participation in physical education is visibly confined to “textbook performances”, creating spaces that sharply divide groups of students into those who can, and those who cannot perform motor patterns as indicated within the textbook. Physical performance competencies become the foregrounded capital, and the valued assessment of ability to the exclusion or marginalisation of other ways of knowing, doing, and learning, such as cognitive tactical understanding. In this type of scenario, many students complete compulsory physical education without ever having learned anything of substance that they can carry into the future (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982, 1983). According to O’Connor (2006), the unintended consequence of many Australian physical education school programs is that success is inadvertently skewed towards rewarding the already athletic and capable students who have largely developed their skill outside of the school physical education setting.

The Australian Government’s *Future of Sport in Australia* report (2009) reviewed all areas of Australian sport and the challenges it was facing in continuing the country’s success in international sport. It recommended improved sport teaching in physical education. It is, however, important that future developments in Australian sport curriculum do not lead to the hegemonic reproduction of problematic sport curriculum and enactment practices. Hence, I suggest *Game Sense* for its potential to provide a model for quality sport teaching and learning in Australian physical education.

Emphasising the need for quality teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum, the Curriculum Standing Committee of National Education Professional Associations (2007), a body comprising representatives of national education professional associations², asserted that success of Australian twenty-first century curriculum “will be dependent on what is experienced by young people in and out of classrooms — the result of an engaging, high quality teaching–learning process” (p. 5). It goes on to say that a national curriculum will “also need to stimulate and support systems and schools to implement improvements to curriculum planning, classroom teaching and learning, student

management and assessment regimes” (p. 7). The notion of quality sport teaching will be considered in more detail later in this paper, but it is relevant to the argument of this paper to note that improving teaching through quality curriculum planning is an ambition of the Australian national curriculum.

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs comprises all state and territory ministers with portfolios of school education. In 2010, this Council made it known that student participation in quality physical education and sport will be a priority when the national physical education curriculum is developed. Currently, physical education is scheduled for national curriculum development in Phase 3. Phase 1 subject implementation begins in 2011 (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2010). Consequently, the Australian physical education community has time to consider the model for enactment of sport teaching within the future national physical education curriculum as ACARA is yet to announce the timeline for Phase 3 subject development.

The purpose of this article is to discuss how *Game Sense* (Charlesworth, 1994; den Duyn, 1996), an Australian approach to enhance sport teaching and learning in school settings, can stand as a model for quality sport teaching and make a positive contribution to the physical education program in an emerging national curriculum.

Sport teaching in Australia

To begin, a national model for the enactment of quality sport teaching in physical education must give consideration to concerns about the current design and enactment of sport curriculum and pedagogy in Australian schools. Disquiet about sport teaching is not new. During the mid 1990s concerns about the nature of sport teaching/coaching led to the emergence of an alternative approach in Australian schools. Known as *Game Sense* (den Duyen, 1996), this approach challenged the traditional hegemony of the highly directed, formal (Metzler, 2005) and “textbook” (Pigott, 1982) skill and drill oriented sport teaching (Pill, 2007) by introducing games instruction that highlighted the learning of tactical concepts common to a variety of similar games through the process of group and individual problem solving. More commonly identified as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) in northern hemispheres, *Game Sense* has since become an embedded element of coach education programs in Australian sport, but it has yet to make a substantive impact within school physical education programs (Alexander, 2008; Forrest, Webb & Pearson, 2006; Light, 2004; Pill, 2009) despite the existence of curriculum documentation support, such as those listed below.

Game Sense has been recognised as effective in the teaching of games and sport in New South Wales (NSW Department of Education & Training, n.d.) and Tasmanian schools (Tasmania Department of Education, n.d.). A “tactical” approach was indicated as the preferred curriculum design model in the Queensland curriculum “source book” sport modules (The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, 1999). In the Western Australian Senior Physical Education curriculum (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2008) a tactical appreciation of sport is also foregrounded. *Game Sense* is also consistent with teaching for the Outcomes stated in Australian curriculum documents (For

example, see Table 1 below), where there is an emphasis on developing student reflective capacity and sport understanding.

Table 1
Physical Activity and Participation³ Outcome⁴ (DECS, n.d.)

<p>4.1 Reflects on the use of specialised skills in various social contexts (including teams) and is able to modify skills to improve performance. Examples of evidence include that the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates correctly the skills of a wide range of movement activities • applies specific skills in games/ performances/ modified sport (eg. netball); • works collaboratively to be an effective member of (single sex and both sexes) teams and/or groups; • displays responsibility in acting safely whether as a member of a team, umpiring or in a coaching role; • analyses performance and provides feedback on skills and performance of themselves and others; • analyses movement patterns with available technology.

The origins of Game Sense in Australia

In order to understand *Game Sense* it is necessary to look at the development of this alternative paradigm for sport teaching/coaching in Australia. This next section will look at three developments leading to the current understanding of the *Game Sense* model.

Games Teaching Findlay (1982) noted that physical education often invokes discrimination as the emphasis on skill performance singles students out because of their lack of ability, strongly reinforcing for many students that they are failures. In order to counter this trend, and to utilize movement fundamentals in games instruction he proposed a system of games teaching underpinned by the assumption “that a game may be adequately played by discovering, experiencing and experimenting with the many movement patterns and possibilities that occur in any game situation” (1982, p. 9).

Findlay differentiated the role of the teacher from the more traditional director to that of catalyst and stimulator of thinking about movement within a games context. Findlay positioned skill learning and game understanding as of equal value in the evaluation of student game learning. He advocated progressive game experiences, initially learning how the concepts of movement (time, space, force and flow) are applied and understood in sequences of play from the perspective of a particular sport, before playing modified rules sport matched to the ability of participants. While Findlay (1982) didn’t use the term *Game Sense* or refer to it as a product of sport teaching several of the pedagogical elements of *Game Sense* are evident in his sport related games teaching approach.

Game Sense – Designer Games The term, “*Game Sense*” was introduced by Charlesworth (1994), in his description of *Designer Games*, which he described as games that “provide an environment in which tactical, technical, psychological, competitive and physical skills can be nurtured optimally” (p. 30).

“Game sense” was used by Charlesworth to describe the player development outcomes from the coaching application of *Designer Games*.

Designer Games were constructed to simulate match conditions in an effort to motivate participation because they were fun, and because they were advantageous to the coach as they targeted skills and worked on fitness requirements under simulated match conditions. Charlesworth (1994) also suggested the role of the teacher/coach was that of a facilitator creating “situations where players have to think out the solutions for themselves (i.e. problem solving)” (p. 31).

Game Sense – Developing Thinking Players While Findlay (1982) and Charlesworth (1994) contributed to the evolution of sport teaching in Australia, Rod Thorpe’s visit to Australia in 1996 to work with the Australian Sports Commission was a key moment in the development of *Game Sense* as a sport teaching model (Webb & Thompson, 2000). Thorpe raised a number of concerns regarding the predominantly technique-based approach to sports teaching that was then being used in Australia. He urged a new focus on a game-centred approach to sports instruction which in many parts of the world is known as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU). In Australia this game-centred approach became known as *Game Sense* (Australian Sports Commission, 2010).

Traditional sport teaching/coaching sessions in Australia tend to rely on a format of warm-up, technique (skill development), game, and warm-down. In this approach, players learn techniques, but they may not learn anything meaningful about the strategies and tactics of the game. The focus on technique is about doing, and not necessarily about thinking. The game-centered approach however, is based on a format of warm-up, game, questions and challenges back to game, further questions and challenges, progression of game. The game-centered approach shifts the teaching emphasis from technique to total performance in a game situation. According to the Australian Sports Commission (2010) technique is distinguished as the movement itself, whereas skill is defined as that movement placed in the context of the game.

The idea of *Game Sense* to develop “thinking players” (den Duyn, 1997b) was advanced by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) through conceptual refinements that developed *Game Sense* as a model for junior sport teaching. This model differed from the traditional approach in that it emphasised game related decisions as well as initial sport specific movement skill development through the context of game play. The role of the teacher/coach became that of designer, creating games with conditions that simulate the tactical and technical elements of game play at a developmentally appropriate level. The games should prompt problem solving, which is guided through the considered use of questions by the teacher/coach to prompt game understanding. Game situations highlight the need for movement solutions. This means that skill learning must be emergent and contextual, to enhance a player’s or team’s ability to respond skilfully during play. Players are encouraged to be actively involved in the construction of game knowledge and understanding rather than being told what to do at every moment of the teaching/coaching session. A sport related games curriculum was scaffolded using *Game Sense* game categories whereby, like TGfU, games are grouped into categories based on structural and tactical similarities. The categories are: Target (e.g. Lawn Bowls); Striking/Fielding (e.g. Cricket); Net/Wall (e.g. Squash); and, Invasion (e.g. Australian Rules Football).

Because skill was defined as the contextual performance of a technique in a game (den Duyn, 1997b), *Game Sense* theory emphasised player understanding of the “why” of tactical play. The emergence of “game sense games” (ASC, 1999) provided a distinctively different design structure and teaching emphasis for the enactment of fundamental sport skill and game teaching. A departure from the hegemonic orthodoxy founded on skill practices to develop textbook techniques was encouraged by the alignment of tactically oriented questions to the “game sense games”. Additional pedagogical principles included the modification of game rules and conditions to teach through the play. This did not mean that direct instruction of skill practice was ignored. *Game Sense* encouraged the teacher/coach to consider when it was appropriate to engage skill drill practices, rather than skill drill practices being the normative starting point for game teaching and learning.

Game Sense has received advocacy and intuitive validation through coach education literature, such as the ASC publication, *Sports Coach* (den Duyn, 1996, 1997a & b, 2000). Although limited, research of *Game Sense* in operation in school settings has occurred. Brooker et al. (2000) investigated the implementation of a *Game Sense* basketball unit in lower secondary school. They found that a familiarity with both the theoretical assumptions and pedagogical elements of *Game Sense* are necessary for teacher confidence in the use of the approach. Austin, Hayes & Miller (2004) investigated a *Game Sense* approach to fundamental movement skill teaching in a primary school. They concluded that it resulted in improvement in the student performance of fundamental movement skills as well as producing high levels of motivation and interest in the lessons.

As a sport iteration of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), the validity of *Game Sense* can be examined by the research contrasting technical skill based approaches and teaching for understanding. Mitchell (2005), described *Game Sense* as a different path up the same mountain. Although comparisons between TGfU and traditional approaches suggest no significant differences in movement skill learning (Oslin & Mitchell, 2006), some studies have indicated improved cognitive learning in the area of tactical awareness and decision making resulting from the TGfU approach (Allison & Thorpe, 1997; Rovegno, Nevet, Brock & Babiarz, 2001; Turner, Allison & Pissanos, 2001; Wright, McNeill, Fry & Wang, 2005).

Game Sense: considering quality sport teaching

Penney (2006) indicated that the question confronting physical education was no longer *how* to teach content, but *why* the construction of curriculum and the enactment of teaching should be carried out through particular pedagogical models. I suggest that the answer is that models used as tools (such as *Game Sense* for sport teaching in physical education) facilitate a more authentic, educationally meaningful and equitable learning experience within physical education. Authenticity, meaning and equity speak directly to the quality of the educational experience.

An Australian framework through which to consider notions of quality sport teaching and learning in physical education is the *Productive Pedagogies* (Queensland Government, online.). In this framework there are four elements to a quality curriculum. They are:

- 1) Intellectual quality that develops deep learning and substantive concepts, skills and ideas;
- 2) Supportive classroom environments;
- 3) Recognition and valuing of individual difference; and
- 4) Connectedness of what is being learnt across the curriculum, and to local and global contexts. (Queensland Government, online.)

All four elements are essential for quality educational experiences. The elements are given life through the observable characteristics of the pedagogy evident in the enacted curriculum. Recently, Pill (2007), has linked the four elements of *Productive Pedagogies* to the characteristics of a game-centred *Game Sense* curriculum.

Game Sense foregrounds *Intellectual Quality* through a stated emphasis on cognitive development through intelligent engagement in sport and sport related games. The pedagogical emphasis on inquiry and problem solving to build player knowledge structures for enhanced game decision making and game related analysis indicates student engagement with substantive concepts, skills and ideas. According to the Queensland Department of Education (2002) *Intellectual Quality* is evident when the design of the curriculum encourages higher order thinking through processes which allow students to problem solve and gain understanding through the construction of knowledge. Intellectual substance is sustained through dialogue between students, and between teacher and student, to create or negotiate understanding. *Game Sense* is a discursive sport teaching approach with a pedagogical emphasis on player knowledge acquisition and development through guided inquiry sustained by teacher/coach questioning to prompt problem solving.

Supportive classroom environments are promoted through a *Game Sense* approach using the pedagogical instrument of game modification. This indicates that games are designed to engage participation at the level of physical and cognitive readiness of the learners. *Game Sense* also values the production of knowledge and the development of movement skill, prompting a pedagogical shift in assessment from a narrow focus on learning movement skills to learning and applying movement skills as game understanding increases. This doubles the available pathways for success for students in sport settings within physical education – movement skill performance and game understanding.

Recognition and valuing of individual difference feature in a *Game Sense* approach as questions and game modifications can be designed for the level of understanding of the individual learner, group or class. Since *Game Sense* outcomes include both skill competency and game understanding, it is possible to construct assessment that values both types of knowledge. In this way, individual students who may not be able to develop the movement skill competencies to the level expected in the allocated curriculum time can still achieve recognition of successful engagement in the learning through the expression of game knowledge and understanding.

Game Sense also aligns with an expectation of *connectedness of what is being learnt across the curriculum*. *Game Sense* promotes teaching of the structure of game knowledge through the principles of play common to games similar in tactical construction. Directing sport teachers to transfer the application of knowledge, understanding and competencies across games within categories and across the game categories, promotes connectedness across the physical

education games and sport curriculum. This stands in contrast to the normative positioning of sports as single entities in the multi-activity curriculum model.

The Productive Pedagogies framework provides a guide to *Game Sense* as an appropriate model for the design and enactment of quality sport teaching and learning in Years K-10 physical education. Another dimension to consider in framing quality teaching is the relevance of the learning experience (DECS, 2004). Penney, Clarke & Kinchin, (2002) explain that physical education is relevant when it involves building bridges between what occurs in class and engagement in sport beyond the school setting. The *Game Sense* approach emphasis on teaching that highlights how skills, knowledge and understanding are transferable between games in a game category, and teaching which illuminates the application of learning across game categories supports the possibility for future use of what is learnt beyond the school setting. This includes dimensions of sport literacy (Pill, 2009b), such as knowledgeable spectators and sport consumers.

The principles and guidelines for the Australian national curriculum development state that a hallmark of the curriculum is “deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications” (National Curriculum Board, 2009, p. 9). In order to promote this discourse for sport teaching in physical education there needs to be further clarity for Australian physical education teachers about what a *Game Sense* sport curriculum would be, and the theoretical pedagogical basis that supports it as quality teaching.

What would define a *Game Sense* curriculum?

To further clarify *Game Sense* as a model for quality sport teaching in physical education, it also requires consideration as to what it would look like as a planned and enacted curriculum. As *Game Sense* clusters sports into game categories, it provides for a thematically orientated curriculum design unlike the more traditional multi-activity curriculum. A sport curriculum built around game categories would have as an emphasis at all year levels teaching for the transfer of game skill and understanding across sports *within* a category and *across* game categories to develop knowledge about sport. For example, the tactical principles of maintaining control and possession of the ball are similar in all invasion games (e.g. basketball, netball and football). Thus, from a defensive rebound in basketball, if the pass down the centre court is blocked by the defence a sideways outlet pass takes advantage of space out wide to transition the ball down the court. This has parallels to a game context in another invasion game, Australian Rules football. If a kick in from the fullback line is prevented from going the direct path to goal down the centre of the ground by the defensive zone, the player with the ball looks sideways for a pass wide into the pocket; taking advantage of space out wide to transition the ball down the field. In both games, if the defence moves wide to cover the transition of the ball forward along the sideline space opens up in the midfield for the team in possession to centre the ball as they penetrate forward. As is demonstrated in this example, game appreciation can be developed across sport curriculum content through a thematically orientated curriculum as this design does not treat what is being learnt in sport teaching as boxed knowledge pertinent only to the sport in focus.

A *Game Sense* approach would also be evident by the enacted structure of lessons. Whereas the typical sport learning sequence within Australian physical education and sport coaching has been evidenced as a linear “warm up- drill practice – drill practice – game” sequence, a *Game Sense* sequence is more likely to be “game - play analysis through question and reflection; skill practice if necessary – return to game” (Pill, 2007). This appreciation of sport skill learning differentiates from the traditional behaviourist orientation of the more normative direct model of teaching. The foregrounding of teacher initiated ‘guided discovery’ (Mosston, 1981) for student learning embraces a more cognitively orientated pedagogical emphasis (Brooker et al., 2000; Pearson & Webb, 2008). It also embraces a non-linear methodology for skill learning representative of an ecological appreciation of the dynamics of sport learning (Chow et al., 2007).

As a pedagogical model, *Game Sense* can be used in the early and primary years for fundamental sport skill teaching using modified games for directed play. It can be deployed in the middle and senior years’ curriculum through the use of small-sided games. *Game Sense* therefore presents a pedagogically diverse practice as it could be initiated through modified, small-sided, or by a ‘mid - sized’ approach (Bhaskaran, 1997). These approaches initially involve a minimum number of players (for maximum participation), limited rules and the progressive building of the complexity of the sport through the staged introduction of rules and skills implemented as players adapt and develop understanding. A *Game Sense* curriculum, therefore, uses the modification of game rules and playing conditions as an instructional strategy through which to teach about the game (the rules that condition play) and through the game (tactical appreciation) to be able to understand the nature of play (Cohen & Pill, 2010). Game rules and conditions are pedagogical tools to shape learning conditions by exaggeration, reduction or elimination of constraints (Chow et al., 2007).

Game sense games to teach fundamental sport skills in the primary years leads then to a modified sport approach utilising the exaggeration and modification of game rules to introduce game understanding and to engage all learners in the play (Pill, 2007). *Designer Games* (Charlesworth, 1994), *Play Practices* (Lauder, 2001), more sophisticated ‘game sense games’ (Pill, 2007) and skill drills all feature in the design of sport learning in a *Game Sense* model in upper primary and secondary physical education.

Conclusion

The opportunity afforded by the progressive implementation of a national curriculum for Australia is not limited to securing a space for sport teaching and learning within school curriculum time. Rather, shaping sport experiences as educative endeavours marked by quality curriculum and teaching is the opportunity presented. The prospect of a national Australian curriculum for health and physical education presents an opportunity to construct sport within physical education as a space more noted for sport learning. The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (2010) indicated that student participation in quality physical education and sport will be a priority when the Health and Physical Education curriculum is developed. This article focuses on how *Game Sense* provides an Australian prospective through

which this quality sport experience could be achieved within a National physical education curriculum.

Game Sense contains inviting possibilities through which to advance the practice and status of sport teaching and learning in Australian schools. Australian national physical education curriculum development soon will begin as part of Phase 3 of the Australian Curriculum introduction. With the introduction of the national curriculum, teachers across Australia will strive for deep learning through high quality teaching–learning processes in all areas of the curriculum. In this article I have made the case that *Game Sense* can be the model to deliver this for the sport component of the Australian Curriculum for physical education.

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¹ Surface learning is when learning is not connected with significant concepts or ideas (Queensland Department of Education, 2002)

² The Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) is the Australian national professional association for health and physical education teachers.

³ The Physical Activity and Participation Strand of the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability HPE syllabus covers learning occurring through physical activity which develops movement skills via active involvement in play, games, sport, dance, gymnastics, aquatics and outdoor activities in a variety of contexts, alone, with others and in teams.

⁴ An Outcome is a developmental learning standard. Outcome 4.1 reads as Standard 4 (Year 8) Outcome 1 (the first of 8 HPE Outcomes).