

Book Review / Compte rendu

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Physical and health education in Canada: integrated approaches for elementary teachers
by Joe Barrett & Carol Scaini. Kinetics, 2019, 252 Pages, ISBN 9781492520429

Physical and Health Education in Canada: Integrated Approaches for Elementary Teachers, edited by Barrett & Scaini, is a practical and accessible resource for pre-service teachers, practising educators, and curriculum developers working in Canadian elementary contexts (K-12). By centering on comprehensive school health (CSH), physical education pedagogy, and teacher preparedness, the text aligns closely with the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum, the broader national standards set by PHE (Physical and Health Education) Canada, and the Joint Consortium for School Health (2019). While the text offers a cohesive and well-rounded overview of how the elements of health promotion can work together in classroom practice, it offers limited guidance on assessment and evaluation practices.

The text is thoughtfully organized into three parts (I, II, III) and 20 chapters, progressing from foundational concepts to applied practice. Barrett and Scaini have assembled a distinguished group of contributors, from across Canada, including teachers, researchers, and field leaders. The breadth of expertise and combination of strategies enhances the book's credibility, practical relevance, and usefulness enriched by conceptual grounding and pedagogical guidance. One of the primary strengths of the book

is the presentation package with web-based teaching resources (after each chapter) with activities, templates, and examples for K-12. All the materials are both ready to use and customizable, enhancing the book's practical utility for educators seeking adaptable classroom materials and resources. This in turn facilitates concrete lesson planning and instructional design. While the materials are flexible and adaptable, the book provides limited guidance on differentiated implementation across diverse school populations, especially in under-resourced school contexts. Nevertheless, the inclusion of these supplemental resources reinforces the focus on bridging theory and practice in classrooms.

Reading this book has encouraged me to think more broadly about engaging students in physical activity and integrating physical education into broader educational experiences. I recommend that anyone with an interest in seeking creative ways to engage students in health promotion pick up this book. While this review did not summarize nor provide perspective on every chapter, it highlights sections that resonated most strongly with me, particularly those addressing student engagement and focusing on inclusive teaching practices. Across the 20 chapters, the text combines insightful refe-

rences and descriptive accounts on positive physical activity initiatives, holistic approaches in promoting student well-being, and the importance of partnerships (Stolp et al., 2015).

The text serves as a guide for integrating concepts such as positive mental health (Chapter 8) and wellness and mindfulness (Chapter 15) into health education (Whitehead, 2010; Bascia, 2014). Furthermore, the strategies and activities presented in the book reinforce the importance of creating inclusive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Chapter 4 is particularly effective in situating inclusive education within the broader principles of acceptance, respect, and student voice, aligning with the work of Mel Ainscow (2020), who also emphasized equity in education. Several other chapters, such as Chapters 10, 12, 13 and 16 demonstrate how traditional games can be modified, broken down, and adjusted to accommodate the functional abilities of students, reinforcing an inclusive approach to physical education.

I found the text to be strongly practice-oriented, supported with concrete examples and case studies that enhance its application in classrooms. Chapter 14, for instance, discusses ways of empowering students to design co-operative games and activities that encourage interaction, collaboration, and confidence-building (Raptis & Fleming, 2003). Similarly, Chapter 19 explores the foundational elements of dance and highlights the benefits of developing fundamental movement skills such as hopping, skipping, running, galloping, balancing, rolling, and crawling. Margaret Whitehead (2010) first advanced the concept of physical literacy, framing movement as an essential part of lifelong participation in physical activity. Other chapters illustrate how physical and health education can be linked to broader educational experiences, including the promotion of safe practices (Chapter 3), community engagement (Chapter 9), teamwork (Chapter 10), and movement competence (Chapter 11).

Rather than isolating physical education as a separate subject area, the text positions it within a wider relational framework in schooling. This integrated orientation is one of the key strengths of the book, especially for elementary educators, who often work across curricular

areas while supporting the overall well-being of their students (Bascia, 2014). Another important contribution of the book is its attention to diverse cultural perspectives within health and physical education. Particularly, Chapter 6 explores the integration of Indigenous games and perspectives, emphasizing holistic approaches that support the body, heart, mind, and spirit. Indigenous concepts such as “The Medicine Wheel” and “Turtle Island” are introduced in the book to highlight the interconnected understanding of well-being, alongside the principle of *Mino’ Pimatisiwin* (living a good life). This chapter enriches the text by foregrounding Indigenous knowledge systems and affirming their place within educational practice, aligning with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (2015).

Overall, the text is highly practical, well-organized, and culturally responsive, particularly relevant within the Canadian educational landscape. Through the resources, reflective teaching practices and concrete strategies can be readily incorporated into elementary classrooms to foster inclusive, active, and healthy learning environments in schools. While the book offers a strong foundation for both professional practice and reflection, some chapters would benefit from deeper engagement with assessment strategies and measuring student outcomes in physical and health education. Despite the limitations, it is a valuable addition to professional development libraries, practicing educators, and an excellent resource for teacher education courses.

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