I felt very privileged to be sponsored to attend the ACHPER conference and found it to be a very worthwhile and stimulating experience.

One could not but be impressed by the wonderful venue chosen for the conference enabling such a large number of delegates to be comfortable and catered for so efficiently. The organization of so many people also was outstanding feat. The support of the sponsors was very much appreciated by all and it was interesting to visit the stalls and discover what they promoted.

I felt the welcome by the Aboriginal artist was a brilliant beginning to the conference. To me it wove together the movement of the music from the earliest culture of our land with the new culture, both embracing movement of body, mind and spirit. It was totemic and mesmerizing.

It was amazing just to be part of such a large gathering of educators from so many countries. This links to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Standard 7 (7.4 Participate in professional forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice). There was a wide selection of sessions to choose from. They were not only very interesting but enabled people to access areas of personal interest. I found myself wanting to do more sessions but could not as they were on at the same time which is unavoidable. In an ideal world, I feel that it would be great to have a few follow up weekend days where facilitators could offer some of their sessions again as an extension programme for those interested to do so.

As a TRT I am always trying to expand my repertoire of games to use while working with a wide age range of students, so I chose to do Session 1A- I’m game if you are! fun activities, for Physical Activity Sessions. It was presented by Carol Sharpe. Here we enjoyed participating in a wide range of games designed to enable the focus of maximum individual participation and presented challenges. These games were useful as they could be adapted to different year levels and we were shown how to extend the level of skill involved. They were games where a team spirit could be built. This links with Standard 2 (2.1 Developing engaging teaching activities).

Session 4: Bringing the Australian HPE Curriculum into the primary classroom, was a useful training session for educators as it is a planning, grounding and connecting tool. It was good to explore aspects of the curriculum and plan for a band level as an exercise with peers. This links to Standard 6 (6.2 Engage in professional learning and improved practice.)
Dr Graham Dodd delivered a brilliant presentation—The unrealized value of human motion. A very special part for me was that he spoke from his vast knowledge and experiences. He brought forward the concept that human motion is embedded in the DNA and showed ‘The Hand of hope’ in the pre-birth stage.’ He also discredited the historical mind/body dualism of the past and presented the interrelation of human movement and improved well being and learning. This was supported by research results and his extensive experiences in the field. There was discussion about human movement stimulating cognitive processes, biological and social/emotional processes. He gave us information and incentives to read and research further into motion creating neuro-plasticity— the oxygenation of brain, the formation of dendrites.

Dodd showed how this research can improve student well-being and learning. This helps teachers gain knowledge and incorporate new teaching methods. This connects with Standard 1 (1.2: Structure teaching programmes using research and collegial advice about how students learn.)

I very much enjoyed the presentation by Griffin Longley—Nature Play. He mentions - Children today are living in a digital world. Technology is important but there is a need to advocate for balance. He is promoting the reduction of screen time and sedentary practices to help children achieve a healthier state of well being. He presented the many benefits that can be gained by engaging children in outdoor activities such as an increase in creativity and a decrease in mental health disorders. He promotes a greater need for PE, outdoor classrooms and engaging play space. Play also increases physical literacy, cognitive function and memory as well as social skills and emotional health. This connects to Standard 3 (3.3 Proficient: Select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking) In the schools where I have been teaching I have encouraged outdoor play and I continue to promote it.

As a temporary relief teacher I teach different levels R-7 so I will be able to promote the games and skills I learnt at the conference. I will be able to share knowledge with teachers, students and parents. I have always encouraged learning for well being in other areas of life, so I will be able to promote physical activity for students, parents, carers and staff of the schools where I am called to teach. As a community member I feel that it is my responsibility to work towards a healthy community. I will be able to promote movement for health of mind, body and spirit. Standard 7 Professional Engagement (7.3 Engage professionally with colleagues, parents /caregivers and the community)
I really enjoyed the dance program with Rebecca Williams. Session 6k. Experiencing movement to music, solo and team dance and viewing the relevant curriculum was a tremendous experience and a joy to be a part of. It inspired me to do another training day with her that very week. Rebecca is a brilliant teacher who inspires every shy wall flower into movement and collaborative fun experiences that are very creative. The session ties in with Standard 3 (3.2: both Proficient and Highly Accomplished: Plan and implement well structured learning and teaching programmes or lesson sequences that engage students and promote learning.)

I am very grateful for the experience and I can highly recommend the ACHPER conference. I hope it will be continued so others can get the chance to attend.

Thank you.

Liz Gauci