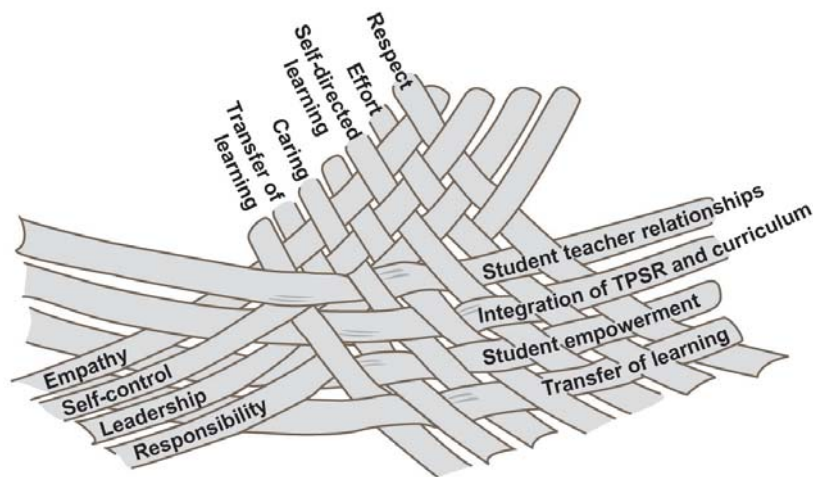




## Research into Practice Series from Victoria University

# Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Through Physical Education

by Dr. Barrie Gordon



Teaching (Taking) Personal and Social Responsibility

## Project Description

This article reports on a study that examined a six-month implementation of the Teaching (Taking) Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model in a New Zealand secondary school physical education programme (Gordon, 2010). TPSR is a pedagogical model that is well established in New Zealand physical education programmes with a recent NZ survey reporting that seventy five (158 individual teachers) of the 148 responding secondary schools taught TPSR in their physical education programmes (Gordon, Thevenard & Hodis, 2011).

TPSR is an approach to teaching that explicitly aims to help students become more personally and socially responsible. Integral to the model are five goals,

Respect; Effort; Self-direction; Caring; and the transfer of learning to other contexts (Hellison, 2011). Lessons are structured to allow students to experience these goals and to reflect on their own and others behaviours both within the group and individually.

This study followed four classes, all taught by the same teacher, for a period of six months. Two classes were taught with TPSR while two comparison classes received a traditional physical education programme. Data were collected through observations of the classes, extensive interviewing of students, teacher interviews and from documentation such as detentions and form books.

*TPSR is an approach to teaching that explicitly aims to help students become more personally and socially responsible*



## Results

The behaviour of the two TPSR classes improved quickly with the teacher reporting by the end of the implementation that both classes were extremely well behaved.

The levels of engagement in the physical education curriculum increased substantially for the two TPSR classes. This was attributed to increased time on task, and because less time was wasted on classroom management and control.

The teacher reported that learning in the physical education curriculum was greater for the TPSR classes.



The teacher and the students described an improved relationship, with the teacher commenting at the conclusion of the programme that “what it brought to my teaching [TPSR] was the development of positive relationships within my class”.

The above results were not replicated in the two comparison classes.

The implementation led to a reaffirming of the teacher’s belief in the importance of a humanistic classroom, the need for teacher-student relationships to be based on mutual respect and the value of offering students opportunities to self-manage their own learning.

## Comment

This study demonstrated that TPSR can be successfully taught in a secondary school physical education programme by a regular classroom teacher. While TPSR has traditionally been implemented in physical education it is a pedagogical model that has also been successfully introduced into a number of other curriculum areas. A particular strength of TPSR is its close alignment with the NZC and in particular with a number of the Key Competencies.

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Hellison, D. (2011). *Teaching personal and social responsibility through physical activity*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

## biography



Barrie Gordon is a senior lecturer in health and physical education in the School of Education Policy and Implementation at the Victoria University of Wellington, Faculty of Education. Barrie’s research is concerned with the reality of practice, particularly as it relates to teaching and learning in physical education.

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