School to School Support explores the impact of an enhanced pedagogical approach to PE on the digital literacy of learners.

Developing a school to school support network, through the Leaders of Learning programme, enables teachers to embed technology in the PE curriculum, empowering learners to take ownership of their learning journey.

This case study highlights how the use of technology in PE can create authentic learning opportunities which enhance learner engagement and develop digitally literate learners with the skills to thrive in the 21st Century.
School to School Support

Context

The Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS) and Physical Literacy Framework (PLF) are funded by the Welsh Government, led by Sport Wales and delivered by PLPS regional consortia teams. The key aims of the PLPS are to improve the health and wellbeing of young people, contribute to whole school improvement, and encourage schools to use physical contexts for holistic learning. Through the Targeted Intervention Programme for Schools (TISPS), the PLPS also aims to support delivery of the Welsh Government’s strategic priorities for Closing the Gap and the Government’s commitment ‘to make physical literacy as important a developmental skill as reading and writing’. The PLPS has been linked with the Welsh Schools Challenge Cymru programme developed by the Welsh Government to support under-performing schools from the most deprived areas in Wales. PLPS teams are working with the 40 Pathways to Success Schools, their feeder Primaries, and an additional 15 schools to create bespoke interventions that address key priorities and support outcomes for young people.

The PLF is a tool for schools, staff, practitioners and parents to support the development of physical literacy. It identifies the skills that should be developed during a young person’s school life and illustrates the importance of developing confidence, motivation and knowledge within the physical domain. The PLF provides practitioners with clear expectations that help promote, inform and track the progress of every child along their physical literacy journey.

SPEAR

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR) was commissioned from October 2014 to March 2016 to conduct an independent evaluation of the PLPS and PLF. Part of this independent review involves the collation, review, selection, secondary analysis and presentation of case studies evidencing and sharing a range of good practice across PLPS and PLF initiatives. As such, the narrative and analysis of this case study has been conducted by SPEAR with resources provided by Sport Wales and the PLPS teams. Consent to identify children, adults and organisations within this case study has been granted.

SPEAR is a cross school and cross faculty research centre at Canterbury Christ Church University established to bring together expertise across and outside the university and to facilitate collaborative working. In particular, SPEAR brings together expertise in Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, Education, Health and Tourism and Leisure. SPEAR’s research has helped guide and inform public policy to increase physical activity and sport participation among young people.

SPEAR’s work includes supporting the Targeted Intervention Programme for Schools (TISPS), the PLPS also aims to support delivery of the Welsh Government’s strategic priorities for Closing the Gap and the Government’s commitment ‘to make physical literacy as important a developmental skill as reading and writing’. The PLPS has been linked with the Welsh Schools Challenge Cymru programme developed by the Welsh Government to support under-performing schools from the most deprived areas in Wales. PLPS teams are working with the 40 Pathways to Success Schools, their feeder Primaries, and an additional 15 schools to create bespoke interventions that address key priorities and support outcomes for young people.

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School to School Support

‘PE and 21st Century learning’

Profile

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become an integral part of life and work in the 21st Century. The growing need for a digitally literate workforce requires the education system to equip young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to survive and thrive in a digital age (Meredith, 2011). Integrating ICT across subject areas is key to creating authentic and adaptable learning environments that enhance teaching, learning and assessment (Browne, 2015). Physical Education (PE) offers an excellent environment in which to integrate and implement a wide variety of ICT learning opportunities (Meredith, 2011). The scope of ICT approaches in PE includes: cameras and videos, mobile phones, motion analysis software, film editing, portable media players (e.g. iPods), interactive whiteboards, voice projections systems, computers, laptops and tablets, active gaming and dance mat systems, physical activity measurement devices (e.g. pedometers), pupil response systems, podcasting, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), video conferencing and the use of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube) (Kretschmann, 2015). Despite the broad range of pedagogical approaches available, many PE teachers lack the confidence and training required to effectively integrate ICT into their PE lessons; embedding ICT across subject areas requires the provision of appropriate training opportunities and continued support for teachers and schools.

Tredgar Comprehensive School, in Blaenau Gwent, is situated in a socially and economically disadvantaged area. The school had been identified as facing a number of challenges and was placed on the Welsh Government Pathways to Success programme, increasing its focus on improving literacy, numeracy and reducing the effects of poverty on children. PLPS enabled the school to develop the use of technology in Physical Education to support the learning process. PLPS also provided the school with an opportunity to share knowledge and skills through an ICT in PE school support network.

More details on SPEAR and its work can be found at: www.canterbury.ac.uk/SPEAR

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The Challenge

The Physical Education Leader at Tredegar Comprehensive School identified a need to develop the use of 21st Century technology in PE. With the potential to develop digitally competent pupils through authentic learning experiences, the integration of ICT into PE lessons also offered opportunities to enhance teacher pedagogy and heighten learner engagement in PE. Working in collaboration the school, EAS PLPS team and Aspire2Be (educational technology company providing digital training and CPD for educational specialists) recognised the opportunity to support other local schools wishing to embed technology into their Physical Education Curriculum. The EAS PLPS team identified and selected an additional five schools to take part; Abertillery Comprehensive, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Llanwern High School, Monmouth Comprehensive, St Julians Primary School. The schools were selected on their capacity to maximise the impact of the initiative. The Leaders of Learning technology for learning training programme was developed and facilitated by Aspire2Be. Its purpose was to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of teachers involved in the programme, share good practice through a school to school support network, and trial the use of ICT in both primary and secondary school PE identifying the impact on learning.

The Intervention

The EAS PLPS team and Aspire2Be developed a three day interactive Leaders of Learning training programme, focused on technology for learning in PE and delivered over a 3 month period. The training enabled the group to explore the strategic implementation of technology, identifying apps to support teaching and learning in PE and across the wider curriculum. Collectively the group addressed e-safety concerns and the development of digital leaders to further embed technology across the whole school. Following each training session the group were set challenges and assigned tasks in order to develop and embed their knowledge and skills in their respective schools. This approach enabled the teachers to trial and practice using technology in their PE lessons, while also sharing their learning and experiences with their peers. Each school was provided with an iTunesU account containing resources to complement the integration and delivery of technology in PE. Aspire2Be provided ongoing support, beyond the three day interactive training programme, to enable teachers to embed ICT into their PE curriculum. During the training programme the teachers and schools shared good practice and ideas creating an ICT in PE school to school support network to further develop their practice.

Table providing an overview of the three day interactive Leaders of Learning training programme, focused on technology for learning in PE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Personal and staff development</td>
<td>• Monitoring learning</td>
<td>• E-safety and device management</td>
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<td>• Management of resources</td>
<td>• Digital environment</td>
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<td>• Community engagement</td>
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Range of apps introduced to the group by Aspire2Be to develop digital competence across all subjects areas

The Leaders of Learning technology for learning training programme with six schools and Aspire2Be

The journey of teachers as they develop their digital knowledge and skills
Impact: What changed for the teachers?

Focusing the Leaders of Learning programme on technology for learning in PE successfully developed the teachers’ understanding and confidence in the application of technology to heighten learner engagement. This was evident in their reflections at the start of every training session, with most teachers using technology to support the delivery of engaging lessons to the rest of the group. The training introduced teachers to a number of apps beneficial to cross-curricular teaching, learning, and assessment methods. The programme delivery provided teachers with the support and freedom to trial the use of computers, tablets, mobile phones, and other hardware, as well as unfamiliar software and apps such as Coachnote, Showbie, Explain Everything, Thinglink, Socrative, Seasaw, Shadow Puppet, and iTunes U. The training developed a broad range of digital competencies and skills enabling teachers to incorporate a variety of ICT approaches into their lessons.

Embedding ICT into PE lessons resulted in heightened learner engagement, with teachers using technology to share stimuli, communicate with learners, track progress, and provide more independent learning opportunities. ICT also provided extended learning opportunities for the more able and talented learners, by breaking down the analysis and feedback processes, and providing virtual dialogue outside of lesson time to further develop and challenge the learners. The training programme enabled teachers to gain a clear understanding of how to embed technology into the learning process. This not only enhanced the learning experiences and engagement in PE but also further developed the ICT competencies and skills required to become digitally literate learners. The majority of practitioners used technology to extend the learning experience to engage parents. The use of technology allowed learners to share work with parents and allow parents to support and access learners’ work from home (using Edmodo).

…”these approaches encouraged staff to trial technology in lessons and to share the learning with other members of the team. All of the schools were really making roads in the use of technology that will be integrated throughout the departments. The whole course was a great success with some excellent feedback from the staff”.
(Aspire2Be – Facilitator)

“Great ideas to develop engagement with learners”
(Teacher)

“I am aware this is what the future will look like, just need to get my head around it more”
(Teacher)

“looking forward to implementing some of the ideas and see how it impacts on learners’ learning”
(Teacher)

“I need to focus and decide where to start, disseminating information for starters and then targeted thinking”
(Teacher)

“Great depth of knowledge well explained for Technophobe”
(Teacher)

“There is so much you can do to engage learners and deepen thinking”
(Teacher)

“During a recent observation by the schools challenge advisor my lesson was graded excellent and I was commended on my use of ICT and its impact on learning in the lesson.”
(Teacher)
School to School Support

Impact: What changed for the schools?

The programme has enabled the schools involved to create a school to school ICT in PE support network. The network has allowed teachers to effectively share their knowledge, skills and experiences with the other schools involved in the programme, while also collaborating with colleagues in their own workplace. The training programme has developed a teaching community that is prepared to trial new approaches to teaching, providing authentic and meaningful learning experiences through the integration of ICT in PE. The schools involved in the programme now have digitally literate PE teachers who are confident enough to embed technology into the PE and wider curriculum, developing digitally literate learners with the skills to thrive in the 21st Century.

“Another excellent day sharing ideas that could enhance the learning journey... thank you to my colleagues for sharing ideas to aid the learning process!” (Teacher)

“With the recent Donaldson Report on Welsh curriculum review these schools are in a really healthy position with regards digital competency across the curriculum as well as having developed some excellent leaders to move learning forward.” (Aspire2Be – Facilitator)

“I now feel I am becoming more of a facilitator and the pupils are more confident learners. They take responsibility for deepening their own learning along with being more engaged in the learning process and enjoy the challenges set.” (Teacher)

“Within the department, staff are using the ipads more confidently. This has been mainly using the basic photo/video facility on the ipad rather than the apps!” (Teacher)

“Lots to take back and share!” (Teacher)

“I will be facilitating a departmental workshop during our inset on Friday 23rd November 2015 – whereby I will be showcasing the work that has been produced by my learners. The aim is that the PE department staff will begin to confidently use the apps and start to appoint digital leaders within their teaching group.” (Teacher)

“Create a range of opportunities for learners to use ICT to develop their skills prior to, during and after the PE lesson.”

“Consider the type of technology you might use to engage parents and families in their children’s learning journeys.”

“Provide regular opportunities for learners to share their feedback on the use of ICT in PE; empower the learners to drive the sessions based on their experiences.”

Recommendations: Advice for schools and practitioners

Share ideas and experiences across the whole school to embed enhanced pedagogies.

Create a range of opportunities for learners to use ICT to develop their skills prior to, during and after the PE lesson.

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