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An Examination of an Implementation of the
‘Responsibility Model’ in a New Zealand Secondary
School Physical Education Programme.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This study examined a six-month implementation of the Responsibility Model (RM) in a New Zealand secondary school. Four classes were involved in the study, two classes were taught a programme based on the RM and two classes were taught using a traditional pedagogical approach to physical education. All four classes were taught by the same teacher. A mixed methodological approach was used combining case study and quasi-experimental research. Data were collected through interviews, observations, analysis of detention patterns, and regular student self-assessments.

The implementation was successful in developing positive, supportive and well-behaved classes in physical education. The majority of students developed a greater understanding of personal and social responsibility and became more personally and socially responsible in class. The students were not found to be disadvantaged in meeting the physical education curriculum goals and students in the RM classes were found to be more engaged in their class work than the equivalent students in the control classes. If the true measure of success, however, is that students are able to take what is learnt in physical education and apply it in other contexts, then this implementation was less successful. For the vast majority of students the teaching and learning about personal and social responsibility was firmly associated with physical education and they generally showed little understanding of the potential for the transfer of learning to other contexts. It is possible that a longer implementation and a more consistent reinforcement of the concept of transfer would lead to students developing greater understanding of the models potential application in other areas of their lives.

This study has implications for teachers who are considering introducing the RM into their teaching. It provides insights into the realities of implementing the RM into the specific context of secondary school physical education programmes. It also challenges the assumptions that teachers may have that the introduction of the RM is a relatively unproblematic process and identifies a number of areas of potential difficulty. The study concludes with recommendations for teachers contemplating introducing the RM into their practice.
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have been particularly motivated by your belief in the need to work in the “swamp of practice”. It is a lesson that many university researchers could learn from.

Dedication

I am dedicating this thesis to my father Jim and my sister Denise, both of whom have passed away. To Dad I am sorry you are not here to enjoy the moment but you will be in my thoughts. Denise, who should have been here to see the completion of the journey, it is times like these that remind us all of how great the loss is.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................ ii
Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................... iii
Dedication .................................................................................................................... iv
Table of Contents ..........................................................................................................v
List of Tables .............................................................................................................. ix
List of Figures ...............................................................................................................x

Chapter 1  **Introduction** ..........................................................................................1
Background to Study .................................................................................................3
Potential Significance of this Study .............................................................................8
Research Questions .................................................................................................10
Organisation of Chapters .........................................................................................11

Chapter 2  **Sport, Physical Education and Social and Moral Development** ....13
Physical Education and Moral Development .............................................................13
Moral Development Theory .......................................................................................22
Moral Development Theorists ....................................................................................24

Chapter 3  **The Responsibility Model** ...................................................................38
Goals (Levels of Responsibility) of the Model ..............................................................40
Teaching Structure ......................................................................................................43
Themes .......................................................................................................................46
The Responsibility Model and Learning Theory .........................................................49
Relationship of the Responsibility Model to the NZ Health and Physical Education Curriculum ..........................................................58
Traditional teaching Pedagogy ....................................................................................65

Chapter 4  **Literature Review of Research on the Responsibility Model** ........73
Emerging Themes .......................................................................................................79
Changes in Participants’ Behaviour Related to the Goals of the Responsibility Model ............................................................................80
Chapter 5  Research Methodology ................................................................. 105
Research Questions ................................................................................ 107
Research Philosophy ............................................................................. 108
  Epistemology ..................................................................................... 108
  Theoretical Perspective ...................................................................... 109
Methodology .......................................................................................... 110
Methods ................................................................................................. 113
Data Sources .......................................................................................... 113
  Interviews .......................................................................................... 113
  Teacher Interviews ............................................................................. 114
  Student Interviews ............................................................................. 115
  Class Observations ............................................................................ 116
  Reflection Sheet ................................................................................ 119
  Goal Setting Sheet ........................................................................... 120
  Detentions ......................................................................................... 120
Data Analysis .......................................................................................... 120
  Interviews .......................................................................................... 120
  Class Observations ............................................................................ 123
  Detentions ......................................................................................... 123
  Reflection Sheets ............................................................................... 123
  Goal Setting Sheet ........................................................................... 123
Participants
  School ................................................................................................. 124
Classes .........................................................................................124  
Teacher ........................................................................................125  
The Researcher ............................................................................125  
Physical Education Curriculum .........................................................126 
Procedures .........................................................................................126 
Ethical Considerations .......................................................................127 
The Case Study .................................................................................128 
Quasi-experimental Research ...........................................................136 
Processes Used to Authenticate the Pedagogical Approaches Used  
in this Study ........................................................................................137 
Contextual Limitations of Research ..................................................138 

Chapter 6  Results ..............................................................................................141 
A. Learning Outcome: Student Understanding of Personal and Social  
   Responsibility ...............................................................................143 
B. Learning Outcome: Impact of the Implementation of the  
   Responsibility Model on Student Engagement in Physical  
   Education ....................................................................................165 
C. Learning Outcome: Impact of the Implementation of the  
   Responsibility Model on Classroom Behaviour in  
   Physical Education.......................................................................172 
D. Learning Outcome: Transfer of Learning about Personal and  
   Social Responsibility to other Contexts .................................188 
E. Learning Outcome: Implementation of the Responsibility Model  
   from the Perspective of the Teacher ...........................................195 
   Overview of Results......................................................................202 
F. Authenticity of Implementation of the Responsibility Model ....206  
   Pedagogical differentiation between the Comparison and  
   Responsibility Model Classes......................................................213 

Chapter 7  Discussion .........................................................................................219 
Question One: Student understanding of personal and social  
   responsibility...................................................................................219 
Question Two: Students’ experiences...............................................223 
Question Three: The implementation from the teacher’s
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 8</th>
<th>Significance and Conclusions .................................................................261</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance of the Study ......................................................................263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations ............................................................................................270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further Research ....................................................................................272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations for Teachers ..................................................................276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Comments ........................................................................................277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Appendices | .............................................................................................................279 |
|            | Referencce List .................................................................................298 |
List of Tables

Table 4.1  Levels of Responsibility .................................................................42
Table 4.2  Essential Skills from the New Zealand Curriculum Framework ....61
Table 5.1  Research plan: Data collection ......................................................113
Table 5.2  Number of observations per class per month ...............................117
Table 6.1  Relationship of research questions to learning outcomes ..........142
Table 6.2  Categories of Variables and Indicators ........................................144
Table 6.3  Year-9 classes - Students’ comments on what they thought they had
learnt in physical education ......................................................................147
Table 6.4  Year-10 classes - Students’ comments on what they thought they had
learnt in physical education .....................................................................149
Table 6.5  RM classes - Students’ comments on what they thought they had learnt
in physical education .............................................................................151
Table 6.6  Written goals for 9CO and 9RM for physical education ...............154
Table 6.7  Written goals for 10CO and 10RM for physical education .............156
Table 6.8  Students’ written comments on behaviour in class – 9RM ............185
Table 6.9  Students’ written comments on behaviour in class – 10RM ..........185
Table 6.10 Students’ written comments on behaviour in class – 9CO ..........187
Table 6.11 Students’ written comments on behaviour in class – 10CO ..........187
Table 6.12 Observations related to the four major themes ............................210
Table 7.1  Summary of comparative research findings for teachers’ experiences
implementing the RM in community and secondary school programmes ................234
Table 7.2  Summary of comparative research findings for community based and
secondary school based programme ......................................................246
List of Figures

Figure 5.1 Organisational structure for sub-nodes derived from the key processes node .................................................................122
Figure 6.1 Student responses by frequency on whether the Responsibility Model had impacted positively on their behaviour in class ..........184
Figure 6.2 Student responses by frequency on whether their behaviour in class had improved ...........................................................................186
Figure 6.3 Number of detentions given to students February – October – Year-9 .........................................................................................193
Figure 6.4 Number of detentions given to students February – October – Year-10 .........................................................................................194

Appendices

Appendix A Questions for Teachers.................................................................279
Appendix B Ethics Approval ........................................................................280
Appendix C Letter of Information and Consent Forms .................................. 281
Appendix D Guide Questions for Teacher Interview....................................285
Appendix E Guide Questions for Student Interviews (RM classes)..............286
Appendix F Examples of Notes Taken During Class Observation ...............287
Appendix G Reflection Sheet (RM classes) .................................................... 289
Appendix H Reflection Sheet (CO classes) ..................................................... 290
Appendix I Goal Setting Worksheet (RM classes) ........................................ 291
Appendix J Goal Setting Worksheet (CO classes) ......................................... 292
Appendix K Detention List .............................................................................293
Appendix L Example of transcript (10RM) .................................................... 294
Appendix M Organisation of Nodes ............................................................... 295