PDHPE - Strategies for preparing for the HSC exam

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This information has been designed to assist you in preparing for and completing PDHPE examination. Firstly, we will outline how to approach this subject in relation to study and then we will discuss important elements when answering questions. As 80% of the PDHPE paper requires written responses, it is vital that students understand exactly how to answer each question. Every year, too many students leave marks ‘on the table’ due to the fact that they are not able to express themselves adequately in the examination.

As I am sure you are aware a number of significant modifications occurred to the PDHPE syllabus and exam format in 2010. In summary, these amendments were:

✓ Short answer questions to be asked in Core 1 & Core 2 (compared to longer responses in previous years).
✓ No question to be worth more than 8 marks (12 in the option section).
✓ Removal of the marking rubric in Core 1 & 2.
Important Information for each core
The good thing about PHDPE is that it is very syllabus driven. That is, students who are organised and are able to keep up-to-date notes on every point within each module, will generally do very well. The bad news is that there is a tremendous amount of content! Therefore, the purpose of this information below is to assist students in focussing on the most important aspects of each core section.

Core 1: Health Priorities in Australia
The key to studying and applying information from core 1 in an exam is to realise the overall aim of what teachers/markers want you to know. The BOS states that this module:

Examines the health status of Australians and investigates, in depth, the current health priority issues in Australia. Students identify and justify the choice of priority issues and examine the roles that the health system and health promotion play in achieving better health for all Australians...In this module, students learn how health can be promoted by personal and community action and by policies and services at all levels of responsibility. The module introduces concepts of health inequities in Australia

(The words in red demonstrate specific links to key questions)

By far and away, this core is the most difficult and time consuming area to study. There are so many areas that can be asked within this information above, not to mention the statistics and evidence required to answer each question. Therefore, when studying and preparing notes for this section, remember:

✓ Cover each dot/dash point in ‘learn about’ column of the syllabus in a way that you will remember them (acronyms, mnemonics, lists, mind-maps, etc.)
✓ You do not have to rote learn statistics to still perform very well. However, trends are essential knowledge for high achieving students.
✓ Questions will generally ask for you to apply your knowledge, as indicated in the “learn to” column of the syllabus. Therefore, turn each point into a question to test whether you have enough background knowledge to answer any potential question.

The key to this area is to look for relationships between each section and its value on the health of Australians. For example, you can link the groups experiencing health inequities with the action areas used to determine Australia’s health priorities. There are lots of places that these connections are possible. Moreover, it also allows you for a greater opportunity to see where the theory exists in the ‘real world’.
There have also been a number of new items added to this core. It is highly recommended that you en-
sure that you understand and can answer questions about:

- high levels of preventable chronic disease, injury and mental health problems (be sure to only study
  CVD, Cancer and one other);
- a growing and ageing population and health care facilities and services;
- Impact of emerging new treatments and technologies on health care;
- Health care facilities and services content (although only minor differences);
- Ottawa Charter – benefits of partnerships and inclusion on link to social justice;

As these changes were only introduced into the syllabus in 2009, many are yet to be asked in the written
section of the 2010 paper.

**Core 2: Factors Affecting Performance**

For many, this section tends to be favoured amongst Year 12 students as links can often be made
between what is studied and what may have been done within their own sporting experience/s.
However, there are some common areas that many students still find difficult. Remember, when
completing past papers, the following areas have been modified, so if you see these questions, just
ignore them:

- Pre-screening and physiological responses removed and moved to the preliminary course
  respectively
- Inclusion of the role of ‘recovery considerations’
- ‘Hydration and fluid replacement’ moved to the Sports Medicine option
- Removal of the ‘learning process’ and ‘rates of skill acquisition’ (including learning curves)
- Inclusion of the notion of establishing a skill acquisition environment, corresponding to the
  performance environment, for the
development of decision-making
skills and tactics.
Some tips to assist in guiding you through this core include:

- Each key question deals with a component that has been proven to affect performance. Thus, you need to understand *how* well each element achieves this. Once you make that link, you will improve your marks!

- Choose sports or activities that you are most familiar with when attempting to contextualise (put into an actual) the theory. The marker does not know who you are or what sports/activities that you are interested in. Therefore, use examples that you know best.

- Where possible, read and research case studies of elite athletes that use these syllabus areas in their daily lives very effectively. Often a contrast of sports allows for greater understanding to be demonstrated.

- As is the case in Core 1, you can test yourself as to how much you know by attempting to complete/answer the ‘learn to’ dot points in the syllabus.

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*Format of the 2011 PHDPE HSC Examination*

**Section I – Core (60 marks)**
This section will consist of two parts. Across this section there will be equal weighting given to each core module.

**Part A (20 marks)**
- There will be objective response questions to the value of 20 marks.

**Part B (40 marks)**
- There will be approximately six short-answer questions. Questions may contain parts.
- There will be approximately eight items in total. At least one item will be worth from 6 to 8 marks.

**Section II – Options (40 marks)**
- There will be two questions for each of the five options.
- Candidates will be required to answer both questions on the two options they have studied.
- The first question on each option will be worth 8 marks and may contain parts.
- The second question on each option will be an extended response worth 12 marks with an expected length of response of around three and a half pages of an examination writing booklet (approximately 500 words).
Writing PDHPE responses

One of the major changes from a marking perspective is the removal of rubric from the core areas of study. Although, in theory, students do not have to demonstrate every point to be successful, it provides an excellent framework for which to write answers. The rubric (that still exists in the option section) is as follows:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of health and physical activity concepts relevant to the question
- apply the skills of critical thinking and analysis
- communicate ideas and information using relevant examples
- present a logical and cohesive response

It stands to reason, therefore, that if each answer contains each of these elements, you are sure to do well! The only area that is not necessary in the short answer questions is often the ‘apply the skills of critical thinking and analysis’ point (unless of course the verb instructs you to do so!).

Common PDHPE Verbs

Whilst the majority of questions in both the 2010 HSC examination and the sample paper still used the glossary of key terms, other questions were asked, such as; “Why has..”; “How does...” and “What is...” This has a significant impact on how question/s should be written.

*Note: Although many suggested that these changes would lead to an increased number of students achieving Band 6, there was no discernable statistical difference from the 2009 numbers.*

It is really important that you know what each of these terms mean. Marks awarded and space allocated for each question will help, but unless you answer exactly what you have been asked to do, you may not receive your maximum marks. A quick recap of the most common verbs used in the PDHPE exam can be found on the next page:
# Common PDHPE Verbs

## Lower mark value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Recognise and name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>To inquire as to the origin, identity, etc., of something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>A question concerning the cause or reason for which something is done, achieved, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Mid mark value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain</th>
<th>Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Identify issues and provide points for and/or against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Provide characteristics and features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare/Contrast</td>
<td>Show how things are similar or different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Higher Mark Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critically (analyse/evaluate)</th>
<th>Add a degree or level of accuracy depth, knowledge and understanding, logic, questioning, reflection and quality to (analyse/evaluate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>Make a judgement of value, quality, outcomes, results or size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend</td>
<td>Provide reasons in favour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue</td>
<td>Give reasons or cite evidence in support of an idea, action, or theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justify</td>
<td>Support an argument or conclusion</td>
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</table>
Sample High Range PDHPE Answer

Argue the benefits of applying the Ottawa Charter to ONE health promotion initiative. (8)

The Ottawa Charter provides a framework for improving health promotion based on five action areas. They include: developing personal skills (DPS), creating supportive environments (CSE), strengthening community action (SCA), reorienting health services (RHS) & building healthy public policy (BHPP). There are numerous benefits that have been demonstrated when applying these frameworks to a HP initiative designed to decrease the incidence of skin cancer titled “Seymour Snowman”.

In order to achieve positive change, HP must ensure that individuals have the opportunity to DPS. The foundation of any promotion should be to empower those in the community with the knowledge and skills to change dangerous lifestyle practices. This initiative successfully achieves this aim through numerous advertising and marketing materials. Posters, brochures, websites and national ad campaigns not only highlighted the dangers of excessive sun exposure, but targeted parents as the primary carers of young people. Students were also taught skills within a school context to enable them to identify danger times and parts of the day. DPS, therefore, is vital for this specific initiative.

SCA is another important component of the Ottawa charter. Research on effective HP points to the fact that the greater the community involvement, the greater the likely success of achieving its aim. There is no doubt that organising sun protection at local schools, funding resources to libraries and working with national parks officers to educate about sun protection is one of the reasons for the evidenced success of this program. These ‘on the ground’ activities are prime examples of effective community actions that deliver measurable benefits.

Not only did this program successfully enact positive individual and community change, it also initiated principles of SCA. The provision of shaded areas in public places where people were more likely to be exposed to sun exposure (such as playgrounds, public pools and beaches) demonstrated tremendous benefits to individuals and the community. Provision of funding, in partnership with local councils, allowed for greater intersectoral collaboration for multiple advantages. This also allowed for elements of RHS to be fulfilled, as the focus was on prevention as opposed to curative services.

Finally, although this particular HP initiative did not incorporate specific BHPP, it can be said that there were similar programs running concurrently that did so. For example, ‘no hat-no play’ and a mandatory skin protection for manual workers exposed to the sun allowed for this principle to be established.

Thus, the ‘Seymour Snowman’ HP initiative is an excellent example of how the action areas of the Ottawa charter can be applied effectively.

Note: Judgement words in yellow, links to syllabus in red
Checklist for writing a PDHPE answer

☐ Read each question twice carefully
☐ Identify the verb and key parts of the question (highlight or underline these word/s if you like)
☐ If the question is worth 4 marks or more, write a plan on the paper (this will be read by the marker and can give you more marks).
☐ Don’t spend time rewriting the question or completing an ‘introduction’. This is one of the biggest mistakes in the PDHPE HSC exam!
☐ Identify the component/s of the syllabus that you will be using to answer the question, and state them at the start of the question if possible.
☐ Write in paragraphs so that it is easy to see each point/idea/component you are writing about
☐ Try to use the SEX technique to provide enough detail:
  1st sentence – State the area of syllabus or point that you want to make
  2nd sentence – Explain the relevance/influence/reason for this to be the case
  3rd sentence – Give an example to show how this works or looks like in the correct context
☐ If it is a higher order verb, ensure that you provide a judgement, with reasons, as to the effect of the syllabus component you are using.
☐ Use syllabus terminology as much as you can in your answer, in the correct context of course!
☐ Spend appropriate time on each question (approximately 2 minutes/mark)
☐ If you have more to say in the time allocated, don’t be afraid to write more on another booklet or in the space near the lines
☐ Reread quickly your answer to ensure that it is logical, coherent and provides enough depth.