



A MOVEMENT MANIFESTO

Introducing Movement Literacy

Movement Literacy is the capacity of a human to access their innate movement potential.

One's Movement Vocabulary is comprised of the constituent components (or capacities) which may be expressed as one's Movement Literacy. It follows therefore, that Movement Vocabulary can be used as a benchmark or proxy for one's level of Movement Literacy.

"Movement literate people move with fluency, autonomy and flow and express movement creatively and playfully. Movement literate people have a heightened bodily awareness and are continually seeking mastery of their bodies and developing in complexity of movement."

The use of Movement Vocabulary as an assessment / portfolio tool in this project helps learners to develop a growth minded approach to their movement development and helps them to see individual tasks and the expansion of their Movement Literacy as achievable.

Whilst 'vocabulary' does not necessarily equate directly to 'literacy', the grouping of movements in levels and strands allows students to work toward a broad development of their Movement Vocabulary and hence to develop the underlying control, stability, strength and power required to progress it.

The end-state is students who value movement for movement's sake; who don't see movement as an add-on to life, or something we need squeeze into our busy schedules. The end-state is students who understand movement as an innate capability that they have, that they exercise, that they use, and that they assimilate into their identity as physical beings. These students are master of their own body, knower of their own body, and capable movers – far beyond the current reality.

"LEARNERS DEVELOP A GROWTH-MINDED APPROACH TO THEIR MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT"

Levels: The structure of the Movement Literacy programme mirrors the internationally recognised language learning levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and finally C2; Level A1 being beginner and Level C2 being advanced.

Strands: There are four strands that run through each level. These are 1) *locomotion and travel*; 2) *coordination and manipulation*; 3) *postures, positions, poses and patterns*; 4) and, *dynamic body positioning and control*.

Vocabulary: Within each strand there is a number of key vocabulary (movements / actions / activities / skills) that one must master for achievement in the particular level. Movement Vocabulary at the lower levels is fundamental to attainment of higher vocabulary at later levels (for example, the capacity to sit in deep-squat tuck position is a building block for forward roll and flip at later levels).

In this sense, the development of a wide Movement Vocabulary is the key to Movement Literacy and should be the ultimate aim of all Physical Education programmes.

To continue the analogy further, to be Level C2 in one's language learning requires almost fluent utility of the language in reading, writing and speaking, as well as a capacity to use these creatively. Similarly, Level C2 Movement Literacy requires that one has mastered numerous locomotive, coordinative, body positions and dynamic movement patterns, and can apply them consistently and with autonomy.

There are also parallels on the opposite end of the spectrum. At Level A1 language learning one can probably order a drink in a foreign language, ask for directions and say please and thank you. This is the equivalent in Movement Literacy for A1 learners (this is most of the population). We realise we have a body and can use it for rudimentary things, but are far from realising it's full power and potential.

"MOVEMENT LITERACY SHOULD BE THE ULTIMATE AIM OF ALL PHYSICAL EDUCATION"

Teaching Movement or Physical Education within a Movement Literacy approach is not a quantum shift from ordinarily accepted good practise. It is not intended to replace traditional curricula, it is intended to justify and legitimise them, and it is intended to guide curriculum development toward the most meaningful paths and ends. Maintaining emphasis on the movement development will ensure that students develop in a balanced way and guard against potential injury or premature plateau later in their practise. As they are signposts rather than rigid criteria, specific vocabulary can be negotiated within each learning environment and movement context.

Planned learning may include any range of sports and other physical recreations as vehicles for development, so long as these are means and not ends. The 'what we do' of the approach is far less important, even inconsequential, to the 'why' (to develop Movement Literacy) and the 'how' (in an inquiry based, growth centered, explorative and playful environment).

A common criticism of our approach is the apparent lack of focus on 'soft skills' typically associated with physical education. We believe that leadership, teamwork, and socialisation are byproducts of schooling in general, and though they will indeed take place in your classroom we believe they should be responded to as authentic teachable moments rather than something manufactured into the lesson planning.

Another concern is pitching the class at the appropriate level. Here we prefer self-differentiating activities; these are usually possible within the physical spaces and in environments where growth-mindsets are fostered. Peer coaching should be encouraged and the development of Movement Literacy should be seen as a journey.

"ADOPTING A MOVEMENT PARADIGM REQUIRES UNDERTAKING A PERSONAL MOVEMENT JOURNEY"

What does this mean for teachers of Physical Education? We have found that there is a lag between introducing teachers to the concept and the time they take to teach it well. Adopting a movement paradigm requires undertaking a personal movement journey and this doesn't happen over night. This can be quite illuminating and frustrating. Please persist. It often requires teachers to go through the entire 'stages-of-change' model to arrive at a new understanding and perhaps a new conceptualisation of the self. We must begin to see our Movement Literacy in a new light and beware our specialisations, beware resting on our strengths and beware closed mindedness. What a movement paradigm requires is that teachers leave the sports coaching to the sports coaches. We need to be generalist coaches and specialist movers. This is not to say that we need to be at Level C (to flip and invert), it is to say that **we too need to be on the journey.**

In this way the students that leave us will do so with a physical confidence and an ability to succeed in any physical pursuit they so desire; and they will desire this, because they have been taught to move, to be free in their bodies and to know the real value of movement.