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# Presentation of the Special Issue: "Future Matters: Reimagining Physical Education for a Changing World"

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## INTRODUCTION

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The field of Physical Education (PE) stands at a critical juncture. Confronted by the cascading crises of the Anthropocene—from climate breakdown and biodiversity loss to social fragmentation and technological disruption—the assumptions, practices, and purposes that have long defined our discipline are no longer sufficient. The urgent question is no longer if PE should change, but how it can transform to meet the profound challenges of our time and actively contribute to building more sustainable, just, and resilient futures. This special issue of Kinesis is a direct response to that call. It is not merely a collection of articles but the curated result of a dynamic, experimental, and collaborative process: the AIESEP Specialist Seminar, "Future Matters: Reimagining Physical Education for a Changing World."

This issue documents a unique journey from identifying planetary-scale problems to prototyping actionable, hopeful futures for PE. It chronicles a novel methodology that brought together international scholars and practitioners to engage in a structured process of collective imagination. What follows is an invitation to explore not only the outcomes of this process but the process itself, offered as a potential model for how our field can move from a state of passive anxiety to one of active, creative agency.

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## THE GENESIS: A HACKATHON FOR HOPE

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The heart of this special issue was a two-day design thinking "hackathon." The premise was simple yet ambitious: to create a space where the PE community could move beyond critique and begin the vital work of building. Participants were immersed in a structured, high-energy environment designed to foster creative problem-solving. The process was anchored by the "Transition(s) 2050" scenarios developed by the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME). These four plausible, contrasting futures—Frugal Generation, Regional Cooperation, Green Technologies, and Restoration Gamble—were used not as predictions to be accepted, but as "controversial devices" to provoke debate, challenge assumptions, and provide a tangible context for innovation.

Working in collaborative groups, participants used these scenarios to empathise with future learners, define specific challenges, and ideate, prototype, and pitch novel solutions for PE. This process was a deliberate attempt to practice what we preach: to learn by doing, to embrace uncertainty, and to build community through shared purpose.

## THE SPARK: IGNITE TALKS AND AI-ASSISTED SYNTHESIS

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To fuel this creative process, the seminar was ignited by a series of powerful talks from leading international thinkers. These presentations, which form the basis of the "Actualité Scientifique" section of this issue, provided the conceptual and inspirational fuel for the hackathon. They explored the critical themes shaping our future, from Education for Sustainability (Marco Rieckmann) and the critique of dominant development paradigms (Helen Kopnina), to the intersection of climate change and physical activity (Paquito Bernard), the imperative of gender equality (Lombe Mwambwa), the power of narrative (Cheryl Miller Houser), the paradoxes of artificial intelligence (Lucy Mills), and the practice of world-building through design fiction (Julian Bleeker).

In compiling this section, we embraced an innovative and transparent methodology that reflects the issue's forward-looking theme. Each conference talk was recorded, transcribed, and then synthesised using Artificial Intelligence to produce a first-draft article capturing the core arguments, narrative structure, and unique voice of the speaker. This AI-assisted draft was then provided to each author, who reviewed, edited, and ultimately approved the final text. This collaborative workflow, blending the efficiency of machine processing with the indispensable nuance of human expertise, allowed us to faithfully represent these vital contributions. We are deeply grateful to all seven speakers for engaging in this experimental process and for approving the final articles that appear in this issue.

### The Response: Original Articles and the Future in Practice

The "Original Articles" section represents the core of this special issue, where the energy of the seminar is translated into peer-reviewed scholarship. This section is intentionally structured in two parts, creating a powerful dialogue between process and practice, vision and evidence.

First, we present a comprehensive synthesis of the hackathon itself. The article, "Reimagining Physical Education Futures Through a Design Thinking Seminar," details the theoretical underpinnings and methodological design of the event. It provides a rich, qualitative analysis of the prototypes developed by the participants, showcasing the breadth of creativity and insight that emerged from the collaborative process. This article serves as both a record of the event and a replicable model for other educational fields seeking to engage in anticipatory action research.

Second, we are proud to feature a collection of original research articles from seminar participants. We offered attendees the opportunity to connect the seminar's themes to their own ongoing research, and the response was outstanding. These articles are not abstract reflections; they are concrete examples of how scholars are already building the future of PE. The work of Besseling and colleagues

examines bullying as a critical issue of social sustainability, reminding us that a sustainable future must be a safe and inclusive one. The article by Howells and her team, itself a product of a hackathon group, presents a data-driven pedagogical model for protecting children from heat stress—a direct and practical response to the realities of climate change. Finally, the research by Williams explores the perceived preparedness of pre-service teachers in South Africa to engage with sustainability, highlighting the critical role of teacher education in enabling any future vision. In the spirit of methodological transparency, it is also noted that AI was used in the development of some of these articles for structural and linguistic support, again demonstrating a pragmatic and ethical engagement with new technologies.

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## CONCLUSION:

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This special issue of Kinesis is more than a snapshot of a conference; it is an invitation into a conversation in motion. It makes the case that the future of Physical Education will not be discovered, but designed. It will be built through the intentional, collaborative, and creative work of a community willing to grapple with complexity and imagine harder. By documenting a process that integrated visionary thinking (the ignite talks), collaborative creation (the hackathon), and empirical inquiry (the original research), we hope to offer both inspiration and a practical toolkit for others to join this vital work.

We believe that the challenges of the Anthropocene, while daunting, also present our field with an unprecedented opportunity: to reclaim our purpose, to deepen our relevance, and to empower a generation of learners with the embodied skills, critical consciousness, and hopeful agency needed to thrive in a changing world. This issue is our contribution to that effort—a down payment on a preferable future for Physical Education.