

**Attitudes and motivation**

The national monitoring assessment programme recognizes the impact of attitudinal and motivational factors on student achievement in individual assessment tasks. Students’ attitudes, interests and liking for a subject have a strong bearing on progress and learning outcomes. Students are influenced and shaped by the quality and style of curriculum delivery, the choice of content and the suitability of resources. Other important factors influencing students’ achievements are the expectations and support of significant people in their lives, the opportunities and experiences they have in and out of school, and the extent to which they have feelings of personal success and capability.

**Health and physical education surveys**

The national monitoring health and physical education surveys sought information from students about their curriculum preferences and their perceptions of their achievement. Students were also asked about their involvement in health and physical education activities within school and beyond. The surveys were administered to both year 4 and year 8 students in groups of four students, with most questions requiring short written answers and others a written response. Teacher help with reading or writing was provided where requested.

There are numerous research questions that could be asked when investigating student attitudes and engagement. In national monitoring it has been necessary to focus on a few key questions that give an overall impression of how students view health and physical education as school, home and community activities.



**Health survey**

The health survey included an item which asked students to indicate preferred subjects at school, an item which asked them to indicate preferred and disliked health activities at school, four items which invited students to record a rating response, and one item which sought open-ended responses (and is not reported here).

The students were first asked to select their three favourite school subjects from a list of twelve subjects. The results are shown in the table below, together with the corresponding 1998 figures. Physical education was the most popular option for year 8 students and the second most popular option for year 4 students. Health was last equal at both year levels.

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS RATING SUBJECTS AMONG THEIR THREE FAVOURITES:		% responses	
		2002 ('98) year 4	2002 ('98) year 8
Subject –	Art	71 (72)	49 (47)
	Physical Education	57 (67)	62 (69)
	Mathematics	36 (36)	28 (30)
	Reading	29 (23)	18 (15)
	Science	26 (20)	21 (23)
	Music	26 (24)	25 (19)
	Writing	21 (16)	7 (12)
	Technology	10 (15)	48 (39)
	Māori	8 (10)	6 (8)
	Social Studies	3 (5)	10 (14)
	Speaking	2 (5)	10 (11)
	Health	2 (2)	6 (2)

The students were presented with a list of thirteen health activities and asked which they liked doing most at school. They were invited to tick up to three activities. They were also asked to indicate activities that they did not like doing at school, by putting crosses alongside up to three activities. Their responses are shown at the top of the adjacent page.







HEALTH ACTIVITIES – LIKES AND DISLIKES:  Activity –	% responses year 4		% responses year 8	
	LIKE	DISLIKE	LIKE	DISLIKE
Friendships	50	8	45	8
How to care for others	37	6	18	11
How to care for myself	36	11	28	15
Families	30	10	19	12
How to keep safe	23	12	33	16
Food and healthy eating	22	14	40	16
How to keep healthy	15	11	27	14
How to get on with others	16	15	19	18
How my body works and how to care for it	16	18	30	18
My feelings and how to feel good about myself	9	20	16	29

were distinctly more popular with year 8 than year 4 students. Both year levels agreed that activities about *Friendships* were particularly liked, while *My feelings and how to feel good about myself* was more disliked than liked.





Responses to the four rating items are presented in separate tables for year 4 students and year 8 students below. Between 1998 and 2002, the percentage of year 4 students awarding the highest rating on each of the first three questions has declined markedly. Both year 4 and year 8 students continue to be very positive about the usefulness of learning about health (question 2), despite the slippage for year 4 students. The responses to question 4 indicated that only 39 percent of year 4 students and 33 percent of year 8 students believed their class did things that helped them learn about health “lots” or “quite a lot”. These figures were essentially unchanged between 1998 and 2002. As found in NEMP surveys for most other curriculum areas, a substantially lower percentage of year 8 students than year 4 students gave the highest ratings to learning about health in school, currently and in the future (questions 1 and 3), often preferring the second most positive response.

Many of the activities were viewed quite differently by year 4 and year 8 students. For instance, *How to care for others* and *Families* were popular with year 4 students, but much less popular with year 8 students. On the other hand, *Food and healthy eating*, *How to keep healthy*, and *How to keep safe*

**YEAR 4 – HEALTH SURVEY RESPONSES 2002 (1998)**

				
1. How much do you like doing health education at school?	41 (51)	43 (34)	10 (9)	6 (6)
2. Do you think learning about health education is useful to you at school and out of school?	67 (75)	24 (17)	5 (3)	4 (5)
3. How do you feel about learning or doing more health education as you get older?	49 (61)	37 (27)	9 (7)	5 (5)
4. How often does your class do things that help you learn about health?	<i>lots</i> 18 (15)	<i>quite a lot</i> 21 (25)	<i>sometimes</i> 56 (55)	<i>never</i> 5 (5)

**YEAR 8 – HEALTH SURVEY RESPONSES 2002 (1998)**

				
1. How much do you like doing health education at school?	22 (22)	61 (58)	15 (16)	2 (6)
2. Do you think learning about health education is useful to you at school and out of school?	57 (64)	36 (31)	7 (4)	0 (1)
3. How do you feel about learning or doing more health education as you get older?	28 (31)	53 (51)	16 (13)	3 (5)
4. How often does your class do things that help you learn about health?	<i>lots</i> 6 (9)	<i>quite a lot</i> 27 (22)	<i>sometimes</i> 65 (66)	<i>never</i> 2 (3)

### Physical education survey

The physical education survey included one item that invited students to indicate preferred physical education activities at school, another that asked about preferences for different approaches to physical education activities, and nine items that invited them to record a rating response. There were also seven items that asked them to write open-ended responses. Only some of the open-ended items are analysed and reported here.

The students were then presented with a list of seven activities that they might do in physical education at school, and were asked to tick up to three activities that they most like to do. The responses are shown below, ordered from most to least popular for year 4 students. The notable differences between year 4 and year 8 responses are the lower enthusiasm of year 8 students for swimming (particularly), gymnastics and dance, and their higher enthusiasm for ball activities.

PREFERRED PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES:		% responses	
		y4	y8
Activity -	swimming/aquatics	62	34
	ball activities	57	70
	gymnastics	40	24
	athletics	31	39
	dance	31	21
	fitness	25	24
	Te reo kori (Māori activities)	6	7

The students were then presented with a list of six ways of doing physical education activities, and were asked to tick up to three ways that they liked. The responses are shown below, ordered from most to least popular for year 4 students. The patterns are very similar for year 4 and year 8 students.

PREFERRED WAY OF DOING PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES:		% responses	
		y4	y8
Approach -	class games	56	64
	doing things in teams	51	55
	school sports days	48	47
	playing for fun (not winning or losing)	42	50
	competitions (winning or losing)	40	39
	doing things on your own	19	9

When asked to write down up to three very important things a person needs to learn or do to be good in physical education, year 4 students overwhelmingly emphasized physical or game skills, with subsidiary emphasis on fitness and then sportsmanship. Year 8



students gave more balanced responses, with fitness the most common choice, closely followed by three almost equally popular options: good sportsmanship, positive attitudes and effort, and physical or game skills.





When asked to write down three really important things they had learned in physical education, large majorities of both year 4 and year 8 students mentioned the rules, techniques or skills of particular activities or games. Good sportsmanship and positive attitudes or effort came next for both year levels, but were mentioned by only 20 to 30 percent of students. Ideas mentioned even less frequently included the importance of fitness, warm-ups or stretches, having fun, training or practising, and learning to cooperate with others.

When asked to list interesting things done in physical education in their own time, team ball activities and individual non-ball activities were each mentioned by 41 percent of year 4 students, with general play mentioned by 31 percent. The corresponding year 8 figures were 52 percent (team ball activities), 41 percent (individual non-ball activities), and 13 percent (general play). One other category was reasonably popular for year 8, but not year 4 students: individual ball activities, mentioned by 16 percent of year 8 students.





Responses to the 9 rating items are presented in separate tables for year 4 students and year 8 students on the adjacent page. The results show that year 8 students were almost as enthusiastic as year 4 students about physical education. In most other curriculum areas assessed in NEMP, use of the most positive rating declines substantially from year 4 to year 8. Year 8 students were less positive (perhaps more realistic) than year 4 students about how good they were at physical education, and about how good others thought that they were. Year 8 students reported a little more vigorous physical activity than year 4 students in the 24 hours preceding the survey. About 30 percent of students at both levels stated that they didn't know how good their teacher thought they were at physical education.

The ratings were similar in 1998 and 2002, especially at year 4 level. There was a small decline in enthusiasm (questions 1 and 6) for year 8 students, but an increase in the percentage of year 8 students reporting more than 60 minutes of vigorous physical activity in the 24 hours preceding the survey.

**YEAR 4**  
**PHYSICAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESPONSES 2002 (1998)**

					<i>don't know</i>	
1. How much do you like doing P.E. at school?	72 (74)	19 (21)	7 (3)	2 (2)		
2. How good do you think you are at P.E.?	61 (55)	28 (32)	5 (4)	0 (1)	6 (8)	
3. How good does your teacher think you are at P.E.?	38 (40)	25 (23)	4 (5)	2 (1)	31 (31)	
4. How good does your family think you are at P.E.?	72 (73)	13 (10)	2 (2)	2 (2)	11 (13)	
5. How do you feel about doing things in P.E. you haven't tried before?	53 (44)	33 (40)	10 (12)	4 (4)		
6. How much do you like doing P.E. in you own time (not at school)?	62 (64)	23 (22)	10 (7)	5 (7)		
7. Would you like to do more P.E. or less P.E. at school?	<i>more</i> 72 (71)	<i>about the same</i> 23 (22)	<i>less</i> 5 (7)			
8. Do you want to keep learning P.E when you are older?	<i>yes</i> 61 (58)	<i>maybe/not sure</i> 34 (37)	<i>no</i> 5 (5)			
9. How many minutes of vigorous physical activities have you done since this time yesterday?	<b>0</b> 18 (15)	<b>1-15</b> 27 (25)	<b>16-30</b> 22 (21)	<b>31-45</b> 3 (4)	<b>46-60</b> 10 (17)	<b>&gt;60</b> 20 (18)

**YEAR 8**  
**PHYSICAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESPONSES 2002 (1998)**

					<i>don't know</i>	
1. How much do you like doing P.E. at school?	59 (68)	29 (25)	11 (6)	1 (1)		
2. How good do you think you are at P.E.?	35 (31)	46 (54)	10 (7)	3 (1)	6 (7)	
3. How good does your teacher think you are at P.E.?	23 (22)	34 (33)	9 (5)	4 (1)	30 (39)	
4. How good does your family think you are at P.E.?	45 (46)	32 (26)	5 (5)	2 (1)	16 (22)	
5. How do you feel about doing things in P.E. you haven't tried before?	45 (46)	40 (43)	13 (10)	2 (1)		
6. How much do you like doing P.E. in you own time (not at school)?	47 (54)	35 (34)	15 (10)	3 (2)		
7. Would you like to do more P.E. or less P.E. at school?	<i>more</i> 66 (65)	<i>about the same</i> 30 (30)	<i>less</i> 4 (5)			
8. Do you want to keep learning P.E when you are older?	<i>yes</i> 62 (62)	<i>maybe/not sure</i> 36 (35)	<i>no</i> 2 (3)			
9. How many minutes of vigorous physical activities have you done since this time yesterday?	<b>0</b> 19 (19)	<b>1-15</b> 10 (15)	<b>16-30</b> 14 (16)	<b>31-45</b> 6 (8)	<b>46-60</b> 14 (18)	<b>&gt;60</b> 37 (24)