

ARTICLE BY D. PIRSL - FOUR LANGUAGES ABSTRACTS

(E)(F)(S)(P)

FUNCTION AND PLACE OF PE IN THE EU COUNTRIES CURRICULA

Analysis of European Union countries' statutory requirements concerning physical education and their actual implementation. Physical education, despite of its importance in health and social integration, is often dropped to make way for other subjects.

Key words: physical education, school, curriculum, European Union.

FONCTION ET LIEU DE L'EF DANS LE CURRICULUM DES PAYS MEMBRES DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

Analyse des exigences de curriculum des pays membres de l'Union Européenne en relation à l'Éducation Physique et des implémentations de fait réalisées. La Éducation Physique, bien que d'importance pour la santé et pour l'intégration sociale, est fréquemment laissé de côté pour donner lieu à d'autres matières.

Mots-clefs: éducation physique, école, curriculum, Union Européenne.

FUNCIÓN Y LUGAR DE LA EF EN LOS CURRÍCULOS DE LOS PAÍSES EN LA UNIÓN EUROPEA

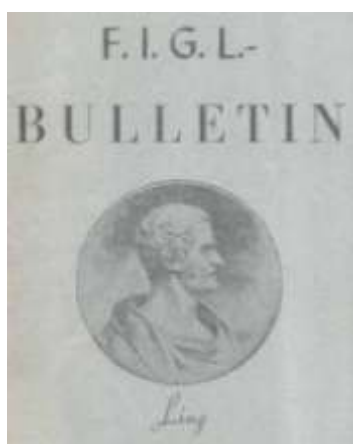
Análisis de las exigencias curriculares de países miembros de la Unión Europea con relación a la Educación Física y de las implementaciones de hecho realizadas. La Educación Física, aunque importante para la salud y para la integración social, es frecuentemente olvidada para dar lugar a otras asignaturas.

Palabras-clave: educación física, escuela, currículo, Unión Europea.

FUNÇÃO E LUGAR DA EF NOS CURRÍCULOS DOS PAÍSES NA UNIÃO EUROPÉIA

Análise das exigências curriculares de países membros da União Européia quanto à Educação Física e das implementações de fato realizadas. A Educação física, apesar de importante para a saúde e para a integração social, é frequentemente deixada de lado para dar lugar a outras matérias.

Palavras-chave: educação física, escola, currículo, União Européia.



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FUNCTION AND PLACE OF PE IN THE EU COUNTRIES CURRICULA ^(E)

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Human movement figures prominently in quality of life decisions, play, sport, games, and physical fitness. In all its varied forms, movement contributes to laughter and sensory satisfaction of human beings. If we are to educate the human being as a whole, as an articulate, fully functioning being, we must put the compartments and artificial boxes of division between school subjects back together again. Physical education must play its part in it. A curriculum must directly address quality life issues that are concise in HLF Heart, Lung, Health constructs. Quality of life is inextricably linked with worthwhile learning and wide ranging emotional experiences.

The statement "I feel terrific" represents that quality of life and our 21st century physical education curriculum had better produce this kind of effect. The 21st century is the moment to take the opportunity to change, to improve, to help people become fit. We must seize the moment to be health and free from disease, to be lively and vibrant and resilient. To some people quality of life is the search or the process, to others it is the result. In practical sense, human movement figures prominently in quality of life discussions; play, sport, games, physical fitness. In all its varied forms, movement contributes to laughter and sensory satisfaction in human beings. The PE curriculum that we plan for children has to reflect historical needs, expert, judgment on the part of teachers, and a curriculum that will both educate and inspire.

INTRODUCTION

Up to now many an aspiring child has been turned off physical education and, in consequence, failed to recognize the importance of human movement as a life long requirement for excellence in living. In a general sense we have closeted education into separate compartments, seeking to study with greater depth. In fact we have created little kingdoms with specialty (science, music) fighting for its life to preserve the last minute of concentration and influence. This has divided staff rooms, and compartmentalized studies into unreal units, indeed, often artificial boxes.

If we are to educate the human beings as a whole, as an articulate, fully functioning being, we must put the compartments back together again. Physical education must play its part.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM STATUS AND IMPLEMENTATION

A high proportion of European countries have statutory requirements with legal prescriptive or guideline expectations for physical education and sport for both boys and girls for at least some part of the compulsory schooling years. However, there is evidence to suggest that implementation does not meet with prescriptions or expectations and that physical education is often dropped to make way for other subjects or at best there is minimal provision. For example in Cyprus PE lessons are abandoned when time is required for reading and mathematics or for revision purposes. In Finland the freedom of curriculum planning at schools has led to situations where implementation of physical education is not done according to the regulations concerning the weekly lessons. In Ireland a majority of senior students in secondary schools receive little or no PE. PE is not given equal time or resources with other subjects. In Germany there have been reductions as high as 25% in timetable allocation for PE at all class stages. In England one third of primary schools suffered reductions in physical education in the year 1998-1999 to make time for literacy and numeric work. In Italy legally PE is like the other subjects, but often is the Cinderella of the school. In Luxembourg PE comes always after academic lessons and these lessons are often cut to make up for other subjects. In Belgium many people give more value to academic subjects and PE classes are seen as pursuing only recreational objectives by pupils, parents and PE teachers. In France a lot of teachers think that PE is not important, except for students to let off steam after of before intellectual classes. Finally in our own country a disastrous thing is happening at the moment. Teachers play nursery rhymes and nursery games at the time allotted for physical education classes.

QUALITY LIFE ISSUES AND PE CURRICULUM

A curriculum that directly addresses quality life issues must take into consideration the following constructs:

- It must recognize that Heart, Lung, Health (HLH) is critical for quality human existence.
- It must recognize that games, some new and some traditional, form an intrinsic basis of human activity.
- The place of human movement in the general school curriculum must be recognized and appreciated. The linkage of human movement with cognitive and affective structures is of critical importance.
- The fourth area is the undeniable influence that competitive sports have in human existence.
- The fifth construct takes one out of the school setting into the life cycle of community and home.

Non school activities can have as strong an influence on human movement experience as anything that we have enshrined in the compulsory world of regular education. All this combined the following issues are featured – home sharing, independence and interdependence, trust, responsibility, fun, self-worth, rhythms and singing, sensitivity to peers and the environment. Concomitant emphases can be placed on values, structure, self-discipline, teamwork, strategy and unselfishness. This requires long-term strategies, since it involves creating new beliefs and evaluations for many individuals rather than building on existing ones. Any reshaping, however, should incorporate strategies to foster body/self concepts (to be seen in a multi-dimensional context, in which societal values and cultural subgroups have some part), healthy well-being and moral education. Together these will contribute to the creation of the physically educated person and the enrichment of quality of life. The formulation of quality programs will assist in attracting young people to the joy and pleasure of physical activity and so foster an “active life-style”. The promotion of the causes of physical education and sport and those responsible for their delivery is a task for all. The reshaping of school physical education and sport presents challenges, which can only serve to, improve the present situation. Combined they will contribute to extend opportunities for engagement in physical activity to all cultural and sub-cultural groups over the full life span as well as in all institutional and wider societal communities. These are challenges that should not ignore relevant scholarly research which, in recent years has made significant progress in unraveling some of the “mysteries” of learning and socialization process in different and various cultural and cross-cultural contexts. They are also challenges which, to paraphrase the United States Surgeon General's 1996 Report on Physical Activity and Health, should be taken up to accord physical education and sport the same level of attention given to the public policies and practices that affect the population at large. The right to participate in play, physical and sporting activity may not be seen as the most important global problem, compared with starvation, poverty, disease, illiteracy etc, nevertheless access to it can be defined at the very least as a fundamental human right.

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