

Ken Hardman | Ken Green



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Contemporary Issues in Physical Education: International Perspectives

Ken Hardman and Ken Green (eds.)

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN PHYSICAL
EDUCATION:
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of David McNair (1916-2010). For over 60 years David had a distinctive involvement in, and made invaluable contributions to, regional, national and international physical education-related activities. He had a profound influence on the lives and careers of many as well as on national and international developments in physical education both personally and through the many former students he mentored during his tenure-ship at the University of Manchester, UK. He was a worldwide renowned History of Physical Education scholar. At regional level, David was an active “servant” within the North Western Counties Physical Education Association (NWCPEA), an Association in which he variously served as Chairman, Secretary, Member of the Executive Committee and Research Group and Blackpool Easter School Principal. He was a prominent member of a NWCPEA group that conceived the idea of a new research-focused journal, the *Physical Education Review* (now the *European Physical Education Review*), the first issue of which was published in Spring, 1978 and, which subsequently became an internationally recognised “impact” journal. As NWCPEA Honorary President, his continuing interest in research was manifest in his support first for what has become an internationally significant text in the domain of physical education, *Physical Education. A Reader*, published by Meyer & Meyer in 1998 and now in its 3rd edition and secondly for this *Contemporary Issues in Physical Education* book. Those who knew, or were acquainted with David McNair, will also remember him for his sharp intellect, his quick wit, charismatic charm, confidence and assurance,

comradeship, as an all round attractive personality who was an inspiration to all.

INTRODUCTION

KEN HARDMAN AND KEN GREEN

Physical education across the world represents a rich tapestry of accumulative influences and developments, which have evolved distinctively from individual and/or “local” institutional and, in some cases, externally imposed initiatives. These initiatives have variously shaped national systems either through assimilation or adaptation or colonial imposition. Taking these evolutionary developments into account, it is unsurprising that different and various forms of structures and practices are evident. Characteristically, diversity prevails but there are elements of congruence in concepts and practice. The congruence is seen in a presence largely grounded in the Aristotelian concept of “harmonious balance” and variously linked with an expanding range of instrumental outcomes to include an ascribed role in achieving broader educational objectives such as whole school improvement, community development and effecting personal behavioural and attitudinal change. The congruence is also seen in the advocacy of physical education as a source of positive developmental characteristics and healthy well-being from early childhood, through adolescence to elderly adulthood; that is, as a life-long process, epitomised in the notion of the “cradle to grave physically educated person”. Within this process, physical education, as a school subject, is granted “broad brush” scope and potential. It is, therefore, in a relatively unique position with responsibility in some way and somehow addressing many contemporary issues with its perceived distinctive features and characteristics within formal education systems not offered by any other learning or school experience. Hence, at one level, physical

education seems to hold a prime position within the school curriculum. Paradoxically, over the last two decades this position has been under threat with evidence of marginalisation, reductions in curriculum time allocation, inadequacies in resources (personnel, facilities and financial), a perception by many of physical education as a “non-cognitive” subject, inferior in status to other so-called academic subjects and by association, inferior status of physical education teachers. The paradox is mirrored on the one hand both in the growth of modular programmes in Higher Education Institutions that in a variety of ways relate to physical education and, since the publication of *Physical Education. A Reader* in 1998, which was intended as a core thematic and issues text primarily to meet the needs of those innovative programmes, with several additions to the physical education-related literature; on the other hand, the two decades have witnessed two worldwide, two continental (European) and several national surveys pointing to concerns about the situation of physical education in schools, a widespread rise in obesity amongst children and young people, especially in economically developed countries, a concomitant increase in sedentary lifestyles as well as a perceived increase in numbers of school pupils no longer seeing the significance of physical education as a school subject: the traditional content of physical education and extra-curricular activity structures and emphasis on competitive sport has little relevance to their life-style context! Furthermore, during the same period, there has been a plethora of inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental initiatives, policies and advocacy commitments to improve access to, and provision of, physical education. Testimony to the array of actions has been ministerial Communiqués, Conclusions, Recommendations and Resolutions, and institutional Declaration and Commitment Statements and Manifestos etc. Collectively, the various advocacy statements and

associated diverse developments in school physical education policies and practices across the world have raised hopes about a secure future for physical education; however these positive initiatives are juxtaposed with sufficient broadspread evidence to generate continuing disquiet and doubts about a sustainable future. Thus, one view would be that physical education is currently at a kind of directional cross-roads, where its hitherto largely indispensable position is arguably unsustainable and the inevitable question arises of “w(h)ither physical education?” (Hardman, 2010).

The essential orientation of this book is on the “whither” rather than the “wither”. It consists of a collection of chapters prepared by European-based established experts and emerging scholars, who have made, or are now making, significant contributions to the present and future physical education debate. Whilst ostensibly there is a “European flavour” in some of the chapters, in that they draw from, or relate to, European-centric national or regional studies, the contemporary issues addressed in all chapters have international resonance. This is because the issues are generic in their topicality; they offer bases for comparative reflections and/or involve references to international aspects and dimensions of the various topics and themes under consideration.

From initial chapters presenting empirically-based information in the form of reality checks on the situation of physical education in schools in international and exemplar national contexts that respectively have had considerable international and national impacts on political and educational debate as well as policy re-orientation, the ensuing contributions provide insights into a broad spectrum of contemporary issues pertinent to physical

education and related areas (such as physical activity education, physical fitness, and health and exercise science). Generally, these issues are variously linked to pedagogy, didactics, inclusion, multi-culturism, policy, institutional structural harmonisation, including qualification frameworks, multi- and cross-disciplinary curriculum developments, personal and professional competences, and career cultures and frames. More specifically, the issues addressed encompass: representative situational national case studies, which reveal policy and political features common elsewhere in the world; perceptions of physical education curricular influences on the constitution of physically educated pupils; the concept of inclusion when applied to pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties; modes of delivery that embrace modern approaches to physical education teaching in general, peer tutoring to support student learning in physical education and teaching games through understanding in particular; perceptions of “significant actors” in active lifestyle promotion in schools with some focus on quality, meaning and relevance of school physical education curricular experiences encompassing curriculum content that not only extends to widening its nature and scope to achieve aims and competences associated with schoolchildren’s physical activity and its role in promoting fitness and reducing health risk behaviours and complementary discussion on physical education-physical activity policies but also introduces “back to the future” traditional or “folk” physical and/or sporting activities in line with a global resurgence of interest in such activity to stimulate young people’s active participation in fostering physically educated persons in multi-cultural school settings; the post-1999 Bologna Declaration structural harmonisation of Higher Education in Europe launching compatibility-seeking “Qualification Frameworks” including theoretical concepts and practical implementation of assessment, extended to include a more

global dimension; Bologna Process reference points' core principles for universal application in the development of physical education teacher education curricula; professionalization and professionalism within physical education teaching as a career; and finally, the future of physical education in a context of social change. In essence, the contributions serve to form a compendium of contemporary issues, which both separately and collectively, should be of wide appeal and, which equally may be of special interest to under- and post-graduate students following academic and professional programmes in physical education and related areas and their tutors, physical education practitioners and professionals in schools and further and higher education institutions, sport pedagogues and other vested-interest professionals and academics.

The editors wish to thank all contributors for their commitment to this collaborative enterprise of preparing chapters, all of which are grounded in research-based evidence and are intended to inform discussion on physical education-related issues as well as to stimulate reflective thought and action. We also want to thank Thomas Stengel of Meyer and Meyer Verlag for his support in the realisation of the publication of this book. Finally, we acknowledge the encouragement of the North Western Counties Physical Education Association to build on its *Physical Education Reader* predecessor with a follow up complementary text on internationally pertinent, contemporary topical themes and so meet with the Association's aims of broadening knowledge and understanding of physical education, fostering critical academic activity, disseminating relevant information on physical education through provision of opportunities for experts to share their research experiences and promoting physical education to international levels.

REFERENCE

Hardman, K., (2010). *W(h)ither Physical Education?: The Future Ain't What It Used To Be!* Unpublished paper presented at the 5th Youth Sport Congress, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2-4 December.

CHAPTER 1

GLOBAL ISSUES IN THE SITUATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

KEN HARDMAN

INTRODUCTION

The first Physical Education World Summit held in Berlin in November 1999, which highlighted concerns about a perceived decline and/or marginalisation of physical education in schools in many countries of the world, culminated in an *Agenda for Action* that prompted an unprecedented expression of interest and a range of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental initiatives, policies and advocacy commitments to improve access to, and provision of physical education. Testimony to a subsequent array of actions and advocacy initiatives, were ministerial Communiqués, Conclusions, Recommendations and Resolutions, and institutional Declaration and Commitment Statements and Manifestos¹ etc. Collectively, the various initiatives raised hopes about a secure and sustainable future for physical education but evidence of a perceived gap between “hope and happening” (Lundgren, 1983) generated continuing disquiet about the situation of physical education (PE) in schools. The disquiet was instrumental in precipitating a second worldwide school PE situation survey that was conducted over a period of four years (2004-2008) and a European Parliament Project survey of the situation of physical education in the European Union (2006-2007). In focusing on selected issues in school PE, this chapter draws from the European Parliament Survey

Report (Hardman, 2007) as well as the multi-source informed *Final Report* of the second worldwide Survey (Hardman & Marshall, 2009) and, wherever appropriate, from the post-world economic and financial crisis period developments.

THE SITUATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Within general education systems, a majority (around 95%) of countries have either legal requirements for PE or it is generally practised in schools. Despite official commitment to entitlement of access to physical education in schools either through state legislation or as a matter of general practice, such provision is far from being assured, particularly in contexts of localised implementation of the curriculum. The international surveys undertaken over the last decade infer that almost 79% of countries (in Europe 89%; in Asia and North America only 33%) adhere to implementation regulations and delivery. The global percentage figure, however, is distorted by comparatively smaller sample sizes' data from the Central/Latin America and Middle East regions and a high proportion of European nation's positive responses; they can, and do, differ between schools in many countries. Conversely, globally in 21% of countries, PE is not actually being implemented in accordance with legal obligations or expectations. This proportion rises to 33% in Central and Latin America and the Middle East, 40% in Africa, and 67% in Asia and North America; in Europe only 11% of countries allege a shortfall in implementation.

The "gap" between official policy and regulations and actual practice is geographically widespread. Pervasive factors

contributing to the gap are seen in devolvment of responsibilities for curriculum implementation, loss of time allocation to other competing prioritised subjects, lower importance of school PE in general, lack of official assessment, financial constraints, diversion of resources elsewhere, inadequate material resources, deficiencies in numbers of qualified personnel and attitudes of significant individuals such as head teachers. Additionally, exemption from physical education classes, granted on presentation of a medical certificate, is only acknowledged by a few countries. Such exemption practice on medical grounds is recognisably widespread throughout the world, thus perhaps undermining its status within the curriculum. An issue here is that exemption is rarely sought from other subjects except, perhaps, for religious education classes in some countries.

Examples from across the world show disparities between state policy legal requirements and implementation with clear indications of non-compliance with regulations and especially so in countries where curriculum responsibility lies with education districts or individual schools and are, therefore, subject to local interpretations:

- **Venezuela**

There is “a national policy (but) the government does not take care of it; there are laws but they are not followed” (PE Teacher).

- **Finland**

“Legal status is the same, but in practice not. 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” (University Professor).

- **Canada (Quebec)**

Schools have “autonomy to adapt to the needs of their settings. This autonomy has helped most schools but some use it to limit PE time to the minimum and act against the efforts to legitimize PE programs on the curriculum” (Rivard & Beaudoin, 2005, pp.154-155).

Physical education provision during compulsory schooling years varies across regions and countries according to age or year stage of attendance. Overall the average number of years during which PE is taught in schools is 12 (range 8-14) with a 73% cluster of 11 and 12 years. The start-end years' continuum and associated access to PE are significant for individual development and sustained participation in physical activity. The early years are important in development of basic motor skills and provision of opportunities for optimal development of physical capacities during the crucial years of growth and maturation; for later age school start, pre-school experiences might offer similar opportunities but often they are neither compulsory nor accessible to every child. The significance of school finishing age centres on tracking physical activity engagement from adolescence to adulthood. When access to PE programmes ends at an earlier age, pupils are vulnerable to disengaging from physical activity. Consequently they might not continue with it in later life and there may be insufficient time to embed habits for regular engagement throughout the full lifespan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM TIME ALLOCATION

The issue of time allocation is generally complicated not only by localised control of curricula but also by practices of

offering options or electives, which provide opportunities for additional engagement in PE and/or school sport activity. Student “uptake” of such opportunities can vary within, and between, countries and not all take advantage of the extra provision. Whatever, the options/electives available may be included in curriculum time allocation indicated in some countries’ survey responses and, hence, may not accurately represent the prescribed time allocation for all students in at least some schools in those countries where additional opportunities exist. However, data triangulation produces a scenario of policy prescription or guidelines not actually being implemented in practice for a variety of reasons as exemplified in Lithuania and Nigeria:

- **Lithuania**

Even though there is a legal basis, “it is difficult to put regulations into practice; the School Boards decide PE hours (obligatory and supplementary); the 1995 Law on PE and Sports stipulated 3 lessons but only 26% achieve this in classes 1-4, moreover, 38.9% do not have a third lesson; fewer than 10% schools comply with the 1995 Act for 3 lessons” (Puisiene, Volbekiene, Kavaliauskas & Cikotiene, 2005, p.445).

- **Nigeria**

“Theoretically, five weekly lessons... are recommended for elementary and secondary schools...Unfortunately, however, at neither level is the weekly workload really adhered to” (Salokun, 2005, p.501).

Over the years, surveys’ findings have revealed variations in the amounts prescribed or expected time allocated to PE (and actually delivered). “Guaranteed” access does not equate with equal amounts of access as seen in variations in timetable allocation. The situation is exacerbated by

curriculum time allocated to other subjects and in some countries is deteriorating where recent educational reforms have resulted in PE teaching time decreases as observed in geographically distanced countries in different sociocultural and economic settings:

- **Ghana**

“Numerous attempts have been made to reduce the number of periods... the local situation determines actual practice. The timetable slots exist on paper. However, about 30% of schools use them for other subjects areas or...as free periods” (Ammah & Kwaw, 2005, p.316).

- **Ireland**

“PE is being squeezed out of the education system by more and more compulsory academic courses, which hold little benefit compared to PE” (PE Teacher).

- **Taiwan**

“Mergence of PE with health education has led to the reduction in the teaching time of physical activities (and) the time allocated to PE (is) affected (by an increase in) the teaching time of English... and new subjects (e.g. computer and dialects) (have been) introduced into the curriculum” (PE Teacher).

Physical education has not escaped the continuing consequences of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009. In the USA, for example, whilst Californian Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed trimming the state budget as he tries to cut billions from college “physical education classes leaving athletic programs... in doubt...” (Krupnick, 2009), and the Portland School Board “in an effort to reduce their budget by \$19 million, is considering the elimination of a significant portion of physical education programs” (Aahperd, 2010).

The allocated amount of PE curriculum time can be determined from policy and/or curriculum documents but local levels of actual control of curriculum time allocation give rise to variations between schools and, therefore, difficulties in specifying definitive figures for a country or region. However, some general tendencies can be identified. During the primary school phase years, there is an average 100 minutes (in 2000, the average was 116 minutes) with a range of 30-250 minutes; in secondary schools, there is an average of 102 minutes (in 2000, it was 143 minutes) with a range of 30-250 minutes per week. There are some clearly discernible regional differences in time allocation: European Union countries 109 minutes (range of 30-240 minutes) with clusters around 60 and 90 minutes in primary/basic schools and 101 minutes (range 45-240 minutes) with a cluster around 90 minutes in secondary and high schools (notably, figures in 2000 were higher with an average of 121 minutes in primary schools and 117 minutes in secondary schools, thus representing a perceived reduction in curriculum time allocation in the period 2000-2007); Central and South America (including Caribbean countries) 73 minutes in primary schools and 87 minutes in secondary schools. There is a gradual “tailing off” in upper secondary (high) schools (post 16+ years) in several countries and optional courses become more evident (Hardman & Marshall, 2009).

PHYSICAL EDUCATION SUBJECT AND TEACHER STATUS

Legal and perceived actual status of PE and its teachers is a contentious issue. Data indicate that equal subject legal status is claimed in 76% of countries. Africa, where only 20% of countries indicate equal legal status of subjects, represents a marked contrast with Europe's 91%. Data

indicate that across all regions except Europe, in practice PE is considered to have lower status than other subjects. Notably in the Middle East and North American regions, all countries/states indicate that PE's actual status is perceived to be lower than that of other school subjects. High proportions of perceived lower status of PE are also seen in Africa (80%), Asia (75%) and Central and Latin America (67%), whilst in Europe lower subject status is reported in less than one third (30%) of countries. There are widespread exemplars of PE's perceived lower status:

- **Brazil**

"The discipline does not enjoy much prestige... in the formal education environment; ... lack of interest and monotonously repetitive classes (are) factors that contribute to this resistance" (Costa & Tubino, 2005, p.143).

- **Luxembourg**

"Legally PE is part of the national curriculum. In practice, PE is perceived as not important; it is just playtime, time off from serious school subjects. In theory it has the same status but other subject teachers believe themselves more important, PE comes always after academic lessons. When teachers have problems to finish the programmes of French for example they cut PE lessons" (PE Teacher).

- **USA**

"PE is not an academic subject, so it is inappropriate to have it as an academic subject'... 'We do not require students to go to the dentist, take showers, get more sleep, and eat balanced meals - we shouldn't require PE either" (Grossman, 2009).

Physical education's inferior status and lower value as a mere antidote to academic subjects are evident in parental pre-disposition to favouring academic subjects with time spent on physical education perceived as a threat to academic achievement and/or examination performance as testified by European observers:

- **France**

"Unfortunately parents don't protest (when physical education lessons are cancelled) and it (physical education) is not considered as fundamental" (PE/Sport Teacher).

- **Germany**

"There is absolutely no protest from parents, when PE lessons are cancelled. There is always a protest if lessons in e.g. maths, German, English, etc. are cancelled. Occasionally parents demand that PE lessons are 'converted' to maths etc." (PE Teacher)

- **Malta**

"Head teachers give a lot of lip service, but when it comes to effective support this is virtually non-existent" (and) "even parents look at it as a waste of time" (PE Teacher).

Frequency of cancellation of lessons is one indicator of subject status. Evidence indicates that the low status and esteem of the subject are detrimental to its position: in many countries (44%), PE lessons are cancelled more often than other so-called academic subjects; 41% of countries indicate that PE is the same as all other subjects when it comes to cancellation; and 5% indicate PE is less likely to be cancelled than other subjects, with 10% indicating that it is never cancelled. Apart from its attributed low subject status as of little educational value etc., other reasons for the

cancellation of PE include: government financial cuts; insufficient numbers of qualified PE teachers; adverse weather conditions; the use of the dedicated PE lesson space for examinations and preparation for examinations; concerts; ceremonial occasions such as celebratory prize giving; spiritual exercises as at Easter time; and use as dining areas.

Illustrations of lesson cancellation causal factors are encapsulated in the following quotations:

- **Israel**

“Principals and school staff generally do not perceive PE as a valuable academic subject... PE classes are the first to be cancelled when there is a special project, performance, trip or other school event” (Harari, 2005, p.402).

- **Scotland:**

“Our programme is adversely affected when we lose two-thirds of our indoor teaching area; ...the games hall is used for exams and prize giving which can disrupt PE programmes” (Scottish PE Teachers).

Table 1 shows that in 28% of countries PE teachers do not enjoy the same status as other subject teachers but there are regional differences. In Central and Latin America, Asia and Europe, over two-thirds indicate that the status is the same. However, in Africa, North America and the Middle East the situation is reversed and in a majority of countries, there are clear indications of lower status accorded to PE teachers when compared with other subject teachers.

Table 1.

**Physical Education Teacher Status:
Globally/Regionally (%)**

Global/Region	Higher Status	Same Status	Lower Status
Global	-	72	28
Africa	-	40	60
Asia	-	67	33
Central/Latin America	-	67	33
Europe	-	85	15
Middle East	-	33	67
North America	-	25	75

This is a feature illustrated in several countries in different regional locations:

- **Australia**

“Teachers of the academic curriculum continue to command higher status within the education profession” (Tinning, 2005, p.60).

- **Ghana**

“Since PE is somewhat marginalised, its teachers do not enjoy the same respect as teachers of compulsory academic subjects...The status of most PE teachers leaves much to be desired. It is often argued that they lack professionalism in the way they go about their job” (Ammah & Kwaw, 2005, p.321).

- **South Korea**

“PE teachers’ pay/work is worse than their colleagues in other subjects. Physical educators earn the same salaries as other subject teachers. However, unlike (them) they perform multiple responsibilities alongside teaching, like coaching, counselling and running intramural sports activities... They are often not viewed as ‘real’ teachers, but as custodians who simply ‘roll the ball out’” (Kang & You, 2005, p.581).

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Physical education is often advocated as a source of a plethora of positive developmental characteristics from early childhood, through adolescence to late teen-age and now, when it is perceived to be a lifelong process, throughout adulthood, epitomised in the notion of the “physically educated person”. Over the past century and a half, there has been an ebb and flow among differing, sometimes contradicting, PE curriculum themes. A number of these themes are alluded to in the November 2007 European Parliament’s *Resolution on the Role of Sport in Education* (2007/2086NI), in which PE, subsumed in sport, as a generic term, is linked with socio-cultural, educational and social values, psychosocial qualities, socialisation, inclusion, moral codes of behaviour, cognitive and physical development, healthy well-being, healthy diet and other benefits to be derived from engagement in regular physical activity. Implicit in the European Parliament *Resolution* is the view that PE has the propensity to make significant and distinctive contributions to children, schools and wider society: respect for the body, integrated development of mind and body, understanding of physical activity in health promotion, psycho-social development (self-esteem and self-confidence), social and cognitive development and academic achievement, socialisation and social (tolerance and respect for others, cooperation and cohesion, leadership, team spirit, antidote to anti-social behaviour) skills and aesthetic, spiritual, emotional and moral (fair play, character building) development, a panacea for resolution of the obesity epidemic, inactivity crisis and sedentary lifestyles, enhancement of quality of life etc. With educational reforms in some countries and responses to concepts of healthy well-being related to active life styles in sedentary lifestyle contexts, the role of PE is expanding to embrace achievement of broader educational objectives such as whole school improvement, community development and effecting personal behavioural and

attitudinal change. New activities are being incorporated into some programmes (fitness-based activities such as aerobics and jazz gymnastics and popular culture “excitement” activities such as snow-boarding and in-line skating etc.). Also evident, is increasing attention devoted to quality physical education concepts and programmes. Ostensibly as a school subject, with such broad brush scope and potential, PE is in a relatively unique and indispensable position with some kind of responsibility in somehow addressing many contemporary issues with its perceived distinctive features within the educational process with characteristics not offered by any other learning or school experience. The alleged distinctive profile of PE with its unique characteristics is summed up in the November 2007 European Parliament’s *Resolution on the Role of Sport in Education* (2007/2086NI). The preamble to the *Resolution* alludes to physical education as “the only school subject, which seeks to prepare children for a healthy lifestyle and focuses on their overall physical and mental development, as well as imparting important social values such as fairness, self-discipline, solidarity, team spirit, tolerance and fair play...” and together with sport is deemed to be “among the most important tools of social integration”. Nonetheless, the various surveys’ data, supported by the literature, intimate narrower scenarios of curricular aims and content across the world: provision reality challenges policy rhetoric!

Examination of the thematic aims of curricula suggests that PE is primarily concerned with development of motor skills and refinement of sport-specific skills (35% in primary schools and 33% in secondary schools respectively). This tendency is encapsulated in Australian and South Korean commentaries:

“In reality, most PE teachers (in Australia) still give preferential treatment to those outcomes related to *developing concepts and skills for physical* activity. Accordingly, social learning and fair play education, probably receive less explicit focus than motor skills, sports and fitness” (Tinning, 2005, p.58).

In South Korea “PE strongly focuses on sport skills rather than health promotion and the affective domain. Most physical educators still have a traditional perspective that the subject’s basic role is to develop motor skills in a variety of sports” (Kang & You, 2005, p.583).

Aims linked to broader lifelong educational outcomes such as promotion of health-related fitness (17% of primary and 18% of secondary schools’ curricula) and active lifestyles (12% and 14% of primary and secondary schools respectively) as well as recognition of PE’s contributory role in personal and social (21% and 23% of primary and secondary schools’ curricula respectively) but less so of moral (4% and 3% of primary and secondary schools’ PE curricula respectively) development are apparent.

According to “official” documents, many countries arguably commit to a “broad and balanced” range of curricular activities’ opportunities and at one level, this would appear to be reflected in practice with the range of different activities taught within many PE programmes (see [Table 2](#)).

Table 2.

Physical Education Curriculum Activities in Primary and Secondary Schools: Countries (%)

Activity Area	Primary Schools %	Secondary Schools
Team Games	96	91
Individual Games	77	84
Gymnastics	87	82
Dance	79	71
Swimming	66	66
Outdoor Adventure Activities	53	54
Track & Field Athletics	88	91
Other	38	49

However, analysis of international surveys' data challenges the actual extent to which breadth and balance are provided: Activity areas' time allocation across the world reveals how, in practice, competitive sport Activities such as Games and Track & Field Athletics dominate the physical activity experiences of pupils globally, thus echoing indications in the World-wide PE Survey I of an orientation to a performance sport discourse in which in both primary and secondary schools there is a predominantly Games (team and individual) orientation followed by Track and Field Athletics and Gymnastics. Together these three activity areas account for 77% and 79% of PE curriculum content in primary and secondary schools respectively. Collectively, swimming, dance and outdoor adventure activities are accorded only 18% of activity time allocation at primary level and only 13% at secondary level. Such orientation runs counter to societal trends outside of school and raises issues surrounding meaning and relevance to young people as well as quality issues of programmes provided.

The competitive sports scenario is typified in African and Oceanic region contexts:

- **Nigeria**

“Emphasis in PE leans rather towards developing