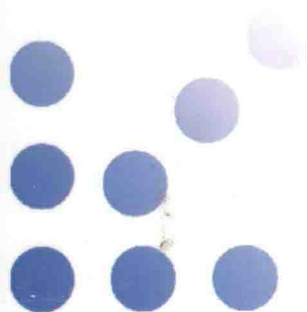


Ken Hardman | Ken Green



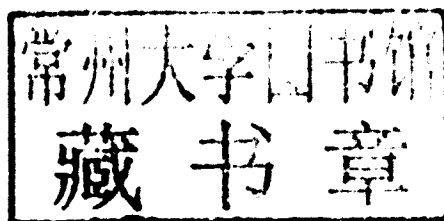
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

MEYER
& MEYER
SPORT

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 I

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 inter-governmental, 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

¹ These include *inter alia*: MINEPS III, Punta del Este Declaration (3 December 1999); European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) support (October, 2002); European Physical Education Association (EUPEA) Forum on *Quality Physical Education* (October, 2002); UNESCO ‘Round Table Meeting’ *Communiqué* (January 2003); Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendations (April 2003); Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) *Declaration from the National Summit on Physical Education* (London, January, 2004); *Recommendations of the International Conference on Women’s Sport for Peace and Development* (Kathmandu, Nepal, November, 2004); MINEPS IV Athens Declaration (December 2004); *The Bangkok Agenda for Actions on Physical Education and Sport in School* (November 2005); Second Physical Education World Summit’s *Maggingen Commitment* (December 2005); Latin and Caribbean Summit of Physical Education Declaration (Havana City Cuba, April, 2006).

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 devolvement 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