

A HISTORICAL-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE PERIOD 1990-1999

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ABSTRACT

This study traced the historical path of Physical Education (PE) in South Africa from being a stand-alone school subject to its incorporation into the learning area, Life Orientation (LO). LO is an amalgamation of non-examinable subjects. The critical stance taken towards this amalgamation may also be regarded as a critique of Outcomes-based Education (OBE). The infusion of PE into LO came about as a result of teacher rationalisation and at the expense of pedagogical concerns. PE was integrated into LO without critical opposition. The introduction of OBE and the integration of PE hinged largely on political symbolism, rather than reflecting true change in the educational system, resulting in policy becoming separated from practice. The post-apartheid government did not consider PE a serious concern, due to the development of a spirit of South African national sport pride mainly promoted along the lines of mega events and through the country's re-admittance to participation in the international sporting arena. Consequently, PE with its emphasis on mass-participation activity was insignificant compared to this emerging international trend. Sources that take a judgemental stand towards LO and OBE influenced the perspective taken in this study. Research for this study used critical theory as a means of expressing dissent.

Key words: Physical education; Life orientation; Outcomes-based education; Politics; South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

A substantial volume of academic criticism exists on the lack of acceptable standards for Physical Education (PE) in post-apartheid South Africa (Van Deventer, 1997, 1998/99, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009; Van Deventer & Pedersen, 2001; Africa & Van Deventer, 2005; Africa *et al.*, 2008a, 2008b; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009a, 2009b; Rajput & Van Deventer, 2010). The major thrust of the said works is a critique of South African PE practices, without any political or historical analysis. The current article takes a historic-critical direction that focuses on how political issues have impacted on the South African school curriculum.

During the last decade of the 20th century, there was a “virtual absence of PE issues in serious, detailed, informed and open discussion at national level in Great Britain and Northern Ireland” (Alderson & Crutchley, 1990:38). Internationally, academics usually identified problems with subject content at a curriculum level, ignoring any political and economic factors that were involved (Siedentop, 1990; Beighle & Pangrazi, 2011). The situation was similar in South Africa, which led to confusion among policy developers, which

in turn filtered down to policy implementers. PE became part of the South African education experiment that involved the implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE) and that placed PE first within the Arts and Movement learning area and later within the Life Orientation (LO) learning area (see Appendix). LO was and has remained a combination of PE with other subjects. The result has been a diverse curriculum that such leading academics as Daxita Rajput and Karel J. van Deventer have criticised extensively.

The criticism has focused on the unfulfilled expectations regarding subject provision, the deplorable conditions in schools, the unacceptably long hours taken up by administrative duties, the low subject status, the difficulty in subject specialising, and the problems at higher education teacher training institutions, where academia have objected to the integration of PE, School Guidance, Religious Education and Youth Preparedness (Rajput & Van Deventer, 2010). The pervasive view in the South African education landscape has been that: “The practice of offering PE and life skills as separate subjects on the timetable is unsound and requires urgent attention, because this further fragments the learning area and polarises educators’ and learners’ understandings of LO” (Rooth, 2005:283,284). Another supporter of the integration of PE with other subjects into LO argues that “specialist teachers with specialist knowledge” must be trained to provide instruction in this learning area (Christiaans, 2006:186).

In contrast, academics have raised concerns about OBE-associated structures being too complex and inaccessible for most teachers to implement the policies that are in place meaningfully through their daily classroom practices (Jansen, 1999b:417). The prevailing situation is indicative of what the educationist Graeme Bloch calls “a crisis... that is hurtling at speed towards a real abyss” (Bloch, 2009:69). On a more emotive level, *The Educational Journal (EJ)*, which is the official organ of the Teachers’ League of South Africa, has called OBE a recipe for disaster (*EJ*, 1997a). The criticism has been a departure from the hopeful and optimistic view that some academics held at the time of the change in curriculum, namely that:

“... the transitional phase between the two political orders is a thrust away from Apartheid ... symbolising freedom, growth, new experiences and the realisation of dreams. Opportunities are being created ... for South Africans to explore their true potential and ... they will play a vital role in redressing the imbalances of the past. One such sphere is ... Physical Education” (Kloppers, 1996:79).

The current research considers whether opportunities for redressing the imbalances of the past were created in PE as part of LO, by providing a historical-political analysis of the subject during the 1990s.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Despite the formal post-apartheid literature on South African PE history being scant, a considerable corpus of academic literature exists on pre-1994 events. Said writings are, however, tainted by concerns pertaining to ‘race’ (Potgieter, 1972; Agjee, 1981; Boshoff, 1981; Kelder, 1984; Paterson, 1984; De Klerk, 1986; Skein, 1986; Vermaas, 1989; Cleophas, 1990, 1991, 2009; Kloppers, 1996). Historical background on PE in schools under the former Department of Education and Training (DET), being the bureaucratic agency for people who

were previously classified African, is scarce but does provide some background to the situation that prevailed at the time. One such example is the 1987 unpublished report of a postgraduate candidate of Stellenbosch University, Margret Weixleder. The report covers her research into PE, while the subject was under the control of the DET. Weixleder concludes her report with this finding: "... teacher training (of Africans) is not concerned enough with the planning of PE according to a syllabus and that the (official) syllabus does not take the situation of the black education system into consideration" (Weixleder, 1987:88). The existence of a PE specialist course for African students at the Healdtown Training School in the Eastern Cape and the reasons for its closure remains an under-researched area (Healdtown Institution, c.1955; Postma, 1977).

The system of Christian National Education (CNE) and Fundamental Pedagogics (FP) provided the underlying philosophy for the teaching of PE in South Africa (Kloppers, 1996). Supporters of the CNE philosophy usually presented it as an innocent and useful tool for transmitting the concept of universal health to all through PE. However, CNE also formed the ideological basis of apartheid schooling (1948-1994), particularly regarding PE with the main characteristics being discriminatory practices that emphasised the unique aspects that make a nation great. This kind of argument was used to justify the CNE view that, "there is a *nasionale lewens- en wêreldbeskouing* [national life and world view] unique to Afrikaners" (Greyling, 1941:22,37,39). Although most schools in South Africa did not take CNE seriously, PE practitioners could not ignore the phenomenon, seeing that the apartheid education authorities used it to "counter the humanistic ideal of self-glorification" (Du Plessis, 1974:131,274). One PE academic who supported the CNE philosophy, Izak van der Merwe, believed that it ensured the future of 'white South Africa' and warned of the dangers of poor nourishment, the negative ergonomic effects of the school environment, and the general health deterioration of the Afrikaner nation in particular. He proposed the following within a CNE context:

"... a PE system that is part of a certain race or nation where not only physical traits are unique but has a "volksiel" [soul of the nation] that has to be studied in terms of traditions, values and habits of the nation ... All the beautiful Voortrekker games must be restored in honour and deserve a place in the school curriculum" (Van der Merwe, 1960:45,46).

During the 1980s in the wake of the implementation of a tricameral parliamentary system, CNE adherents tried to rid their exclusivity and infuse it into other 'race groups'. Physical Education was no exception. In 1986, Jan Nel submitted a doctoral dissertation, *Die rol van Liggaamlike Opvoeding as skoolvak in die vestiging van 'n Christelike lewens- en wêreldbeskouing* (The role of Physical Education in the establishment of a Christian life and world view). A comparison between a few selected extracts from Nel's dissertation regarding previous work that had been conducted on CNE shows the similarity of language involved:

"Education is more than knowledge and a muffling up from outside ... loosen him from the national culture and home education, he becomes a valueless co-worker of that what can never become his own ..." (Greyling, 1941:36).

"It is undesirable to eliminate the national element from education, the learner makes contact with the national element from childhood ... if the Christian

element is absent from this there can be no talk of true education” (Du Plessis, 1974:28,29).

“The education task of the Physical Educationists lays outside the movement and physical existence of the child ... the subject must be a bastion for the preservation and safety of the Christian community, we plea for homes and schools where everything is soaked with Christendom and the PE teacher plays an important part” (Nel, 1986:242,243, 246).

Kloppers warned that the discriminatory ideas of CNE might continue during the post-election (post-1994) period, albeit in a different form (Kloppers, 1996). He did not specify how long he envisaged ‘the post-election period’ would last. A limitation of Kloppers’ work from a historical perspective was the lack of detail regarding the transition of PE from the apartheid era to post-apartheid. Also, the general hype about new prospects and possibilities for PE influenced his findings (Kloppers, 2011). Nevertheless, ‘[t]o move with a different view’ was an attempt at providing contemporary historians with ammunition for critical analysis.

The history of PE in South Africa is generally not analysed within a critique of institutional linkages. Agjee (1981), for example, suggests that the Department of Indian Affairs had a “profound concern for the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the Indian education system ... and provided considerable development, expansion, consolidation and stabilisation ... for PE in particular” (Agjee, 1981:49,50). Agjee does not refer to the South African Indian Council Act of 1968, which created an advisory, wholly nominated body to deal with Indian-related affairs in three provinces (keeping in mind that Indians were not allowed to settle in the Orange Free State) (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). The pre-1994 South African PE landscape denied most children purposeful participation opportunities (Kloppers, 1996).

To date, only one formal historical research study has challenged the official version of PE in South Africa during the apartheid era (Cleophas, 2009). Instead, the few formal works on the subject during that era tend to emphasise the “harmonious development of all the facets of a child’s well-being” (Lion-Cachet, 1997:v). Such notions ignore the political power struggles that were at play in PE policymaking, and see the subject’s main contribution to education as being in “developing attitudes, knowledge and skills related to health, fitness and recreation” (Lion-Cachet, 1997:10). Lion-Cachet admits that her research “seeks scientifically substantiated answers ... on the importance of the ... momentous developments in South African sport and [the] purpose of PE” (Lion-Cachet, 1997:6). During the post-apartheid period, most South African schools neglected the subject in the curriculum (Mchunu, 2008). None of the works mentioned above provides a comprehensive critical-historical account of the policy collapse of PE into LO in South Africa.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Statement of the problem

Since the Government of National Unity (GNU) took office in 1994, there has been a general hesitancy regarding critical discourse concerning the origin of education policies. The current research paper, therefore, attempts to answer the question: *What educational, historical and*

political factors were in play that resulted, directly or indirectly, in the integration of PE into the learning area, LO, in the immediate post-apartheid period era (1995-1999)?

Methodology

The research undertaken relies on contemporary South African literature reviews (in the form of books and academic journal articles), that deal with education and PE. Unstructured interviews were used to gather information from prominent role players in the South African PE landscape during the period under review. The contemporary historian undeniably has a particular angle of vision, which is reason enough to make certain statements with reasonable certainty in the absence of proof in the strict juridical sense (Alexander, 2002). The educational philosopher, Wally Morrow, who influenced the current research, suggests using sources that take a judgemental stand (Morrow, 1989). Within such a context, research for the present study uses critical theory as a “means to express dissent” (Haralambos & Heald, 1980:227). The current paper also argues for a reflective distancing from the daily grind of policymaking (Jansen, 2001). No attempt is made to offer solutions to the research problem, but rather every effort is used to make critical and coherent statements regarding the practice of PE in South African schools for the period under review. Understandably, the study relies heavily on sources that take a definitive stand against OBE.

PE IN SOUTH AFRICA WITHIN A BROADER EDUCATION SYSTEM: 1990-1999

Two key political events marked the last decade of the 20th century: the unbanning of political organisations in February 1990, and the establishment of a new regime in April 1994. Competing social movements and political actors who wanted to stake out their curriculum policy positions in the looming, and seemingly inevitable, post-apartheid capitalist state characterised the period in question (Jansen, 1999a).

It was the military visibility in the PE programme that remained a focal point around which the new education authorities rallied. A former senior Cape Education Department (CED) PE inspector mentioned how, when he applied for the new post of Senior Curriculum Advisor in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), he was peppered with questions relating to his South African Defence Force (SADF) involvement (Nel, 1996). At the same time, General Geldenhuys (former head of the SADF) succeeded in convincing military generals to reconcile themselves to the transition process, while he “kept a firm hand on enemies of the SADF” (Williams, 2008:130). Although the military landscape remained fertile ground for PE research during the early 1990s (Du Plessis, 1990), the apartheid-era administration officials who were included in the new administration were eager to rid the government of its historic military element. In 1995, Geldenhuys was arrested on charges of apartheid crimes committed in 1985; however, he was found not guilty (Hamann, 2001).

Post-apartheid South Africa inherited a PE landscape that produced doctoral dissertations confirming physical performance ‘race differences’ (Putter, 1964). The ‘new South Africa’ was born with expectations of ridding itself of such findings, with official documents at the time reflecting this optimism.

PE was integrated into LO during a period of consensual politics and alternative policy formulations. According to Jansen (1999b), key political role players devised education policies that were not in congruence with the realities of classroom life. The genesis of PE as part of LO is found in the work of the National Education and Training Forum (NETF). The first facilitating meeting for the NETF, which was held on 21 May 1993, was officially launched on 7 August of the same year (Chisholm & Kgobe, 2003). The events took place amidst a power struggle between two teacher unions, namely the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA) and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), both of whom were sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC) (Burger, 1993e; 1993f).

The NETF, under the guidance of both the government and the ANC-orientated National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) (Hendricks, 2010), had a membership of 26 stakeholders in education, as well as in business, government, tertiary institutions, and teacher and student organisations (Kloppers, 1996; Hendricks, 2010). One of the earliest 'successes' of the NETF was its role in making a deal, concerning the early retirement of 2931 teachers between the House of Representatives (HOR), (formerly known as the Department of Coloured Affairs), and SADTU (Motala & Tikly, 2003). The HOR and the Department of Education and Culture intended phasing out 3200 teaching posts in 1993. Part of the deal was the brokering of an agreement (in which the NETF played a leading role) whereby the teachers whose posts were to be phased out could remain in service until December instead of 31 July of the year in question. However, only six teachers agreed to remain on with the Department for the extra six months (*Cape Argus*, 1993a:5). After a succession of meetings was held on the future content of the PE syllabus, the NETF recommended that schools should use the existing syllabi in the interim, and that the provinces should develop their own syllabi (Hendricks, 2004). Two prominent South African universities, namely those of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape, were not invited to submit input on the development of the PE syllabi (Kloppers, 2011; Van Deventer, 2011).

Contrary to their active participation in the earlier policy development, academics fell silent in the new official South African education landscape (Fataar, 1999). Yet, the supporters of LO persisted in their claim that PE "representatives from all the relevant education-based bodies were included on the PE sub-committee of the NETF" (Hendricks, 2004; Prince, 2011). In addition, most provinces lacked qualified specialists who could serve on research committees to develop their own syllabi (Prince, 2011). Consequently, a number of innovations emerged in the deliberations of interim provincial committees dealing with PE. One innovation was a movement towards co-educational PE (Hendricks, 2004), which reflected the title of a master's thesis that was written by a SADTU official, Wayne Alexander, who also served on the NETF PE committee (Alexander, 1998). The thrust of Alexander's argument was that co-educational education was part of the "processes of change [that involve] ... letting go of past traditions and absorbing new ideas into the framework" (Alexander, 1998:112).

REVIEWING EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND PE EXPERIMENT WITHIN AMBIT OF OBE

The *Education Journal (EJ)* argues that the proposed PE policies that emerged in the immediate post-apartheid era were "quick fixes and fancy footwork that bedevilled a sane and

creative approach to policy and education practice” (*EJ*, 1995a:1). Some individuals who were actively involved in policy transformation processes during the period 1994-1999 stated afterwards that the “debates at the time were utopian” (Young, 2001). Others admit that “there was a quick rush into things ... anything new was welcome, but were disappointed and concerned that PE became part of LO” (Alexander, 2011).

The proposed remedy for South African education – and, by implication, for PE – was OBE. According to the *EJ*, such an approach surfaced in 1993, with such terms as ‘Competency-based Education’ (CBE), ‘OBE’ and ‘continuous assessment’ being used commonly. The OBE experiment surfaced for the first time with the appointment of the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) in 1993 (*EJ*, 1997b). Almost simultaneously, a new policy emerged regarding the rationalisation of teacher training, The Paarl Teachers’ College merged with the Wellington Teachers’ College in 1990, both having offered PE specialist training but having dropped the subject due to the rationalisation of teachers. In 1993, the Cape Town College of Education merged with the Sally Davis Training College, the former dropping the PE specialist teacher training that had been started in 1921 (*Burger*, 1993a; Cleophas, 2009).

One NETF member, Alan Tonkin from Barlow Rand (who later became the CEO of Global Values Network), justified rationalisation in terms of the (over) supply of, and the (under) demand for, teachers (*Cape Argus*, 1993b). Tonkin argued that if business “was to reach its fullest potential, it would need to create a new paradigm that moved beyond simplistic machine/industrial models to those that embraced the complex interdependencies of multiple constituencies” (Tonkin, 2008), which included the labour movement. The CBE idea was popularised in the labour movement, in particular within the ambit of the ANC-aligned Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Little integration of educational ideas into the CBE took place, the focus being on the labour movements’ expanding relationship with business (Jansen, 1999a). The demands of business, and then of labour, largely directed the new South African education system and, by implication, PE policy.

In 1995, the new National Department of Education (NDoE) invited the HOR to be part of the discussions advocating a new positioning of PE within the school curriculum (Prince, 2011). The representatives of the different provincial departments, the DET and churches, as well as psychologists, were present. Brenda Prince, a PE subject advisor, represented the HOR, whereas the DET teachers “had no PE repertoire and no subject knowledge” (Prince, 2011). Writing teams were established to deal with the new learning areas, and Prince recalls that she was the only PE specialist on the LO writing team. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS), which was an ANC-sympathetic organisation, voiced accusations that the subject was elitist and a luxury. Prince asserts that she “was forced” to use the term ‘movement’ instead of PE (Alexander, 2011; Prince, 2011).

UNHEEDED CRITIQUE ON THE OBE EXPERIMENT

Without warning, the NDoE released a document outlining the proposals for OBE. A former National Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, officially launched the system of OBE on 24 March 1997 in Cape Town, as Curriculum 2005 (C2005), amidst much dissatisfaction from government opposition forces (Jansen, 1999a). Locally, the WCED

undertook a road show to advertise the new LO programme (Prince, 2011). Only one teachers' union, SADTU, publicly defended OBE. The parliamentary opposition parties were excluded from discussions on the launch of C2005, and they criticised OBE because it had not been discussed at portfolio committee level. They concluded that it was an ANC affair that lacked transparency (*Cape Argus*, 1997). Official statements, such as that learning programmes and material development were not urgent, accompanied the implementation of C2005 (*Burger*, 1997).

Jansen (1999b) claims that the OBE system offered an economic panacea to benefit those who had been alienated from education and training under apartheid, in the name of a complex curriculum reform policy. Such a connection has political goals without being founded on the accumulated research on curriculum change (Jansen, 1999b). The principles of OBE rested on achieving equity, redress, access, non-discrimination, relevance and quality education (*EJ*, 1997b). None of these features was evident in the practice of PE during the period under review.

The *EJ* states that the new South African education reform policies emerged from demands by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that resulted in increasing teacher retrenchments (*EJ*, 1995a). It was, according to the *EJ*, a period when "the realisation of a fully democratic education system in a non-racial democracy was thwarted" (*EJ*, 1995a:2-3). Very few academics spoke out against the new PE system in South African schools. Government ignored those who did, such as Dr Karel van Deventer of Stellenbosch University:

"Government needs to be convinced to invest in initial and in-service professional training and development of teachers and should recognise that failure to provide PE costs more in health care ... research to improve the effectiveness and quality of PE should [therefore] be supported by the authorities" (Van Deventer, 1998/99:100,101).

Education critics stated that the OBE framework was designed in isolation from the concrete context of teaching, learning and training (Isaacs, 2013). Further, it was the state, and, in effect, the ANC, rather than education-driven imperatives, that directed policy – and the state had an academic support base that obfuscated criticism. One such supporter stated:

"The ANC's implementation plan for education and training provided a well-planned and visionary guideline, which was to be of paramount importance in developing changes in the South African education system. Stakeholder participation, transparency and inclusive development were novel modes of operation in this country. From its inception, the new education system was participatory and consultations were widely held" (Rooth, 2005:29).

Alternative voices asserted that the new regime pushed ahead with OBE because of its determination to demonstrate that visible change had taken place in the education scene before its term of office came to an end in 1999 (Spreen & Vally, 2003). Political representation, rather than meaningful involvement in policy development, provided sufficient proof of consultation (Greenstein, 2003). Critics remarked that the OBE policy

was implemented with “much confusion, some resistance and significant trepidation” (Spren & Vally, 2003:450). Alexander claims that the post-apartheid state thrust the idea of PE becoming part of the LO learning area upon them. The NDoE invited SADTU to the NETF in 1994. Alexander was nominated at the SADTU national congress of the same year to represent the Union at the NETF, with the mandate to agitate for a change in the philosophical underpinnings of PE (Alexander, 2011). Subsequently, despite Alexander being appointed senior PE advisor in the WCED, he was unable to prevent the subject from being collapsed into LO.

WHY PE COULD COLLAPSE INTO LO WITHIN AN OBE FRAMEWORK

A former HOR official submitted a mini-thesis entitled “Empowering teachers to implement the LO learning area in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band”. A finding of the said work was that “teachers were not ready and sufficiently prepared to implement LO and lacked knowledge and a positive attitude towards the subject” (Christiaans, 2006:167). However, departmental officials were also not pedagogically prepared for the implementation of LO and remained silent on its shortcomings.

Initially, universities supported the idea of adopting an OBE approach towards PE, but later a few raised concerns about the development. In 1997, Van Deventer’s research-based article appeared in the *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation (SAJSPEER)*. He answered the question: “What must policy makers in South Africa do, through PE as a school subject, in order to contribute to a purposeful national curriculum?” (Van Deventer, 1997:66) with the following statement:

“OBE provides a new departure and approach to teaching and learning experiences. This new approach presents programme designers ... within LO, the ideal opportunity to design inclusive and contextual learning programmes ... on micro level, C2005 offers teachers the opportunity to be, not only implementers, but development agents that are able to develop relevant learning programmes for the school and community in a dynamic and creative way” (Van Deventer, 1997:66).

The above did not materialise and, instead, a major characteristic of post-apartheid South Africa was the intense contestation between political parties for control over education, with the politicians concerned seldom consulting with the policy implementers, referring to the teachers involved (Isaacs, 2013). One of the three bills that were passed in 1995, the National Education Policy Bill “effectively placed almost complete power in the hands of the National Minister of Education” (EJ, 1995c:4). The new ruling party’s promise of free compulsory education had not materialised and, instead, the National Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, launched a teacher rationalisation scheme to cut the number of teachers by offering voluntary severance packages (VSPs), in what was commonly known as a form of rationalisation.

Opposition to the VSPs was voiced across the South African political spectrum, initially including SADTU (Burger, 1993a; *Cape Argus*, 1997). Some of the best and the most experienced teachers took the packages concerned (Johnson, 2009). As was mentioned

earlier, 2931 teachers received VSPs under the administration of the HOR (Motala & Tikly, 2003). The teachers concerned included Frank Stoffels, Jumat Idas and Andre Skein, who were senior PE curriculum advisors in the HOR and Cape Education Department, respectively. Teacher training colleges that offered PE specialist training were merged, and the subject was discontinued (EJ, 1997c). This move occurred despite the fact that teachers generally had poor qualifications. This situation was exacerbated by the removal of 16 000 educators from the profession by means of a system of rationalisation (which amounted to leaving many schools without PE instruction) that took place across all the former 'racially' defined education departments. The remaining teachers had to implement C2005 under conditions of poverty, social decay and poor school facilities (EJ, 1997a).

Ideas of a South African 'rainbow nation' characterised the 'era of transformation', during which national South African sports teams "did much to develop a sense of national pride and nation building" (Griffiths & Pienaar, 1999:8). The rainbow theme also infiltrated the South African PE arena and the 7th International Rainbow Week (consisting of a children's gathering, an exhibition and a symposium) was held in Cape Town from 3 to 10 December 1995 (Katzenellenbogen, 1995). However, no implementation of the findings that were delivered in research papers at the rainbow Week Symposium was visible in schools.

The development of a South African national sport pride was promoted through the staging of mega events and through the country's re-admittance to international participation in 1993. The ANC called for the lifting of the sport, economic and air travel boycotts against South Africa without the consent of the organisation behind the anti-apartheid sport struggle, namely the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) (Burger, 1993c). The opening up of opportunities in this direction paved the way for the establishment of a consumerist professional sport set up to swamp mass-based PE, allowing learners to work towards improving their own health by means of participating in sporting activities. Before the 1994 elections, prominent ANC officials lobbied for South Africa's return to international cricket and in November 1991, the country toured India for the first time (Odendaal, 2003).

The period immediately before the advent of democracy in 1994 was characterised by "three times more foreign sport people visiting South Africa in 1992 than in 1991, while four times more South Africans travelled abroad" (Booth, 1995:107). During the period under review, South Africa hosted and won the Rugby World Cup (1995), participated in and won the Africa Cup of Nations Soccer Tournament (1996), and bid unsuccessfully for the Olympic Games in Cape Town, at the projected expense of R6 billion (EJ, 1995b; Blades, 1998; Griffiths & Pienaar, 1999). The cricket administrator Ali Bacher says of the period stated that "the country was awash with the 'Madiba magic'... and South African sport looked in excellent shape" (Hartman, 2004: 316). In contrast, the new government did not express the same level of concern regarding PE, a mass-based health activity.

In 1995, the EJ asserted that the ruling party had a deliberate strategy, which it had designed before 1994, not to transform certain key centres, including Model C (former Whites-only) schools, and that the overall South African education framework, policy and structures were flawed (EJ, 1995c). The last education minister the apartheid regime, Piet Marais, had made it clear that the government was intent on maintaining Model C schools that allowed for the 'free association' of distinctive cultural groups (Burger, 1993b; Cape Argus, 1993b). The

establishment of the NETF also deeply pleased Marais (*Burger*, 1993d). The inauguration of the NETF had implications for poor schools that originated in the former Black education departments, which elicited the following comment from Johnson:

“The real problem lay in ... poorly educated and poorly motivated teachers, obstructive teaching unions, gross abuse and indiscipline of every kind and all the normal kinds of corruption and maladministration, which made these (black and poor) schools a nightmare. Only a tough-minded emphasis on higher standards would turn things around” (Johnson, 2009:462).

Johnson reasoned that the ANC government was reluctant to take the route of meritocracy, because doing so would have made for “immediate casualties – irredeemably bad teachers and weak students – and would have [had] to rate merit over affirmative action ... no ANC minister had the stomach for that” (Johnson, 2009:462). The post-apartheid government was unwilling to accept the idea of competency as being the sole criterion for social cohesion, and appointed PE subject advisors on the basis of their union affiliation (Davenport, 1998). Academic qualifications and experience were secondary factors with regard to senior appointments. When South African PE officials such as Andre Skein warned that the subject would wither if it placed within the LO learning area, they were simply ignored (Skein, 2011). Thus PE became situated within the LO learning area for lack of critical opposition.

CONCLUSION

The above research has shown how PE was fused into the LO learning area in the transition to the OBE system. The solution to the problem of the apartheid legacy of educational inequality and to the lack of purposeful PE participation opportunities was sought through positioning PE within the LO learning area, as part of Curriculum 2005. Despite much scepticism, the new educational authorities pushed ahead with implementing an educational policy that “hinged largely on political symbolism rather than [on] the substance of change in education ... resulting in a distance between policy and practice” (Jansen, 2001:41). The above-mentioned development, combined with the rationalisation of educators, compelled schools to reassess their academic needs and to seriously consider the feasibility of offering non-examination subjects, such as PE. The subject needed a “dedicated leadership, i.e. a sufficient number of individuals in influential positions who had faith in the importance of PE ... and who had perseverance to wear down the prejudices which exist in the employment institutions” (Anthonissen, 1997:85). In the absence of such a “dedicated leadership”, PE was integrated without much opposition into the LO learning area.

Under the apartheid regime, the majority of South African schoolchildren had no or scant purposeful opportunity to participate in PE. The post-apartheid regime was more concerned about promoting mega sport events and about appeasing the short-term demands of the teacher unions, in particular those of SADTU. Therefore, despite the change in government, the majority of South African children still lacked access to meaningful PE. During the period under review, most South African schoolchildren continued playing the same purposeless games in PE classes as they had done during the apartheid era. Sadly, many played no games at all. Therefore, in concluding the current study, the research question can be answered as

follows: Symbolisms, which ignored the prospect of critical analysis, were the major driving force behind the collapse of PE as a school subject into the LO learning area.

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APPENDIX

Curriculum framework development of Physical Education

Date	Learning Area & Subject	Comment	Source
December 1995	Physical Education and Health (Fitness and Health; Creative Movement; Coordination and Control)	Document is primarily concerned with establishing broad principles, rather than detailed programmes. Prince (2011) asserts that no document has been released.	Greenstein <i>et al.</i> (1996:248,249)
	Arts and Movement (Visual, expressive and performing arts, theory of art and Physical Education)	Document released by the Curriculum Development Working Group of the National Curriculum Development Committee (NCDC)	Motala (1996:311)
1996	Arts and Movement/ Life Orientation	Learning Area Committee established. Develops specific outcomes for Life Orientation/ Arts and Movement	Govender <i>et al.</i> (1997:359)
March 1997	Life Orientation	Launch of outcomes-based education	Greenstein (1997:373)

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