

SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN FOUR SOUTH AFRICAN PROVINCES: A SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Post-apartheid educational transformation in South Africa (SA) reduced Physical Education (PE) from a stand-alone subject to a learning outcome of the Learning Area/Subject Life Orientation (LO) in Grades 7-12. The main purpose of the current study was to determine the implementation of LO in selected secondary schools with specific reference to Physical Development and Movement, a learning outcome in the Senior Phase (SP), and Physical Education in the Further Education and Training Phase (FETP) in the Eastern Cape, Free State and North West Provinces (n=88). The data was combined with the data obtained in selected Western Cape secondary schools (n=62) in 2008. The combined sample was N=150. In the SP, 57% of the schools had qualified PE teachers on the staff compared to 42% of the schools in the FETP. Fifty-eight per cent of LO teachers in the SP and 40% in the FETP who facilitated the movement component of LO were not qualified to present PE. Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) and other stakeholders in SA need to convince government that there should be a discipline-based approach to PE and it should be a stand-alone school subject. The way that LO is compiled does not allow for subject specific training implying that generalist teachers are responsible for teaching the movement component of LO.

Key words: Education; Physical Education; Life Orientation; Curriculum 2005; National Curriculum Statement; Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

INTRODUCTION

Sedentary lifestyles, especially among the youth, increasingly challenge active lifestyles because of the demands of modern life (AG, 2010). The basis of the physical activity (PA) pyramid within the school context is Physical Education (PE) (Seghers *et al.*, 2009). The only school subject that focuses on physical and mental development and prepare almost all learners for an active lifestyle is PE (Malina, 2001; Talbot, 2001; Seghers *et al.*, 2009).

The first South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (SAYRBS) of 2002 (N=10 699), indicated that 44.6% of learners in Grades 8 to 11 participated in adequate vigorous PA, 25.9% did not want to participate in PA the week before the survey and 25.2% watched television or played video/computer games for more than three hours per day (DoH, 2003). In the SAYRBS of 2008 (N=10270), 43.2% of learners in Grades 8 to 11 participated in adequate vigorous PA, 28.8% did not want to participate in PA the week before the survey and 29.3% watched television or played video/computer games for more than three hours per day (DoH, 2010), indicating a decline in participation and an increase in sedentary pursuits.

Health 24 (2011) reported that a panel of health scientists gave South African children an overall health grade of C- in 2007 and 2010. This mark included unhealthy eating, tobacco use and participation in PE for children in primary and secondary schools. In 2007, 45% of South African children participated in vigorous PA and in 2010 it declined to 42%. Learners from low socio-economic backgrounds or from single-parent homes participated less in leisure-time PA (Health 24, 2011). In 1992 the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts in Australia found that "...ironically there is no dispute about the importance of physical education, yet there is a serious problem with its delivery" (AG, 2010:3).

However, cognisance should be taken that education is a political enterprise (Craig, 1991), which also applies to PE (Fisher, 2003; Kidd, 2003; Klein, 2003). The birth of democracy in SA brought about a new national curriculum, Curriculum 2005 (C2005), based on Outcomes-based Education (OBE), which was the master plan to eradicate the inequalities of the Apartheid education system (Jansen, 1998; Manganyi, 2001; Harley & Wedekind, 2004; Rooth, 2005; Vambe, 2005; DBE, 2009; Rajput & Van Deventer, 2010). Curriculum 2005, a radical paradigm shift, reduced PE from a stand-alone subject to a Learning Outcome of Life Orientation (LO), a new Learning Area/Subject in C2005 (Van Deventer, 2002; Van Deventer, 2005; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2008; Toriola *et al.*, 2010), which had a political rather than an educational undercurrent (Toriola *et al.*, 2010).

Craig (1991:22) believes that education *is* "a process based on people's cultural existence". Yet, in SA it is believed that educational practices can be transplanted from one social context to another (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). Bloch (2009:115) is of the opinion that OBE was "a case [of] uncritically drawing on unworkable proposals from New Zealand and Australia".

Educational change in SA failed because the unique milieu in which it had to take place was not considered (Blignaut, 2009). Historical and situational constraints in education limit the potential of OBE to enhance learning (Mathieson, 2001; Botha, 2002; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Todd & Mason, 2005; Vambe, 2005; Prinsloo, 2007; Bloch, 2009). A lack of management capacity and support, and weak infrastructure in Provincial Departments of Education and most schools further erode the success of policy implementation (Chisholm, 2000; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Todd & Mason, 2005; Vambe, 2005; Blignaut, 2009; Bloch, 2009).

Over several years considerable criticism has been raised against the revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) that replaced C2005 in 2000 (DBE, 2009). A major challenge was that subject specific training was not addressed, as was the case with C2005 (Chisholm, 2000; Bloch, 2009; DBE, 2009). Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008) revealed that 60% of the LO teachers in selected Western Cape (WC) primary and secondary schools were not qualified to present PE, which is at the core of the battles regarding the successful implementation of the NCS (Campbell & McGhie, 2007; Blignaut, 2009; Jacobs, 2011). Van Deventer *et al.* (2010) found in a study conducted in selected primary and secondary schools in the Eastern Cape (EC), Free State (FS) and North West (NW) Provinces that 50% of the LO teachers compared to those in the WC Province were not qualified in PE.

Life Orientation, with its underlying constituents (e.g., School Guidance, Religious Education, Youth Preparedness, PE), does not denote an academic discipline (Rajput & Van Deventer, 2010). International studies of curriculum indicate that a strong, *discipline-based* approach to subjects is a feature of school curricula associated with countries performing better on international standardised tests (DBE, 2009:38). In SA, 60-80% of the schools are dysfunctional indicating a national education disaster (Bloch, 2009).

It took the Department of Education (DoE) some time to admit that C2005 did not work: “The new curriculum was never researched or properly trialled and there was inadequate preparation” (DBE, 2009:12). Future expectations of the youth in SA are of particular importance owing to the extent of social problems that they face (poverty, unemployment, crime, violence, corruption, HIV/AIDS) (Steyn *et al.*, 2010). In dysfunctional schools learners remain trapped in the “poverty cycle, without skills, without jobs, without hope” (Gaum, 2008:1; Bloch, 2009). Steyn *et al.* (2010:185) allege that: “An education system which blocks adolescents’ future hopes ... creates a formidable ethical dilemma and can actually stand accused of a crime against humanity”.

It seems, however, that efforts to improve the NCS have been on going. Prior to 2008 the national DoE housed both the schools and Higher Education Institution (HEI) sectors, but since the general political elections of 2008 it was divided into the Department of Basic Education (DBE), responsible for the school sector, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) who is responsible for the HEI sector. In 2009 the Minister of Basic Education had the NCS (Grades R-12) reviewed by a Ministerial Task Team. In response to this report (DBE, 2009), the Minister announced that a *Ministerial Project Committee* was appointed to develop *National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* (CAPS) for each subject in the NCS, with the exclusive goal to improve the NCS’s performance (DBE, 2010b).

The Ministerial Task Team (2009) recommended in their report that “the training of teachers ... should be specific” (DBE, 2009:10). However, the new CAPS policy does not allow HEI’s to train teachers specifically for LO, because LO with all its topics within the CAPS again does not constitute a specific discipline at HEI’s. However, *Action Plan 2014*, announced in March 2011, aims to facilitate the implementation of PE in schools with training workshops that will commence in April 2011 (DBE, 2011).

To determine the state and status of PE within the context of LO, a study was undertaken in 2007 in selected primary and secondary schools in the WC Province (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2008). The aim of the current study was to extend the 2007 study to primary and secondary schools in the EC, FS and NW Provinces.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem emerging from the above literature is that the state and status of PE in the context of LO is still uncertain in different provinces of SA, and that research in this regard was deemed necessary. The main purpose was to determine the implementation of LO with specific reference to *Physical Development and Movement* as a Learning Outcome in the SP

and *Physical Education* in the FETP in selected secondary schools in the EC, FS and NW Provinces. The following objectives were addressed:

- To determine whether schools had qualified PE teachers on their staff;
- To determine whether the LO teachers who facilitated *Physical Development and Movement* in the SP and *Physical Education* in the FETP were qualified in PE;
- To determine whether LO teachers had in-service training needs;
- To determine whether schools had the necessary facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation;
- To compare the perspectives of LO teachers in the SP to those of LO teachers in the FETP.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study can be typified as descriptive research making use of qualitative and quantitative data. A pilot study was conducted in 2006 to determine the content validity of a self-designed questionnaire to capture quantitative data.

Sample

Secondary schools (N=150) were randomly selected in the EC (n=50), FS (n=50) and the NW Province (n=50). Life Orientation teachers were requested to complete the questionnaire, as this would reflect a more realistic and hands-on perspective of LO.

The 88 questionnaires returned amounts to a response rate of 59%. A further analysis indicated that 40 SP and 48 FETP teachers returned questionnaires. In the EC, 28 secondary schools reacted (14 SP and 14 FETP). In the FS, 14 schools reacted (5 SP and 9 FETP), while in the NW Province 46 schools reacted (21 SP and 25 FETP). In the study of Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008) the 62 secondary schools included 30 SP and 32 FETP teachers. The combined sample of the four provinces consisted of 150 teachers.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the study only discriminated between the grades of the different phases of the NCS and had four sections. The first section focused on *demographic information*, while the main section focused on the NCS. The third section focused on *extramural activities* and in the fourth section, teachers had to reflect on *general issues* related to the implementation of LO in general.

Statistical analysis

Summary statistics were done using frequency tables and histograms. Comparisons to test associations of ordinal variables between the SP and the FETP in the four provinces were done using cross tabulation and the Chi-square test. Statsoft Statistica 8.0 (Statsoft, 2007) was used to analyse the data. The level of statistical significance accepted throughout the study was $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Demographic information

In the EC and FS the schools mainly served the Black communities, while White and Coloured communities were mainly served in the NW and WC. The schools were classified as urban (53%) and rural (47%) respectively. In 54% of the schools the total number of learners in the SP ranged between 500 and 999 as opposed to 45% in the FETP, while in 29% of the FETP the learners ranged between 100 and 499.

Curriculum information

In the four provinces the LO teachers in the SP indicated that their schools had more teachers qualified in PE in comparison to the FETP (Figure 1).

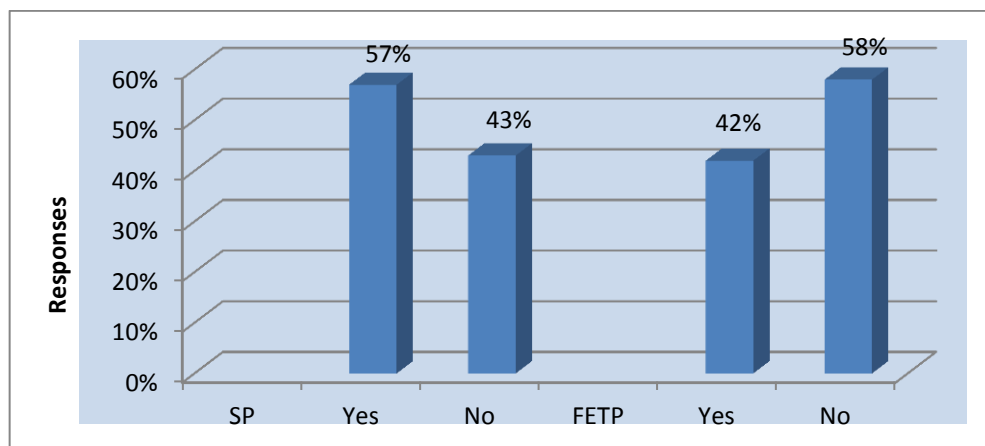


FIGURE 1: TEACHERS QUALIFIED IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

No statistical difference ($p=0.07$) was found between the phases (Figure 1). The raw data indicated that 96% ($n=144$) of the total number of respondents ($N=150$) responded to this question. In combination it seemed as if 57% of the secondary schools had qualified PE teachers on their staff.

The training of LO teachers in the principles of OBE was done in the majority of cases (87% and 90%) by the Provincial Departments of Education. Only 36% of the SP and 33% of the FETP teachers received training at Higher Education Institutions. In the four provinces, teachers in the SP and the FETP attached more or less the same importance to LO. No statistically significant difference was found between the phases ($p=0.82$) (Figure 2). The majority (99%) of the teachers in both the phases responded and most attached either an important or very important category to LO.

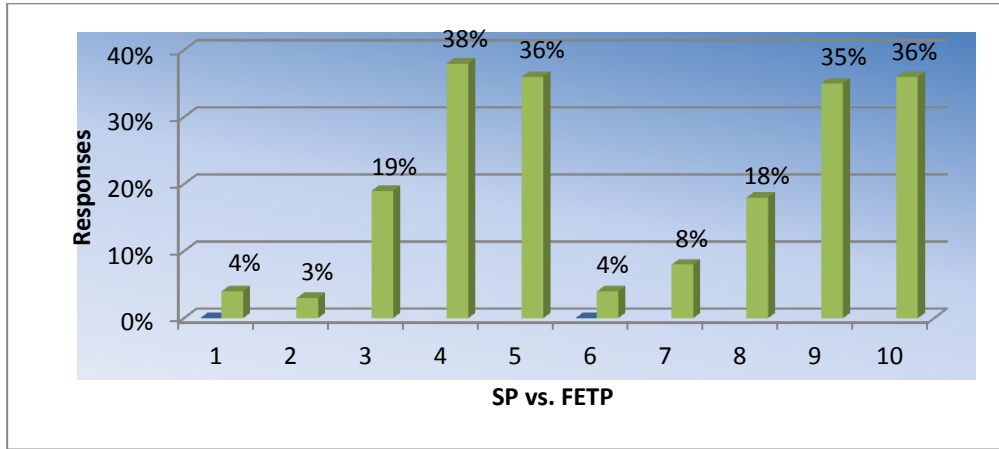


FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO LIFE ORIENTATION

(1/6=Not important; 2/7=Reasonably important; 3/8=Average; 4/9=Important; 5/10=Very important)

In the sample, 58% of the SP teachers who facilitated the Learning Outcome, *Physical Development and Movement* were not qualified in PE. In the FETP, 40% were not qualified in PE (Figure 3). No statistical significant difference ($p=0.06$) was found between the SP and the FETP.

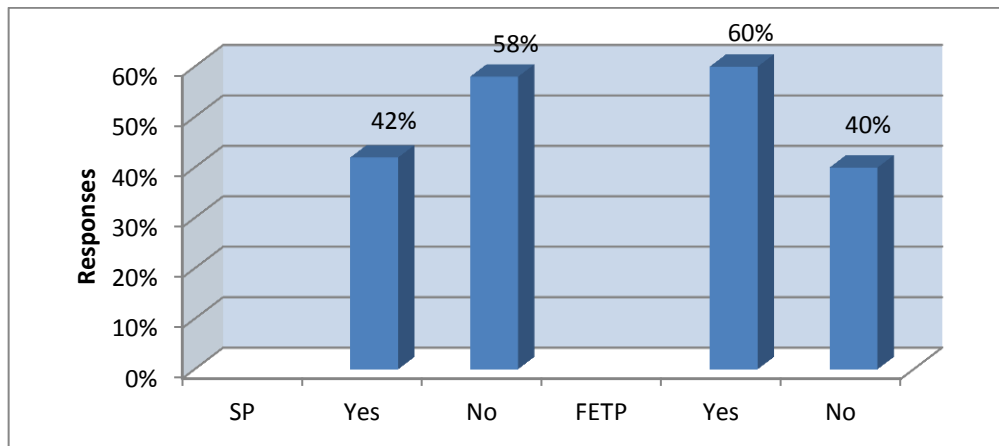


FIGURE 3: LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS QUALIFIED IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In combining the raw data, an even number of LO teachers who facilitated PE in Grades 7 to 12 was either qualified (50%) or not qualified (50%) in PE. Regarding a question whether “outside” persons or an “outside” organisation were brought in to provide PE, 84% of the SP and 69% of the FETP teachers reacted negatively. No statistical significant difference ($p=0.11$) was found between the SP and the FETP.

In the sample, 73% of the SP teachers believed that the time allocation for PE was sufficient, as opposed to 63% of the FETP teachers. No statistical significant difference ($p=0.21$) was found between the phases (Figure 4). Therefore, most of the LO teachers in both the SP and the FETP believed that the time allocated for PE was sufficient.

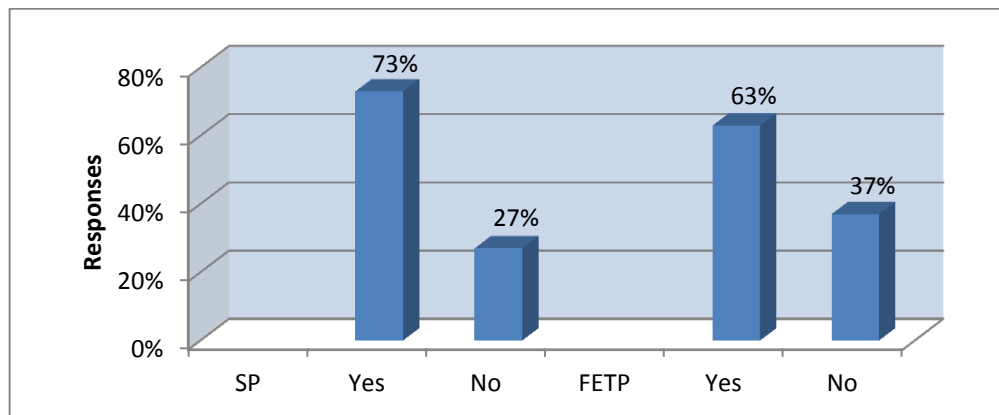


FIGURE 4: TIME ALLOCATED FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The findings of a question regarding whether the teachers knew how to assess the movement content is also in stark contrast to the number of LO teachers qualified in PE. In the SP, 73% and in the FETP, 69% of the respondents reacted positively to the question. No statistical significant difference was found ($p=0.60$). In combining the two phases Table 1 indicates that 71% of the LO teachers indicated that they knew how to assess movement content.

TABLE 1: KNOWLEDGE ON ASSESSMENT OF MOVEMENT CONTENT

Phase	Yes		No		Total
	n	%	n	%	
SP	49	73%	18	27%	67
FET	54	69%	24	31%	78
Total	103 (71%)		48 (29%)		145 (97%)

In Figure 5 it is clear that the majority of the LO teachers wanted to know more about new developments, such as programme planning, content ideas and presentation skills, within LO in both phases. No significant difference ($p=0.28$) was found between the SP and the FETP. The majority of LO teachers indicated that they have in-service training needs.

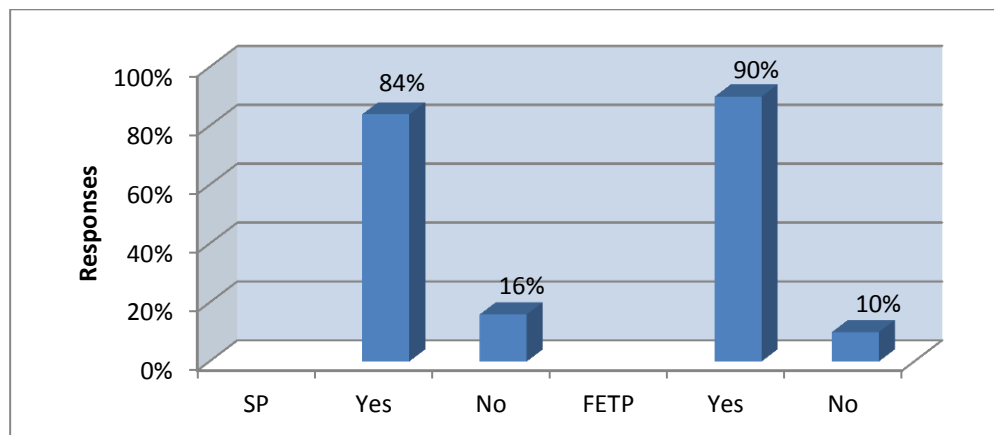


FIGURE 5: NEED FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

According to the results of this study it would seem that most secondary schools in the four provinces did have problems regarding sufficient facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation. No statistical significant difference was found between the phases ($p=0.61$) (Figure 6). Most of LO teachers in both phases indicated that the schools did not have sufficient facilities and equipment.

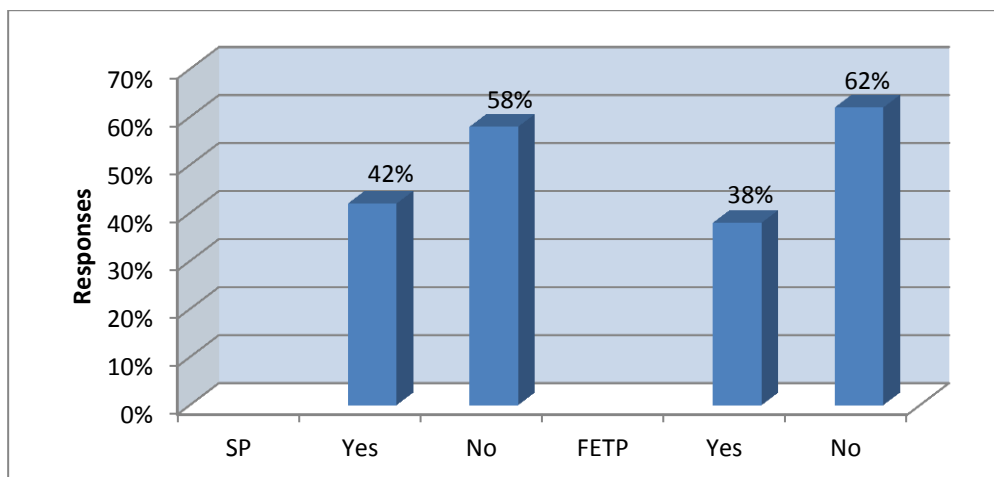


FIGURE 6: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO PRESENT PHYSICAL EDUCATION

General issues

Soccer, hockey, tennis, badminton, cricket, swimming, rugby, drum majorettes, netball, karate, wrestling and athletics were the main extramural sports presented for the SP and FETP learners. Volleyball and modern dancing were activities presented for the SP rather

than the FETP learners, whereas learners in the FETP were exposed to canoeing, basketball, horse riding, gymnastics, judo and ballet (Figure 7).

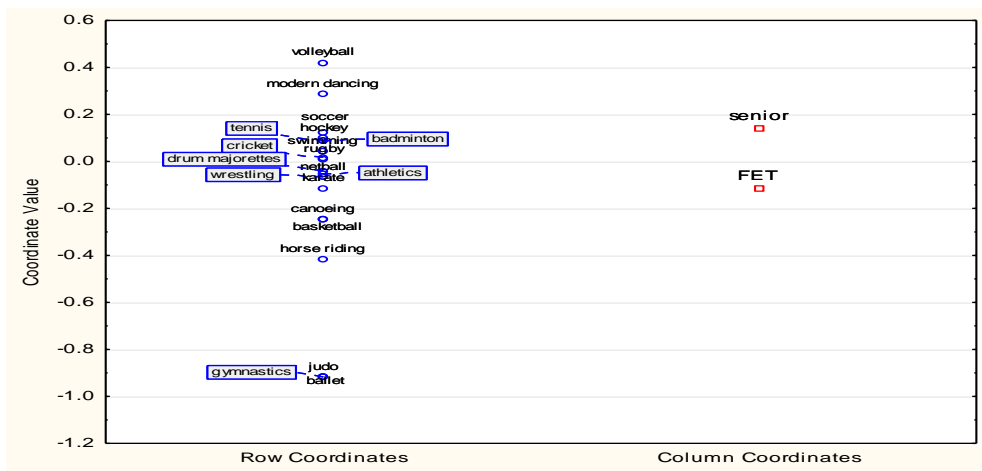


FIGURE 7: EXTRAMURAL SPORT IN THE FOUNDATION AND INTERMEDIATE PHASES

Regarding facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation (Figure 8), hockey fields, open spaces outside, gymnastic halls, rugby fields, swimming pools and tennis courts seemed to feature predominantly at schools according to the FETP teachers. Senior Phase teachers indicated that halls, netball courts and soccer fields feature at their schools.

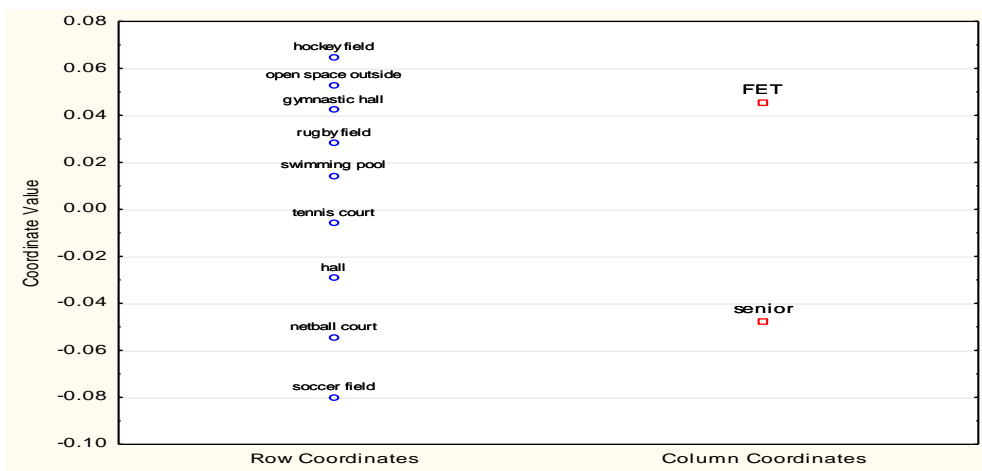


FIGURE 8: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO PRESENT PE, SPORT AND RECREATION

CONCLUSIONS

The selected samples of secondary schools in the four provinces could be regarded as inclusive by representing previously disadvantaged, as well as former Model C schools. Although more schools could be classified as urban, a fair number were situated in rural areas. In most schools the total number of learners ranged between 500 and 999.

Regarding secondary schools who had qualified PE teachers on their staff, it can be concluded that a greater percentage of SP than FETP teachers indicated that their schools had the services of qualified PE teachers. However, the teachers in the SP and the FETP of the current study did not necessarily teach the LO learning outcome, PE. The in-service training of LO teachers in the four provinces was mainly performed by the respective Provincial Departments of Education. Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) only featured in a few cases. In the SP and in the FETP most teachers who facilitated LO thought of the Learning Area/Subject to be of high importance.

A conclusion that relates to, yet contradicts, the number of qualified PE teachers on the staff of the secondary schools, especially in the SP, is that most teachers who facilitated PE were not qualified PE specialists. In the FETP, more LO teachers who facilitated PE were qualified in PE, but in a large number of secondary schools PE was not facilitated by a specialist in Grades 10 to 12. Most schools in the four provinces did not make use of "outside" persons or organisations to present PE. In contrast to the qualifications of LO teachers who facilitated PE, especially in the SP, most LO teachers of Grades 7 to 9 indicated that they knew how to assess the movement content. In the FETP this finding more or less correlates with the number of LO teachers qualified in PE.

More LO teachers in the SP, as opposed to the FETP, believed that the time allocated to PE on the school timetable was sufficient. This could relate to the previous finding regarding the qualifications of the LO teachers who facilitated PE. In the FETP more LO teachers who facilitated PE were PE specialists and would therefore know what the time requirements should be for learners to reap the benefits of PE.

The final conclusion regarding the curriculum was that the majority of LO teachers in both the SP and the FETP needed in-service training workshops to learn more about new developments in LO. Regarding facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation paradoxical findings were made. Most schools in both the SP and the FETP indicated that they did not have the necessary facilities and equipment. However, in subsequent questions it was established that a number of sporting codes were presented at the schools and that these schools did have facilities to present these sport codes. It could, however, be inferred that the secondary schools who indicated a shortage of facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation could have been the former disadvantaged schools in the four provinces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major problems experienced with the implementation of LO in secondary schools in the four provinces were qualified PE teachers, time on the school timetable for PE and facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation. These findings support those of Rooth

(2005), Christiaans (2006), Van Deventer (2008), Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008), Van Deventer (2009), Van Deventer *et al.* (2010). In the past much has been reported in the literature regarding subject specific training of teachers (Chisholm, 2000; Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2008; Blignaut, 2009; Bloch, 2009; Van Deventer, 2009, Van Deventer *et al.* 2010). In the *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement* even the DBE emphasised that there should be a strong *discipline-based* approach to school subjects (DBE, 2009:38).

In both the SP and the FETP, Life Orientation, as defined in the CAPS documents is not a discipline. In these phases PE is one of the many topics of LO (DBE, 2010a,b), which has major implications not only for the status of the subject, but more importantly for the total well-being of learners and of future generations. Jacobs (2011) clearly states that Grade 7 to 12 learners thought that LO was a waste of time that nothing new was learned and they hardly did any work. Life Orientation was a period where the learners could relax, do homework, or simply have a free period (Jacobs, 2011). This also impacts negatively on sport development, transformation within sport and the sport-for-all concept.

Life Orientation with its broad topics does not constitute a specific discipline and has major implications for PE Teacher Education (PETE) at HEI's for the simple reason that it is not a scientific discipline or field of study at HEI's. This is in contrast to a recommendation made by the DBE in 2009 that subject specific training is necessary (DBE, 2009). The benefits of PE for the learner, for future generations and for sport will only be realised when PE is explicitly re-instated as a stand-alone school subject.

The announcement in March 2011 that the DBE aims to promote mass participation in schools and facilitate the implementation of PE in schools is met with much scepticism (DBE, 2011). This political rhetoric has been heard in the days of the former Minister of Education, but nothing materialised. Again no plans on how *Action Plan 2014* is going to be implemented are provided and no indication is given as to who is going to finance the aims of the DBE. The DBE and HEI's need dialogue urgently to discuss their aims as announced in March 2011 and how the training of PE teachers will take place as announced. With a one-sided approach to Physical Education Teacher Education, history will repeat itself and the same situation regarding unqualified PE facilitators and the resultant negative impact on the health of the nation and sport development will continue. As stated earlier, the DBE aims to allocate time within the timetable in the CAPS for PE. In the SP (Grades 7-9) and in the FETP (Grades 10-12), 60 minutes per week is allocated for PE (DBE, 2010a,b). However, according to international standards 60 minutes per week is not sufficient to reap the health-related benefits of PE (Seghers *et al.*, 2009). At least three 60 minute periods of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity at secondary school level would be sufficient (Seghers *et al.*, 2009).

It is time that the SA government listens to the voices of the learners. One of the positive features that came out of the study of Jacobs (2011) was that the learners in Grade 7 to 12 regarded exercise as the only applicable aspect of LO to their daily lives. It was the only aspect that the learners experienced as positive and would like to see more of in LO (Jacobs, 2011). Maybe it is time that Government should come to the table as the Australian government did recently. As part of Australia's Building the Education Revolution (BER)

initiative, they have already embarked on a significant infrastructure upgrade by providing 16.2 billion Australian\$ for world-class educational facilities (AG, 2010). These facilities include multi-purpose halls, sports grounds and facilities to increase participation in physical and recreational activities (AG, 2010).

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