

3- Comparative study between Lebanese public high schools and French affiliated high schools' Physical Education and Sports Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Background: Physical education and sports' aim goes beyond improving students' motor skills, it allows for an improved overall physical and mental health.

Objective: This study aims at gathering data from two different "Physical and Sports Education" curriculum; The one adopted by the French affiliated high schools from one side, and that of Lebanese public high schools on the other side, and providing a synthesis and tangible recommendations for the improvement of the Lebanese curriculum.

Methodology: The study is a comparative review of two Physical and Sports Education' curriculum. It will shed light on various criteria from each curriculum or highlight the lack of thereof such as main objectives of the program, its content, assessment methods and so on. Results and conclusion: Given that we are nearing the end of the review process, results and recommendations will be presented at the conference.

Keywords: Physical Education and Sports, physical health, curriculum, high school, assessment, PES

Comparative study between Lebanese public high schools and French affiliated high schools' Physical Education and Sports Curriculum

Background:

Physical Education and Sports (PES)' aim goes beyond improving students' motor skills, it allows for an improved overall balanced physical and mental health.

In order to better understand how an education system operates, and more particularly the physical and sports education in this case, one needs to review its components, learning standards and objectives as well as its outcome. In fact, beside the improvement of motor skills, the main purpose of the PES is to enable students to develop their citizenship, their health conditions, and ability to form educated decisions among other benefits (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, 2019). It will also prepare them on how to collaborate, cooperate and interact with each other in a democratic way. It additionally sheds light on values and standards such as equality, respect of laws and regulations, recognition of one's right and developing a sense of patriotism (CRDP, 1990).

Objective:

This study aims at reviewing the content of two different "Physical education and Sports" curriculum; The one adopted by the French affiliated high schools from one side, and that of Lebanese public high schools on the other side, and providing a synthesis based on gathered data. The study will highlight the main weaknesses to be tackled in the Lebanese curriculum and provide recommendations for improvement knowing that physical education is considered a good investment for the free

time of Lebanese youth, helping them to get away from corruption, to blend in a healthy social context, and to express their emotions properly. Today more than ever, “sports language” is needed as it will unite all ideological, economic and social differences.

After which tangible recommendations for the improvement of the Lebanese curriculum are provided.

Methodology:

The study is a comparative review of two Physical Education and Sports' curriculum. It sheds light on various criteria from each curriculum or highlight the lack of thereof These include a comparison between general objectives, specific objectives, content, skills and competencies adopted in each curriculum as well as assessment methods where applicable in order to highlight its importance and relevance in reflecting the seriousness of the program.

Findings and discussion:

Throughout the review of both curriculum, we have summarized below our main findings on general objectives, specific objectives, content, acquired skills and competencies as well as assessment methods in order to discuss the resemblance and disparities among these two types of curriculum.

General objectives

When it comes to French affiliated high schools (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Jeunesse, 2019), the general objectives to be attained by the students can be summarized as follow:

- to develop their mobility
- to know how to prepare oneself and train properly

- to act responsibly at an individual and team level
- to sustainably develop their health
- to access cultural heritage
- They are well defined and straightforward, paving the path to a focused and well-structured content.

On the other side, the Lebanese public high school PES curriculum thoroughly describe objectives and divide them under various fields (CRDP, 1990). These are detailed in the following table:

In the field of education	In the field of physical & mental health
Creating an integrated person physically, mentally and emotionally.	Helping the harmonious growth of the body by improving its physiological efficiency, such as developing the efficiency of circulatory and respiratory systems, strengthening the nervous system, stimulating biomechanics mechanisms etc.
Promote the leadership and cooperative qualities of the individual	To improve, develop, and qualify the psychological, physical, and mental abilities in accordance with the learner's age, gender, and abilities in accordance with the stages of education to gain physical and social fitness.
Providing the individual with cognitive and behavioral experiences that help him to form an independent personality who interacts positively with society.	Improving the physical endurance and efficiency of the motor efforts, so that the learner gains physical stability when facing external variables.
Create calm reactions for the individual towards society, and that what games and exercises provide in terms of firmness and courage, efficiency and ability to exercise self-control and perseverance to reach goals.	Providing students with healthy habits by teaching them and practicing basic health principles.
Enhancing the sportsmanship of the individual, with the effect of physical education on self-refining and creation, which contributes to eliminating all kinds of violence and hatred.	Developing the habits of preserving the

	environment through activities and thus respecting nature.
In the field of skills	In the field of sports
Providing students with a set of necessary life skills and experiences.	Developing, promoting and disseminating school sport through clubs, with the aim of reaching national, regional and international sport.
Providing them with motor skills through practicing exercises, rhythmic movements, games and various activities, leading to balance, stability and compatibility in the muscle movement.	Promoting the national spirit and pride in the homeland through internal and external sporting successes
Enabling them to consciously control their physical effort, and to complete the work with the necessary accuracy and timing and in accordance with the specific mission, and imposed conditions.	Building a sports generation that has the necessary skills and knowledge, respects the sports laws and rules, and is characterized by a high moral level.
Giving them the ability to organize and manage activities in physical education.	To discover and train athletic talent to reach the championships and open fields in front of them so as to enhance the representation of Lebanon with competent champions who raise the name of sport in Lebanon.
Expanding the awareness of learners in the field of physical culture and drawing their attention to the importance of physical education lessons, so they take a positive attitude towards it, and accept it to automatically develop their technical and physical capabilities.	Expanding the horizons of sport, so as to secure new job opportunities for trainers in the field of physical education.
Strengthening the kinetic memory of students and developing their reactions to audio, visual and sensory signals.	Promoting sport to serve the economic interests of the country through the establishment of regional and international sports courses in Lebanon.
Providing students with knowledge of the effects of physical education on fitness, health and behavior, and the effects of negative and positive external factors on health and morals.	Create a national sporting atmosphere by contributing to the organization of national festivals.
	Promote rhythmic dance of all kinds to

Emphasizing that sports education is a pleasure that helps learners invest in their free time constructively and productively.

reach a world stage of dance as in developed countries.

Preserving the national sporting and folkloric heritage by promoting folk dances and including them in the physical education curriculum.

Emphasizing the importance of scouting activities because of their influence on groups in their national fusion and coexistence, and in benefiting from the nature of Lebanon while preserving it and using it for recreation.

Table 1: stratified main objectives of the Lebanese PES curriculum (CRDP, 1990)

One of the main reasons to list above detailed objectives is intended to point out the exaggeration when describing what will be attained and what are the expectations from the program. In fact, besides being redundant in theory, they are even more challenging in practice. when it comes to applying what is suggested, many challenges are faced especially in the context of public high schools in Lebanon. To list a few, the lack of resources, be it adequate space, material, tools, etc. or financial resources. It is also worth mentioning that some of the public high schools do not have the PES program within their curriculum for the previously mentioned arguments (Akiki, 2020).

Specific objectives in high school

Physical education at high schools level aims to make the learner acquire “*knowledge, skills and attitudes*”

Knowledge:

- Enriching their educational culture by identifying games, their laws, arbitration methods, and plans approved therein, and exposure to famous figures in the world of sports, as well as reviewing complex exercises in team games and activities.
- Awareness of the negative impact of bad health habits (drugs, alcohol, smoking ...).
- Gaining more information about proper leadership and organizing social service work inside and outside the school.
- Learning about the different exercises related to strength, muscle coordination and protection.
- Awareness of the importance of sport and its role in developing sports culture, a sense of motor advantage, and the acquisition of motor skills and physical fitness.
- Developing his information about practicing first aid in injuries.
- In depth learning about positive comfort.
- Tackling the types of efforts, methods of self-training, organizing and leading competitions.

Skills

This section will be detailed in the “building skills” section

Attitudes and trends

- Instilling sportsmanship and developing a tendency to cooperation and teamwork through correct behavior and participation in sports teams and in various group activities.
- Going to pursue a variety of sports hobbies to fill leisure time.
- Respecting and appreciating others and respecting democratic principles.

- The desire to achieve himself through developing his capabilities by watching games and practicing them in practice while respecting their rules and regulations.
- Participate in sports, excursions, camps and all matches.
- Respect for the opposite sex and move towards positive, honest and strong relationships. (CRDP, 1990)

Building skills

While the focus on skills is elaborated in specific objectives of the Lebanese curriculum, the curriculum of French affiliated high schools highlight “building skills” within the content of the program. In fact, their curriculum is structured in five learning fields as follow:

- "*Achieving maximum measurable motor performance by a given deadline*"

In this area, the student deliberately pushes his limits in a unique way or by repetition, as in races, jumps, throws, speed swimming

- "*Adapt your movement to varied or uncertain environments*"

In this area, the student examines his entourage and then modifies his movement accordingly in a secure manner for him and the others, such as in climbing, water rescue, mountain biking and orienteering.

- "*Perform a physical service intended to be seen and appreciated*"

In this area, the student manifests with his body in one of two ways: the first through expressive body performances that generate choreography; the second by forms of the body which generate a composition or a chain. As in dance, circus arts,

acrobatics and gymnastics. **Annex 1 is an example of an assessment of acrobatics session.**

• *"Lead and master a collective or interindividual confrontation to win"*

In this area, the student confronts individually or in a group to twist the favorable relationship in his favor. As in badminton, table tennis, French boxing, judo, basketball, football, handball, rugby and volleyball.

• *"Perform a physical activity in order to develop and maintain your resources"*

In this area, students engage in a lucid and autonomous manner in the development of their resources based on a chosen training theme. As in long-term running, weight training, long-term swimming, step and yoga (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, 2019).

The French curriculum also describe the resources needed to build these skills

There are three resources: capabilities, knowledge and attitudes. The first encourages efficiency, coordination, perception and interpretation of sensations, balance, the acquisition of mobility techniques. The second encourages analysis, understanding, identification, concentration, memorization, body training and physical practice. The third encourages engagement in social relations and then immerses oneself in social functions on the one hand those "which are inherent in physical sports and artistic activities (partner, opponent, referee, timekeeper, judge...); on the other hand, those which belong to the school culture and allow collaborative work and co-learning.

While in the Lebanese curriculum, the approach towards building skills is listed in the specific objectives section of the curriculum and are described hereafter:

Skills:

- Development and consolidation of skills previously acquired, that is, in stage (5 to 12) with an emphasis on:
 - a. First aid skills.
 - b. Mental skills necessary to properly participate in civic life.
 - c. Appropriate leadership skills and correct social behavior.
 - d. Communication skills - listening, expression, understanding and reaching a solution.
 - e. The right arbitration skills from attention, awareness, fairness, impartiality and issuance of the correct judgments.
 - f. Technical and motor skills for different sports.
 - g. Cooperation, sharing, interdependence and acceptance skills.
 - h. The skill of making the right choices for their future directions, based on their knowledge of themselves and their capabilities.
 - i. Self-evaluation skills of capabilities and energies.

Content and assessment methods:

In the Lebanese curriculum, the content is very minimalistic as to briefly describe in a table the following section in couple of sentences:

- The hub
- Knowledge
- Exercises
- Rhythmic movements
- Gymnastics

- The games
- Athletics
- Extra-curricular activities

The above sections remain the same from one year to another and the description change by scholar year. (CRDP, 1990). **Annex 2** is an example of the above information.

When it comes to the French curriculum content is developed thoroughly by learning field or what is called in french “*champ d’apprentissage*” where outcome and expectations from each field is well structured and specific to the learning filed.

The content also tackles how the evaluation is to be made, what are the pedagogic responsibility of teachers, and how the sports association is accessible to students.

When it comes to the evaluation or assessment, it is done by “learning field” on the expected outcome at the end of the year for each type of physical or artistic activity.

The content also describes the requirements to organize teaching PES in terms of how to:

- Ensure optimal teaching conditions
- Exploit the digital use of learning in PES
- Conceive and share a pedagogic project which operationalize the national program and defines the training challenges
- Share a project that proposes adapted didactic treatment to all students (fit, partially unfit, and presenting a case of disability)
- Integrate specific devices and unique organizations

All of the listed above is not available in the Lebanese PES high school curriculum. In fact, the Lebanese curriculum was first put in ideal standards back in 1979 and was then reviewed in 1990. Schools still adopt this version of the curriculum without any recent revision knowing that no budget nor resources neither proper infrastructure are available to be able to actually implement it.

There is also nearly a lack of training programs to teachers, and when they take place they are not mandatory. In addition, no proper follow up is done to ensure they apply new learning. On the other hand, the French curriculum is reviewed every couple of years; in fact, a focus group takes place to provide recommendations for a revised version of the curricula based on feedback reports from the teachers. Adjustments and changes are consequently made. Moreover, teachers performance is regularly audited and a mandatory continuous education program is developed to ensure quality updated PES curriculum is effective (Akiki, 2020).

Discussion and recommendations

Based on the above reviews and observations, it is necessary to have an assessment of needs as a first step; this is to be done throughout field visits to various Lebanese public high schools in order to check the physical facilities and availability of the adequate space, resources, tools, etc. based on which an action plan is to be elaborated and the curriculum is to be updated. In fact, findings will be reflected in what can be changed and done as an improvement, it will also highlight what cannot, at least on the short and medium run, be adopted in the curriculum.

Moreover, one of the key issue to be tackled in order to raise the perception of “the seriousness of the program” is to include it in the official grading system in high school and to take part in the official exams. That said, it is worth noting that some public schools do not have PES as part of the educational curriculum altogether.

On a final note, the reviewed and edited version of the curriculum needs to be customized to the Lebanese context on one side; but also it should be more elaborate in some sections as to include the above mentioned editions and assessment methods while remaining focused and well-structured to avoid any redundancies.

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