

A Practical Guide to Teaching Physical Education in the Secondary School

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Chapter 4

Long-term planning

Schemes of work

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INTRODUCTION

All the planned experiences which contribute to pupils' learning and development within the context and ethos of the school are generally referred to as the school curriculum. To plan a physical education curriculum effectively, you need to understand the mechanics of planning at three different levels: planning in the long term (schemes of work); planning in the medium term (units of work); and planning in the short term (lesson plans). However, definitions of what constitutes in particular long- and medium-term planning differ, resulting in an interchangeable use of terminology and subsequent confusion over how the physical education experience is or should be planned.

Although it is unlikely that at this stage of your teaching career you will be involved in long-term planning, it is important that you understand how your planning fits into the overall physical education curriculum. In this chapter we consider the influences that shape a school's overall physical education curriculum. In Chapter 5, we consider medium- and short-term planning.

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- understand the factors which influence planning in physical education and engage in a critical review of existing planning models;
- understand the constraints on a physical education curriculum and planning issues that result;
- analyse a physical education curriculum and determine the extent to which it presents pupils with a broad and balanced experience and takes account of continuity and progression;
- undertake the long-term planning of a physical education curriculum, taking account of statutory requirements.

Each school has a physical education policy which outlines the aims (the long-term intentions of the subject) and describes the objectives (the stepping stones or means of achieving those aims) of the subject. In writing the policy, staff have considered many factors which have an influence on the physical education curriculum experienced by pupils in the school, including:

- the school's ethos, values and aims;

- the ethos, values and aims of the physical education department;
- the statutory requirement (in England, the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE));
- the wider demands of the National Curriculum;
- the need to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which has both continuity and progression;
- the facilities available.

It is likely that you will bring with you certain philosophies and beliefs about your subject area which influence your views of teaching and learning in physical education (see Chapter 3). These will probably have been shaped to a large extent by the curriculum you experienced as a pupil.

The school's ethos, values and aims

Physical education, like all subjects, has to justify its place in what is seen by many to be an over-crowded curriculum. The value a school places on different subject areas is reflected in the priority and, in particular, the time, given to them.

Activity 4.1

How people in the school view physical education

Record the evidence from the various sources identified in Table 4.1 that give you insights into the value placed on physical education in your placement school and how it might influence the way in which the physical education curriculum is planned.

Table 4.1 How people in the school view physical education

<i>Form of evidence</i>	<i>Summary of findings</i>
Documents, e.g. school's prospectus, notice boards, newsletter, local paper	
Attitude of the head teacher towards physical education	
Attitude of the senior management team towards physical education	
Attitudes of the governors towards physical education	
Community links	
Extent of staff and pupil involvement in extracurricular activities	
Success of school in interschool competitions	

The ethos, values and aims of the physical education department

Another factor often considered significant is the traditions of the school and the expertise and interests of the members of staff. It is quite common for a school to recruit staff with particular expertise in an activity/area of activity in which the school is strong or wishes to develop a strength. Such factors have an influence on both the formal curriculum and the range of extracurricular activities offered. The advantage of this is that the school often develops a reputation in this activity and the enthusiasm of the members of staff has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes. The disadvantage is that there can be an imbalance and pupils miss out on experiencing a variety of contexts. Very often student physical education teachers are able to stimulate an interest in an activity while they are on placement which hopefully can be maintained when they leave the school. Now complete Activity 4.2.

Activity 4.2

Factors which influence the scheme of work in a physical education department

Ask your tutor the questions in Table 4.2 and fill in the Response column.

Table 4.2 Which factors influence the scheme of work in a physical education department?

Question	Response
How is the NCPE interpreted within the department's scheme of work?	
Do personal areas of expertise within the department determine what is included within the scheme?	
How does the scheme of work cater for the needs of different groups of pupils and individuals within those groups?	
How does the department's scheme of work respond to the Key Stage 3 strategy and Learning Across the Curriculum?	
How do available facilities and equipment influence the design of the scheme of work?	
What whole school factors influence the scheme of work?	
What government documents have been utilised to support the planning process and why and how?	
What other resources and sources of support are utilised when devising the department's scheme of work?	

The statutory requirements

Schools are guided to various degrees in what they are expected to teach. Within this context, in England, the National Curriculum and NCPE clearly defines what should underpin planning in physical education. It does this by giving weight to both the content of what pupils should learn and do (product) and how they learn it (the process).

The wider demands of the National Curriculum

Changing demands and new initiatives are influencing what we teach and how we teach it. Many of these place additional demands on the teacher, particularly the need to contribute to pupils' wider education through planned contributions to other aspects of learning (see Chapters 6, 7 and 9).

A broad and balanced curriculum which has both continuity and progression

When the National Curriculum for England was introduced in 1988, one of its explicit aims was to ensure that pupils experience 'a broad and balanced curriculum whilst demonstrating continuity and progression' (DES, 1987: 4). The application of these concepts in terms of the long-term planning in physical education is explored below.

Curriculum breadth and balance

If a school is meeting the requirements of the curriculum in terms of good practice in the range and content of activities they are offering pupils, then they should be providing a broad curriculum.

Having decided *what* to teach, it is necessary to decide *how much time* is to be devoted to each. However, as well as the amount of time devoted to each activity, balance refers to many other aspects of the curriculum, including the balance of planning how learning will take place in the broader dimensions of the curriculum (Chapters 6, 7 and 9). Areas of balance within physical education which may be considered are the balance of competitive and non-competitive/co-operative activities or the balance of individual and team activities. Balance could also be looked at in terms of the demands made upon the body, i.e. the extent to which curriculum planning ensures that over the long term there is a balanced use of the body.

Physical education departments, however, rarely have the luxury of providing totally the curriculum in which they would like to achieve balance. Facilities are one of the constraints. For example, the amount of indoor and outdoor space and availability of facilities such as a swimming pool will affect the range of activities which can be offered in the curriculum. Some facilities become unavailable at various times of the year. For example, large indoor spaces are often used for examinations and drama productions. Similarly, outdoor spaces may become unusable in the winter time. In England, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2002: 3) noted that 'one in five schools have inadequate access to specialist accommodation; a lack of indoor work areas, and outdoor play areas with poor drainage and poor standards of maintenance inhibit the programme that schools can offer'. It is important that for long-term planning purposes these constraints are taken into account, for example, by teaching indoor activities when the weather is likely to be inappropriate for teaching outside activities, such as the first half of the spring term.

Ofsted (2002: 3) noted that, 'Although in over half of schools there is a well-planned curriculum, the time allocation still favours games more than other aspects; to some extent this reflects limitations in accommodation, but also teacher preference.' Activities 4.3 and 4.4 ask you to identify the balance of work in the physical education curriculum and then add up the time spent on each activity.

Activity 4.3

The extent of breadth and balance in the physical education curriculum

Using Table 4.3, note all the activities that are taught in the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. Then complete Table 4.4, indicating the total time spent on each area of activity.

Table 4.3 Activities taught in Key Stages 3 and 4

Year	Autumn term		Spring term		Summer term	
	Activity	No. of weeks/ times	Activity	No. of weeks/ times	Activity	No. of weeks/ times
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						

Table 4.4 Total time spent on each area of activity

Area of activity	Hours: Key Stage 3	Hours: Key Stage 4
Athletics		
Dance		
Games		
Gymnastics		
Outdoor and adventurous activities		
Swimming		

Activity 4.4

Balance in the physical education curriculum

Using the data you gathered for Activity 4.3, as well as the school's schemes of work for physical education, complete Table 4.5 in relation to the various dimensions of balance identified above, and then using your findings, complete Table 4.6.

Table 4.5 Dimensions of balance

Question	Detailed answer
Is there a balance of focus on developing skills/performance; planning and applying decisions; evaluating and improving; and other outcomes over the long term?	
Do any of the activities receive a larger proportion of time than others?	
What is the balance of competitive and co-operative activities?	
Is there a balance of individual and team activities?	
Does the curriculum ensure there is a balanced use of the body?	

Table 4.6 Understanding the balance

Question	Answer
What are the reasons for the differences in curriculum balance?	
What is the rationale for choosing the activities offered?	
What are the practical constraints on offering certain areas of activity, e.g. staff expertise or lack of facilities?	

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

In considering long-term planning, it is also necessary to consider curriculum continuity and progression.

Using a dictionary definition of continuity as being a 'consistent line of development without any sharp breaks' Murdoch (2004: 287) considers that learning should be 'one logical, focused, seamless, smooth state of growth or advancement'. The important point is that planning should take account of what has gone before, so that new knowledge, skills and understanding builds on previous learning in a logical sequence.

Progression, on the other hand, concerns the sequencing of the content. It is based on the structures of the subject, with pupils progressing from initial to more mature forms of knowledge, skills and understanding. The concept is, according to Murdoch (2004: 288), 'that learning should take place over an extended period in steady stages that empower the learner to achieve more complex, better things'. Planning for progression is therefore a major aspect of any curriculum development. Effective planning involves carefully and deliberately sequencing the curriculum content and experiences that teachers intend learners to have. These plans should build on previous learning and achievements to promote future learning.

Now complete Activity 4.5 to analyse whether and how much continuity and progression are found within the physical education curriculum.

Activity 4.5

Critically analyse the extent to which continuity and progression exists within the physical education curriculum

Using the school's schemes of work for a Key Stage, look critically at the continuity and progression within one area of activity and complete Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Continuity and progression

Question	Answer
Is the activity continuous over all years within the Key Stage?	
Does planning of the area of activity over the Key Stage show progression across developing skills/performance; planning and applying decisions; evaluating and improving; and other outcomes?	
Do you feel the amount of time devoted to the activity per unit of work allows progression?	
What changes would you make to ensure better continuity and progression in this area of activity?	

SUMMARY

This chapter has looked at long-term planning in physical education. It has considered many of the factors that govern planning decisions. You have been asked to analyse, challenge and seek justifications for decisions made about the physical education curriculum. In undertaking this process you will have come to the realisation that there are many constraints on the curriculum and that a number of factors prevent us from delivering our ideal curriculum. In Chapter 5, we consider how our long-term plans can be transferred into medium-term unit of work and short-term individual lesson plans.

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FURTHER READING

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2010) *A Guide to Teaching Practice*, 5th edn, London: Routledge.

A major text which is easy to read and considers issues in planning that student teachers need to consider during school placements.

Ellis, V. (2011) *Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools (Achieving QTS)*, 4th edn, Exeter: Learning Matters.

Chapter 5 of this book provides a useful guide to long-term planning.

Note: all proformas, tables or figures you are asked to complete to help you undertake activities in this chapter are also available on the website which accompanies the book (www.routledge.com/9780415814829). ! ! !