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Professional paper

STANDARDS AND COMPETENCES – A NEW CORE CURRICULUM FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUXEMBOURG

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The new curriculum in physical education for secondary schools in Luxembourg (MENFP 2009) focuses on two aims¹. This dual mission consists on the one side in the education of the young people by the means of movement, play and sports. On the other side, pupils are educated to a responsible participation in movement, play and sports culture. The aptitude to participate and the ability to judge in the context of movement, play and sports as consistent elements of an active life style provides this second mission of physical education in school. Together, both aspects of body movement culture and education must be considered as completing one each other and have to be promoted in a same way.

The concept of this curriculum is based on the „Educating PE” („Erziehender Sportunterricht”), which is wide-spread in german-speaking countries. This concept is built around three main principles of quality, which are

- „miscellaneous perspectives” („Mehrperspektivität”), meaning the didactic differentiation of movement, play and sports under different aspects and perspectives,
- „reflection” („Reflexivität”), which consists in the learning of a certain ability to judge in action situations related to sportive activity, including the examination of the ambivalence of sports,
- self-directed autonomy („Selbsttätigkeit”), which should allow the young people a certain scope for development in sportive activities.

¹ The curriculum as a download in pdf-format and more information about the concept and its implementation can be found on <http://curriculum-sport.web.myschool.lu/>.

COMPETENCES AND COMPETENCE EXPECTATIONS

The new PE curriculum for secondary schools in Luxembourg is based on the concept of a multi-perspective PE like described by Kurz and his concept of pedagogical perspectives (2000). Compulsory minimal standards are described as „expected competences” at the end of three different learning cycles at the end of grade 9, grade 11 and grade 13. As said before, those standards are compulsory for all educational levels in all secondary schools in Luxembourg. These expected competences in Physical Education incorporate abilities and skills, attitude and mind-set, as well as knowledge. Furthermore, there can be made a distinction between essential and continuative competences, where as essential competences are prior to continuative competences.

The competences are grouped in six perspective-based areas of competences (fig. 1) and are not specific for any subject-related contents in form of sportive activities. In those areas the main aims of pupils’ competence development are described in different core competences.

Subject-related Competence Areas (CA)	
CA 1	Health and perception activities
CA 2	Social and integrative activities
CA 3	Skill and performance activities
CA 4	Play activities
CA 5	Creating and presenting activities
CA 6	Adventure and experience activities

Figure 1. Subject-related Competence Areas (MENFP, 2009, p. 6)

In the following, the core competences of the new curriculum are listed, with a precise representation of the competence area 1.

CA 1: Health and perception activities

Figure 2 shows the targeted competences of the competence area 1, focused by activities related to health and perception.

Competence Area 1 Health and perception activities			
Core competences	Skill expectations		
	At the end of grade 6 / 9	At the end of grade 4 / 11	At the end of grade 1 / 13
	Students ...		
(1) to interpret physical signals and act adequately	experience physical reactions under exposure and recovery	react adequately to physical signals under exposure and recovery	
	improve body awareness by varied movement experience		
(2) to preserve and increase physical capability	are aware of the need for warming up before exercise	arrange warm-up independently	are able to exercise independently and goal-oriented the fitness abilities strength and endurance
	stretch and vitalize functionally adequate		
	provide endurance performances and understand basic contexts in practice	improve their physical capacity	
	manage sensomotor challenges	deal critically with body ideals and fitness programs	
(3) to rate constitutional and adverse health effects of movement and sports	are aware of the importance of moving for the physical, mental and social well-being	deal health-consciously with their body on their own authority	counteract the negative impacts of specific (job-related) physical stress
		judge options to improve fitness	realize and reflect independently fitness improving measures
		learn basic relaxation techniques	reflect basic relaxation techniques

Figure 2. Competence area 1: Activities related to Health and Perception (MENFP, 2009, p. 10-11)

CA 2: Social and integrative activities

Core competencies of area 2:

- keeping, changing and configuring agreements and rules
- communicating and cooperating
- taking and configuring different parts
- taking responsibility for oneself and for others

CA 3: Skill and performance activities

Core competencies of area 3:

- providing motivation and improve individual skills
- estimating the capacity of one's own and dealing responsibly with the capacity of others
- detecting, changing and configuring criteria for efforts in sports

CA 4: Play activities

Core competencies of area 4:

- configuring and reflecting games
- discovering and using responsibly facility for play
- changing, inventing and configuring creatively games

CA 5: Creating and presenting activities

Core competencies of area 5:

- working out, extending and presenting basic forms of movement and movement feats
- estimating basic forms of movement and movement feats
- turning music and rhythm into movement

CA 6: Adventure and experience activities

Core competencies of area 6:

- estimating capacity and constraints and acting adequately
- detecting and estimating dangers and acting adequately
- configuring one's own movement activities sustainably

Finally, it can be said that in PE the main objective is to develop subject-related competencies systematically and gradually during the pupil's career in school, so that young people leaving school are able to handle problem-orientated situations in

the action field of movement, play and sports. Indicators, developed by PE teachers in their schools, and written down in the school-based curriculums, show if those standards have been provided by the pupils or not.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Furthermore, content standards are described in seven „movement fields”, or „movement areas”, with the objective to give an indication of the activities to be worked out in PE lessons. Figure 3 lists those areas, with a small description of the possible contents in the following. Different to older curriculums, there are not only common games or sports competitions which can be subject of PE lessons, but a much broader interpretation of the different areas allows the PE teachers to focus not only on the promotion of precise and specific sportive skills, but provides the necessary place to the development of social and transversal competences by the means of sportive activities.

Movement fields in Physical Education (MF)	
MF 1	Running, Jumping, Throwing
MF 2	Moving in water
MF 3	Moving on and with devices
MF 4	Creating, Dancing, Presenting
MF 5	Playing games
MF 6	Wrestling, Scuffling and Fighting
MF 7	Moving an rolling and sliding devices

Figure 3. Movement fields in Physical Education (MENFP, 2009, p. 38)

MF 1: Running, Jumping, Throwing

This movement area turns around track and field activities like running, jumping and throwing in different contexts. Of course, the competitive perspective of sportive activities is a main objective of those activities.

MF 2: Moving in water

Not only swimming in different styles, but also any other sportive activity possible in the context of water is focused in this area: lifesaving, synchronised swimming, water polo, aqua gym and aqua jogging.

MF 3: Moving on and with devices

Apparatus gymnastic activities represent the main activities in this field, with movements like balancing, climbing, firming up, jumping, bouncing, swinging,

bending round, rotating, flipping over, etc. on devices like high bar, parallel bars, etc. It includes also modern aspects of these movements like in activities as „parkour” or „freerunning”.

MF 4: Creating, Dancing, Presenting

With a focus on a creative and presenting perspective on sportive activities, this area contents rhythmic activities like dances, hip-hop, jazz-dance and rope skipping i. e., but also acrobatic activities including juggling, etc.

MF 5: Playing games

The improvement of play skills is one main objective of the activities or games in this movement field. On the other side, the focus lays on social competences, like cooperation, communication, the respect of rules, etc. Traditional and in Luxembourg popular collective games like football, basketball, handball and volleyball may be in the focus, just like alternative games, like baseball, flag football, rugby, Gaelic football, ultimate, intercrosse, etc. in their soft school-adapted versions.

MF 6: Wrestling, Scuffling and Fighting

Wrestling and fighting in any different school-adapted ways may be worked out in this area, with a focus on the pupils measuring their force with each other. Respecting rules, respecting each other, controlling one’s emotions are further very important aims of this movement field.

MF 7: Moving an rolling and sliding devices

Cycling, very popular in Luxembourg since ever, is one activity in this area, with, if possible, skiing, surfing, canoeing, etc. as further possible activities.

PUPILS ASSESSMENT

To be complete, the three areas in which the assessment of the pupils’ outcomes takes place are listed in figure 4.

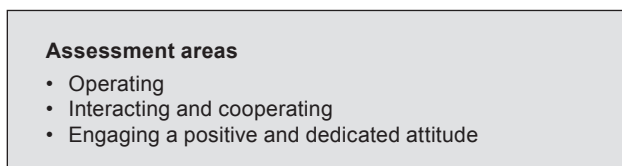


Figure 4. Assessment areas (MENFP, 2009, p. 48)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW CURRICULUM CONCEPT

In the following, five pedagogical principles of the new curriculum concept are listed and shortly being discussed, as seen in Stibbe & Ingelmann (2009, p. 18-20).

Core curriculum

The new curriculum for secondary schools in Luxembourg consists in a core curriculum fixing not every detail of PE and the contents of PE. Therefore, it is very important that school-based curriculum work takes place, and PE teachers of any schools work out in cooperation their own individual school curriculum. So a cooperative development of pedagogical ideas in a subject-focussed perspective takes place in the schools themselves. This allows a standard-orientated development of PE with as a main objective to help children and young people to attend the in the core curriculum described compulsory competencies.

Minimum standards

Not rule standards on an average standard level like in Germany, but minimal exigencies which any pupil has to attend are described in the curriculum.

General-comprehensive standards

Not on one precise sportive activity focused standards and competencies are described, but general and comprehensive competencies in the sense of potentially developable in any sportive activity.

Development of a subject-related competence model

The competencies are formulated in competence areas based on the concept of pedagogical perspectives of Kurz (2000, see also Kurz, 2008, p. 31-35). This idea is supported by the actual didactic discussion in German-speaking countries. Furthermore, the described competence expectations are subject-based and can only be worked out in physical education. Finally, the fact that the competences are comprehensive allows emphasising not too much specified contents and contents in general.

Educating PE

This curriculum is not a concept based on skill oriented sportive activities, but much more: as a pedagogical motivated concept of PE as an educating subject it can be described as innovative, modern and pedagogically ambitious

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ABSTRACT

Since September 2009 a new curriculum in physical education applies in secondary schools in Luxembourg. This core curriculum is based on the concept of educating physical education and provides minimal expected competencies in six competence areas. To achieve these competencies in classes, PE teachers in schools can revert to physical activities described in seven movement fields. Further main characteristics of the new curriculum are the general-comprehensive nature of the described competencies and the subject-related competence model based on physical education activities.

Key words: *Educating Physical Education – Core curriculum – Minimal standards – PE competencies – Content standards – Movement fields*