



CHAPTER 4

Global Policy: Holistic Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education Evolution

When considering Quality Physical Education (QPE) implementation in primary/elementary and secondary schools and subsequent child well-being, the promotion of health is of major significance. Hence, this chapter relates to various elements of quality physical education (cf. Figure 1.2) including Curriculum, teaching and learning; Whole child development; School implementation; and Strength-based community partnerships. The Health within Physical Education (PE) has impacted many parts of the world as evidenced by curriculum policy; the Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education (H, W & PE) revolution has and continues to grow globally. Furthermore, the worldwide survey of school PE found that countries of ‘Best Practice’ had a common theme relating to “promotion of health and healthy lifestyles” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 10). Hence, when considering quality physical education (QPE) implementation in primary/elementary and secondary schools around the world, the promotion of health is salient.

The volume of holistic HPE literature found in international, peer-reviewed journal articles and research books suggests that Australia has led the way in HPE nomenclature and curriculum reform (Lynch, 2016). In Australia, the HPE Framework document is described as an ‘ideal’ policy document (Hickey et al., 2014), more specifically, it is a public

incremental educational policy (Dinan-Thompson, 1998) that has gradually been enacted by Australian schooling systems over the last 25 years (Lynch, 2005, 2014; Macdonald, 2013).

Policies are a matter of the ‘authoritative allocation of values’, the operational statements of values, or ‘statements of prescriptive intent’ (Kogan, 1975, p. 55). The HPE national curriculum provides a flexible framework conceptualised as text (Penney, 2014). “Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (Dye, 1984, p. 1). Text or written curriculum is defined by Goodson (1988, p. 9) as:

- an important part of a consolidated ‘state’ system of schooling;
- setting ‘standards’ and defining statements of intent and
- providing clear ‘rules of the game’ for educators and practitioners, parameters but not prescriptions.

Australian Education Departments’ health and wellbeing outcomes, frameworks and statements all directly relate to the Health and Physical Education learning area:

In Health and Physical Education students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to support them to be resilient, to develop a strong sense of self, to build and maintain satisfying relationships, to make health-enhancing decisions in relation to their health and physical activity participation, and to develop health literacy competencies in order to enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing. (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 2)

As discussed in Chapter One, the gap in practice that modern research illustrates is that PE implementation is not progressing (unlike educational policies). This is the case for many countries across the globe, whether or not they combine Health with Physical Education and espouse holistic education. Hence, although Australia has promoted an inclusive, holistic approach to H, W and PE over the last 25 years, PISA data indicates there is room for improvement in the curriculum’s implementation. Australian 2022 PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) were above the OECD average for making friends easily at school, 78% (OECD average: 76%) and below the OECD average for feeling that they belong at school, 70% (OECD average: 75%) (cf. Table 4.2, p. 63). Also, 18% reported feeling lonely at school and 21% like an outsider or left

out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%) (OECD, 2023b), which was above the OECD average but was not statistically significant.

The holistic health and wellbeing shift is not unique to Australia, as identified by other developed countries, but not all. This is further evidenced by the OECD Future of Education 2030: Making Physical Education Dynamic and Inclusive for 2030 Report; “Physical and health education curriculum reform has become a policy focus in many OECD and partner countries and jurisdictions looking to promote student health and well-being” (OECD, 2019, p. 3). For this report a comparative study was conducted across 18 countries and jurisdictions. The OECD countries/jurisdictions participating were Australia, Chile, England (UK), Estonia, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Norway, Ontario (Canada), Portugal, Scotland (UK), Switzerland, Turkey and Wales (UK). The other four partner countries/jurisdictions were China, Hong Kong (China), Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Data was gathered through various means including “desktop research, international working groups, an international comparative survey on physical education, and national/jurisdictional case studies with input from experts, academics, policymakers, teachers and school leaders” (OECD, 2019, p. 3). Australia, Ontario [Canada], China, Japan, Korea, and Wales [UK] reported including health education content, mainly combined within physical education, in one subject (OECD, 2019).

This is supported by literature which suggests holistic Health & Physical Education (HPE) philosophy has been adopted by the US (Lynch, 2016), Canada (Kilborn et al., 2016) and parts of the UK (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). In the US, similar to Australia, each state controls education policy and curriculum implementation; hence, it differs in quality between states and between schools. While there is no national curriculum as such, there is a National Framework for Physical Activity and Physical Education known as the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP). The National Framework (CSPAP) is supported by National Initiatives which has included ‘Let’s Move! Active Schools’ (LMAS), ‘Presidential Youth Fitness Program’ (PYFP), the ‘CDC’s (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) State Public Health Actions Program’ and ‘CDC Healthy Schools’.

CDC Healthy Schools works with states, school systems, communities, and national partners to prevent chronic disease and promote the health and well-being of children and adolescents in schools. The Whole School

Whole Community Whole Child (WSCC) model is our framework for addressing health in schools. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023)

According to the OECD PISA results for students' sense of belonging which is indicative of health and wellbeing; in 2022, 75% of students in the US reported that they make friends easily at school (OECD average: 76%) and 70% felt that they belong at school (OECD average: 75%). Meanwhile, 22% reported feeling lonely at school, and 24% like an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%) (OECD, 2023ff). This was an improvement across all areas when compared to 2018 results but it did not change significantly. In 2022, 21% of students in Canada reported feeling lonely at school, and 21% like an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%) (OECD, 2023f).

In the UK, Wales introduced wellbeing over 10 years ago, influenced by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and "showed a greater commitment to cross-curricular links" (Griggs, 2012, p. 4). Health and Wellbeing is one of six areas of learning and experience in Wales (HWB, 2024). In Scotland Health and Wellbeing includes: physical education, physical activity and sport; mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing; planning for choices and changes; food and health; substance misuse and relationships, sexual health and parenthood (Griggs, 2012; Scottish Government, 2024). It is important to note that the UK consists of four constituent countries; Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England. Each nation has its own unique education curriculum. Furthermore, the requirements of becoming a teacher and school leader change from nation to nation. England has 56, 536, 000 people which is 84% of the UK's population (67, 026, 000) (Office for National Statistics, 2024). Therefore, the UK results are a better reflection of England than any other UK country. In 2022, 25% of students in the UK reported that they were not satisfied with their lives. In 2018, about the same number of students were not satisfied with life (26%) (OECD, 2023ee). Students not satisfied, rated their satisfaction with life between 0 and 4 on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. Students' satisfaction with life, more generally, declined in many countries and economies over recent years. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of students who are not satisfied with life increased from 11% in 2015 to 16% in 2018 and 18% in 2022.

Other nations such as New Zealand have a ‘Health and Physical Education’ key learning area—“where the focus is on well-being of the students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health-related and movement contexts” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2014). The latest OECD PISA results for New Zealand students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) were consistent with 2018. In 2022, almost one-quarter of students (23%) indicated they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD average: 18% in 2022).

Asian nations have experienced a shift towards H, W & PE, this includes the largest and most populous country in the world; China (OECD, 2019). China’s education has experienced deep reforms to the curriculum and examinations which have involved:

- government’s abandonment of a system built around “key schools” for a small elite for the development of a more inclusive system;
- all students are expected to perform at high levels;
- greatly raising teacher pay and upgrading teacher standards and teacher education;
- reducing the emphasis on rote learning;
- increasing the emphasis on deep understanding, the ability to apply knowledge to solving new problems and the ability to think creatively;
- greater curricular choice for students and more latitude for local authorities to decide on examination content (OECD, 2010, p. 83).

In 2001 China shifted from its traditional sports performance-oriented PE curriculum to a more holistic PE and Health curriculum. “Not unlike recent changes in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, this process has seen a heightening of the emphasis on health” (Hickey & Jin, 2010, p. 19). According to Jin the Chinese shift towards a H, W and PE holistic approach had similar challenges to other nations during enactment; as it “challenges many aspects of traditional PE theory and practices, and requires PE teachers to change their professional perspectives and pedagogic approaches” (Jin, 2013, p. 15). Jin researched teachers’ perspectives on PE curriculum reform in China and found barriers:

All eighteen PE teachers expressed their support for the fundamental goal of putting more emphasis upon health promotion in the new HPE curriculum. It is fair to say that the interviewed teachers, viewed as a group,

overwhelmingly endorsed the broad direction of the new HPE curriculum. However, the data reveals a number of structural, personal and cultural factors that might prevent PE teachers from actively implementing the new HPE curriculum. (p. 15)

This drive for holistic PE curriculum reform continues to grow as the Chinese State Council promised to “further promote physical education in schools and improve students’ physical health” (The State Council, 2016). The document advocated inclusive teaching; “Schools for the physically challenged should vary their physical education lessons to fit the needs of different kinds of disabilities and guarantee every student could enjoy their right to exercise”. It also advocated community ‘strengths-based’ partnerships.

China developed ‘Healthy China 2030’: From Vision to Action, where “President Xi Jinping has put health at the centre of the country’s entire policy-making machinery, making the need to include health in all policies an official government policy” (WHO, 2024).

Healthy China 2030 is a breakthrough for ensuring that the Chinese population has access to health, through advocating the whole society’s participation in the concept of "Health for All, and All for Health." The plan puts forward five strategies such as popularizing healthy life, optimizing the health service, improving health protection, building a healthy environment, and developing healthy industry, from the perspectives of health effects of personal life and behaviour, health care and security, production, and the living environment. (Tan et al., 2019, p. 96)

China’s progress report on implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (Center for International Knowledge for Development, 2021) states “The Healthy China initiative has been implemented in great depth to improve the capacity of all-round and whole-cycle health services” (p. 34).

The latest OECD PISA results for Chinese students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) where data was collected include Macao and Hong Kong. The Chinese provinces/municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang were participants in PISA 2022 also (OECD, 2023a). In 2022, 16% of students in Hong Kong (China) reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023k). Also, in the same year, 18% of students in Macao (China) reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023gg). These results were lower

(Hong Kong, China) and the same (Macao, China) as the 2022 OECD average of 18%, suggesting that the promotion of holistic health approach underpinned by the Healthy China initiative is having a positive influence.

The drive for holistic PE and health curriculum reform appears to be consistent throughout many Asian countries:

The economic growth witnessed in many countries in Asia has led to significant changes in cultural and social practices. As people become more affluent, their lifestyles and habits reflect their shifting priorities and spending power. In general, people in urban Asia have grown more sedentary in tandem with greater technological advances that offer an escape from physical work and exercise. This trend has raised the concerns of educators who have noted a declining interest in physical education and sports in schools. Educational institutions play an important role in improving the health and well-being of their students, especially through their physical education, sports and recreation programmes. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008, p. iii)

UNESCO led the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) in the Asia and Pacific region. “To achieve the goals of the Decade, UNESCO strongly advocates[d] the development of the intellectual capacity, morals and ethics, emotional maturity and physical well-being of children and youth, enabling them to become responsible citizens and leaders of the future” (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008, p. iii).

Within Asia, Singapore has ‘Physical Education’ and Health Education is embedded within (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2016). The Singapore education evolution to become one of, if not the most successful education system in the world is investigated in Chapter 9; The Power of Lifelong Wellbeing and Academic Learning: The Singapore Model. The latest OECD PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) was consistent with the OECD average. However, 19% reported feeling lonely at school, and 20% like an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%) (OECD, 2023z).

Brunei Darussalam has adopted a 21st Century National Curriculum consisting of nine key learning areas, which includes Health and Physical Education (Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam, 2013). Extending PE to ‘Health and Physical Education’ corresponded with the aim of the curriculum reform—to address issues relating to the whole child. PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing):

In 2022, only 59% of students in Brunei Darussalam reported that they felt that they belong at school (OECD average: 75%). Meanwhile, 24% reported feeling lonely at school, and 31% like an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%). Also, 26% of students in Brunei Darussalam reported that they were not satisfied with their lives. (OECD, 2023d)

Similarly, neighbouring nation Malaysia also promotes a holistic curriculum, specifically in primary education they aim “at ensuring the overall, balanced and integrated development of a child’s potential—which includes intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects” (UNESCO, 2011h, p. 15). This stipulates enabling pupils to look after their health and physical fitness. Health and Physical Education is embedded within Arts and Recreation (along with Music and Art) where the “elements of Health are incorporated within Physical Education” (UNESCO, 2011h, p. 16). PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) were consistent with the OECD average. In 2022, 80% of students in Malaysia reported that they make friends easily at school (OECD average: 76%) and 75% felt that they belong at school (OECD average: 75%) (OECD, 2023s).

This is a similar curriculum situation being offered in the Philippines (UNESCO, 2011j). The PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) in the Philippines in 2022 indicated that 83% of students in the Philippines make friends easily at school (OECD average: 76%) and 84% felt that they belong at school (OECD average: 75%) (OECD, 2023v).

The first aim of education in Japan is that it should “foster an attitude to acquire wide ranging knowledge and culture, and to seek the truth, cultivate a rich sensibility and sense of morality, while developing a healthy body” (UNESCO, 2011g, p. 2). Japanese elementary schools have ‘Physical Education’ as a subject and Health Education is embedded within (similar to Singapore) (OECD, 2019). However, in Lower Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education, the curriculum is titled ‘Health and Physical Education’ (UNESCO, 2011g, p. 19). This is a similar curriculum structure to Nepal (UNESCO, 2011i). For the PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) in Japan (2022), 86% felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%), only 10% reported feeling lonely at school, and 6% liked an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average: 16% and 17%). (OECD, 2023q).

Thailand also has the holistic Health and Physical Education subject area in education (primary and secondary) which includes “human growth and development; life and family; movement, physical exercises, games, Thai and international sports; strengthening of health, capacity and disease prevention; and protection from various risk behaviours” (UNESCO, 2011n, p. 22). The PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) in Thailand (2022), indicated that only 13% of students were not satisfied with their lives [OECD average: 18%] (OECD, 2023cc).

Cambodian education has ‘Health and Physical Education and Sport’ as their subject area with the goal of “improving and maintaining their own physical and mental health and to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of the health of their families and wider society” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 13). PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) in Cambodia (2022) indicated that only 9% of students were not satisfied with their lives [OECD average: 18%] (OECD, 2023e).

Indonesia is similarly titled ‘Physical Education, Sports and Health’ across both elementary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2011e). The PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) in Indonesia (2022), indicated that 87% of students make friends easily at school (OECD average: 76%) and 86% felt that they belong at school (OECD average: 75%). In 2022, 14% of students in Indonesia reported that they were not satisfied with their lives [OECD average: 18%] (OECD, 2023n).

In India “Health and Physical Education must be an integrated part of schooling at the elementary level” as well as at secondary schooling. The aim of the HPE curriculum is “To provide the required theoretical and practical inputs in order to provide an integrated and holistic understanding and developing positive attitudes, values, skills and behaviour related to health and physical education at the primary, secondary and senior secondary levels” (National Council of Educational Research & Training of India, 2024, p. 3). This is a similar curriculum situation being offered in Sri Lanka (UNESCO, 2011m). Both India and Sri Lanka choose not sit the PISA choose not to sit the PISA assessments.

In Europe, unlike Asia, there has not been as clear a presence of holistic education in regard to PE curriculum and nomenclature. For example, in England, the curriculum area is only Physical Education (Department of Education, 2024). While there is Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) as a subject in England, it was “not statutory and therefore schools had the autonomy to decide on what and how

they implement these guidelines” (Department for Education, 2016). However, from 2020 Relationship education in primary schools, Relationship and sex education in secondary schools and Health Education in state-funded primary and secondary schools were made compulsory in England (Department for Education, 2019).

As emerging trends, many participating OECD countries and jurisdictions indicate a general shift towards a more inclusive curriculum that balances competition and sports with other less competitive dimensions in physical education... A notable exception to this trend is England (United Kingdom), where competitive sports are becoming an increasingly central component in the national physical education curriculum. (OECD, 2019, p. 54)

The PE national curriculum for England has been described in the past as a ‘dominant performance-oriented curriculum with its accompanying behaviourist inclined pedagogical approach’ (Thorburn et al., 2011, p. 393); behavioural to the degree that “official guidance from the department of education advise teachers to use physical activity as punishment in schools—to discipline misbehaviour with forced exercise” (Curran, 2014; Department for Education, 2014). However, this does appear to be circumstantial, as the previous national curriculum draft purported a holistic approach. It proceeded the Rose Review and was suitably titled ‘Understanding Physical Development, Health and Wellbeing’. This holistic H, W & PE curriculum, however, was discarded in 2010 with the change of government (Griggs, 2012). Notably, it can be argued that it planted the seed for future reform as Health education is now compulsory. “Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa” (Ofsted, 2021).

Furthermore, in the UK the health and wellbeing gap created by having optional PSHE, appeared to have been momentarily filled by the Physical Literacy concept which as argued has contributed to blocking curriculum policy in PE from reaching children in schools (Lynch & Soukup, 2016, 2017); “England, Canada and Wales are listed as having the most established physical literacy initiatives” (Corbin, 2016, p. 15), but there are confusing and problematic aspects which are addressed in Chapter 7 (cf. p. 105). It is of no surprise that the children in the countries who promote physical literacy or have adopted the term in

curriculum (US) are according to Curran “among the unhealthiest in the world” (2014; UNICEF, 2007), which suggests physical literacy may have been a reactive adoption, rather than proactive, strategic forward planning.

The PE curriculum in many European countries does appear to correspond to tradition which is detailed in Chapter 7. Hence, when it comes to learning through the physical, many countries in Europe do what has always been done; change is slow or non-existent. Germany has sports as a subject in primary education (and General Lower Secondary (European Commission, 2019c). In 2022, 22% of students in Germany reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023j).

France has physical and sports education, again with no connection to health (European Commission, 2019b). In 2022, 16% of students in France reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023i). Greece also has Physical Education which is related to mental health (not a holistic connection to health) (European Commission, 2019d). Compared to 2018, students’ sense of belonging at school declined in Greece. In 2022, 19% of students in Greece reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023k).

Italian primary education has sports education (European Commission, 2019e). Iceland, Poland, Spain and Romania refer to a PE curriculum only and again have no connection to health. In 2022, only 64% of Italian students felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%) and 18% of students in Italy reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023p). Whereas, in 2022, 17% of students in Iceland reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023m) and in the same year, 64% of students in Iceland felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%) (OECD, 2023w). In Spain, in 2022, 86% of the students felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%). In 2022, 15% of students in Spain reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023aa). Romania had similar findings, however, only 50% felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%), whereas, only 11% of students in Romania reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023y).

There are, however, many European countries that acknowledge a holistic H, W & PE curriculum in either nomenclature or structure. This includes Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden. Ireland has Physical Education which aims to “promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development

of the child" (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 10) which is similar to Northern Ireland who have 'physical education' and 'personal development and mutual understanding' as two of the six areas of learning in the primary curriculum (Department of Education, 2024). Scotland's curriculum area is titled Health and Wellbeing (European Commission, 2019f) and Switzerland and Sweden also have Health and Physical Education in nomenclature.

The current Swedish PEH curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011) includes not only a focus on physical but also mental health, as well as social well-being, along with aspects of democracy and societal values. Importantly, this broader notion of health is directed towards enhancing pupils' capacity to contribute to the development of society, where the core Swedish societal values of democracy, equity and social justice are particularly emphasised. (Gerden & Schenker, 2022)

In the Netherlands the promotion of physical activity is part of a healthy school programme (Lucassen & Dijk, 2020).

Finland's curriculum integrates wellbeing through all areas of teaching and learning; they have health education and physical education as separate subject areas, however, acknowledge the holistic development of the child as a foundation throughout a healthy life (UNESCO, 2011c). A research review by Yli-Piipari (2014) concluded that "physical education has a solid foundation in Finnish schools and it enjoys strong support in Finnish society" (p. 1). In 2022, 11% of students in Finland reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023h). Students' sense of belonging at school did not change significantly in Ireland. In 2022, 19% of students in Ireland reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023o). In 2022, only 7% of students in the Netherlands reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023u) and in the same year, 14% of students in Switzerland reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023bb). Similarly, students' sense of belonging at school improved in Sweden. In 2022, 16% of students in Sweden reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD,).

Finland is a progressive nation when it comes to education and was identified as world leaders (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The national core curriculum (2016) has instruction based on Steiner pedagogy, embedded within a constructivist curriculum approach (cf. p. 24). Furthermore,

context is prioritised, the curriculum is closely aligned with the twenty-first-century lifelong learning skills (cf. p. 26) and innovation in delivery is encouraged (European Commission, 2019a).

Hence, similar to Australia, they advocate genuine school and community partnerships through curriculum implementation: developing schools as learning communities; emphasising the joy of learning; emphasising a collaborative atmosphere and promoting student autonomy in studying and in school life (European Commission, 2019a).

The guidelines for developing school culture are specified in the national core curriculum. The goal is to build a school culture that promotes learning, interaction, participation, well-being and a sustainable way of living. The principles that guide the development of the school culture emphasise the school as a learning community. In addition, an aim to ensure the well-being and safety of every pupil.

Schools must provide opportunities for experimentation, exploration, active learning, physical activity and play. Cultural diversity and language awareness are also key principles that guide the development of the school culture. The use of various languages in the school's daily life is seen as natural, and languages are appreciated. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014)

African nations are also mixed with many countries shifting towards a holistic H, W & PE curriculum. Nations such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Uganda, Sudan, Malawi, Namibia and Tanzania have Physical and Health Education and advocate a holistic approach to its implementation. However, there are countries such as Kenya, Botswana, Chad, Zimbabwe and Zambia who offer Physical Education in the primary school with no explicit connections to health (UNESCO, 2011).

Many Middle Eastern countries have also shifted to a holistic HPE in schools. Afghanistan's primary education includes PE and health education (UNESCO, 2011e). Islamic Republic of Iran has PE and has 'Science and Health' as a separate subject in their primary curriculum (UNESCO, 2011f) and recently, the United Arab Emirates have experienced a holistic HPE curriculum reform;

The Ministry of Education has designed a brand new Physical and Health Education curriculum to meet the individual needs of each student and will be implemented in all government schools from January 2017. The objective is to empower young Emirati students to take ownership of their

physical education, health and wellbeing to ensure a future generation of healthy, motivated, highly educated Emiratis. (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2017)

Bahrain advocates a holistic primary education; “developing the children physically, mentally, morally, socially, and emotionally, and providing them with the basic general education and skills required to be good citizens”, however, has PE (with no health) in the curriculum (UNESCO, 2011a). In 2022, 19% of students in the United Arab Emirates reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023dd).

Other similar nations include Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Egypt and Qatar (UNESCO, 2011l). In 2022, 23% of students in Jordan reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023r). In the same year, 69% of students in Qatar felt that they belonged at school (OECD average: 75%) and 21% of students reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023x).

Countries in Central and South America such as Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina all advocate PE with no Health subjects or curriculum connections. In 2022, 26% of students in Mexico felt like an outsider or left out of things at school (OECD average:17%) and 14% of students in Mexico reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023t). However, 19% of students in Brazil reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023c), 23% of students in Chile reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023g) and 22% of students in Argentina reported that they were not satisfied with their lives (OECD,).

There are countries with no PE or health, such as Vanuatu in Oceania (International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance (ICHPER-SD, 2014)). However, most nations in Oceania have been heavily influenced by Australia and New Zealand’s shift towards holistic H, W & PE. The Cook Islands has Health Education and Physical Wellbeing (includes Physical Education and Health) (UNESCO, 2011b) and Samoa has Health and Physical Education in their primary curriculum (UNESCO, 2011k).

The PISA results for students’ sense of belonging (wellbeing) from the various countries are influenced by many contextual variables that make it difficult for comparisons to be made. Variables that may be beyond the school’s control, such as the weather, religion and culture of the country. However, all nations and jurisdictions’ results, despite their philosophy

Table 4.1 Countries who do not identify connections between PE and Health within their curriculum policies

Country	<i>I make friends easily at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel like I belong at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel lonely at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school (%)</i>	<i>Not satisfied with their lives (%)</i>
OECD average	76	75	16	17	18
UK	75	64	16	19	25
Germany	69	76	12	12	22
France	80	73	15	25	16
Greece	75	78	14	16	NA
Italy	76	64	14	13	18
Iceland	77	80	14	13	17
Poland	71	64	21	24	24
Spain	78	86	12	12	15
Romania	83	50	17	15	11
Mexico	69	78	25	26	14
Brazil	70	76	27	19	19
Chile	63	72	27	26	23
Argentina	73	78	22	26	22
Average	74	72	18	19	19

for H, W and PE in schools, curriculum documents and depth of implementation, have areas of belonging and wellbeing requiring further focus for improving the learning experience of the children. Having noted this, it is interesting to investigate the average results for the countries that do not identify connections between PE and Health within their curriculum policies (Table 4.1) with the countries who either combine or promote health and healthy lifestyles in their PE/HPE curriculum (Table 4.2).

In Table 4.1 on average the countries explored in this chapter who do not promote connections between PE and Health in their curriculum policies, when compared with the OECD countries average are: less likely to make friends easily at school, less likely to feel like they belong at school, more likely to feel lonely at school, more likely to feel left out at school and more likely to not be satisfied with their lives. However, these results are not statistically significantly above/below the OECD average.

In Table 4.2 on average the countries explored in this chapter who do combine or promote strong connections between PE and Healthy

Table 4.2 Countries with a strong promotion of health and healthy lifestyles in curriculum policies

Country	<i>I make friends easily at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel like I belong at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel lonely at school (%)</i>	<i>I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school (%)</i>	<i>Not satisfied with their lives (%)</i>
OECD average	76	75	16	17	18
Australia	78	70	18	21	NA
US	75	70	22	24	NA
Canada	75	72	21	21	NA
New Zealand	75	68	21	22	23
Thailand	84	76	20	18	13
Hong Kong (China)	75	68	20	24	16
Cambodia	77	81	24	26	9
Macau (China)	75	80	19	18	18
Indonesia	87	86	16	13	14
Singapore	77	73	19	20	NA
Japan	75	86	10	6	25
Brunei Darussalam	70	59	24	31	26
Philippines	83	84	28	28	17
Malaysia	80	75	22	18	17
Finland	77	79	13	12	11
Ireland	81	71	14	14	19
Netherlands	83	70	9	10	7
Switzerland	79	79	12	12	14
Sweden	79	70	15	16	16
United Arab Emirates	75	71	22	27	19
Jordan	77	76	22	32	23
Qatar	76	69	22	25	21
HW&PE revolution average	78	74	18.5	20	18.2

lifestyles in their curriculum policies, when compared with the OECD average are: more likely to make friends easily at school, less likely to feel like they belong at school, more likely to feel lonely at school, more likely to feel left out at school and more likely to be satisfied with their lives. However, these results are not statistically significantly above/below the OECD average.

There is clearly a global shift to a holistic constructivist approach in H, W and PE curriculum policy. However, there is a need for continued efforts in this process. Questions are raised regarding how effectively this curriculum reform is being implemented or enacted within schools around the globe.

REFLECTION

In this chapter the Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education (H, W & PE) revolution is proposed and discussed. Think about your context. Where would you position your context in relation to promoting health and healthy lifestyles? How strong are the connections in your curriculum policies? In the details and data presented, which country/ies did you find surprising? Why were you surprised? What percentage of community members do you think would feel that they belong within your context?

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