

Role of physical education in the Primary Years Programme

Questionnaire report

November 2008



Introduction

In May and June 2008, the IB sought feedback from teachers and PYP coordinators in IB World Schools. The purpose of the feedback was to gather information about teaching and learning in physical education (PE) in PYP schools in order to inform future IB curriculum development. The questions included in the questionnaire related to the organization of PE teaching and learning in each school and to the purpose and use of curriculum documentation in the school.

Respondents

This questionnaire was emailed to PYP coordinators in IB World Schools offering the PYP. They were asked to coordinate responses from PE teachers and class teachers and to submit their feedback within a four-week timeframe. The response rate was around 60%, with 261 schools responding. 60% of the respondents identified themselves as private/independent schools with 36% claiming state or national affiliations. Almost 80% of the questionnaires had input from PE specialists and PYP coordinators.

PE teaching in schools

Schools were asked to identify who in the school has responsibility for teaching PE. Approximately 80% of schools indicated that PE teaching is done by specialist PE teachers and 20% of schools indicated that PE teaching is done by classroom teachers or a combination of class and specialist teachers. Of the specialists who responded, 35% of them work in the PYP, as well as in one other programme in the school (e.g. MYP).

Schools specified a range of time allocated for participation in active PE.

- 2.2% less than 40 minutes per week, per class
- 18.7% 40-60 minutes per week, per class
- 27.6% 60-90 minutes per week, per class
- 20.9% 90-120 minutes per week, per class
- 23.1% 120 minutes or more per week, per class

Links to specific aspects of the PYP

Respondents were asked to comment on how often they were able to make links to aspects of the PYP when the teaching of PE falls outside the programme of inquiry. Table 1 summarises the responses.

Aspect	Most of the time or always	Occasionally or rarely	Never
Transdisciplinary themes	31%	61%	7%
Central ideas	26%	67%	5%
PYP concepts	51%	44%	3%
Transdisciplinary skills	62%	34%	1.5%
PYP attitudes	79%	16%	0.4%

Table 1

Schools were also asked how often they could make an authentic connection between PE and the school's programme of inquiry. The results were:

37%	One or fewer than one unit of inquiry per year level
36%	Two units of inquiry per year level
13%	Three units of inquiry per year level
6%	Four units of inquiry per year level
4%	Five units of inquiry per year level

Additional comments about the role of PE in the transdisciplinary programme included:

- Authentic connections are made through the attitudes and concepts of the PYP which are at the core of each PE unit and are the elements around which the entire PE unit is planned.
- It is very difficult for the PE teacher to be involved in all 36 planners for the entire school but there is usually one unit per grade level that has a very strong connection to the homeroom unit.
- The PE specialist has developed his own programme and does not make direct connections to the units of the programme of inquiry.
- It varies from year group to year group. On average, connections are made to three units per year group but some have as many as four and some have only one.

Collaboration

A range of collaboration strategies between teachers and PE teachers were identified in the questionnaire however, the predominant mode was through scheduled meetings with class teachers (70%).

Comments regarding collaboration included:

- We spend time talking with teachers during staff meetings and whenever possible. We try our best to discuss the units and the amount of communication is as much as we can manage at this time. Class teachers also initiate discussions where possible.
- As we cannot have organized planned meeting for PE teachers to get together with classroom teachers, the Head of Department and the PYP coordinator get together to pass on the information relevant to the units where PE teachers can get involved. They also look at the programme of inquiry and publish a timeline of the units for PE teachers to know what the classes are working on.
- The PE teachers have regular meetings with the PYP coordinator. Our coordinator acts as the link between specials teachers and classroom teachers. When collaborations are seen as possible or required, the coordinator starts the connections and then the specialist teachers and classroom teachers contact each other regarding the collaboration.
- Planning days are allocated to PE teachers.
- There are scheduled meetings with class teachers when they have the time. Most of the time PE teachers have the class when class teachers meet. So this makes it very hard to find a meeting time.
- We hold 'flexi meetings' designed to have classroom teachers meet with specialists. We also have scheduled collaborative times. The PE teacher is part of the specialist group and ideally, they get together once a fortnight. Collaboration is a tricky thing!
- We have meetings when possible but crossover teaching with high school has made regular collaboration difficult. This will improve next year as crossovers are eliminated and a planning period is added.

Reporting

Student participation and development in PE is reported on in all schools, usually in more than one way. Report cards were the most common form of reporting (by 96% of schools), followed by portfolios (by 50% of schools) and three-way or student-led conferences (by 37% of schools). A number of other reporting or communication formats were shared in the comments, including newsletters, open-house PE classes for parents and students, video clips available on DVD, assessment records, displays around the school, self and peer reflections.

Workshops

When asked about participation in PYP workshops, the comments indicated that many PE teachers have attended general PYP workshops, e.g. Introduction to PYP, Teaching and Learning in PYP. 29% of schools indicated that teachers have attended the IB workshop “Role of PE in the PYP”; 68% have not. Many comments reflected the need for more workshops to be made available for PE as well as other subject-specific areas.

Current curriculum documentation

When asked whether they were using the PYP planner to plan inquiries in PE, 47.8% of respondents indicated yes and 48.1% indicated no.

When asked which documents they referred to for planning, 36% of schools stated they referred to the PYP PE scope and sequence (2003), 41% referred to a scope and sequence developed by the school, (usually a combination of a state curriculum and PYP scope and sequence documents) and 16% of respondents used a national curriculum document.

The responses indicated that the PYP PE scope and sequence has been used for a range of purposes including as a tool for planning for particular age levels (by 50% of schools), the identification of learning outcomes (by 43% of schools), to assist with curriculum mapping (by 39% of schools), as a tool for assessment for particular age levels (by 35% of schools), to identify sample questions and activities (by 30-35% of schools), and to inform reporting (by 23% of schools). Table 2 shows the perceived usefulness of particular aspects of the PYP PE scope and sequence (2003).

Aspect	Useful, or very useful	Not very useful, or do not use
Overall expectations for each age range	61%	22%
Specific expectations	58%	25%
Sample questions, activities, assessments	54-58%	30%
Resources and comments	50%	35%
Glossary	44%	33%

Table 2

Further comments regarding the purpose of the PYP PE scope and sequence included:

- The PE teachers used the PYP scope and sequence as a guide to create our own scope and sequence document

- Although we did not take the samples for assessment from the PYP PE scope and sequence, we did use the assessment tools identified in Making the PYP Happen (2007)
- Have used PYP PE scope and sequence documents to check for alignment with state curriculum. We believe there is great alignment.

Future documentation

In response to the question “What strands or aspects of PE are *not* addressed in the PYP scope and sequence but *are* included in the school’s PE programme?” most respondents reported that the strands in PYP aligned with their own schools. However the following PE-related concepts were felt to be missing from the PYP documents:

- emotional aspects
- fair play
- swimming/aquatics/water safety
- local traditional games and activities
- personal development
- fitness
- fundamental motor skills
- understanding of how participation in physical activity promotes inclusion and understanding of abilities and cultural diversity of people

Table 3 summarises the responses to the question “What would teachers most like to see included in the revised PE scope and sequence?”

Aspect	Very useful, or useful	Not very useful, or would not use
Overview of learning in PE	78%	11%
Make the PYP essential elements clear	90%	4%
Clear learning outcomes for each strand	83%	8%
Sample questions, activities, assessments	86%	6%
Sample planners	90%	4%
Guidelines for planning for PE within the programme	89%	4%

Table 3

The following comments and suggestions were submitted by respondents to inform the curriculum review process.

- Photos, activities, assessment strategies, portfolio samples for practical PE, visual promotion of IB learner profile, the set up of PE 'classrooms' or working spaces - all of these would be helpful resources for PE teaching and learning and could be available through the OCC
- The curriculum overviews at the top of the scope and sequence documents are very general and similar for all age levels. An idea may be to specify overall expectations for specific age levels to help teachers with vertical alignment
- We would like to see some strategies for integrating the PE strands into our units of inquiry
- There is still a need for guidance to move from interdisciplinary to transdisciplinary, with the links being conceptually-based rather than thematic.
- Examples of how to schedule planning time between specialists and classroom teachers

- Sample planners for PYP PE would be extremely useful. Examples from schools on how to separate out PE skills and content to divide into units would be helpful
- The adventure challenge has been particularly popular with the students as something different and challenging
- There could be higher expectations at each age level in the scope and sequence documents
- Guidance on the ways in which P.E. teachers can be a meaningful part of the Exhibition process and product. Ideas about how a P.E. teacher could lead a unit of inquiry for a grade level class.

Conclusion

The IB wishes to thank all the schools who responded to this questionnaire. The feedback collected as a result of this questionnaire provides the IB with valuable insights from school-based practitioners, about the role of PE in the PYP. It will inform the curriculum review process leading up to the publication of a revised scope and sequence for PE in November 2009 as well as informing the general development of the PYP.