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Exploring and comparing how 'health' is conceptualised in physical education curricula across the four nations of the UK

What?

This infographic describes our comparative analysis of the ways in which health (or health and wellbeing) is conceptualised across the four PE curricula of the UK: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Who?

It's for teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators interested in PE and Health and Wellbeing across the four nations of the UK.



We highlight some of the different ways in which health (or health and wellbeing) is conceptualised both across and within UK PE curricula, encouraging you to think about how you understand health in PE and what this means for the experiences of young people in PE.

Why?

The meaning assigned to health within PE curricula can influence how health is taught in PE – and therefore the health-related learning experiences of pupils.



SOME KEY FINDINGS



The landscape of health in PE across the UK is complex. It is variously understood across and within the PE curricula (see image on right).



Across Scotland and Wales, the curricula place greater emphasis on health and wellbeing as a holistic concept in PE, paying some attention to social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

Messages conveyed about health across the four UK PE curricula:

- holistic and broad
- narrow and focused on physical health/physical activity
- necessary to contribute to society
- a way of caring for young people

KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED



In England there is limited reference to health within the PE curriculum, beyond ensuring that young people 'lead healthy and active lives' (Department for Education, 2014, p. 260).



In Northern Ireland, there is a shifting health landscape as pupils progress through the Key Stages. At the primary level, there is limited reference to health within the PE curriculum, yet in Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14), a broad conceptualisation of health and wellbeing is prevalent (with links to citizenship and care), which shifts to a focus on physical health and physical activity in Key Stage 4 (ages 14–16).



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Multiple conceptualisations of health (or health and wellbeing) within curricula means that there are multiple ways of teaching health in PE and multiple ways of experiencing health for pupils.



Image: Loughborough University ©

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Consider your context and your pupils

- How do you understand the concept of health in PE, and how does this influence the way you teach health in PE?
- To what extent does your approach meet your pupils' health needs?
- Drawing from the different ways that health can be understood, can you 'reimagine' health in PE to connect more with the lives of your pupils?



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