

A Comparison Between Physical Education in Canadian Schools Versus Egyptian Schools: A First Reflection

HESHAM AHMED
University of Calgary
HOSSAM ELHADY
Benha University

Abstract: This paper compares the major aspects of the Canadian and Egyptian curricula in physical education. The paper presented each country's geography and demography background, reflecting the aim of the physical education curricula. Also, considering the governance of education, how each country shapes its curricula, and how they form the policy of the physical education aims. We also conducted a small interview with a few children who had studied for at least one year in an Egyptian school and then came to Canada and spent at least a term in Canadian schools in order to understand how they felt in those different educational systems. This comparison showed some preliminary outcomes that will be useful to the Egyptian side to get an idea of how the curriculum gets shaped in one of the developed countries and also provides a general understanding of the education system in both countries. The paper showed some similarities but also illustrated huge gaps between the two countries in particular aspects, such as the ratio between the number of students and the schools, the expenditures on education, and the elements that shape each country's physical education curricula.

Résumé : Cet article compare les principaux aspects des programmes d'études canadiens et égyptiens en éducation physique. Le contexte géographique et démographique de chaque pays est également présenté, reflétant l'objectif des programmes d'éducation physique. En outre, cet article tient compte de la gouvernance ainsi que de la façon dont chaque pays réalise les buts et les objectifs des programmes d'éducation physique. Nous avons également mené une petite enquête auprès de quelques jeunes qui ont étudié pendant au moins un an dans une école égyptienne, puis sont venus au Canada et ont passé au moins un trimestre dans des écoles canadiennes afin de comprendre comment ils se sentaient par rapport à ces différents systèmes éducatifs. Cette comparaison a montré quelques résultats préliminaires qui seront utiles au système éducatif égyptien puisqu'ils donnent une idée de la façon dont le programme est mis en place dans l'un des pays développés. Les

résultats fournissent également une compréhension générale du système éducatif dans les deux pays. L'article montre certaines similitudes, mais illustre également d'énormes écarts entre les deux pays dans des aspects particuliers, tels que le rapport entre le nombre d'élèves et les écoles, les dépenses en éducation et les éléments qui façonnent les programmes d'éducation physique de chaque pays.

Introduction

The physical education status and curricula in schools have been the main research topic for many researchers. Physical education is an essential part of the education process. Each country has its philosophy and theoretical foundation for teaching and learning (Kilborn, M., Lorusso, J., & Francis, N., 2016).

We believe that each country has the right to shape its physical education programs in schools that fit the national interests and are realistic to the resources. We also believe that geography, demography, and political status play a role in shaping the curricula. Thus, this article begins with a brief review of relevant background information regarding geography, demography, and education governance and a brief historical perspective of physical education. Important descriptive information about the physical education curriculum is then described, including explanations of terminology used and grade and subject level configurations.

We think that demonstrating the pros and cons in each country will not just be helpful for the Egyptian side, but it will also be beneficial to the Canadian side to be aware of different educational systems worldwide.

The Geography and Demography

Canada

Canada has vast geography that occupies much of the continent of North America, covering 9,984,670 km². (McColl, 2005). Canada is divided into ten provinces and three vast northern territories in fifteen major terrestrial and five marine ecozones. The climate varies from more moderate west coast climates to the northern regions and inland provinces, which experience harsh winters. Since only 12% of Canada's landmass is suitable for habitation, most of the population lives in the southernmost areas. Despite its large landmass, Canada's population is relatively small, with approximately 35 million inhabitants (Canada, www.statcan.gc.ca,

2018). The current population of Canada is 38,337,692 as of 2022, based on the World meter elaboration of the latest United Nations data. The population density in Canada is 4 per Km². (Nations, 2022a)

Egypt

Egypt is located in the northeastern corner of the continent of Africa. Covering 1,002,000 km² and the inhabited area is 78,990 km² which is 7.8% of the total land area. In the north, the Mediterranean Sea has a coastline of 995 km in length, and in the east, the Red Sea has a coast of 1941 km in length. (Egypt S. o., location and total area of Egypt, 2022). Egypt's climate can be distinguished into two climatic seasons: the hot-dry summer, which extends between May and October, and the mild-rainy winter, between November and April. Egypt is located in the arid tropical region, except for the northern edges. It falls into the warm temperate area, which enjoys a climate similar to the Mediterranean region. It is characterized by heat and dryness in the summer months and moderation in the winter with little rain that increases on the coast. In January, the lowest temperatures are 9-11 degrees Celsius, and the maximum temperatures are 20-24 degrees Celsius. As for July and August, the minimum ranges from 21-25 degrees Celsius and the maximum ranges from 37-42 degrees Celsius. (Egypt, 2022). The current population of Egypt is 105,806,911 as of 2022, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data. The population density in Egypt is 103 per Km² (Nations, 2022b).

Governance of Education

Canada

Canada is a democratic constitutional monarchy with a federal parliamentary government with shared responsibilities between provincial, territorial, and federal governments (Canada, 2015b). There is no national education department, so all provinces and territories regulate and administer their education systems (Canada, 2015a). Curriculum development is the responsibility of each province and territory, and all provinces have their own independent physical and health education curriculum. However, the three territories have adopted the curricula of neighbouring provinces (e.g., Yukon utilizes the curriculum from British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories utilizes Alberta's physical

education curriculum) (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, 2004; Yukon Government, 2014). The Ministry of Education in each province develops its curriculum according to its needs, resources, and policies.

Egypt

Egypt is a state based on the democratic-republican system. It is divided into 27 governorates. The Ministry of Education and Technical Education is responsible for pre-university education. These governorates are divided into 282 educational administrations within them to ensure the implementation of the general plan of the Ministry. The Ministry sets the curricula for physical education and is unified in the country. (Egypt, Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2019) (Egypt, ministry of education, 1981)

A Brief Historical Perspective

Canada

Canada's physical education has developed from various geographical, historical, political, and cultural influences. Throughout the 20th century, physical education curricula in Canada were strongly influenced by England and the United States of America, which resulted in an array of military, gymnastics, play, fitness, and sports influences (Francis N and Lathrop A, 2014). The American impact was significant because the United States had physical education teacher training programmes 50 years before Canada. Thus, many of the first Canadian physical educators were graduates of American programmes (Morgan, P. J., & Hansen, V, 2008).

Egypt

Over its history, Egypt has been ruled by different countries and power. from French occupation at the beginnings of the early modern era to British occupation in the late modern era. (Rickard, J, 2022) Over its history, Egypt has been ruled by different countries and power. From French occupation at the beginnings of the early modern era to British occupation in the late modern age. Also, Egypt's location in Africa and between Asia and Europe and being a part of the middle east and Arab world, all these factors made us hard to figure out which counties influenced Egyptians' physical education curriculum the most.

Schools Capacity

Table 1 shows schools' capacity in Canada and Egypt.

Table 1

| | Canada | Egypt |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Number of schools | 14,600 public schools | 49,067 public schools |
| Number of students | 5.7 million | 25.06 million |
| students per school | 390 | 510 |
| Expenditures on education | \$88 billion (USD) | \$9.3 billion (USD) |

Physical Education Curriculum Aims

In Canada, each province sets out its prescribed curriculum with the inclusion of an overall aim statement that provides a rationale for physical education in the school system. While in Egypt, the ministry of education sets the aim for the physical education curriculum for the whole country.

Table 2 demonstrate how Egypt and each province in Canada articulate their vision for physical education.

Table 2

| Country | Province | Aim |
|---------|----------------------|---|
| Egypt | N/A | There is no clear aim statement for physical education on the Ministry of Education and Technical Education website or documents. |
| Canada | Alberta | To enable individuals to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. |
| | British Columbia | To provide opportunities for all students to develop knowledge, movement skills, and positive attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a healthy, active lifestyle. |
| | Manitoba | To provide students with planned and balanced programming to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for physically active and healthy lifestyles. |
| | Newfoundland | Physical education fosters personal and community wellness by empowering students to attain healthy, lifelong attitudes and behaviours through physical activity as part of the total educational experience. |
| | New Brunswick | To attain healthy levels of physical activity and fitness for all students; to encourage the acquisition of motor skills; to develop knowledge and attitudes supportive of continuing active living habits throughout life, and develop specific objectives designed to meet the physical growth and developmental needs of all children and youth. |
| | Nova Scotia | Active, healthy living is shaped by the vision of learners experiencing purposeful physical activity and developing knowledge of skills and attitudes towards the health benefits of a physically active lifestyle. |
| | Ontario | Based on the vision that the knowledge and skills acquired in the programme will benefit students throughout their lives and help them to thrive in an ever-changing world by enabling them to acquire physical and health literacy and to develop the comprehension, capacity and commitment needed to lead healthy, active lives and to promote healthy, active living. |
| | Prince Edward Island | To provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward active living. The curriculum will support students in acquiring the understanding and skills to engage in movement activity and develop a solid foundation for a balanced lifestyle. |
| | Quebec | To help students gain a sense of self-responsibility for their fitness and health by allowing them to develop a repertoire of movement skills, a repertoire of cognitive strategies, a knowledge base in the subject, behaviours consistent with safety and ethical rules, the critical sense they need to manage their health wisely, and positive attitudes in their relationships with others when participating in physical activities. |
| | Saskatchewan | To support students in becoming physically educated individuals who have the understandings and skills to engage in movement activity, and the confidence and disposition to live a healthy, active lifestyle. |

Physical Activity Time Requirements

The Daily Physical Activity (DPA) recommendations vary in provinces. The range of DPA starts from 75 min per week in Prince

Edward Island to 150 min per week for most provinces. Only in Ontario, there is no specific time required, only guidelines. In Egypt, The Daily Physical Activity (DPA) recommendation in Egypt is 90 minutes per week from grade 1 to high school, representing 5% of the school week. Table 3 illustrates the DPA recommendation in Canada and Egypt.

Tabel 3

| Country | Province | DPA |
|---------|----------------------|---|
| Egypt | N/A | 90 minutes per week from grade 1 to high school, representing 5% of the school week. |
| Canada | Alberta | The physical activity Guideline indicates at least 30 minutes per day for grades 1-9. |
| | British Columbia | The physical activity policy notes at least 30 minutes per school day. |
| | Manitoba | Physical education is required for 30 minutes each day for Grades K-10. |
| | Newfoundland | 30% of the day is recommended for grades K-3 as an integrated approach with other specialized subjects. Grades 4-6 is 6% recommended, and Grade 7-9 is 6%. High School requires two credits (i.e., one year). |
| | New Brunswick | 30 minutes of physical education 3 days per week (total 90 mins/week) is required for grades K-5. And for grades 6-8, 150 minutes per week. While Grades 9-10 have to do 45 hours over the 2 years. |
| | Nova Scotia | 20 minutes of physical activity per day is required for grades K-2, Grade 3 must have 30 minutes per day, and Grades 4-6 must have 20 minutes per day. |
| | Ontario | There is no specific time required for PE, only guidelines. The recommended is 150 minutes per week. |
| | Prince Edward Island | Grades K-6 must have 75 min per week. Grades 7-9 must have 60-90 min per week. |
| | Quebec | Grades 1-6 must have 120 min per week. Secondary students must have 100 min in a six-day cycle or 150 minutes in a nine-day cycle. |
| | Saskatchewan | Grade 1-8 are needed to have 120-150 min per week (still dependent on school division). Grades 9-10 are needed to have 150 min per week. |

Physical Education Program

Canada

In this paper, we will use the physical education curriculum in Alberta as a model for our comparison between Canada and Egypt in physical education curricula.

The physical education program in Alberta is based on four general outcomes:

General Outcome A (Activity)

Students will gain basic skills through appropriate activities, e.g., locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative, and apply these skills in different environments such as dance, games, gymnastics, and individual activities.

General Outcome B (Benefits Health)

Students will learn to appreciate and understand the health benefits, e.g., body image, well-being and functional fitness.

General Outcome C (Cooperation)

Students will interact effectively with others (communication- leadership- fair play- Teamwork)

General Outcome D (Do it Daily... for life)

Students learn to be responsible for leading an active way of life (safety- active living in the community- effort)

The Grade 1 to Grade 12 physical education program aims to achieve the four goals of the program in a way that suits their age and skills. The following tables will demonstrate how the four outcomes will be achieved and the specific outcomes from Grade 1 to grade 12.

Table 4

| General Outcome a Basic Skills | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Locomotor | Nonlocomotor | Manipulative | Application of Basic Skills |
| walking, running, hopping, jumping, leaping, rolling, skipping, galloping, climbing, sliding, propulsion through water | turning, twisting, swinging, balancing, bending, landing, stretching, curling, hanging | catching, collecting; retaining, e.g., dribbling, carrying, bouncing, trapping; sending, e.g., throwing, kicking, striking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance • Games • Types of Gymnastics (running, jumping, throwing in a variety of environments) • Application of Basic Skills in an Alternative Environment |

From grade1 to grade 12, the general outcomes for basic skills are nearly the same. The essential skills include Locomotor, Non-locomotor and Manipulative, and the programs give many examples of these basic skills. However, the programs gave the physical education teacher the freedom to choose the exact exercise, dance, or games suitable for each grade and the capacity of the schools.

General outcomes B, C and D are interrelated and interdependent and are achieved through involvement in movement activities identified in General Outcomes. Table 5 illustrates the specific outcomes for general outcomes B, C and D.

Table 5

| General Outcomes | Specific Outcomes |
|--|---|
| General Outcome B (Benefits Health) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Fitness • Body Image • Well-being • Application of Basic Skills |
| General Outcome C (Cooperation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Fair Play • Leadership • Teamwork |
| General Outcome D (Do it Daily... for life) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort • Safety • Goal Setting/Personal Challenge • Active Living in the Community |

Egypt

In Egypt, the basic education phase in Egyptian education is divided into two phases:

1. The primary education stages.

The primary education stages consist of 6 years. The first three years of primary education are different from all the other stages of basic education. The main goal is to teach students some concepts about who I am? – The world around me – How is the world work? - Communicate. Each concept branches into sub-concepts which will be demonstrated in table 6.

Table 6

| The concepts | The sub-concepts |
|------------------------|---|
| who I am? | I love my country, collaboration, hard-working, we are outstanding, the little innovator, I'm clean, I'm energetic, we're thinkers, and I'm Creative. |
| The world around me | harmonic movements, Free activities, play and count, Run and shoot, play and learn, and play freely. |
| How is the world work? | Play and learn, collaboration, the little athlete, the creative and little winner. |
| Communicate | Let's play, my movements, play freely, play with music, <u>Run</u> and shoot and motor abilities. |

So-called kinetic stories implement these concepts. And the motor story is a story that is implemented dynamically by the teacher to achieve physical, cognitive, emotional, and social goals and away from the traditional form of the study of sports education for the higher stages. Therefore, the child does not learn motor skills in a specific sport directly, but the focus is all on the general aspects.

2. The last three years of primary and middle school

At this stage, the student studies the lesson in its traditional form and the Ministry in advance determines the sports-specific skills. Table 7 illustrates the specific skills in each sport.

Table 7

| | Basketball | Soccer | Handball | Volleyball | Athletics | gymnastics |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ball control. - Chest pass with both hands from stability/movement. - Bouncing ball. - Two-handed and one-handed shooting. - Bbasketball passing from stability and movement. - Free throw. - Game rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run and control. - Aiming at the target. - Ball control. - Passing skills. - Shooting skills. - Heading the ball. - Game rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ball control. - Passing skills. - Shooting skills. - Single Defense. - Zone Defense. - Game rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - standby pause. - receiving the ball. - Passing from the bottom with the forearms - Game rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long jump. - 40-50 Stick Relay. - Throwing a ball with a weight of 300-400g. - Sprint from low start 40M-50M. - High jump - Game rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - balance. - Balance on one foot - Hop to safe landing - Forward roll - Backward roll - Jump half turn - Bridge |

These skills are divided between the first and second semesters. A test is conducted at the end of the school year to measure the skills' level of mastery.

Student's Perspective

We asked students in elementary schools who experienced at least one year in an Egyptian school before they became students in a Canadian school simple questions (e.g., What kind of sport did you practice in physical education classes in Egypt and Canada? How long was the lesson? Did you enjoy the courses in Egypt? Do you prefer physical education classes in Egypt or Canada?)

The children all agreed that they enjoyed physical education in Canada more than in Egypt. They spent more time in physical education classes in Canada than in Egypt. They practice more different games in Canadian schools.

Discussion and Conclusion

Both countries have a relatively similar time required for physical activities in schools. Nonetheless, considering the schools' capacity shows that Canadian schools have better equipment, budgets, utilities, and the ability to apply the curricula objectives. The United States of America has affected Canadian physical education since it is the only country with shared borders and many of the first Canadian physical educators were graduates of American programs (Morgan, P. J., & Hansen, V, 2008). While in Egypt, it is not clear the roots of physical education curricula.

Physical education curriculum goals vary depending on the province in Canada. It was unclear to us the objective of physical education in Egypt; there was no aim statement on any official websites, and the Ministry of Education determined the detailed curricula for the whole country. We believe that setting a detailed curriculum for the entire country, without considering the geography or culture of each city, will badly impact the achievement of its goals.

Most physical education activities in Egypt focus on outdoor sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, and exercise, which are stated explicitly in the ministry programs. And some schools find it difficult to stick with the ministry plan. On the other hand, the provincial government in Canada draws the big picture for the programs and determines the general and specific outcomes for each grade. It allows the schools to choose the best activities that fit their utilities and the environment.

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Editor's note: This is an article commission by the Editor as we have never had any articles from Egypt and we would like to encourage them.

Author and Affiliation

Dr. Hesham Ahmed
Visiting professor
University of Calgary
Email: Hesham.Ahmed1@ucalgary.ca
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6138-1730>

Hossam Elhady
Lecturer
Benha University
Email: Hossam.Elhady@fped.bu.edu.eg
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6020-5196>

