A case study of Curriculum Implementation in one Australian pilot school: Sports, Exercise and Health Science within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Benjamin Doyle B.Ed B.AppSci (QUT)

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ABSTRACT

The emergence and consolidation of Physical Education as an examinable school subject represents improvement in the status and delivery of the discipline. Whilst examinable forms of the subject have existed for a number of years in Australian secondary schools, it is not until recently that Physical Education has been included in an international curriculum. This further inclusion was an initiative of the International Baccalaureate Organisation and currently involves the piloting of a Diploma Programme subject, namely, Sports, Exercise and Health Science (SEHS). This stage of curriculum development presented a unique and timely opportunity to investigate, the process of introducing an examinable Physical Education subject into a school offering an international curriculum. The conceptual framework guiding this investigation is based on a theory of curriculum implementation by Rogan and Grayson (2003). Key constructs of this theory of implementation are: profile of implementation; capacity to innovate; and, outside support. Through a case study approach this theory was applied to the process of implementation of SEHS in an Australian secondary school. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven school community members involved in the piloting of SEHS, namely, coordinator; teachers; past and present students. Interview data were collected, recorded, transcribed and analysed using an inductive approach. The experiences of those involved in the pilot highlight a range of factors that may impinge upon, or facilitate the successful implementation of SEHS. Based on these findings, the theory of curriculum implementation was tested and resulted in a modified case-based framework for the introduction of SEHS. The findings provide support for the constructs suggested by Rogan and Grayson (2003) and extend this theory with the inclusion of an indicator “subject promotion” which was found to be an essential to the implementation process as a whole. These findings are recommended to inform the process of widespread introduction of the subject in non-pilot schools. The research findings have both theoretical and practical implications in the area of curriculum implementation.
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