

An examination of the correlation and compromises of Ofsted, The National Curriculum, and Physical Education in British Schools

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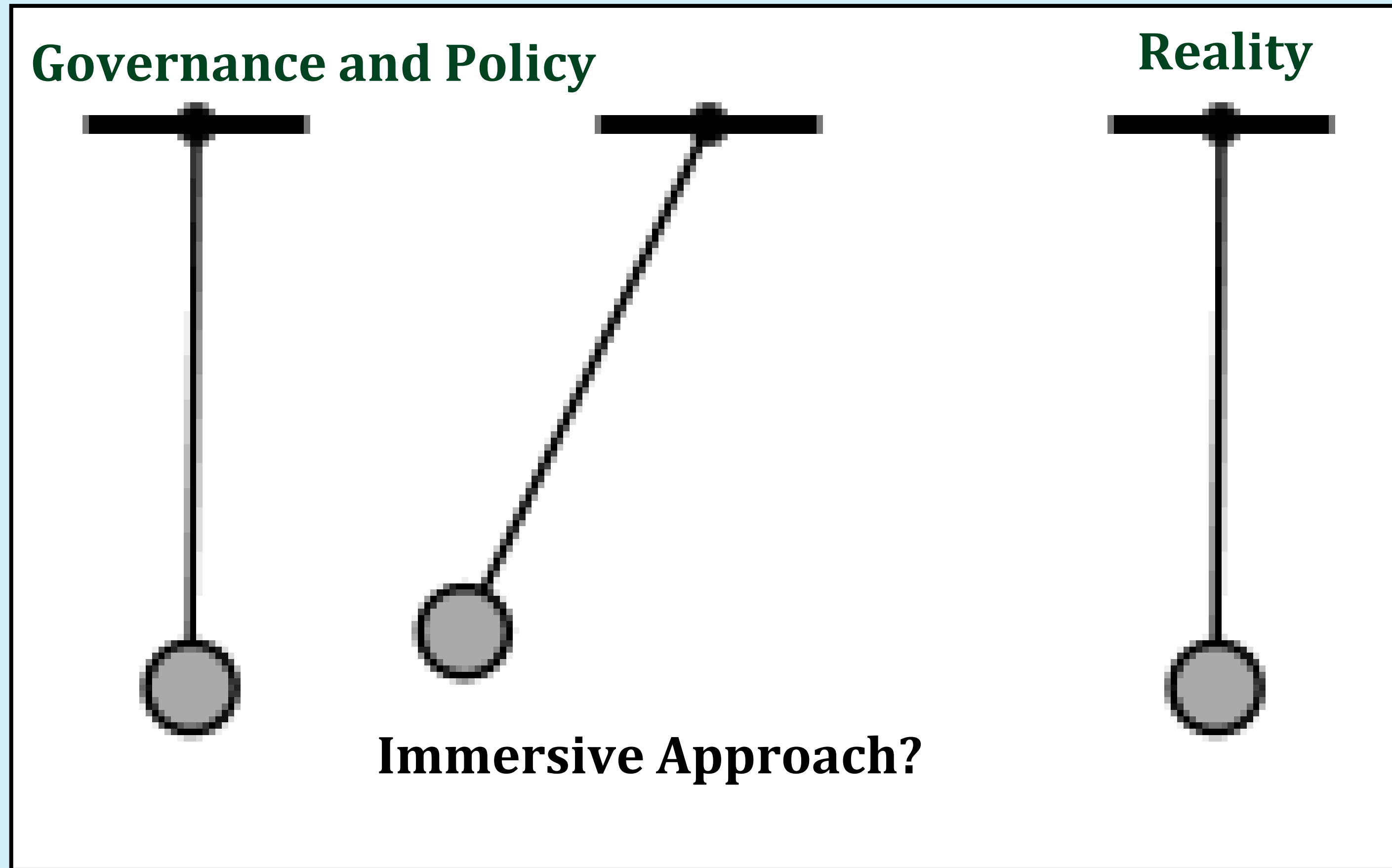
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Immersion

1. Using the Boston Matrix as a **curriculum** assessment concept for KS3 PE Curriculum design (2022)
2. Using Bernstein's theory of pedagogical devices to examine compromises made within **physical education curriculum** designs (2022)
3. How Does the **National Curriculum** impact Physical Education Curriculums in Special Schools for Children and Young People with Disabilities? (2024)
4. Inclusive Pathways: Perspectives of Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in **Physical Education** (2024)
5. SEND Physical Education: The Ofsted Inspector Guidance for **Secondary PE versus the SEND Code of Practice** (2024)
6. An examination of the correlation and compromises of Ofsted, **The National Curriculum**, and Physical Education in British Schools (2025)



The Why



Research Context & Methodology

The Analytical Scope

An examination of the level of inclusiveness within the Physical Education (PE) curriculum across 30 British secondary schools. *The study focuses on recent Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspections.*

Methodology

Utilised a Grounded Theory approach with *inductive thematic analysis*. The research team **scrutinised** curriculum maps in the public domain, focusing on the "3 Is" framework: Intent, Implementation, and Impact.

Mandates vs Oversight

National Curriculum (NC)

Statutory guidance that provides a proposal for physical health, social skills, and self-development. Schools retain freedom to construct curricula, often leading to varied interpretations and delivery methods.

Ofsted Inspection Framework

Regulatory oversight assessing consistency against the NC. The 2019 framework emphasises educational **quality**, inclusivity, and ensuring students acquire necessary "cultural capital" through sport.

Primary Research Findings



Sporting Dominance

Information is primarily disseminated through traditional organised sports highlighted in the NC, rather than exploring alternative physical activities.



Pedagogical Variance

Findings show a focus on secondary curriculum designs and assessments concerned with objectives rather than individual inclusive practice.



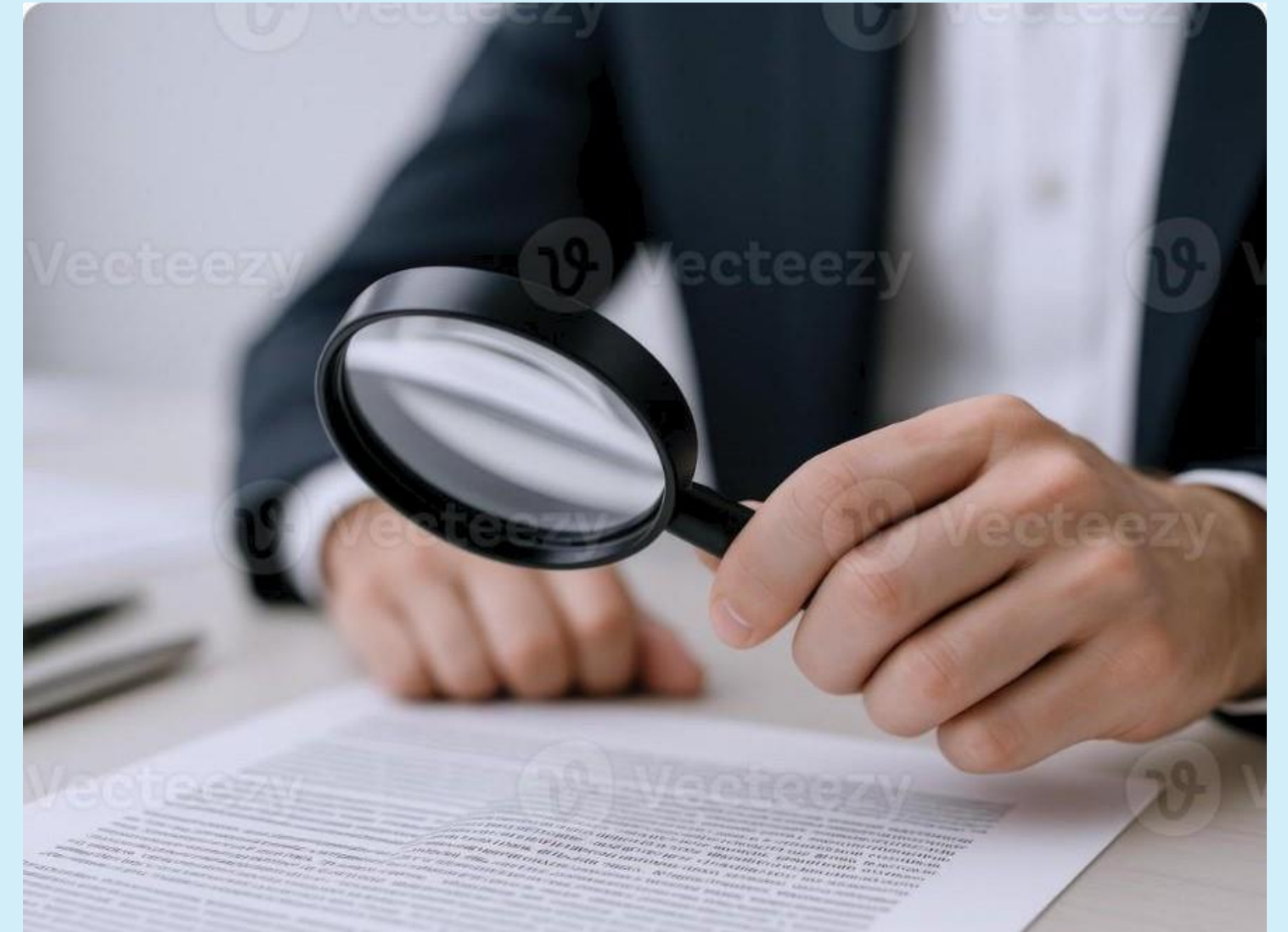
The Inclusion Gap

A significant discrepancy remains between high-level policy intent and the practical consideration of diverse student needs in PE environments.

The 'Ofsted Compromise'

Intent vs. Reality: The research suggests schools often prioritise curriculum maps that demonstrate compliance with Ofsted's "Deep Dive" methodology over pedagogical flexibility.

The 'Front Window' Effect: Curriculum designs are frequently fashioned as a public-facing display of adherence, which may not fully capture the nuances of classroom interactions or teacher adaptations for inclusivity.



Recommendations & Impact

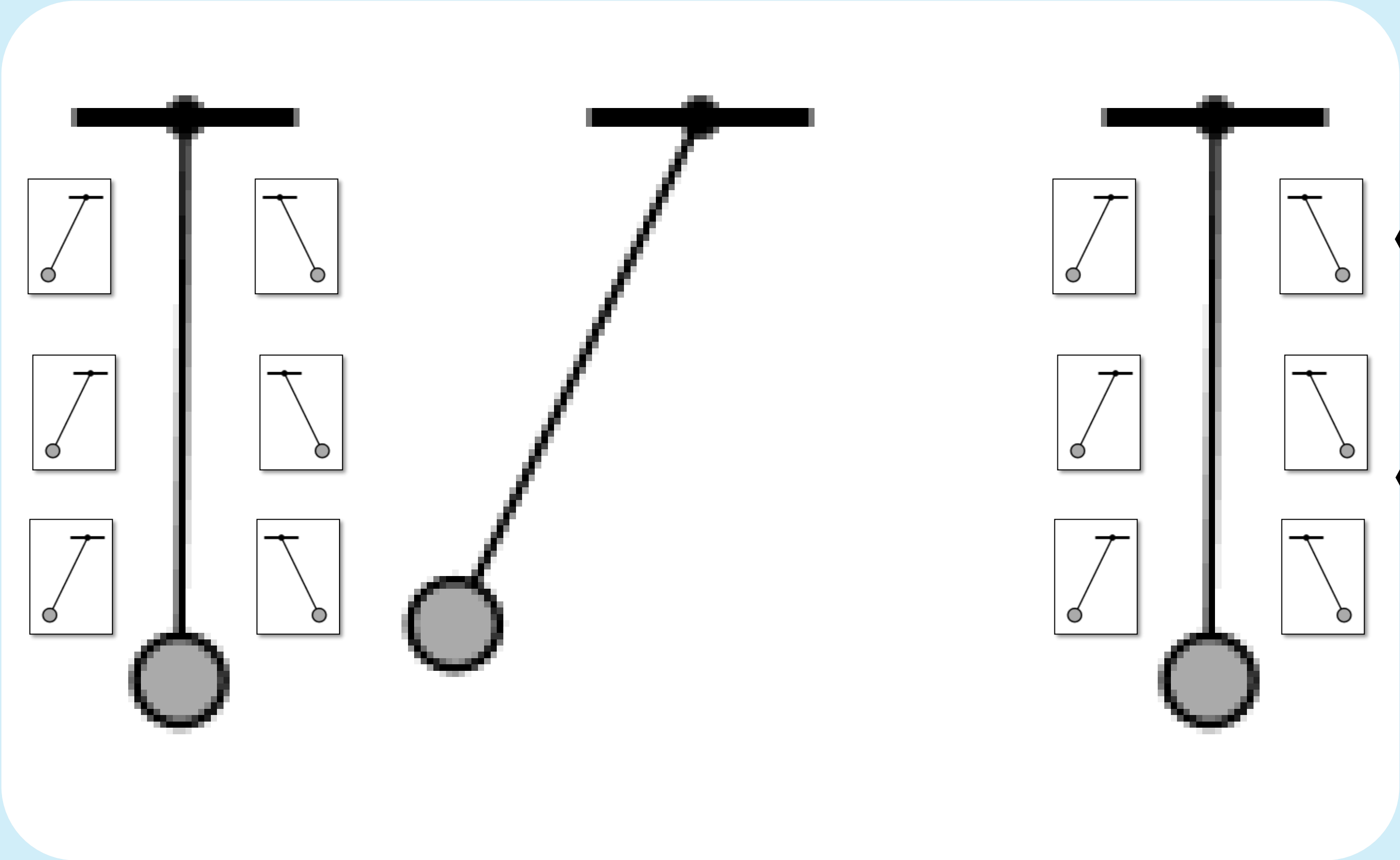
- @ Meaningful Inclusion: PE curriculums must move beyond statutory compliance to include the development of self-esteem and self-worth through student-centred experiences.
- @ Reclaiming Agency: Departments should focus on the underlying ideology of curriculum designs rather than simply mirroring NC example sports.
- @ Holistic Assessment: Transition from skill-acquisition metrics toward broader physical literacy and lifetime engagement markers.

"Quality physical education is contingent on a school's deep understanding of the subject, not just compliance."

Governance and Policy

Reality

- Do all schools need to Follow the governance? Or is it guidance only?
- NC from 2016, Ofsted from 2019, Update to date?
- What does policy inclusion look like?



- Experience of those creating the curriculum?
- Has the curriculum/policy maker experienced inclusion in their own lives?
- Immersion vs. Front-Window