

The Impact of Sport Education on Research and Teaching in Physical Education

Efecto del modelo de Educación Deportiva sobre la investigación y la enseñanza en educación física

I N 1994, Daryl Siedentop presented the first text formally outlining his vision of Sport Education, a pedagogical model aimed at promoting positive sport experiences for all students through simulating the key contextual features of authentic sport. Siedentop's main criticism of the way sport was taught in schools is that it failed to resemble the key features that young people find so attractive and meaningful. That is, within schools, individual game skills (such as dribbling or throwing a ball) are often taught in isolation, rather than as part of the natural context of executing strategy in game-like situations. Further, the rituals, values, and traditions of a sport that give it meaning are seldom even mentioned. More so, within school sports units, students rarely get to experience the opportunity to become members of teams that last beyond a single lesson, so unlike a situation they would experience in community sports settings. By consequence, they are denied the opportunity to develop the idea of team affiliation that so often promotes personal growth and responsibility in sport.

Since the initial appearance of Sport Education, teachers and researchers have expanded the degree of sophistication of the model, and the creativity of its implementation in ways even beyond the scope of its original intent. The model is now used in schools spanning east and west Europe, Australia and New Zealand, parts of East Asia and the United States. Further, research on the model has been forthcoming from these regions as well. Sport Education is now used by classroom teachers, by specialist physical educators in elementary and secondary schools, and also in universities that offer physical education courses for students of all academic majors.

One country in which some of the most recent significant work in Sport Education has been developed is Spain. Researchers from the *Universidad Católica San Antonio (UCAM)* and from the *Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM)* have made a number of notable contributions to the literature on Sport Education. First, authors from UCAM collaborated in the development of the most extensive review of Sport Education to date (see Hastie, Martínez de Ojeda, & Calderón, 2011). From there, Calderón, Hastie, & Martínez de Ojeda (2010) examined the potential of incorporating Sport Education into the early primary school years. Here, third grade children in rural Spain reported that they improved their positive perceptions in most of the aspects that define success in the model (that is, competence, literacy and enthusiasm). One of the major outcomes of this research has been the development of a sophisticated methodology for teaching in-service teachers how to incorporate the model in Spanish schools (see Calderón, & Martínez de Ojeda, 2011). Based upon research on effective professional development (Armour & Yelling, 2004; Sinelnikov, 2009), this research team now has in place the potential for some significant work on Sport Education in the coming years.

Indeed, one of the outcomes of researchers at both UCAM and UCLM has been the presentation of a major investigation into Spanish students' perceptions of their participation in Sport Education. Studying students across a number of school grade levels, across a number of different

sports, and in two regions of Spain, the team of Gutierrez, Garcia and Calderón have produced perhaps the largest scale study of Sport Education since those first conducted in the 1990's in Australia and New Zealand. In this study, Spanish students declared that not only did they make significant improvements in their skills, that this format of physical education was favoured over their previous experiences. In addition, the UCLM research team is currently investigating the potential of Sport Education for the development of positive social behaviours in physical education.

The overwhelming attractiveness of Sport Education for Spanish students suggests that teachers across Spain should consider attempting to incorporate the model in their classes. Spain has a rich sporting heritage and it would appear that Sport Education serves to invigorate and excite students towards physical activity. More importantly, research on Sport Education has shown significant attractiveness to those students who previously were not so enthusiastic about physical education. In particular, lower skilled students and girls find this model particularly attractive, as they feel a sense of importance within their teams, and can take responsibilities and leadership roles not directly related to their physical skills.

Research on Sport Education on the Iberian peninsula is not only limited to Spanish sites. Currently, there are a number of projects underway in Portugal (from the University of Porto), where a number of significant studies on student learning across a number of sports are taking place. Spanish researchers are collaborating on some of these projects which should provide a major contribution to the way in which physical education is taught throughout the region.

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