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## SPORT AND EDUCATION: SPORT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR ALL OR FOR SOME?

Bevan Grannt and Clive Pope

### OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of this chapter, readers should be able to:

- identify several key events since 1900 that have influenced the role of sport in secondary school
- trace aspects of the relationship between sport and physical education
- explain why Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) and the Regional Sports Trusts (RST) have become key players in the promotion of sport in schools
- explain the difference between, and impact of, a sport for all and high-performance philosophy of sport in schools
- articulate their own position about the educational role of sport in secondary school and how this contributes to the community
- argue the pros and cons related to current issues in secondary school sport and speculate about the possible consequences of each.

### KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In this chapter readers will become familiar with the following terms and concepts:

1937 Physical Welfare and Recreation Act	Moving Through Sport report New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport	Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC)
1999 Health and Physical Education Curriculum	secondary school sports academies	sport education curriculum
Graham Report	sports academies	'sport for all' philosophy Sport on the <i>Move</i> report Thomas Report

**UNDERSTANDING MYSELF**

Many experiences at school help shape our perception of sport. In what ways did your experiences during physical education lessons influence your ideas about sport and how did these impact on your involvement now? Is there anything that you would like to change about the way sport was offered at your school?

## Introduction

If sport is to remain a desirable activity for secondary school students in the 21st century then those involved in promoting, managing and teaching/coaching will need to reflect more critically on and rethink current practices. To be appealing to young people, future initiatives will have to be more equitable, educational, diverse and culturally significant than some practices in the past. If the school is to *make a* significant contribution in educating about and through sport, Tinning and Fitzclarence (1992, p. 302) suggest:

...it requires more than good teaching and a love of physical activity and sport by the teacher. It requires a rethinking of the nature of school physical education [including sport in school], which is informed by an understanding of the nature of the postmodern world.

Such a message is not new and those in charge would do well to heed Smithells' (1964, p. 12) caution of several decades ago that using 'regimented structures and compelling people to play sport defeats its own end'. In a postmodern age with a proliferation of leisure activities, young people have mixed views about sport and may avoid participating, especially when a high degree of commitment and energy is required. It can be further complicated if their skill level is below that expected from significant others (Hendry, Shucksmith, Love & Glendinning, 1993). However, this should not be interpreted as meaning that young people have a dislike for either playing or watching (which is becoming more prevalent) sport. Rather, it is a rejection of the excessive demands that sometimes pervade the boundaries of play and erode the elements of fun and spontaneity that should be prevalent in sport. According to Arnold (1997), sport in school should be treated as a practice that has internal goals and standards rather than an institutional focus that tends to be more concerned with power, status and prestige.

The place of sport in schools has always been controversial and struggled to gain legitimacy and acceptance as a part of the formal curriculum. While some commentators argue sport has no place in the curriculum, others claim it is too important to be left to chance and, like other aspects of education, it can and should be pursued for its own intrinsic value. For example, Siedentop (1982, p. 2) stated, 'if sport is equal to other ludic [movement] forms (art, drama, music and dance) both for the individual and the culture; and if more appropriate participation in sport represents a positive step in cultural evolution then sport in education is justified'. From another but still supportive perspective, Arnold (1997, p. 1) claimed, 'sport is a trans-cultural valued practice ... and despite its corruption from time to time it is inherently concerned with concepts, ethical principles and moral values which are universally applicable and justified as a form of education'.

**CONCEPT CHECK:*****Curriculum***

The range of subjects offered by schools. The health and physical education curriculum is prepared by the Ministry of Education and serves as a guide for teachers to plan a programme for their school.

The 1999 Health and Physical Education Curriculum (used in schools today) acknowledges sport is integral to our culture and an important part of the overall development of students. It would seem, therefore, that one role of the school is to initiate students into those practices of a culture considered worth protecting and fostering. However, there is a long history in New Zealand of sport and education, and in particular physical education, not always being companionable 'bed-fellows' (Stothart, 2000, 2005). It is possible this disparity has more to do with the philosophical position and action (or lack of action) of teachers and other interested groups than the notions of sport itself. After all, sport by itself is neither good nor bad!

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an historical overview of the link between education, physical education and sport in New Zealand secondary schools. It will make reference to the initiatives of prominent educationalists, comment on the influence of significant reform in legislation, draw on the related literature, particularly from New Zealand authors, and consider how changes in lifestyle and the sporting culture have influenced the meaning and place of sport in society and school.

## Pre-1960: A glimpse of the past

There are reports of sport being played in New Zealand boys' schools as early as the 1860s. The philosophy of these programmes was based on Arnoldism (English Public School System) and projected an ideology that physical prowess was an instrument of moral education and athletic excellence as well as a way to enhance the school's reputation (Crawford, 1983). However, the first time physical activity became a required part of the curriculum was in 1877 when the Education Act recommended that drill (military) be offered. In 1901 the Physical Drill in Public and Native Schools Act made physical drill mandatory (Stothart, 1972). Although not sport, it was the first step towards making physical activity a part of education in New Zealand.

While physical training, or what we now call physical education, became part of the school programme, the curriculum included sport and games. Although contentious, some argued that **sport** should be compulsory, 'valued for its character building qualities and for promoting values of teamwork, co-operation and discipline. As a result some sports, especially rugby, cricket and later netball came to occupy much school leisure time' (Watson, 1993, p. 22). By the early 1900s this became a popular development and many schools began to offer sport outside class hours and to organise interschool fixtures.

While these developments marked the beginning of a new era, it was evident not all agreed with what was happening. For example, there were entrenched attitudes regarding sport and what was considered proper behaviour for girls prevailed (Jones, 1980). Annie Whitelaw, the first principal of Auckland Girls' Grammar: 'wouldn't dream of allowing her girls to play so unladylike a game as hockey' (Coney, 1986, p. 174). Elsewhere, Dr Maud Ferey of Christchurch was asserting 'soccer is the finest

sport for girls that exists' (cited in Coney, 1936, p. 162). In many co-educational schools there were separate play areas for boys and girls. In spite of such constraints many girls' schools appointed games mistresses (often trained overseas) to improve sports performance. While the place of sport in schools remained the prerogative of teachers, 'sport-like society was male dominated with a strong European middle-class concern for the "acquiring" ethic' (Jones, 1980, p. 42) and the social skills acquired on the playing field were transferable to the world at large. This reflected what O'Neill (1992, p. 74) called the gendered curriculum, where girls were to be educated for 'the private realm of domesticity, moral guardianship, unwaged lay-about, childbearing and rearing'. Such an ideal promoted an assumed social hierarchy and had a powerful negative influence on the participation rate of Young women in physical activity.

Initiatives between 1900 and 1935 included the appointment of games mistresses and other specialists, acknowledging the increasing importance of the 'physical aspect of education. Two of these were Miss K. Noble, appointed in 1910 to Auckland Teachers College to teach physical culture to girls, and Dr Renfrew White, appointed in 1927 as a lecturer in physical education at Dunedin Teachers college. The efforts of these and others, and in particular the appointment of Philip Smithells in 1939 (as Superintendent of Physical Education in the Department of Education), provided the impetus for a dramatic change in the place and purpose of school physical activity and its significance to the community (see Stothart, 1970).

In 1937 the Labour government passed the Physical Welfare and Recreation Act with the intention of making recreation and sport more available in the community and to address a concern about the physical condition and fitness of all New Zealanders. This provided a background for the Thomas Report of 1942 that recommended physical education become a core subject in secondary schools. In 1946 physical education became a 'core' compulsory subject up to Year 11, of which a small portion could be allocated to sport (Stothart, 1974). The Department of Education (now Ministry) acknowledged the need for additional specialist teachers and in 1948 the School of Physical Education, University of Otago, was opened, with Smithells as Director.

By the 1950s sport was becoming a significant event in the lives of many young people (predominantly males) and an educational activity to which many schools attached prestige and Status, particularly through interschool sport. Sport was seen as a way to promote the ethos of a 'sound mind in an active body' as well as contribute to the social and physical development of the young generation. While these ideals embodied middle-class values, McGeorge (1992, p. 49) suggested the associated traits were also considered to contribute to moral development through 'honour, courage and sportsmanship'.

## 1960-1980: A time of significant change

The increasing affluence of the 1960s saw manifestations of a distinct, urban-based youth culture. Teenagers were more socially and physically mobile than their predecessors and in addition to participating in organised team sports, many sought new leisure activities (Hindson, Cushman & Gidlow, 1994). This coincided with a proliferation and diversity of games and non-traditional sports in New Zealand, in particular the growth of individual sports and programme innovations in schools (Spanhake, 1970). There was also a greater level of public sector involvement in the promotion and

management of sport and recreation than ever before. The first signs of commercial involvement were evident through incentive schemes in sport of which some were developed specifically for use in schools (e.g. Gymnastics Incentive Awards, BNZ 5 star Awards for athletics, Royal Life Saving Society Award).

The advent of commercial interest, to assist with the promotion of sports in both the school and community, expanded in the 1960s. For example, the Rothmans Foundation (a tobacco company) employed national coaching directors who travelled throughout the country taking sessions in schools and the community. These experts were highly skilled in their particular sport and were effective at delivering the sporting message and inspiring students to get involved. However for some educators, the connecting of sport with tobacco was anathema. Eventually, the Rothmans Coaching Scheme was superseded in 1973 by the New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport, which adopted a much broader approach to leisure and active living through innovative activities and programmes at a regional and national level (e.g. Have A Go Campaign, fun runs).

As sport became more accessible and more diversified, so too did the number of related issues. The 200 delegates at a refresher course held at Massey University in 1970 concurred that sport was at a turning point and believed that the government (Labour) would begin to interfere like never before (Shaw 1970). This prediction was realized in 1973 when the government allocated \$3 million towards the development of sport and recreation. There was also concern that traditional sports of the time (e.g. athletics, cricket, hockey, netball, rugby, tennis) would become less popular as more leisure sports developed. An ‘expert’ panel suggested schools should be expected to absorb much of the responsibility if the proliferation of leisure sport continued at the expense of the more traditional sport. It was clear from the meeting that sport was taking on a new dimension and a ‘business as usual’ approach was no longer appropriate. The nature of the change was captured by Beamish (1982, p. 178) who claimed, ‘Sport is no longer a process of utility that is enjoyed by the player for his or her health, welfare, amusement or whatever. Sport is commodity.’

As sport proliferated and diversified in the 1960s, many teachers were willing to provide support by coaching and turning up on Saturday to support their teams. By the mid-1970s, however, the changing conditions of teachers’ work and the introduction of ‘new’ sports placed real pressure on schools to provide adult support. Such sports as squash, gymnastics, badminton, archery, softball, basketball, volleyball, golf, skiing and rowing were demanding equal time, support and resources. Schools struggled to meet the demands. This was further complicated by a lack of teacher (coach) expertise and a preference by some teachers to give more emphasis to traditional sports (Bradley, 1974). With the expansion of the school curriculum and increasing diversity of activities, it became unreasonable to expect physical education teachers to manage, coach and organise a range of sports (and other outdoor activities) as well as teach physical education to every class (Grant & Stothart, 1994); at least, not if a ‘sport for all’ philosophy was adopted.

In the late 1970s the Post Primary Teachers Association began to take a stand against the voluntary involvement of teachers in extracurricular events, including Saturday sport. Some rejected the notion of coaching sports teams in their own time while the parents of the children went about expanding their own leisure-time activities (Grant & Stothart, 1994). Teachers objected to being ‘child minders’. Although the level of voluntary support varied from school to school, the tradition of an enthusiastic teacher giving up time for the greater glory of the school was changed forever. In 1973 the Recreation

and Sport Act addressed the resourcing and development of sport and recreational activity. Many argued more resources were required in schools for promoting and organizing physical activity and attracting greater numbers of young people into competitive sport (McKenzie, 1974). Some were advocating the appointment of sports liaison officers in schools to relieve the burden placed on teachers (Bradley, 1974). The social and administrative structures that once nurtured and sustained youth sport in both the school and community sport realms were at risk of being eroded.

There seemed no logical reason why sport, as an integral component of the social system, could not be an acknowledged part of the school curriculum. In 1977 the Johnson Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education (Department of Education, cited in McGeorge, 1992) supported such a view and noted that sport could promote values such as fair play, benevolence, justice and social harmony. Smithells (1974) recognized this and claimed it should be possible to achieve some physical education objectives through sport.

## 1980-1995: The Concerns result in action

While the range of sports being offered in schools during this era was increased, there were conflicting reports about the numbers of young people participating, differing reasons of offering sport in schools and some disquiet about the way sport was being administered in the school and the community. At the same time there was a widespread move to change the roles and responsibilities of the Council and Ministry of Recreation and Sport. This led to Mike Moore, Minister of Sport, setting up a Sports Development Inquiry to examine the state of sport in New Zealand. Although the subsequent report *Sport on the Move* (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985) made some positive recommendations, it was highly critical of physical education and the way physical educators had neglected their supposed responsibility for educating and socializing young people into sport. Schools and physical educators in particular were being apportioned an unreasonable share of the blame for the apparent demise of sport in our culture. The report (pp. 68-70) also condemned the Department of Education for failing to recognize the proper place of sport in schools and asserted:

Sport has been buried within the current school physical education syllabus.... The declining standard and status of physical education has also affected the quality of school sports education.... We see sport as seriously disadvantaged at the present time within the physical education curriculum.

This and other comments illustrated the committee's lack of understanding about the changing nature of sport in society and the challenge of educating young people about, in and through the physical medium. Such was the committee's concern that sport would be ignored by teachers, they suggested 'sport needs to be separated from the physical education syllabus...because the requirements for teaching each are fundamentally different' (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985, p. 69). However, there was no evidence to support this assertion. Of more concern was a comment by an Inspector of Secondary Schools with specific responsibilities for school sport who contended, 'Sport in secondary schools has many symptoms of chronic illness. Unless remedial measures are applied the degeneration could become so advanced that sport as we know it could slowly disappear' (p. 75). Although clarification of the relationship between sport and physical education was overdue, the blasphemous comments did little to encourage physical educators to adopt alternative practices. The

1985 report of the Sports Development Inquiry Committee, however, recommended a more deliberate effort be made to make sport an integral and purposeful part of education, although it should be separate from physical education.

The sport on the Move document openly challenged what was happened to sport in schools. Depending on one's philosophy about sport and physical education, the suggestions were either contentious or exciting. Irrespective, it prompted considerable debate and resulted in some change, at least in principle, when a new, national Physical Education Syllabus was published (Department of Education, 1987). For the first time, reference was made to sport as being under the umbrella of physical education. It stated:

Physical education and sport are closely linked. Sport is a significant part of New Zealand's culture. It is formalized physical activity involving challenge or competition against oneself, others, or the environment. It begins in play, develops through games, and culminates as a structured competitive activity.

(Department of Education, 1987, p. 12)

The syllabus further emphasized that the role of the school is 'to ensure that opportunities are provided for students regardless of their abilities to participate in sport... student can experience the essential elements of a range of sport' (p.4). This can be achieved, the syllabus contended, if 'students play, officiate, coach, respect opponents, appreciate skill in others and know the rules of games' (p. 12). There was, however, no intention that physical education should be transformed into sport. Rather it was an extension of the 1981 teacher resource *Fitness for Living* (Department of Education, 1980) and acknowledged that many of the fundamental skills taught in physical education are best expressed through sport. After all, it is possible to offer a well-planned sports education programme as part of a physical education curriculum in a way that is both sane and exciting, humane and competitive and contributes to the culture's growth and survival (Siedentop, Mand & Taggart, 1986). Furthermore, it was believed this could be done in egalitarian ways.

By the mid-1980s there were two contrasting positions beginning to emerge on sport in schools: an inclusive philosophy with mass participation and choice on the one hand, and restricted participation through a performance-based model emphasizing elitism on the other. One point of contention that kept surfacing was related to the use of structured competition. Regardless of the model adopted, sport involves competition. Many teachers believed this was contradictory to the philosophy of physical education and education in general. However, this was a hypocritical view as many school activities operated in a competitive environment and being the 'best' is acknowledge in many ways (e.g. scores kept in physical education games, class ranking recorded on school academic reports, most games in physical education, normative-based fitness tests, achievements announced at school assembly).

When discussing competition as it relates to physical activity, Arnold (1988, p. 62) reminded us that 'competing and trying to win should not be confused with a person's reason or motive for playing'. Furthermore, the inappropriate use of competition 'may hasten the flight away from sport into alternative youth cultures' (Hendry et al., 1993, p. 61). Competition was generally viewed from two extreme perspectives. The first held that competition was necessary for personal development and social progress. In direct contrast, the second maintained that competition undermined personal and social relationships and was primarily concerned with identifying winners. In spite of the

contention, many players aren't winners, but this does not prevent them from wanting to participate in a competitive setting. Sport then *is* about more than winning or losing and teachers are well placed to ensure that the positive values of competition are promoted and the abuses eliminated in order that students share in a positive sporting experience (Siedentop, 1994).

The establishment of the government- (Labour-) funded Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure in 1987 (now SPARC), arising directly from the recommendations of *Sport on the Move* (sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985), was a significant development. The purpose of the Commission was to promote a more active lifestyle for all New Zealanders. The early 1990 saw considerable economic investment in sport from the public and private sectors (Hindson et al., 1994). For example, in the mid-1990s the Hillary Commission spent approximately \$3 million on junior sport of which some was deliberately targeted at schools. Given this level of commitment, it is not surprising that frequent attempts were made to justify the spending by quantifying how many people actually participated. The following is a summary of surveys on youth participation in sport at this time:

- A survey of 1000 adolescents showed that 76% (school sport), 57% (club sport) and 52% (voluntary physical pursuits) of the boys were involved in sport, with slightly lower levels of 65%, 47% and 51% respectively for girls (Marketing Diagnostics and Development Ltd, 1991).
- After studying the lifestyle of 1600 young (15-18-year-old) *New Zealanders*, Wilson, Hopkins and Russell (1993) reported that 64% of males and 54% of females were engaged in high levels of physical activity (including sport), while 17% and 24% respectively were sedentary.
- Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Health (1993) found a similar percentage of young people were active and engaged in sport, but noted a greater proportion of both sexes were adopting a sedentary lifestyle.

Two of the school-based sport programmes to receive funding were Sport Education and Sportfit. This was the most significant attempt yet to provide financial support specifically for sport in schools and make the sporting experience more accessible and meaningful to greater numbers of young people. The sport education curriculum was trialled as a part of physical education in 1991; it was designed to help students become skilled sports participants and good sportspersons in the fullest sense (Grant, 1992; Siedentop, 1994). In doing so, students would learn to be:

- *competent*: acquire skills, become knowledgeable players, execute strategies
- *literate*: understand and value the roles, rituals and traditions in sport, and discriminate between good and bad sport practices
- *enthusiastic*: develop tendencies and behaviours that preserve, protect and enhance the sport culture, and learn to want to participate in sport.

In a summary of the research on sport education in Australia and *New Zealand*, Alexander, Taggart and Thorpe (1996, p. 43) stated that 'the grass roots adoption and dissemination of the model is a strong indication that sport education is versatile and responsive to teachers' practicality ethic.' While those teachers involved tend to share a common set of beliefs and values, there is some indication that not all practices in sport are dealt with in the same way. This is particularly the case when dealing with social, ethical and moral matters that arise as a part of the sport education programme. Many schools now use the sport education curriculum as part of the NCEA Level 1 in physical education.



Sportfit on the other hand was a school based non-curriculum initiative funded equally in the school and the Hillary Commission. The sole purpose was to provide funding for the employment of a person(s) to help further develop and support the school sports programme (Grant & Pope, 2000). It was very much about ensuring that more students had greater opportunities for experiencing number of sports in a range of contexts (highly competitive, social, recreational).

Meanwhile, sweeping educational changes were recommended by the Picot report regarding the way schools should be managed. These changes became reality as the policy of Tomorrow's Schools was implemented in 1990 (see Stothart, 1991). Under the new structure, Boards of Trustees (school, administrative committees) would determine their own priorities within the guidelines of national requirements. This included determining the place of sport in school. It could be argued that changes in the 1999 Physical Education syllabus, the various Hillary Commission initiatives in the early mid-1990s and the reforms in school administration since the Education Act of 1989 provided opportune time to critically reflect on the past and move towards the 21st century with an array new ideas and feelings of optimism.

### **CASE: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE**

Until recently at Nederville College, a large co-educational school in a low to medium socioeconomic area, the majority of girls and boys played at least one sport for the school - some in social grades while others were more serious. A 'sport for all' philosophy was 'alive and well' and helped create a 'feel good' factor in the school. Many teachers, some senior students and a few 'outsiders' willingly helped coach and/or supervise over 119 teams across 14 sports. The programme also had excellent support from parents, of whom many volunteered to raise additional funds for uniforms, travel and equipment. Sport was an integral and much liked part of the students' life at Nederville. However, a considerable turnover of staff, new leisure options in the community, more pressure on winning, more students working after school, and the increasing costs involved in playing sport have resulted in less than a quarter of the students opting to playing sport.

As the new principal of the college, describe what strategies you would consider to ensure that:

- those students who want to excel in sport have the opportunity to do so
- all students can participate in a range of sporting experiences.

### **Post-1995: Putting differences aside**

One of the challenges for educational institutions as they moved into the 21st century was to keep, pace with, and satisfy, the ever-increasing needs and wants of a new generation of young people. With regard to sport, this has meant schools have had to be more enterprising. Just like any other activity in the modern era, students need to see sport as being personally rewarding if it is to continue to attract their interest. But achieving this is anything but easy given the popularity of many alternative forms of active and passive leisure pursuits. Consequently, many initiatives have been implemented to ensure sport in schools maintains a high profile and students' experiences are both educational and enjoyable. The following sections detail some of these initiatives.

## New Zealand Secondary Schools Sports Council (NZSSSC)

The primary reason for establishing the NZSSSC (an independent organization) in 1995, was to support schools in the promotion and preservation of this important part of our culture. The Council consists of 11 board members (mostly school principals) and an Executive Director. They work with school and sporting associations to ensure sport remains an attractive leisure time option for students and maintains its place on the podium. One of its roles is to coordinate the individual island and national sporting calendars as well as provide leadership for school sports coordinators. After all, things such as sponsorship, scholarships and celebrity are all part of this growing aspect of sport in both school and the community.

Since the Council's inception, there has been a steady increase in the number of students playing sport, the number of teachers and/or other adults involved in coaching, a bigger range of sports hosting more prestigious events, and an increase in the number of events being staged (see Table 13.1 below). It could be interpreted from this that sport is 'alive and well' in the secondary school and should students wish to participate then there is the opportunity to do so.

Table 13.1 Secondary school sport participation profile 1998-2005

	Students playing sport	Teachers coaching <sup>1</sup>	North/South Islands & national events	Sport offered at events
1998	239,543	5013	93	42
2000	238,495	5434	107	42
2002	228,599	5056	115	44
2004	243,624	5393	131	55
2005	241,115	5424	153	55

<sup>1</sup> Many other adults and senior students also coach school teams

### *Moving Through Sport*

Following the 1996 National Junior Sport Forum for representatives for the sporting and tertiary sector, the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure produced a policy document titled *Moving Through Sport*. This provided a framework for a series of principles that would hopefully help shape the future development of junior sport. Included in this was an attempt to find a way to create a more coherent interface between the government and providers of sport - including schools. Specific attention was accorded to education and its development needed by the young and therefore, sport and sport education should be included in the curriculum' (1997, p. 8). In addition, *Moving Through Sport* advocated a closer and more robust link between schools, sports clubs and community organizations. This was considered essential if a high proportion of young people were to remain actively engaged in sport whether they be a participant, manager or coach. It was also seen as a way to try and avoid what are often an unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. While *Moving*

Through Sport was greeted with enthusiasm, for it accorded a positive shift in how junior sport might be structured, the enactment of this rather ambitious ideal is yet to be fully realised.

## Health and Physical Education Curriculum

In 1999 the Ministry of Education released a new *Health and Physical Education Curriculum*. This was developed around seven key areas of learning of which one was Sports Studies. In this component of the curriculum students are required to gain experience by playing an array of sports, consider some of the social and political issues associated with sport, and critically appraise the educative value of sport. The new curriculum wanted students to have more than a 'learn to play' construct about sport. However, not everyone involved with either teaching or promoting sport agreed with the shift in emphasis. A corresponding initiative in Australia drew a similar response. In this case Tinning (2000) suggested there was a danger of trying to shift the emphasis too far too soon from the more traditional approach to teaching sport. Here in New Zealand, Ross (2004) questioned the educational value of any document that prescribes social improvement as a component of the curriculum and learning process – in this case through sport. These perspectives illustrate the difficulties of attempting to ameliorate the uncomfortable relationship that has existed for years between sport and physical education. This situation also provides an ongoing challenge for physical education teachers, many of whom have a strong sporting background (Stothart, 2000). But as Siedentop (1995) argues, whether we like it or not, sport is an important part of our society and how students get to learn about this should not happen by chance. One way many secondary schools currently work to ensure their students able to consider and critically reflect on both the sporting experience and the non physical aspects associate with sport is through teachers using the Sport Education Model (Siedentop, Hastie & Van der Mars, 1994) and teaching Games for Understanding (Griffin, Mitchell & Oslin, 1997). Sports Studies has also been a very popular component of the Year 13 Bursary programme (now NCEA level 3) and this embraces the ideals of the new curriculum.

## Getting set for an active nation

In 2000 the Labour government launched a review into the nature and provision of sport and recreation in New Zealand, including what was happening in schools. The prime purpose of the review was to create a vision for the next 25 years – up to 2025. Following seven months of extensive consultation, a Ministerial Taskforce chaired by John Graham released what was known as the Graham report in late 2000. The tenor of this report was marked by a catchcry of 'less is more' that advocated relationalisation, accountability and working towards specified outcomes such as 'more people more active more often' and better performances in the international sporting arena. To achieve such goals it was deemed necessary to establish a new bureaucratic organisation and as a result, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) was formed in February 2002. This new organisation was an amalgamation of the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure, the New Zealand Sports Foundation and the policy section of the Office of Tourism and Sport and hence became the new government sport agency. One reason for the change was the desire for a more business-like model, and more centralized control over the way sport was being managed and administered.

What was occurring in schools did not escape the attention of the ministerial review. The claim was that the contribution of the education sector towards physical activity (including sport) was considered to be grossly inadequate — although much of the claim was based on anecdotal evidence. The taskforce (p. 54) stated it was:

... appalled at the state of physical education, physical activity, movement and recreation and sport education in New Zealand. Evidence was repeatedly presented to the Taskforce that showed a lack of clarity, direction, prescription and scheduled time for schools for physical activity and sport.

In spite of this claim the numbers of students opting for physical education units in Years 12 and 13 (previously known as Bursary Physical Education) had steadily increased since the early 1990s. Sport and recreation, however, was presented as a 'Cinderella' area of the school curriculum that possessed many faults.

This echoed noises from *Sport on the Move* in the 1980s. It was as if many people were asking what, if anything, had changed during the past couple of decades. Irrespective of what was happening in schools, the Graham Report acknowledged education was seen as becoming more and more a fundamental driver of sport and recreation in New Zealand. However, one problem was that it lacked the vision and resources to be as effective as it might be. Hence, the taskforce recommended a \$25 million injection of funds be allocated to initiatives such as secondary school sport and recreation coordinators, physical education resource teachers, professional development for heads of physical education departments, and the appointment of secondary school regional recreation and sport directors who would be mostly based in the local Regional Sports Trust. Many of these initiatives are currently being acted upon.

### School sport academies

As previously noted, the 1989 Education Act allowed for schools to make much more control over how best to satisfy educational goals; to be more creative in how they packaged some programmes. Not surprisingly, many schools began developing alternative ways, more liberal than the traditional curriculum-based programmes, to satisfy the needs of some students who saw little relevance in their schooling. Aranui High School in Christchurch, for example, introduced an initiative which they called a sport academy.

#### CONCEPT CHECK:

##### Sport academies

An alternative means of schooling through which life skills and student growth can be championed. Some schools have academies for one sport while others offer a range of sports. In most cases, what occurs in the academies is in addition to the formal school curriculum and focuses primarily on high performance.

The academy grew out of staff concerns over a number of senior students 'dropping-out and a subsequent investigation into what was needed to encourage them back to school. The one common interest signalled by these students was sport. The school set up its first sport academy in 1997 and encouraged 30 students to return to school to undertake a special programme of subjects 'relevant' to their lives and to spend a considerable period of time studying and training for sport. The success of programme at Aranui became a watershed for how sport and education could work in harmony for a special group of students. Since its inception, the school now operates several sport and vocational academies at junior and senior levels.

Following in the footsteps of Aranui, many other schools in New Zealand have established sport academies. A survey of secondary schools in 2000 revealed 52 schools had sport academies in some form. For example, some schools covered a range of sports while others focused more on performance in one or two sports. A further 19 schools indicated they were planning to have an academy in operation by 2001 and many others expressed they were 'thinking about the possibility' (Tristram & Ratty, 2000). Although this development has been greeted by a range of responses, Pope (2002, p. 98) contends that 'sport academies have presented an alternative means through which life skills and student growth can be championed. The present education system falls short in allowing all students to be successful or to gain positive experiences from their secondary education'. However, only time will reveal the true stature of sport academies in the educational landscape.

### THE BOTTOM LINE: MANAGEMENT/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- In the current climate of school management each Board of Trustees should ensure there is a policy on the role of sport in their school.
- Secondary schools need to be aware of how the Sportfit programme can assist with making quality experiences in physical activity (including sport) available to all students.
- Schools should address the idea of covering costing for those teachers and volunteers who willingly give of their time to coach sport.
- The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and SPARC should adopt a more definitive joint policy than that stated in the new Health and Physical Education syllabus on the role of sport in schools. They should also provide the resources to ensure this is realized.

### Summary

Sport in contemporary times has taken on new meanings, particularly for young people. Because of advances in technology it is now easier than ever to consume sport, particularly high-performance sport. Hence we are frequently exposed to the good and not-so-good aspects of sport from around the world. In essence, we can become 'experts' without having any direct involvement. But in spite of such exposure, playing sport is something many young people still aspire to do whilst at school. Furthermore, they also learn that sport has been and still is a significant part of our culture. They also develop an understanding about the way sport is intertwined with social, political and economic themes.

However, sport by itself is an insufficient medium to ensure ongoing participation and we are frequently warned about the vulnerability of sport in schools. Consequently, what Huxley (1969, p. 187) argued four decades ago still applies today and we would do well to heed this advice if sport is to remain an important and valued aspect of what happens in schools.

Like every other instrument man has invented, sport can be used for good or evil purposes. Used well, it can teach endurance and encourages a sense of fair play and a respect for rules, and subordination of personal interests to those of the group. Used badly it can encourage personal vanity and group vanity, greedy desire for victory and hatred for rivals, and hatred for rivals, an intolerant *esprit de corps* and contempt for people who are beyond a certain pale.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What role did sport have in secondary school prior to the Thomas Report of 1942?
2. What causes some of the tensions between physical education and sport?
3. Explain some of the ways in which sport has been integrated into the physical education curriculum in secondary schools.
4. On what grounds did Sport on the Move (1985) and the Graham report (2001) claim that physical education in schools was not successful in helping the development of sport?
5. Critique the argument that schools should focus primarily on 'sport for all' and leave the development of high-performance sport to the national sport associations.
6. Argue a case for or against the notion that 'sport academics in schools are more about seeking kudos for the school than the education of students'.

## Advancing your understanding

In *Sport, ethics and education*, Arnold brings many of the current issues associated with sport in school to the fore and puts them into an educational context. Throughout the book, you are encouraged to adopt your own position based on personal beliefs about the experiences of self and society.

- Arnold, P. (1997). *Sport, ethics and education*. London: Cassell.

This meaning of sport as a form of play and associated arguments for and against having sport as a part of the curriculum are clearly stated in Siedentop, Hastie and Van der Mar's book. It provides a vision, framework for change, models for teachers, and more importantly a reassurance for those who doubt the potential of sport to contribute to our culture in a positive way.

- Siedentop, D., Hastie, P. & Van der Mars, H. (2004). *Complete guide to sport education*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

This report provides a background to some of the issues associated with sport and allows the reader to trace the reasons for the development of several new initiatives:

- Sport, Fitness & Leisure Ministerial Taskforce. (2001). *Getting set for an active nation: Report of the Sport, Fitness & Leisure Ministerial Taskforce*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

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