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Does competitive sport have educational validity in Physical Education?

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Aspirations in Physical Education and Sport

- Young people learn to love being active
- Energise the lives of young people
- Enable young people to develop a commitment to being regularly active
- Enrich the lives of young people
- Enhance wellbeing and enable young people to flourish

Problems

- Culture of Negativity – particularly coaches
- Inappropriate content and pedagogy
- 70% of young people claim they don't like competition
- Huge drop out from sport
- Most parents have a “Big Concern” with youth coaches (Aspen Institute Project on Parents, 2014) – too much emphasis on winning

A Culture of Negative Practices

- Negativity in interactions
- Shouting
- Shaming students in front of their peers
- Ridiculing
- Making students feel guilty
- Focus on what is wrong
- Setting up students to fail
- No understanding of connecting with players
- Blaming players when things go wrong

Negative Images in learning

- ❖ Repetitive Content
- ❖ Little focused learning
- ❖ NO obvious direction
- ❖ Too much waiting time
- ❖ Too much discipline
- ❖ Uninspiring content
- ❖ Few positive Interactions
- ❖ Little self-controlled practice

Royal Society of Arts article 2013

- Expose the **danger that lies at the heart of British Education**, the profound disregard for the cardinal sin: first, 'do no harm'.
- We are **harming the life chances** of our young people by **rigid academic models** and **testing** that fail to capture the richness of human need and capacities.
- Where do we **encourage capabilities** like initiative, responsibility, self-discipline, persistence, flexibility, self-management, teamwork, problem solving, resilience and confidence?

Issues

- NO longer can we accept taken-for-granted assumptions about the value of PE
- WE need to demonstrate that we can match aspirations with actual practice

Gatekeepers

Teachers/coaches are Gatekeepers with a negative perspective or a positive perspective who can:

- Put young people off sport
- Stall and inhibit progress
- Encourage
- Inspire

A Sporting Habit: Are these recognised?

- **Emotional engagement** in sport while growing up is the most important driver of current regular participation
- Have built a much **stronger attachment to sport** from secondary school age, being more likely to feel sport defines them and plays a much bigger part in their lives
- The **support networks** of family, friends and teachers to build and reinforce an emotional connection with sport and making young people feel that sport is 'for people like them'
- **A passion for sport in general** is more important than a passion for a specific sport.

How to Develop a Sporting Habit for Life: Final report. Sport England December 2012 www.sportengland.org/media/39266/sporting-habit-for-life-report.pdf

So when is Sport Educationally valid?

- Establishing a positive culture that promotes active lifestyles
- Giving young people a Voice in their learning
- Encouraging self-directed learning
- Enabling young people to be independent and responsible learners/people
- Creating a culture in which empowerment and agency can flourish

Young People need

- The capacity to take responsibility for creating a meaningful life/fulfilling life in which purposeful physical pursuits (like sport) can play a significant role.
- Learn to make informed choices that they have thought about
- Learn to give their life shape and purpose through purposeful physical pursuits
- Generate an enabling resource that provides the basis for living a flourishing life (wellbeing)

These proposals represent radical proposals for Physical Education and Sport

What do we need to do?

It means that teachers have to acquire an **understanding** of:

- **What is entailed** in promoting **responsibility, autonomy, empowerment/agency and independence** in Physical Education/Sport
- How to promote **emotional engagement** and developing a **passion for sport**.

What do we need to do?

- A curriculum in schools that recognises that these dispositions need to be addressed
- Appropriate pedagogy
- The will and courage to challenge existing practice
- The patience to generate change