

1994

## Sharing teachers' stories of sport education : a summary of findings from the 1994 national SEPEP trials

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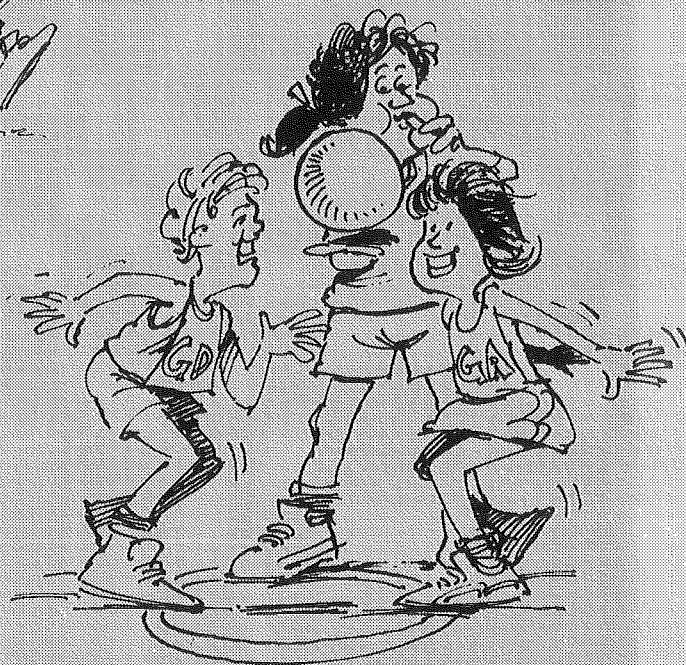
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# SEPEP

SPORT EDUCATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROJECT

Sharing teachers' stories  
of Sport Education:  
a summary of findings  
from the  
1994 National SEPEP Trials



**SPARC** SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESEARCH CENTRE  
EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

Commissioned by the National Aussie Sport Unit, ASC

1

OF V.I.A.

# Sharing teachers' stories of Sport Education:

**A summary of findings from the  
1994 national SEPEP trials**

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[This document is an abbreviated version of the main SEPEP Report]

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As the title of this document suggests, in order to be able to compile this summary, the writers have relied on the stories that teachers and students have told. The teachers involved in the SEPEP trials willingly gave up their time to write and talk about the Sport Education Curriculum model. It is their enthusiasm that has made this summary and the more comprehensive SEPEP Report possible.

## The teachers involved in the Project were:

### NSW

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Cathy Grey, Roger Davis & Jillian Norris:	Castle Hill High School

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Macgregor State High School

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In Western Australia SEPEP workshops and subsequent trials were not held as part of the national project due to the advanced stage of the second Western Australian Sport Education trial (SE II).

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National AUSSIE SPORT Unit:

Henny Oldenhove            Manager

Shirley Willis                Assistant Manager (responsibility for SEPEP)

# Foreword

*By Professor. Daryl Siedentop, Ohio State University, who first wrote about the Sport Education model.*

I do not pretend that a one semester Sport Education experience in the 10th grade is going to have any far reaching implications for our collective life. On the other hand, I would be most distressed if students who experienced Sport Education repeatedly over several years of schooling were not somehow changed in ways that eventually impact on the larger sport culture. What if Sport Education were done everywhere and done well? What would be its effects?

The play education model aims to help students learn to engage in physically active play, to help them become “players” in all of the full meaning of that term. That aim is still foregrounded in Sport Education, except that it now is explicated as helping students to become competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportspersons.

By literate I mean Sport Education should prepare students who are knowledgeable and activist regarding a particular local sport culture. Whether it is volleyball or cycling, student should not only learn about the sport culture—where it is done, who does it, how access is gained, how it is governed—but also willing to use their knowledge as activist participants to improve the local practice of their sport. The knowledge without the activism is impotent. The activism without the knowledge is uninformed.

By critical I mean Sport Education should help students to examine the structure and social inequities in their local, regional, and national sport cultures. They should so value fair access that they are willing to work within their local sport cultures to effect change. They should also be critical consumers, recognising how media and institutions manipulate sport and sport participation for political and economic gain.

Sport Education has always been teacher-tested and, therefore, has many variations as teachers adapt the model to local constraints and their own teaching styles. That the model has proven to be adaptive is perhaps the best evidence that it has a chance to survive and grow in schools around the world. I’m grateful for all the antipodean physical educators who have been willing to try the model and have implemented it in so many interesting and different variations, collectively they represent quite well the antipodean experimental attitude I so admire—they have been willing to “have a go”.



# Table of Contents

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	Page
Acknowledgments .....	i
Foreword.....	v
List of Figures.....	x
<b>Part One: <i>General Background To SEPEP</i></b> .....	<b>1</b>
What is Sport Education? .....	1
Background to Sport Education .....	2
Introduction to SEPEP .....	2
The Study .....	3
<b>Part Two: <i>Summary Of SEPEP Key Findings</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
Programming .....	5
Summary of Findings .....	5
Educational Impact of SEPEP .....	6
Summary of Findings .....	6
The Sport Education Philosophy .....	7
Summary of Findings .....	7
Team Selection in Sport Education .....	8
Summary of Findings .....	8
The Aspect of Competition .....	9
Summary of Findings .....	9
Publicity Officers .....	10
Summary of Findings .....	10
The Teacher's Role.....	11
Summary of Findings .....	11
Student Feelings.....	12
Summary of Findings .....	12

School Community Links .....	13
Summary of Findings .....	13
Student Roles .....	14
Summary of Findings .....	14
Class Management.....	15
Summary of Findings .....	15
Equity.....	16
Summary of Findings .....	16
General Impressions .....	17
Summary of Findings .....	17
<b>Part Three: SEPEP Key Findings.....</b>	<b>19</b>
What Teachers Said About the Programme.....	19
Impact of the Change .....	20
Curriculum Support Materials.....	23
What Teachers Said About the Educational Impact of SEPEP .....	24
Skill Development.....	25
Social Development .....	26
Cognitive Development .....	28
What Teachers Said About Teaching the Sport Education Philosophy .....	30
Teaching the Sport Education Philosophy .....	30
Teaching Students for Roles and Responsibility .....	31
Receptivity to Modified Games .....	31
What Teachers Said About Team Selection in Sport Education .....	34
Students as Selectors.....	34
The Issue of Friendship .....	37
The Value of Sustained Team Affiliation .....	38
What Teachers Said About the Aspect of Competition.....	40
The Value of Competition.....	41
The Problem of Absenteeism.....	42
What Teachers Said About Publicity Officers .....	44
Implementation and Performance of the Role.....	45
What Teachers Said About the Teacher's Role in Sport Education.....	48
Teachers' Understanding of Their Role in Sport Education .....	49
Student Understanding of the Teacher's Role in Sport Education .....	51
Assessment in Sport Education.....	52
Achieving Outcomes in Sport Education .....	54
What Teachers Said About Student Feelings.....	56
Student Attitudes Toward Sport Education .....	56
Factors Affecting Student Attitudes Toward Sport Education .....	58
What Teachers Said About School Community Links .....	62
Attempts to Develop School Community Links .....	63

Those Who Became Involved in the Season .....	64
Developing Approach Tendencies to the Movement Culture .....	66
What Teachers Said About Student Roles .....	68
Role Distribution .....	69
Performance in Roles .....	72
Absences .....	74
What Teachers Said About Class Management .....	76
How Much Class Management was Carried Out by the Teacher? .....	77
How Much Pre-season Planning Was Needed? .....	80
What Teachers Said About Equity in Sport Education .....	82
Summary of Findings .....	82
Gender-Appropriateness of Chosen Sport .....	83
Girls' Attitude Toward Physical Education in Sport Education .....	85
Involvement of Physically Challenged Students .....	88
Involvement of Socially Challenged Students .....	89
What Teachers Said About Their General Impressions of Sport Education .....	90
Is Sport Education a Good Way to Teach Physical Education? .....	91
Problems With the Sport Education Model .....	92
Teachers Impressions of Sport Education's Characteristics .....	93
Sport Education: A Stronger Case for Physical Education? .....	94
What Teachers Said About Their Future Directions Regarding Sport Education .....	96
Teachers' Future Plans for Sport Education .....	97
Transferability of the Model .....	98
Publicising the Model to the 'Uninitiated' .....	99
Need for Curriculum Support Materials .....	101
 <b>Part Four: <i>Recommendations</i> .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Recommendations For Managing The Development And Diffusion Of Sport Education .....	103
Recommendations For Teachers Seeking To Maximise The Educational Impact Of The Model .....	105
Recommendations about teaching Sport Education .....	105
Evaluating the place of Sport Education in school physical education programs .....	107
Recommendations for the development of curriculum support materials .....	108
Recommendations For Research .....	108
 <b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>111</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 2: The existing content was easily modified to accommodate Sport Education. ....	20
Figure 2:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 4: 'The teacher support materials for Sport Education were useful for planning the season'. ....	23
Figure 3:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 5: 'When doing Sport Education, students displayed greater skill development than with the usual teaching model'. ....	25
Figure 4:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 7: 'Sport Education was less effective than the traditional teaching model in terms of student knowledge of rules, techniques and game strategies'. ....	28
Figure 5:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 16: 'Through practising and competing in a team for the entire season, students were exposed to unique and valuable social experiences'. ....	38
Figure 6:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 30: 'My role in Sport Education was similar to that for traditional teaching models'. ....	49
Figure 7:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 32: 'My role in Sport Education made assessment more difficult than for traditional models'. ....	53
Figure 8:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 33: 'I found it difficult under Sport Education to achieve outcomes I usually seek in physical education'. ....	54
Figure 9:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 37: 'Student attitudes about physical activity were more positive in Sport Education than for the traditional model'. ....	58
Figure 10:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 39: 'The social aspects of team affiliation in Sport Education provides a positive influence on student attitudes toward participation'. ....	59
Figure 11:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 42: 'The sport's contact person contributed significantly to the Sport Education season'. ....	65
Figure 12:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 49: 'Only well-liked, confident students received roles'. ....	70

Figure 13:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 56: 'Most students were self-managed during Sport Education lessons' .....	78
Figure 14:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 58: 'The sport chosen for Sport Education was appropriate for both girls and boys' .....	84
Figure 15:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 59: 'Girls showed a more positive attitude toward physical education under Sport Education than for the traditional model' .....	85
Figure 16:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 65: 'Overall, the model traditionally used to teach physical education is better than Sport Education' .....	91
Figure 17:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 69: 'I plan to continue teaching physical education using Sport Education' .....	97
Figure 18:	Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 71: 'I would feel uncomfortable talking to other teachers, who were thinking about using Sport Education, about my experiences with the model' .....	99

# General Background To SEPEP

## What is Sport Education?

Sport Education is an innovative curriculum model, increasingly used as a component of upper primary and secondary school physical education programs and exhibiting many parallels with community junior sport. Within normally scheduled physical education lessons, mixed ability teams are formed at the start of a 20 session (approximately) competitive "season".

In addition to the aim of helping students learn to become good players, Sport Education encourages students to fulfil other roles such as umpiring, acting as a team coach, manager or captain, serving on a sports management board or duty team and working as a publicity officer/journalist. As students assume greater responsibility for learning, teachers relinquish traditional "up-front" direct teaching roles, often moving off-centre stage to facilitate social, knowledge and skill learning through a range of student-centred learning strategies. The Sport Education model is a process with a potential for educating children into good sporting behaviour and embodies a number of characteristics:

- involves seasons rather than units,
- requires a formal schedule of competition,
- establishes matched, mixed ability teams to promote even competition and unpredictable outcomes,
- gives students responsibility and ownership within physical education,
- casts the teacher in the role of learning facilitator,
- modifies traditional game rules and team sizes,
- depends on record keeping and the publication of results,
- culminates in a festive event.

While these characteristics seem central to realising the educational potential of Sport Education, teachers and students will determine the precise nature of the instructional arrangements embodied in the social system created by the model. The varied expression particular teachers give to the characteristics of the model seems to invite a collegial sharing of stories, representing a genuine form of school-based professional development. The future of Sport Education seems encapsulated in the phrase: "no curriculum development without professional development".

## **Background to Sport Education**

Sport Education in Australia became formalised in December 1992 when SPARC invited 32 teachers from 19 different high schools to attend two Sport Education workshops. These workshops relied heavily on earlier work carried out by Grant and Sharp in New Zealand which had been based on the Sport Education Curriculum Model; (Siedentop, Mand & Taggart, 1986).

Support from the WA Ministry of Sport and Recreation, the WA Department of Education and Edith Cowan University enabled SPARC to encourage trial teachers to 'action research' Sport Education in their schools during 1993 and tell SPARC staff about their experiences. The first two trials of Sport Education in WA became known as SE I and SE II (Reports available from SPARC).

## **Introduction to SEPEP**

In December 1993 Edith Cowan University's Sport and Physical Activity Research Centre [SPARC] undertook, with the support of the Australian Sports Commission, the management of a national trial and subsequent evaluation of the Sport Education teaching model. The broad aim of the project, named the Sport Education in Physical Education Project [SEPEP], was to ascertain teachers' professional judgements regarding the potential of the model to be a viable vehicle for the teaching of physical education within the widely varied contexts specific to Australian schools.

## The Study

The evaluation of SEPEP trials focused primarily on teachers' professional judgements. Both formative anecdotal evaluations and retrospective accounts of the strengths and weaknesses of the model were collected.

Qualitative data in the form of teachers' stories about their trials form the basis of the SEPEP evaluation. Teachers were asked to be reflective about their experiences and to keep SPARC and their steering committees informed of their progress. These 'stories' were collected using a number of devices including journals, questionnaires, interviews and surveys. Students were also used as a data source for the evaluation. Journals, surveys and some interviews helped provide a balanced view of the successes and failures of the trials.

The objectives of the project were centered around focus areas. These fourteen key areas have been fully discussed in the main SEPEP Report document. This document contains a summary of the findings taken from the report. The questions we asked the teachers have been condensed to form one or two main themes.





# Summary Of SEPEP Key Findings

This section is a summary of the key findings taken from the main report. These key findings are presented in more detail in PART THREE.

## Programming

**Focus Question:**      **How successfully did Sport Education fit within the constraints of the usual physical education timetable?**

*I found that some of the Year 10's involved in the running of Sport Education got quite political... and started pushing (questioning) the idea that everything goes on top of physical education and physical education misses out, and we haven't got more time in the programme. It was like a breath of fresh air for them to actually get involved in how physical education was taught in the school.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

---

## Summary of Findings

The changes made to accommodate Sport Education affected the number of sports the students would come into contact with, the combination of classes that could be programmed together and the tying up of equipment and facilities for a prolonged period. These sorts of changes often caused teachers to think about what they were offering their students as a total programme. This was a healthy spin off and many schools are now using the model across various year levels. Several are using the model with each group once or more each year.

## Educational Impact of SEPEP

**Focus Question:**      **How did Sport Education compare with your traditional teaching model in terms of student learning?**

*I noticed that the skill level really increased with the low ability students, so I was pretty impressed with that. I was also happy that, working within their teams, they knew that they had to get on with each other, so they developed quite a lot of tolerance toward some of the ones who weren't so good to start off with—they even helped each other with learning skills.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

---

### Summary of Findings

Teachers were generally of the view that students had displayed improved skill, social development and knowledge of the sport after one season of Sport Education. The success of Sport Education in promoting the achievement of knowledge specific to rules, techniques and game strategies was very encouraging. Skill development in Sport Education was seen as superior to “the usual teaching model” for all States and Territories except one. In this State the skill outcomes for both teaching models were seen as comparable.

The teachers were very much of the view that Sport Education taught children game strategies as the value of teamwork became important. The games were also occasions in which achieving attitudinal outcomes (e.g., fair play, tolerance of umpiring) became relevant. Teachers believed that the positive outcomes in the area of educational impact were largely due to students being more motivated to actively participate in class.

## The Sport Education Philosophy

**Focus Question:** Did students learn about the concept of, and philosophy underlying Sport Education?

*Students took responsibilities seriously as role performance was part of their overall assessment.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

---

### Summary of Findings

Many teachers assumed an active and central role in educating students about the Sport Education philosophy. This was usually done early in the season, but several teachers found the need to continue reinforcing the concept at regular intervals. Teachers who failed to successfully attend to this significant teaching role generally experienced problems and expressed regret at the end of the trial.

Some teachers said students had a good understanding of roles and took them seriously. Others reported that the students did not apply themselves to their roles, particularly in the cases of the Sports Board and Publicity Officers.

There were no negative reactions to the use of modified games and in some cases their use was positively welcomed by both teachers and students as an inclusive teaching strategy.

Students appeared to show varying degrees of understanding about what was expected of them in addition to their usual 'player role'. In most cases this new model was a great departure from what students are normally expected to do within their physical education classes.

## Team Selection in Sport Education

**Focus Question:**      **What procedures were used in team selection and how successful were they?**

*The team selection hasn't worked out as well as we thought. The boys dominate and our assessment of each player hasn't been as accurate as we first thought.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

---

### Summary of Findings

The major outcome was that team selection seems best handled by the students, but only if the teacher has some input in the critical structuring of the selection process.

Care is required when involving students in team selection. The success of the competition relies heavily on the selection of evenly matched, mixed ability teams. It is important for teachers to prepare clear guidelines for team selection and to educate the students in the consequences of various approaches to team selection. Sports Board members generally attempted to create even competition.

## The Aspect of Competition

**Focus Question:**        **What forms of competition/tournament were used, and how successful were they?**

*I think this whole competition thing was a great idea. It actually makes you want to do physical education, which is pretty amazing for me because I don't really like it.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

---

### Summary of Findings

Students appeared to like Sport Education's competitive format and were keenly involved.

The most common form of tournament format was Round Robin. Teachers frequently commented on the suitability of such a format:

Absenteeism was seen by teachers as a significant problem: It often disrupted and devalued the competition when teams were short of players or needed to use the duty team to make up numbers.

Several teachers commented that a culminating event had not been organised due to the perceived extra effort and preparation that would be involved.

## Publicity Officers

**Focus Question:** How did the students respond to the role of Publicity Officer and how successful were they in publicising the season?

*I was busy this lesson in between games and during them, writing up results and pinning them up on the notice board. Because I'm a Publicity Officer, I do a lot of work.*

(Student journal , Australian Capital Territory)

---

### Summary of Findings

Although many positive results regarding the role of the Publicity Officer were reported, the majority of responses suggested teachers perceived the area to be either not essential to the Sport Education season or excessive additional work.

Where Publicity Officers were used, the role proved to be a significant contribution to the overall success of the season. However, many teachers did not see the relevance of introducing, persisting with and promoting this aspect of Sport Education

*When I went through the questionnaire, you seemed to be saying the Publicity Officer was the most important part. I didn't get that impression from the workshop, and we just decided not to have one because the kids didn't see that it was at all relevant.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

Generally Publicity Officers were not effective in disseminating material. Despite this, teachers felt knowledge of Sport Education tended to move beyond the confines of the classroom as a consequence of word-of-mouth communication.

## The Teacher's Role

**Focus Question:**      **In what ways did the teacher's role change in Sport Education, and what did teachers think about these changes?**

*Personally I found it very difficult not to interfere and controlled the situation more than what was expected in Sport Education philosophy. Will try to hand over more content to the students in future.*

(Teacher journal, South Australia)

---

## Summary of Findings

The most significant finding with respect to the teacher's role was that although the teachers in the program indicated they understood that they should give students added responsibility, they were reluctant to do so. Many teachers struggled to make the gradual transition away from their traditional teaching position of autonomy.

In those instances where the teachers were able to change their role, they found their students were more than happy to assume responsibility and work with the teacher under new expectations. Several teachers expressed surprise at the level of responsibility students took on.

Many teachers explained that the Sport Education model allowed them time to look at student development at various stages during the season. They generally told us that initially they had reservations about skill development under this model, but that because of the amount of game play involved, skills had improved. Teachers said that the greatest potential of the model was to increase students' affective skills. This area of student development was seen to be very noticeable and teachers could map outcomes to their student-profile/monitoring-standards assessment criteria.



## Student Feelings

**Focus Question:**      **What attitudes do students have toward Sport Education?**

*Nearly everyone enjoyed Sport Education, and it's much preferred to regular physical education.*

(Student journal, Queensland)

---

### Summary of Findings

Student attitudes to Sport Education were overwhelmingly positive. Given that these responses came after one trial season, and it is likely that inevitable hiccups plagued the trial, there appears to be much potential for Sport Education in meeting the needs of students.

Sport Education was resoundingly popular amongst students when compared to the traditional teaching model. It especially seems to have positive benefits for the students who are not normally motivated in physical education or sport. This seems to be partly due to the social aspect of 'doing it for their team'. Other reasons given for these improved attitudes included the independence of student centred learning, the increased learning from extended units of work and the social aspects of team affiliation and increased participation due to small team numbers and modified games.

*Today I asked my friend if she likes the Sport Education programme again. After a few games her answer had changed. She said she liked it a fair bit and found it was fun.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

Student feedback illustrated a certain trepidation about the idea of being given so much responsibility. Journal entries reported a build up of excitement and enjoyment as the season got underway.

## School Community Links

**Focus Question:** Were any linkages established to encourage transfer of learning in Sport Education to community sport?

*I will try to get more links next semester. More students were interested in representing school teams.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Victoria)

---

### Summary of Findings

While the data show teachers generally did not pursue links, where contacts did occur, teachers and students found them of value. No instances of inappropriate or unproductive contact were reported.

There was a varied response to the implementation of linking the Sport Education experience with community involvement. In some cases teachers saw this as a higher order feature of the model and told us they would expect to address the concept of linkages in future seasons. In other schools teachers planned to include local sporting personnel in their seasons. Several teachers explained how their students could get involved in the community organisations or invited club officials in to talk in class time.

*They told us how we can be involved and we even had a top touch player to explain where we can join.*

(Student questionnaire, Northern Territory)

Some schools brought in umpires to take a session and pass on up-to-date rule changes and game positioning. Several students reported in their journals that they had joined or looked into joining local teams following their Sport Education experience.

## Student Roles

**Focus Question:**        **How successful was the introduction of student roles other than player?**

*I had nobody actually volunteer for management roles... a lot of these kids don't see that sort of thing happening in club sport or anywhere else – it's usually behind the scenes.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

---

### Summary of Findings

Students took on their new roles as part of their Sport Education class with great relish. In only a handful of cases did students feel unable to carry out their responsibilities or rebelled against the extra work suddenly being delegated to them in what they traditionally see as an 'activity-only' subject.

Many students found they could be useful and were needed within the context of physical education for the first time. Others found they were able to diversify into organising or coaching roles.

Teachers reported that often students who had been difficult in class in the past, thrived in positions of responsibility within the Sport Education structure.

Allocation of roles was influenced by the social standing of some students (particularly notable in Tasmania), but this was not seen as a problem in most cases. Gender would appear to be more indicative of roles chosen.

## Class Management

**Focus Question:**        **What class management issues were relevant to Sport Education?**

*The better the planning, the greater the benefit.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

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### Summary of Findings

Establishing management routines with the class early on proved to be most effective in giving students guidelines within which to work. Sports boards and duty teams were then able to take responsibility for much of the class management.

There was reported to be less class management for teachers using the Sport Education model. Especially when the Sports Board was well briefed and maintained close contact with the teacher throughout the season.

Many teachers remain uneasy about relinquishing up-front management tasks.

Prior planning and preparation by the teacher was thought to be an essential part of establishing smooth class management routines.

*Today we were totally on our own. Mr. Richards was sick. Our class was surprisingly good. Two of the groups had a great time, their coaches had watched the video and knew what they were doing and just got on with it and did it!*

(Student journal, Victoria)

## Equity

**Focus Question:** Did Sport Education offer positive experiences for groups traditionally marginalised in physical education?

*Our team seems to be a bit biased: Boys hog the ball and they just don't trust us. But girls complain that boys hog the ball too much and then boys think girls are whingers and don't pass them the ball.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

---

## Summary of Findings

We looked for signs, in the trial seasons of Sport Education, of inequities for girls, the less skilled and for other students who were socially marginalised within physical education classes. Whilst it was pleasing to learn that in many cases Sport Education appeared to be a more inclusive program than those typically delivered to students, we must still try to ascertain what level of inclusivity is ultimately delivered by the Sport Education model.

*Today I helped set up a try. It's about time I did something useful for the team. I know I drop the ball a lot, and a lot of the time it is often my fault, but a lot of the time I get bad passes which of course I don't catch. Even when it is a bad pass that I don't catch, some players get angry at me. Them getting angry at me just makes me feel like bad player.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

This comment was fairly typical from students who were starting to experience some level of success. The challenge is for teachers to set up a positive environment in which these less confident students feel needed and valued as part of their team and group.

## General Impressions

**Focus Question:**        **What were the advantages and disadvantages of Sport Education as a model for physical education?**

*Need suggestions on ways to encourage students to take roles seriously in future sessions e.g., Sports Board, Publicity Officers, coaches, captains did little.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

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## Summary of Findings

The major finding for this strand is best stated as 'the context determines the process'. This should not have surprised us as we have continually been told by teachers that they need to make Sport Education suit their circumstances: The school; students and their own teaching style. Teachers, in their unique school contexts, held different ideas about which year levels should feature Sport Education. The model is in no way prescriptive in this regard but interestingly has been successfully trialed in SEPEP with children from Years 6-11.

Perceived problems with the model generally concerned management and organisation. Teachers were conscious of tying up facilities and resources for extended periods of time. Some students were worried about being stuck in an unfavourable sport for ten to twenty weeks.

*I think it will become easier each time you do it.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

As a result of their trials, teachers in all States and Territories were convinced that Sport Education is a good way to deliver content in physical education. To many observers Sport Education is best characterised as an alternative pedagogy for physical education, the teachers in this trial were firmly of this view.



## SEPEP Key Findings

The following section contains a summary of the findings detailed in the full SEPEP Report. For a more complete record of the Project's findings, refer to the SEPEP Report (available through SPARC).

### What Teachers Said About the Programme

*People are appreciating the fact that if they reduce the amount of quantity and increase the depth of their doing, they are getting better results.*

(Steering committee member, teleconference, Tasmania)

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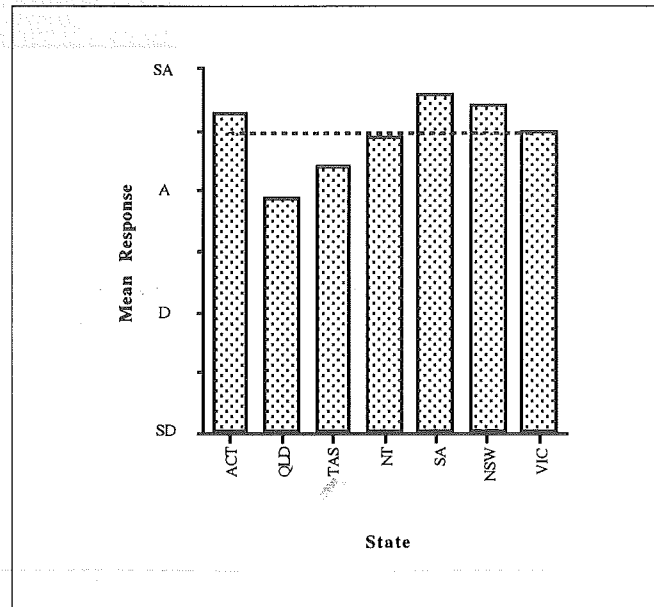
The success of any curriculum innovation is, to an extent, reliant on teachers' perceptions of the amount of change to existing practices that is required. In evaluating the potential success of Sport Education we asked teachers how successfully Sport Education fitted within the constraints of their usual physical education timetable.

It became clear from teacher responses during the year that the positioning of Sport Education in the timetable was problematic and usually precipitated changes to the curriculum. The changes made to accommodate Sport Education affected the number of sports the students would come into contact with, the combination of classes and the tying up of equipment and facilities for a prolonged period. These sorts of changes often caused teachers to think about what they were offering their students as a total programme. This was a healthy spin off and many schools are now using the model across various year levels. Several are using the model with each group once or more each year.

Teachers told us stories that focused on two key categories related to the programming area: The impact of the change and curriculum support



materials. The following comments tell the tales of teachers' experiences with Sport Education related to these specific areas.



**Figure 1:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 2: The existing content was easily modified to accommodate Sport Education.

## Impact of the Change

Teachers did not usually see the uncertainty brought about by the trial nature of SEPEP to be a significant problem:

*We're more into, rather than just taking a guess and saying "no I don't think that would work with the Year 8's" for example, actually doing a bit of action research by trialing it and then making some decisions afterwards with the view that it's not going to destroy a kids' programme by experiencing a unit in it. In fact our experiences so far have been hugely positive.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

A major outcome of teachers changing their programming schedules was that many teachers began to critically review their whole physical education timetable.

*It certainly made us question the length of the units that we traditionally run.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*After the success we had with our 9's and 10's this year, our 1995 programme for the 9's and 10's will be Outdoor Education, Dance and Sport Education across the board.*

(Teacher conversation with Project Officer, Australian Capital Territory)

*We had a few problems with timetabling and clashes with different things but certainly the kids were ready to try it again, especially if they could get some time that sort of flowed on and wasn't going to be interrupted.*

(Teacher teleconference, Victoria)

Even students began to question traditional physical education offerings:

*I found that some of the Year 10's involved in the running of Sport Education got quite political... and started pushing (questioning) the idea that everything goes on top of physical education and physical education misses out, and we haven't got more time in the programme. It was like a breath of fresh air for them to actually get involved in how physical education was taught in the school.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

Teachers commented on the need to gradually introduce the model:

*I also think Sport Education needs to be gradually introduced over a period of time eg., student involvement in publicity etc. as the programme progresses. A full-on Sport Education programme, especially with a "difficult" class would (in my experience) not work successfully.*

(Post season reflection, Teacher journal, South Australia)

At times, however, the introduction of change made some teachers uneasy. This is reflected in the following comment:

*There were two fellows teaching it but the guy who was inserviced was too scared to tell the other what was going right or wrong because... the other was a senior teacher. So even though he could see the problem and had been inserviced, he was too scared to say something.*

*Once I knew the problems it was okay. I don't have a problem with the senior teacher, and once you give him an idea of what could happen, he started to change a little bit. But the inservicing for people like that is incredibly important because they don't believe that kids can be let go and they actually do feel, like you said at the inservice, that they're not working if they're not actually actively teaching the whole time.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

In several instances teachers returned from the workshop to work alone with one discrete class. This instance was reported in one Victorian school:

*Other staff don't know a hell of a lot about it. I was the only one who took it on and of course they were teaching while I was taking my group. Occasionally they have come out to take a look and I have given them some feedback. They all want to try it but I think they are still in the dark.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

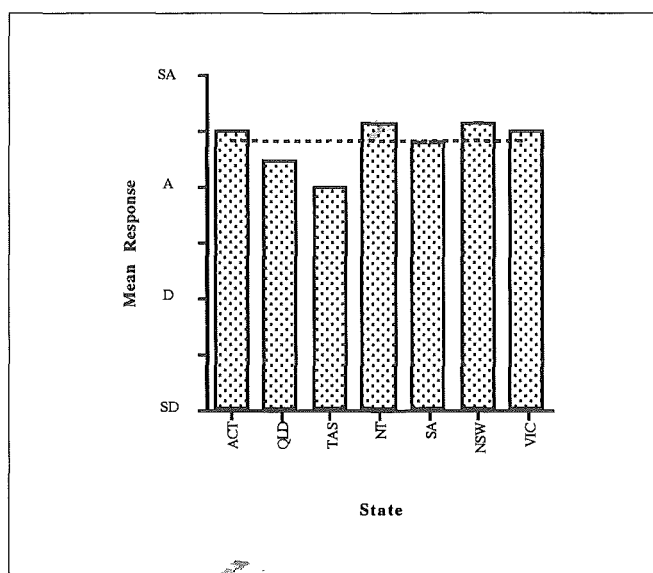
News of attempts at innovation and change within schools generally have a way of filtering out the classroom:

*Within the school we made a conscious effort to make what we're doing public, and I guess while a lot of that took part as informal chatting with staff, because we had almost the whole faculty involved, everyone was talking about it in the staffroom. The kids were talking about it, so everyone started asking us questions and it culminated in me writing an article for our school newspaper. The news about Sport Education and what was happening, and the good things about it were certainly starting to filter out of our faculty, through the school and out into the community.*

(Teacher teleconference, South Australia)

## Curriculum Support Materials

Teachers agreed that the teacher-support materials were useful for planning the season. Many teachers made suggestions about the development of additional materials which would be useful in the future. SPARC purposely decided not to give the give teachers a rigid and prescriptive manual to ensure that teachers developed the model as they thought necessary given their specific contexts. From the responses we received teachers requested more examples of season outlines, more complete/ developed role descriptions for students, some ideas on assessment of roles and possibly a video, showing some of the important characteristics which would be a part of a resource package.



**Figure 2:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 4: 'The teacher support materials for Sport Education were useful for planning the season'.

*Support materials necessary for first time use of Sport Education.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*More information needed for better instruction of student roles, so they perform these well.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*If you can get a short video, which may only take two hours altogether to look at and shows how Sport Education runs with various sports, it would really help sports that aren't very well known to develop teacher confidence.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

## What Teachers Said About the Educational Impact of SEPEP

*I think that the tolerance was great, I though there was a lot of respect between students, particularly towards the ones with lesser abilities. There was a lot of cooperation and organisation, and there is no doubt, as far as I am concerned, that their skill development increased enormously.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

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The educational impact of a Sport Education season on the motor skill, social development and knowledge outcomes in physical education was investigated. Positive outcomes in these areas are important to any justification of the educational value of physical education in schools and so were important in the evaluation of SEPEP.

Teachers were generally of the view that students had displayed improved skill, social development and knowledge of the sport after one season of Sport Education. The success of Sport Education in promoting the achievement of knowledge specific to rules, techniques and game strategies was very encouraging. Skill development in Sport Education was seen as superior to "the usual teaching model" for all States and Territories except for one State's trial in which the skill outcomes for both teaching models were seen as comparable.

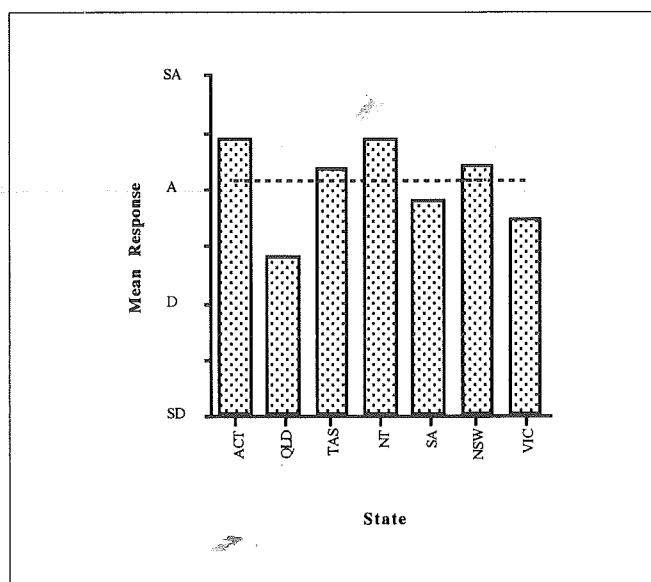
The teachers were very much of the view that Sport Education taught children game strategies as the value of teamwork became important. The games were also occasions in which achieving attitudinal outcomes (eg., fair play, tolerance of umpiring) became relevant. Teachers believed that the positive outcomes in the area of educational impact were largely due to students being more motivated to actively participate in class.

Sport Education has highlighted the problems some teachers have in the specialised areas of strategy, umpiring and game-play. Teachers need to overcome these by accessing resources such as Sport Development Officers, local sporting personnel or curriculum packages.

*The outstanding impression I had was that participation was a lot, lot better.*  
 (Teacher teleconference, Queensland)

*Sport Education seems better than most other models as far as getting them straight into it and getting them active goes.*  
 (Teacher teleconference, Queensland)

## Skill Development



**Figure 3: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 5: 'When doing Sport Education, students displayed greater skill development than with the usual teaching model'.**

Figure 3 illustrates that all States apart from Queensland agreed Sport Education contributed to greater skill development than the traditional model. Teachers responded to the issues related to skill development through comments such as:

*I saw some good, no, really terrific examples of skill development, and I also saw some really great examples of less-skilled people being encouraged by others. Some kids that have never been willingly included in anything found their place and were really enjoying it.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

*I noticed that the skill level really increased with the low ability students, so I was pretty impressed with that. I was also happy that, working within their teams, they knew that they had to get on with each other, so they developed quite a lot of tolerance toward some of the ones who weren't so good to start off with—they even helped each other with learning skills.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

Students comments were generally in a similar vein:

*I do think that I improved in some ways because you learn more in competition situations.*

(Student questionnaire, South Australia)

*Over the last couple of weeks I've improved in my defence skills. I can now pass the soccer ball more accurately and I can dribble the ball down the field without losing control.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## Social Development

Social development in physical education has rarely been systematically targeted in our teaching. It is frequently talked about and is a universal 'hoped for' objective. With the Sport Education key characteristics of set teams and extended seasons in place, affective outcomes appear to be realised more widely than for the current teaching models. Teachers agreed that the usual teaching model did not facilitate students' social development as effectively as Sport Education. With students having to work through relationships with their peers on a weekly basis in a variety of settings Sport Education created opportunities for outcomes which seem to be lacking in other programme models. Victorian and South Australian teachers were particularly positive in this regard with comments such as:

*It became obvious that students were taking on very new roles and this was taking some adjustment. However as time went on they were growing in many areas whereas previously there had not been the room or time for this. Some awesome educational implications have arisen. Many students now want more of a voice in how their physical education is run.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Victoria)

However, the words of one student should be a gentle reminder that it is impossible to please everybody:

*I used to think that volleyball was OK, but now I really hate it. I really wish that physical education could go back to the way it was before when we did one sport for two-four weeks.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Apart from a few disparate comments such as that above, students were telling us very strongly that Sport Education is addressing social development.

*You feel like you're part of a team. People don't ignore you. Because you don't have a huge team, you can't really do nothing. If you don't help, then you let your team down and you lose.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*We have all had a lot of fun in my team. We all learnt new skills together, but most important of all, we all got to know each other better than we would in other classes. So far I've enjoyed each session of physical education this term and it's been a long time since I was able to say that.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

An added potential of Sport Education relates to the recently released National Statements and Profiles for the Health and Physical Education Learning Area:

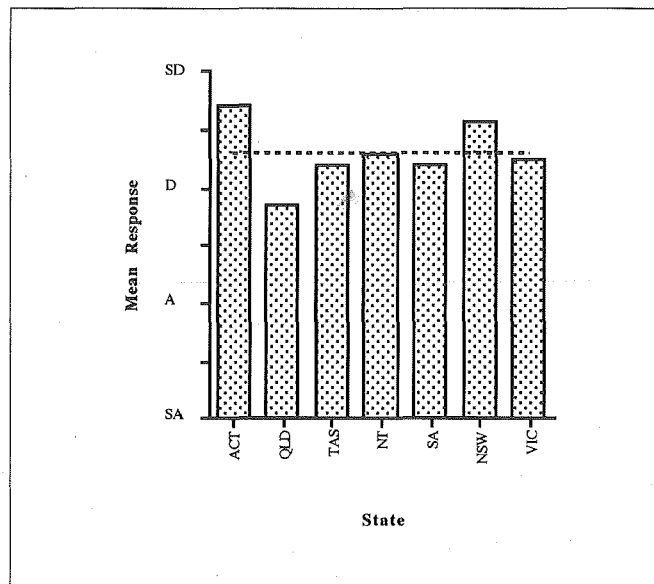
*...with the National Statements and Profiles starting to come into schools and working out ways of meeting those, part of that is going to be about giving kids more responsibility and challenging them with tasks that require them to develop skills that we'd normally just leave to adults.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)



## Cognitive Development

Perhaps the strongest finding of all in the educational impact section relates to the area of cognitive development in physical education. Sport Education, in a most emphatic way across all States, demonstrated outcomes superior to traditional approaches in terms of student knowledge of rules, techniques and game strategies. It appears that Sport Education contextualises and makes meaningful the need for mastering the cognitive components of sport.



**Figure 4:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 7: 'Sport Education was less effective than the traditional teaching model in terms of student knowledge of rules, techniques and game strategies'.

*Umpired again today. I think umpiring makes you look at the game and the rules of the game more closely than playing it. I am learning more about the game and its rules by umpiring.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*Their skills both in attack and defence seemed to improve throughout the season. We talked about defensive and attacking strategies, and that got to be something they became really fond of. They would develop their own strategies outside of school time and come back to me before and after class and say 'do you think this would work?'*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*Sport Education... makes the end of unit knowledge test irrelevant, they know it all by week 3 when they have to umpire an important pre-season game.*

(Teacher interview, Western Australia)

Although questions have been raised regarding the extension of high ability students in Sport Education, teachers have suggested the pay-offs come in other areas such as coaching and team management. Within these roles high ability students can develop social and cognitive development to a greater degree than traditional programmes may allow.

## What Teachers Said About Teaching the Sport Education Philosophy

*Students took responsibilities seriously as role performance was part of their overall assessment.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

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During the workshops the importance of teachers' understanding of the Sport Education philosophy was emphasised very strongly. This was necessary since the success of Sport Education partly depends, due to its shift of focus from traditional approaches, on the teachers' ability to relay the philosophy to students. Teachers saw it as important to educate the students about the objectives and rationale of Sport Education, with the aim that students would then display an understanding of the different roles. Some teachers reported they would take more time to introduce the concept more fully in future seasons. It was clear that teachers preferred a teacher-centred approach to helping students understand the Sport Education concept.

### Teaching the Sport Education Philosophy

Teachers assumed an active and central role in educating students about the Sport Education philosophy. This was usually done early in the season, but most found the need to continue reinforcing it throughout. Teachers who fail to successfully attend to this generally experienced problems and expressed regret at the end of the trial.

*A lot of time spent explaining rationale and this was reinforced throughout programme.*

(Teacher journal, Tasmania)

*Constantly explaining WHY and WHAT. Had to reinforce responsibilities throughout, particularly WHY.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

*Student understanding of roles not good, need to address this next time. Teachers did a lot of the work.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

Teachers need to actively develop the role performance of students. Although the teacher's instructional role has changed as a result of Sport Education it appears that teachers must be constantly reviewing roles and reinforcing responsibilities of Sport Education students throughout the season. Quality Sport Education demands that teachers are active facilitators of learning outcomes.

## **Teaching Students Roles and Responsibility**

Students appeared to show varying degrees of responsibility in fulfilling their roles, with moderate to high levels of responsibility observed. Some teachers said students had a good understanding of roles and took them seriously. Others reported that the students did not apply themselves to their roles, particularly in the cases of the Sports Board and Publicity Officers.

With some aspect of assessment built into the performance of roles, students are likely to meet prescribed expectations more readily. Some teachers suggested that the number of roles be kept to a minimum in the first trial of Sport Education. The idea of a gradual build-up of the diversity of roles and a developmental continuum of responsibilities as students progress through Sport Education in different years matches our earlier recommendations (see Sport Education II Report) for a developmental view of Sport Education in physical education.

## **Receptivity to Modified Games**

At a recent SPARC Sport Education seminar, a teacher asked the presenter how students could learn the concept of being a midfielder in soccer if they were not playing full-sided games. This teacher view of modified team sizes, which is often supported by the assertive minority of skilled students, is regrettably quite strong within secondary physical education and presents a major challenge to Sport Education proponents who see modified/small-sided games as being fundamental to the success of sport as an educative experience. Fortunately, in SEPEP there were no negative reactions to the use

of modified games and in some cases their use was positively welcomed by both teachers and students as an inclusive teaching strategy.

**Interviewer:** *How have people's skill levels changed?*

**Student G:** *In 3 on 3 they get more involved and willing to try more.*

**Student H:** *It's like Howie, he knew how to play but he didn't know the rules. He's been playing with me and I've been telling him how to play and what to do. It's like he's just taken over, he's gone in hard and that and just changed his attitude totally.*

*(Student interview, Victoria)*



## What Teachers Said About Team Selection in Sport Education

*I can see that the teams seem a bit unfair and I have heard a lot of people say this. It seems like those on the sports board are on teams with their best friends, and good players, while the rest of the teams have maybe one good player and the rest is sort of mixed. It really effects who is winning and losing.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

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There was a great deal of variation in attitudes to the team selection process. There were many comments suggesting teams were uneven, upsetting the competition: However an equal number claimed team selection went smoothly, enforcing competition.

It is important for teachers to prepare clear guidelines for team selection and to educate the students in the consequences of various approaches to team selection. Teams should be selected early and remain together for the whole season to allow for a sense of affiliation to develop. Although various strategies, such as mid-season drafts, have been used with limited success the general rule appears to be the longer teams are together, the better. For this reason it is also preferable to have two or three substitutes on each team who regularly rotate in, rather than using the duty team as fill-ins when players are absent.

### Students as Selectors

Students' comments suggested they were generally vigilant in selecting evenly matched teams:

*All the teams practiced hard. As a member of the Sports Board it is obvious who can play the game and who cannot. The Sports Board hopes that they have picked an even competition.*

(Student journal, Victoria)

*The selection of teams was fun but serious. We tried to make them as fair as possible, matching an able student with a not so able one. All seemed to be quite happy with team selection.*

(Student journal, Victoria)

As the following comments suggest, students devised inventive ways of selecting teams.

*Today was the day our teams were selected. There were different stations and we rotated between each one. We were given a mark between 1 and 5. That way the teams were fair with a variety of good, medium and not so good players.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*We graded players so we could have even teams. First we set up a course that everybody had to complete, this took all lesson. Next lesson we decided our first set of gradings weren't enough so we decided to see how the students in our class perform under pressure by grading them during a game.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

One student honestly commented on their apprehension of being publicly graded—a potential problem of which teachers need to be aware:

*Today we had to get into groups of three to be rated by the Sports Board. At first I really didn't want to do it because I felt too embarrassed about my skills being rated.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Students tended to be suspicious of the power given to the Sports Board for team selection. Some were hasty to claim they were victims of unfair dealing, with some of the following comments being made on the day teams were announced.

*The Sports Board has now put us into teams. They are very uneven. I'm disappointed with the Sports Board: all the better people are in one lot of groups and the not-so-good people in another.*

(Student journal, Queensland)



*When the Sports Board picked out the teams, there was a little rigidness in the air. How often is it when all the Sports Board and popular people get put in the same team? How unfair is that? I'm not complaining but I got a team full of uncoordinated students who can't even play and are afraid of the ball.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Some suggested that, despite the Sports Board's best intentions, teams tended to be unbalanced.

*I thought the teams were a bit unfair. Team 5 have all the leftovers. The idea of Sport Education is to have even teams and the teams we have are not.*

(Student journal, Victoria)

*Today we were all put in our teams. I am very disappointed with the Sports Board because the teams selected were unfair. I am one of the fortunate ones who was put in a good team, but some people were put into teams that had no chance of winning.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*I am getting really bored with the teams because in most of our games we don't even score. Our team is the worst in the competition but the Sports Board won't change the teams.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Many students suggested the team selection process was well handled by the Sports Board. The following comments reflect positive feelings about team selection:

*We played a couple of games and from what I can see, the team selectors have done a fairly good job of selecting fair teams.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*The standard of play was fairly high. All teams were very evenly matched after the Sports Board made the teams up to be fair.*

(Student journal, Queensland)

*The team selection process is good. Our competition ended up very even.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*People still think the teams are unfair but I don't think that they are because all of the teams have been winning.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## The Issue of Friendship

The main emphasis for the teacher is to educate the students to see past friendships and to make and accept selections based on matching the teams' overall abilities. Students tend to claim friendship should be the main criterion for team selection, as the following comments suggest:

*Team selections were OK on the whole but a few teams seem to be unequal. Some people were placed with their friends while others were separated.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*This lesson we were put into teams to be judged on our ability and then would be placed in our final teams. I didn't think this was a very good way of choosing teams because you might not get with any of your friends and might not have a good time.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

A small number of students suggested friendship was not the most important factor:

*It was decided that we could split up into our friendship groups and just play other teams without worrying about competition points or MVP votes. It wasn't very much fun because the teams were so unfair and in the end not many people were playing by the rules at all.*

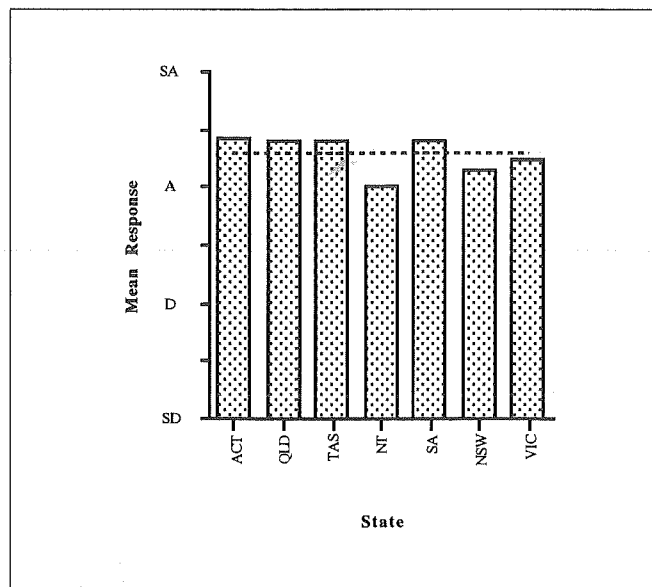
(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*I really like it how they put us in teams even though I didn't get to be with my friends. I am concentrating more instead of socialising.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## The Value of Sustained Team Affiliation

Teachers were quite happy with the way students accepted their team placements. Although some students were initially unhappy about being placed in a team without their friends, they generally accepted this. Figure 5 illustrates that teachers felt the notion of sustained team affiliation in Sport Education to be valuable.



**Figure 5:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 16: 'Through practising and competing in a team for the entire season, students were exposed to unique and valuable social experiences'.

A teacher commented on the way in which teams can become cohesive:

*I really thought it was all going terribly for one team who hadn't won a single game. Then today they played the top team and I thought 'here we go again'. But they came out with this really positive attitude and beat the top team. You should have seen them after the game. You'd have thought they had won the cup final.*

(Teacher interview, Tasmania)

The following comments suggest students were developing positive attitudes:

*It was good how we had selectors because then friends were split up, they made new friends.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*Today was pretty cool. We got into our teams and kicked the ball around and then played against other teams. I now like my team, although at first I hated it 'cause I didn't want to be with the people in my team. I didn't really know them that well.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## What Teachers Said About the Aspect of Competition

*When the lesson began and the ladder went up, I was wondering whether the programme had gone on for too long. All teams had played at least 9 games; one team hadn't lost a game, one team hadn't won one. Before the games started, I told the bottom team not to give up hope—but today they were playing the top team. Things didn't look good. To the amazement of all, the bottom team beat the top one. You should have heard them: "We beat the top team and we're on the bottom". My fears were alleviated.*

(Teacher journal, Tasmania)

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The competitive aspect of the programme was generally well received. It was perceived as being quite different from the competitions that characterise lessons within the multiactivity programme model. Students appeared to like Sport Education's competitive format and were keenly involved.

Positive aspects of the competition include:

- Longer time allows for the build up of strong team identity;
- The tournament idea and play-offs were a motivating factor;
- Having a set team seemed to help the competition run smoothly;
- Keeping statistics and a team ladder encouraged competition;
- Teacher input is required to ensure competition remains in the right spirit;
- The motivating nature of the competition made significant contributions to students' skill development.

Negative experiences have occurred usually when one of two circumstances arise:

- There are a large and/or persistent number of absentees throughout the season;
- The competition becomes too serious, and gameplay loses the Sport Education ethics of inclusivity and chances for success.

In both situations, the teacher must take action to avoid these problems. Foresight in the planning stages can avoid disturbances caused by carnivals, camps, work-experience or other such activities. Enforcing the values of fair (but serious) play and including others is an ongoing responsibility for the teacher. This action is vital given the damaging messages children receive through the media and by watching professional sport.

We should look further at the role of the culminating event in the overall theme of meaningful competition. The effort and preparation needed to organise a culminating event was, in some cases, seen as unnecessary. However this key characteristic provides an important educational experience and is seen as an integral and necessary aspect of the Sport Education philosophy.

## The Value of Competition

*Competition aspect different to the traditional approach. It really built up team identity.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*I do think I improved my skills... you learn more in competitive situations.*

(Student journal, South Australia)

*I think this whole competition thing was a great idea. It actually makes you want to do physical education, which is pretty amazing for me because I don't really like it.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Although positive comments about the idea of sustained, organised competition were widespread, there were some negative responses that need to be acknowledged:

*I think that this form of physical education is a bit too competitive. I mean some people take it too seriously and really get too caught up in the actual comp. Physical education should be for fun and learning.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*Big fight in one team: Captain/Coach too serious and team mates are refusing to play with her. Sports Board mediated to team's satisfaction but captain/coach feels 'hard done by'—she sees she is helping her team but their motivation is different to hers.*

(Teacher journal, New South Wales)

These problems need to be attended to if the competitive aspect of Sport Education is to be seen as educational. Perhaps the problem lies not with the model but with the teacher. As one teacher suggested:

*It wasn't a win-at-all-costs attitude that they had. I guess it depends on the teachers and how they shape the way students approach the game.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

## The Problem of Absenteeism

Absenteeism was seen by teachers as a significant problem: It often disrupted and devalued the competition:

*Absences made a big difference in the finals... a best player away could mean a big upset.*

(Teacher journal, Tasmania)

*Dispute over team membership with an absence and a better player being substituted. Sports Board stepped in. Several girls had a go at her. I found her in tears after presentation.*

(Teacher journal, New South Wales)





## What Teachers Said About Publicity Officers

*Publicity has really worked well. The children have written things for the newsletter, and also advertised themselves on parade at school. Other students in the school are very keen to see what is happening in the programme and they all seem to want to participate.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

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The success of the Publicity Officer role varied greatly from school to school. Many teachers believed this to be one of the Sport Education model's biggest problem areas. Although some positive results regarding the Publicity Officer role were reported, the majority of responses suggested teachers perceived the area to be either not essential to the Sport Education season or excessive additional work. As such, insufficient attention was often given to explaining the role to students and offering continued support. Some students see the role as being alien to physical education—perhaps more as the domain of English—and thus are hesitant to apply themselves. The educational potential of the role and the positive experiences of many teachers deserve further promotion.

The following suggestions to aid the success of this role were made by teachers:

- Gradually increasing the Publicity Officers' tasks through the season;
- Careful selection and ongoing encouragement of the person/s in the role;
- Ensuring that more than one person to share the burden;
- Providing some compensation of class time for Publicity Officer work;
- Providing teacher help. This is a necessary factor, particularly in the first experience of Sport Education;
- Pursuing cross-curricular links so that work for the Publicity Officer role becomes a valuable learning experience through other subjects, such as English, media or computing.

## Implementation and Performance of the Role

In situations where Publicity Officers were used, the role proved to be a significant contribution to the overall success of the season. However, many teachers did not see the relevance of introducing, persisting with and promoting this aspect of Sport Education, as evidenced by the following quotes:

*I didn't do the Publicity Officer role because I didn't want to increase the students' out-of-class workload.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*When I went through the questionnaire, you seemed to be saying the Publicity Officer was the most important part, I didn't get that impression from the workshop, and we just decided not to have one because the kids didn't see that it was at all relevant.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

In the instances where Publicity Officers were used well, there were some very positive reactions, such as the following quote:

*My journalists did a great job. I just absolutely loved reading their articles. Two of them wanted to be sports journalists. They were very funny and they put in everything about who did what and who threw the goals. They wrote it in a way that anyone would like to read it. I'd print it up and it became a feature of each week.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

Some students really enjoyed the opportunity afforded them by the role:

*I didn't use to like physical education much, but as a team member and Publicity Officer, I found myself actually looking forward to it.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*I was elected as a Publicity Officer and will enjoy the role. I am very handy with computers and I will create a Touch database.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

The Publicity Officer role places an extra workload on students. The following quotes suggest this work can be considerably more:

*I was busy this lesson in between games and during them, writing up results and pinning them up on the notice board. Because I'm a Publicity Officer, I do a lot of work.*

(Student journal , Australian Capital Territory)

*I spend about one and a half hours each week at home on the computer doing publicity stuff.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Teachers have suggested this increased workload is a key problem in getting students to successfully perform in the role.

There were many instances where Publicity Officers shirked their duties. The following quotes illustrate this:

*They don't seem to post many results or anything on the board yet. Some kind of interesting information would be good, like the draw perhaps.*

(Student journal , Australian Capital Territory)

*I don't think the publicity officers are doing their jobs properly. None of this group's results have been put up and so we are not able to see how other teams are doing.*

(Student journal , Australian Capital Territory)



## What Teachers Said About the Teacher's Role in Sport Education

*I didn't completely 'step back' as expected in a true Sport Education programme.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory).

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The most significant finding with respect to the teacher's role was that although the teachers in the programme indicated they understood that they should give students added responsibility, they were reluctant to do so. Many teachers struggled to make the gradual transition away from their traditional teaching position of autonomy.

In those instances where the teachers were able to change their role, they found their students were more than happy to assume responsibility and work with the teacher under new expectations.

Physical education teachers' styles seem to indicate a strong 'on centre stage' theory of teaching characterised by the 'drills-modified game-game' lesson structure. This is the way most physical education teachers were taught as students, the way they have been taught to teach and the way they have consequently been teaching. To ask teachers to suddenly change their teaching style is potentially unsettling, even threatening. As a result of this, many teachers took only a cautionary step into the Sport Education model and allowed students only partial responsibility in organising their seasons.

Several teachers did take major steps away from centre stage. For these teachers the rewards were great. Students respected the teacher's new role and enjoyed their own new-found responsibility. Teachers found they had more time during the course of the season to work one-on-one with students and to work with smaller groups (eg., teams, duty teams, Sports Boards). Many teachers found students were achieving far more than expected. For many teachers it was the first occasion that their assessment procedure could meaningfully address all learning domains.

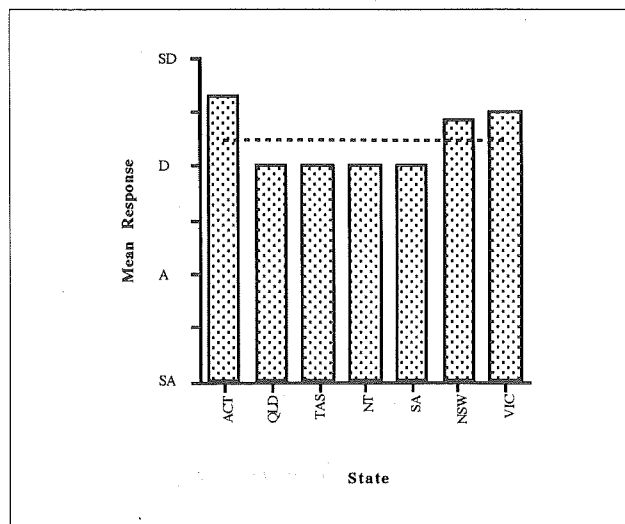
## Teachers' Understanding of Their Role in Sport Education

The teacher's role under Sport Education is dramatically different from the traditional 'centre stage' presence teachers typically maintain throughout a traditional model of physical education. The teacher will decide when the 'right' time is to move off centre stage (and this should be earlier than mid-season). However, this does not mean the teacher ceases to be completely involved with the class. All that really changes is the profile of the teacher who now becomes much more involved in working with individual students in areas such as umpiring, coaching and encouraging students to fulfil their roles.

The importance of the teacher's role cannot be understated. The planning and careful facilitation of a successful Sport Education season does not happen by chance. Teachers are in a unique position to educate young people into the sporting culture and for those young people to become discerning consumers of sport. In order for this to occur the teacher will plan, control and then guide and assess the Sport Education season.

Figure 6 illustrates that teachers in all States and Territories found their role in Sport Education to be different to their traditional teaching approach. Despite this, open-ended responses suggest many teachers had difficulty in making the change. This would appear to be influenced by several factors:

- The first time nature of the trial;
- Years of teaching using a 'direct instruction', teacher-centred model;
- A perceived 'difficult' class;
- Lack of confidence in the model to achieve outcomes;



**Figure 6:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 30: 'My role in Sport Education was similar to that for traditional teaching models'.

*Personally I found it very difficult not to interfere and controlled the situation more than what was expected in Sport Education philosophy. Will try to hand over more content to the students in future.*

(Teacher journal, South Australia)

*Probably had more input in trial than I would in subsequent units of Sport Education.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

*Role not clear, difficult to know how much teacher direction and when to back off. Students expected teacher to take over for coaching direction etc. They showed little self direction.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

Many teachers were initially uneasy about letting the students take on responsibility and in many cases it would appear they were not prepared to devolve much control to the students.

*Teacher still maintains overall control and feels that if he didn't the class would fall over.*

(Teacher, conversation with Project Officer, South Australia)

*Finding it difficult to not offer too many suggestions or sort out problems. This is hard when you are an organiser like me.*

(Teacher journal, New South Wales)

Many teachers made the transition to more student centred learning very well as the next quotations illustrate;

*At the start of the programme we spent two weeks 'teacher directed' looking at the skills of the sport, so that when we broke up into the student orientated aspect of it, when they did all the coaching etc., they would have a bit more of an idea. But at the start we told them that they will be eventually running the whole programme.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*The students would come to me, we would go through a coaching skill, they would go away in their groups and their coach was responsible for each group practising that particular skill. Then they would come back and we would work through a couple of skills in each coaching session, but it was very much led by me. They'd go away and practice and then come back for the next part of the skill. That seemed to work well, and their skills both in attack and defence seemed to improve throughout the season.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*A couple of times we had people away and we had to have relief teachers come out. I had two relief teachers who just couldn't believe that they didn't really have to do anything because I was sitting and looking and doing things like that. At the start of every lesson, I didn't do a thing. I waited for the kids to set everything up and that meant lacrosse goals and chairs with skipping ropes around them. The relief teacher said 'well don't you go out?' and I just said 'no. I'll just wait here for 5 minutes and I expect all the games would have started by then'. And she was absolutely amazed at what went on and said 'I have never seen lessons get under way so well so quickly.'*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

This last comment alludes to the difficulty casual observers may have in understanding the deliberate strategy of creating a learning environment by redefining the teacher's role and giving students increased responsibility.

## **Student Understanding of the Teacher's Role in Sport Education**

The majority of students enjoyed the experience of seeing the teacher assume a less direct role. They liked the help the teacher could give them on a more personal level. When the teacher did intervene the students often resented it.

It may take time for some students to get used to seeing the teacher in a different role. Our experience tells us that students quickly adapt and although many found it difficult to deal with disputes and to be coached by peers, when the Sport Education classroom environment was well structured, students coped admirably. The majority of students enjoyed the experience of running their own class, taking responsibility for organising their own games and seeing the teacher in a different, less intrusive role:



*Everyone's skills have picked up a lot thanks to all the skill work with the teachers.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*Today I refereed for the first time. It was really hard. Everyone on both teams kept on telling me what to do, and most of the time I didn't know what to call. My teacher had to come and help me which was great because I learnt things like where to stand and when to blow the whistle.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

In some cases when the teacher did intervene the students made their feelings known:

*It annoys me that people I know (on the Sports Board) have told me that the teachers are telling them how to operate things when I think the Sports Board are doing a really good job themselves. After all we elected the Sports Board because we thought they could do it, and they can. They are supposed to be running it without the teachers.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

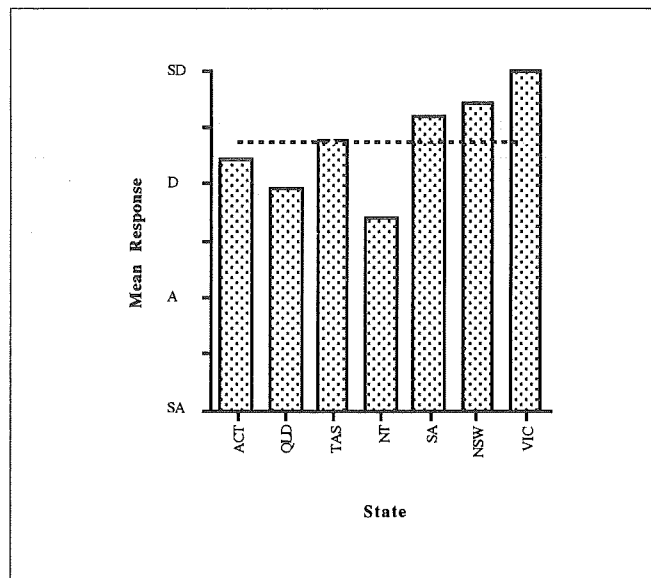
*All the Sports Board are complaining that the teachers have taken over. It's supposed to be run by the students.*

(Student journal, Queensland)

## **Assessment in Sport Education**

Many teachers explained that the Sport Education model allowed them time to look at student development at various stages during the season. They generally told us that initially they had reservations about skill development under this model, but that because of the amount of game play involved, skills had improved. Teachers said that the greatest potential of the model was to increase students' affective skills. This area of student development was seen to be very noticeable and teachers could map outcomes to their student-profile/monitoring-standards assessment criteria.

The overwhelming consensus, as illustrated by Figure 7, was that conducting assessment was easier using Sport Education than it was with the traditional model.



**Figure 7: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 32: 'My role in Sport Education made assessment more difficult than for traditional models'.**

The following remarks reflect teachers' thoughts on assessment:

*Assessment generally easier, the extended time made it easier to make evaluations and judgements of performance and skill development.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Assessment was good—more time for observation and extended length of unit helped. Assessment easier; used student peer group ratings and umpires' votes. Had more time for observation.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

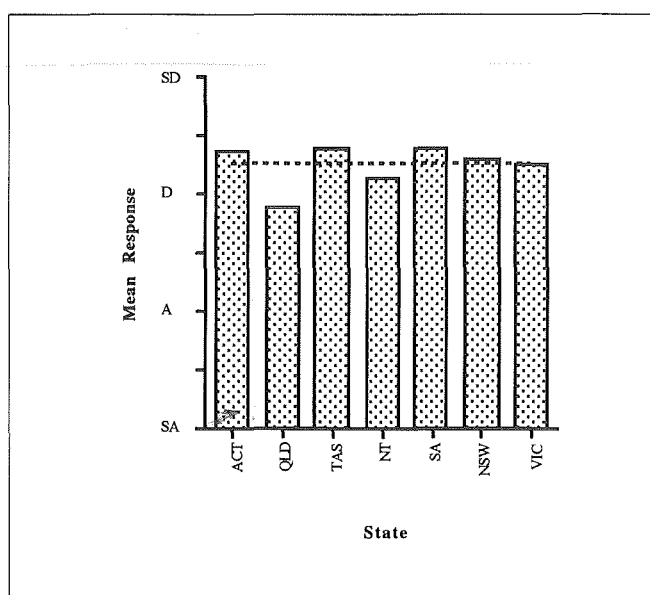
*Role allowed me to stand back and see bigger picture.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

## Achieving Outcomes in Sport Education

Teachers were initially unsure and anxious about the potential of the model, given the modified teacher's role, to increase students' skill levels. In a majority of cases these fears were unfounded and skill levels increased. However the affective domain was probably the area in which teachers perceived that the most significant student outcomes occurred. Increased participation across a range of roles seemed to mediate the achievement of outcomes across the domains of learning. Participation appeared to be influenced by team affiliation and students' willingness to accept positions of responsibility.

Figure 8 illustrates that teachers felt they were not disadvantaged by the Sport Education model when it came to achieving outcomes.



**Figure 8:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 33: 'I found it difficult under Sport Education to achieve outcomes I usually seek in physical education'.

The outcomes teachers spoke most about were skill acquisition and affective development. Because of the smaller numbers in teams the students also received a far greater aerobic workout than many experienced in larger sided games. The following comments represent teachers' thoughts on achieving outcomes in Sport Education:

*My previous job was as the lacrosse development officer, so I've actually seen a fair bit of lacrosse and having been out and seen Jenny's group in action quite a few times, the skill development there was actually quite phenomenal. You've got a minor sport, so very few of the kids would have even picked up a lacrosse stick before, let alone experience the game and had any teaching. And from the beginning to the end to the final result, the skill development was terrific, it was really good.*

(Steering committee member, teleconference, South Australia)

*The other surprising outcome for our faculty here was just how much the skill level improved during the competition. We met some faculty resistance early on, mainly because everyone had come from the demonstration-skill-drill-refining type approach and using a games approach to lessons was seen as a bit of a professional no-no. Initially, we were a bit sceptical because of that. We found by simply giving the kids lots of opportunities to perform the skills and by encompassing things like coach-training and doing whole-group stuff early on, that some of the finer points of skills and tactics became important to them. They suddenly had a reason to do well, to improve.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

## What Teachers Said About Student Feelings

*Before physical education was a bit boring. We always did different sports and things but they weren't as fun as Sport Education because there was no competition or nothing to play for and most of the time people stuffed around or cheated.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

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Sport Education was resoundingly popular amongst students when compared to the traditional teaching model. It especially seems to have positive benefits for the students who are not normally motivated in physical education or sport. This seems to be partly due to the social aspect of 'doing it for their team'. Other reasons given for these improved attitudes included the motivation brought about by competition, the independence of student centred learning, the increased learning from extended units of work and the social aspects of team affiliation and increased participation due to modified team numbers and games.

## Student Attitudes Toward Sport Education

Student attitudes to Sport Education were overwhelmingly positive. Given that these responses came after one trial season, and it is likely that inevitable hiccups plagued the trial, there appears to be much potential for Sport Education in meeting the needs of students. The following comments illustrate some student feelings about the model:

*It will be sad when we go back to the 4 week periods of the one thing, not 8 or 9 weeks where you can develop skills and all have fun. I think this idea of teaching physical education is excellent. It lets students take a more active role in what we're doing. I think it worked extremely well and should be used more often in physical education classes.*

(Student journal , Victoria)

*I really enjoyed Sport Education and I love sport now. I used to hate it.*  
(Student journal, New South Wales)

*Nearly everyone enjoyed Sport Education, and it's much preferred to regular physical education.*  
(Student journal, Queensland)

*We were put in a real life situation, and have a better chance to learn leadership and team skills.*  
(Student journal, Northern Territory)

Teachers corroborated these views of students:

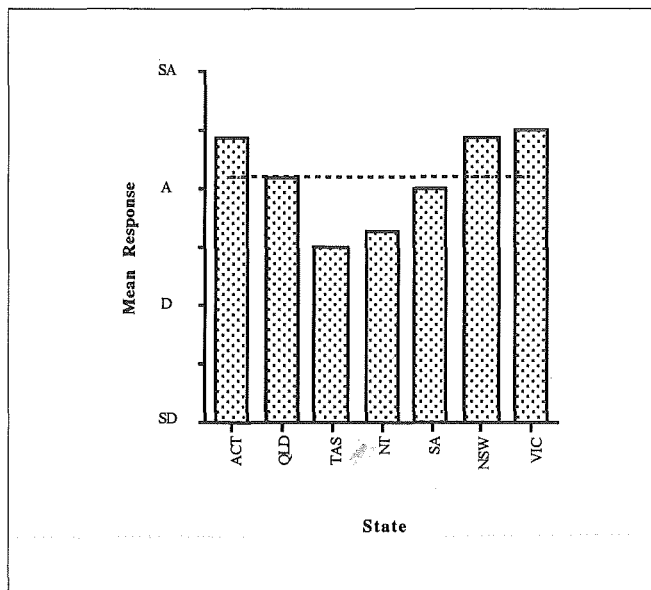
*'Not letting the team down attitude' was an important factor in motivation.*  
(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Student attitudes more positive, particularly the fringe students.*  
(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

*Students were more positive in their approach to physical education classes. Keen to do it again. Participation rate was higher. Ownership of model motivated students to increased participation. No one was a sideliners.*  
(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*None of them ever said 'when is this going to stop?'*  
(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

Figure 9 illustrates that teachers generally felt student attitudes about physical activity were more positive in Sport Education than they had been traditionally.

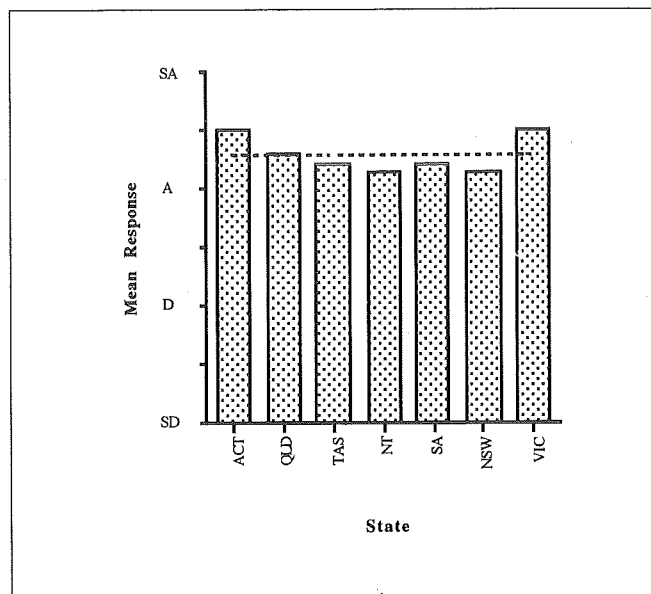


**Figure 9:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 37: 'Student attitudes about physical activity were more positive in Sport Education than for the traditional model'.

### Factors Affecting Student Attitudes Toward Sport Education

Teachers agreed the social aspects of team affiliation formed a significant factor contributing to positive student attitudes to Sport Education. The competition aspect of the model was also rated as important by teachers. Most negative student comments regarding the model centred on the extended season.

Figure 10 illustrates that all States reported the social aspects of team affiliation to be a positive influence on student attitudes towards participation.



**Figure 10: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 39: 'The social aspects of team affiliation in Sport Education provides a positive influence on student attitudes toward participation'.**

Student comments referred to the sense of affiliation gained by staying in the same team for the extended season. The competition aspect was also felt to be important.

*It was something more and better than just doing physical education. It also taught us about being part of a team.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*Today was the grand final so we all watched it. Everybody was enjoying themselves, people were cheering and screaming. After the game it was the presentation of the trophies, medals and team awards.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)



A small number of negative comments referred to the extended season:

*For the people who don't like the activity chosen it is hard, as they have to tough it out for the whole term.*

(Student journal, Victoria)

*It would be pretty dumb just doing one sport for the whole term. We chose netball and considering I don't really like netball, that was worse.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*I think it was all right but you get sick of playing the same sport for a whole term.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)



## What Teachers Said About School Community Links

*I think it certainly gives the kids the confidence to go out and participate in the sort of recreational programme that might be offered at a local leisure centre—you know, organising their friends to get a team together and put it in. I can see that definitely being a positive outcome.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

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It is one thing for teachers to see value in school-community linkages but quite another for students to move into community sport, especially after their first experiences of Sport Education. The establishment of school-community links was recommended in the workshops, and the SEPEP Curriculum Materials contained a section on strategies for achieving links. Despite this focus, the majority of schools did not aim to establish community links in their first trial of Sport Education. The main reasons given were:

- It was impractical, given the stop-start nature of some seasons;
- Costs were prohibitive;
- Community facilities were not easily accessible;
- Timing of the season made it difficult to coordinate with community groups;
- Students on the Sports Board were not interested in having any one come in;
- Time constraints prevented such action.

Where seasons did feature school-community links, they were limited. There was some use of local facilities and some contributions by Sport Development Officers in the form of coaching clinics within the Sport Education season. There were occasional reports of students participating in district tournaments. There appeared to be no parental involvement in Sport Education seasons.

The major use of community personnel were the Sport Development Officers who were involved in giving coaching clinics and helping students with umpiring. In some instances local facilities were used. Although most trials did not seek to establish community links, comments suggest teachers see the value in this area. We have concluded that initial forays into Sport Education present a challenge to teachers which leaves little time or energy for the active pursuit of school-community linkages. However, simple links should be part of the professional development offered to beginning Sport Education teachers. Using the local recreation centre or inviting in a representative of the umpires board to take a session on umpiring and rules of the game seem worth pursuing. Appointing a student to the role of community link officer, with a detailed role description and ideas about what is expected, may be a more advanced strategy suited to teachers moving into their second or third seasons of Sport Education.

## Attempts to Develop School Community Links

The following comments are typical of those made about school community links:

*I will try to get more links next semester. More students were interested in representing school teams.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Victoria)

*Costs made community links impossible.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Queensland)

*We contacted the local Volleyball Association and they wanted some competitors for a weekend competition. One of the students was interested in that. More might have gone with it if the connection with the Sport Development Officer was on a more regular basis .*

(Teacher journal, Queensland)

## Those Who Became Involved in the Season

Many teachers anticipated the potential value of contacts with community sporting personnel. However, teachers tended to focus on the State Sport Development Officer when considering school-community links. This may be a result of the emphasis their role was given in the SEPEP workshops and materials. The role of local recreational and sporting clubs and personnel in establishing effective links between school physical education and community sporting participation needs particular attention.

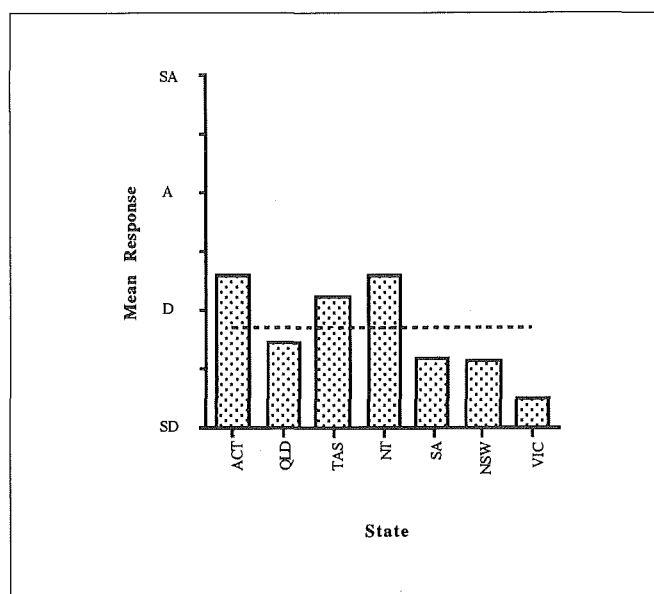
*Used local facilities. Local Sport Development Officer assisted in programme.*  
(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*We even had students get sponsorship through McDonalds.*  
(Teacher questionnaire, Queensland)

*We have district umpires to the school every now and then to help with some umpiring skills. Student umpiring is much better after the district umpires gave us some helpful tips. That idea worked well.*  
(Student journal, Queensland)

*A person from Australian Capital Territory volleyball talked to us and taught us how to improve on skills greatly.*  
(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*They told us how we can be involved and we even had a top Touch player to tell us which teams we can join.*  
(Student journal, Northern Territory)



**Figure 11: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 42: 'The sport's contact person contributed significantly to the Sport Education season'.**

The following comments are typical of those made about the involvement of such contacts:

*Our school is in a country town. There is no community Sport Development Officer available. Students were keen to join a community club.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*Community Sport Development Officers were not easily accessible.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*The only problem is the time constraints on the Sport Development Officer. They've got to fit into your programme.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

While there was clearly limited involvement by sporting personnel in the Sport Education seasons, teachers did recognise the potential contribution school-community linkages could make, as indicated in the following comments:

*I think the Sport Development Officer has a big role to play in Sport Education... you would have them at one or two pivotal points in your season and it would really help you out a lot.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*It would really improve the motivation for them (students) to have someone special to come out... You would probably find that more students would be involved in community sport as a result.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*The kids would appreciate having someone come in (Sport Development Officer) whom they see as having a bit more expertise and knowledge than the normal everyday teacher.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

Parental involvement in Sport Education was, in teachers' opinions, minimal. In New South Wales parents were sent questionnaires on which 29% indicated their child was playing community sport as a direct result of their involvement in Sport Education. This figure may sound surprisingly high but clearly it seems certain that a great more can potentially be achieved in the area of communicating our physical education programmes to the home.

## **Developing Approach Tendencies to the Movement Culture**

Further study is needed into the students' attitudes and actions with regard to the movement of students from school to community involvement. There are clear signs that the programme model can spark interest in continuing student involvement in sport. We need to carefully evaluate this aspect in future Sport Education trials, especially where we know many of the teachers are setting out to implement strategies aimed at linking their seasons with community sport.

*Quite a number of students said they would look into playing Touch outside of school.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*I think that's the drawback with some games: The sport I chose is not played outside the schools over here. But after we finished, there have been students expressing interest in forming teams.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*I have discovered a game that I would like to take further outside school.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*I have had a couple of kids ask me already, and I have had to go and find out how to get them to join clubs. I found in our area though that the season's already half way through. Perhaps some of them will still be interested next year.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*Yeah! I know a girl who actually wants to organise a team for a competition in Bacchus Marsh, playing just for fun. They probably will be on the bottom of the ladder but it's still recreational sport.*

(Student, post-season interview with their teacher, Victoria)

*We promoted local club trainings and contacted the Sport Development Officer. While there are not strong community links, there are boys now playing in the local competition.*

(Teacher journal, South Australia)



## What Teachers Said About Student Roles

*I had a few kids, whose job involved using class time. The other kids... were still out there in their team training. They saw it as being a bit unfair because they were super-keen and wanted to get out there and join in. At the same time, I think they realised the importance of their role and that people in positions of responsibility need to make some sacrifices.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

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The involvement of students in seeking to take on roles varied greatly between schools. Many students found they could be useful and were needed within the context of physical education for the first time. In some cases there were no problems filling roles and students did a good job. In others students were either reluctant to take on roles, showed little responsibility when they did or spent little or no time out of class time working on their duties. Students sometimes rebelled against the extra work suddenly being delegated to them in what they traditionally see as an 'activity-only' subject.

All students should be in a position to take on umpiring, scoring and other official duties. There is a real danger of the less confident, introverted students leaving such tasks to the more extrovert or higher skilled players. The teacher needs to be aware of this problem and plan to overcome it by giving all students opportunity to do all the different tasks. Several teachers alluded to the need for very thorough preparation and planning and for spending a lot of time going over with the class the philosophy behind and the requirements of student roles.

Absences have proven to be a real hindrance to the smooth running of Sport Education, and if students in key roles are away the season can potentially flop. The appointment of a vice captain/coach is a good strategy and can also groom this person for the job in a future season.

## Role Distribution

Teachers told us that students generally actively sought roles and that role distribution was a relatively smooth and simple process. They also claimed all students who desired roles were given opportunity of access. However, student feedback suggests that allocation of roles was often influenced by the social standing of some students. Gender also appeared to influence who received roles, with boys tending to receive activity-based roles such as coach and captain, and girls tending to assume managerial and organisational positions.

Some teachers found problems with distributing roles:

*Overall they didn't tend to want a role at the start. Some volunteered, but most had to be talked around.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

*Students actively sought roles, but the level to which they fulfilled them was limited.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*I had nobody actually volunteer for management roles... a lot of these kids don't see that sort of thing happening in club sport or anywhere else—it's usually behind the scenes.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

Within the student role category we were interested to discover whether only popular students were assigned roles. Figure 12 illustrates that all States except for Tasmania and Victoria generally found this not to be the case.

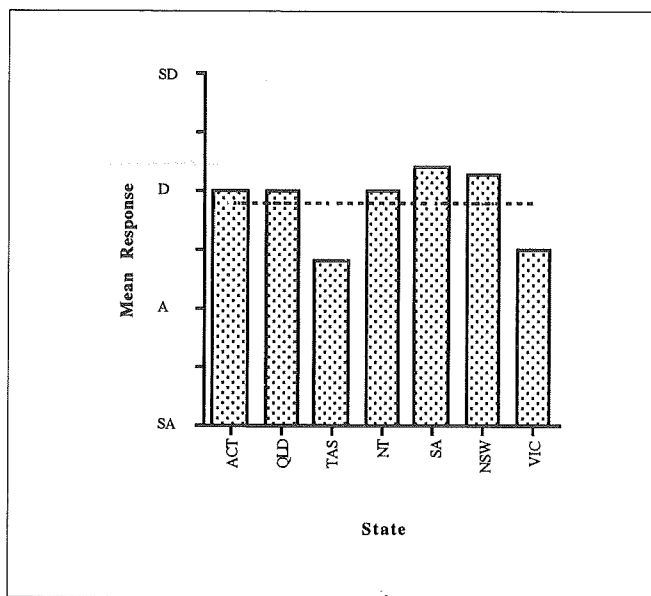


Figure 12: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 49: 'Only well-liked, confident students received roles'.

Students' feedback on this issue was mixed but generally tended to confirm teacher's perceptions:

*All kinds of people get a chance at different roles.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*Anyone who wanted to do something probably got it.*

(Student journal, Victoria)

*I enjoyed seeing who won (voting for roles), there were some surprises but good to see some of the others who aren't so popular, get in.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Some comments suggested that this was not always the case, however:

*When the Sports Board was selected, I was disappointed to see all the popular people take the stage, even though it wasn't surprising to me.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*This year I left it very much 'open-slather' to the kids and it became more of a popularity contest than a 'who would do the best job' contest.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

*I found the girls in my group absolutely, totally dominated the management side of it, and the boys let them do that. Then when it came to playing the game, the boys took over and the girls were pushed to the background.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*In my team two of the guys wanted to be coach and captain. Not even considering the girls! So now the biggest idiot is our captain.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

However, not all feedback in this area was negative:

*I was surprised by the amount of female participation in every aspect of the game, whether it was refereeing, playing or being an official. I've got some girls who usually have absolutely no interest in moving, other than breathing, they seemed to involve themselves very much in the Sport Education Touch season.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

## Performance in Roles

Many teachers agreed that time spent on role description and initial help with students was time well spent. Others commented they would take more time to work on roles with future groups. It was pleasing to hear that a great number of students revelled in the opportunity to show some different, 'non-activity' performance skills within their physical education programme. Students were generally against performing 'extra' work for physical education, outside lesson time. Teachers need to plan to change the perception that physical education is only concerned with physical performance.

*They had no trouble coping with the responsibility of captain/coach, because that was something they understood. They had no real problems with refereeing because they understood most of the basic rules. What I did have problems with was trying to get someone to do publicity or anything that involved writing or organisational skills. They weren't sure of what was expected and they weren't prepared to put extra time in.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*Students tentative about roles. Few worked out of class time. They needed constant prompting to do the work.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

Teachers need to carefully consider how they can best integrate, coordinate and recognise the efforts of students outside allocated class time. Careful planning in this area can be very productive and will ultimately affect the success of the season, as the following comment suggests:

*I didn't have any problems mainly because in their initial sessions I went to the sports committee meetings and helped them with the initial organisation. Being Year 8 they weren't too aware of some of the organisational side. Once I did that, there was no need for me to be involved from then on.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

Some teachers commented on how they would more effectively prepare for the roles in future seasons:

*My largest problem was with the Sports Board. I think we only had one member who was able to display any initiative. The others would turn up and just say 'well, what do we have to do?' I think this problem had a lot to do with my level of experience with allowing children to have the responsibility of this sort of thing. Had I put more time into helping prepare them, things may have been different. If I were to run it again I would certainly concentrate on the Sports Board, giving them practice at organising and showing them how to prepare things in advance.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

*When we gave them assistance with coaching and refereeing they picked it up really quickly, so next time we do this we would like to have more input with coaching, refereeing and giving feedback at the start of the unit.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*In hindsight, I should have spent more time spelling out duties for other positions apart from Sports Board.*

(Teacher journal, New South Wales)

Teachers were generally dissatisfied with student performance of roles in their Sport Education seasons. Despite this evidence, there were many comments referring to positive feelings about student roles:

*All the children were really interested in being player-coach, referee or scorer. When I offered the job to anyone, they seemed to want to take it on with a bit of relish, and I have had two or three students who have gone outside to find a club to join once the season was finished.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*Basically we found that the organisers excelled and the followers floundered.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*In Sport Education I think we learnt a lot about teaching and the people around us. We found out that you actually have to do a lot of organisation before a lesson and that its hard to teach when people won't listen.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## Absences

As with most aspects of Sport Education, student absences proved to be crippling to the performance of roles. As the following comment suggests, this problem cannot easily be overcome:

*A problem lies with absences. You've got a small number of people doing a particular job, and if they're absent, particularly for a number of days, then you've got to build something into your organisation as a back-up. That's a little tricky considering that you're essentially trying to have all of your students having in a special role anyway.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)





## What Teachers Said About Class Management

*Sports Board ran class with no preparation-time. They were terrific. I didn't get involved at all. They took on a lot of my teaching and discipline techniques.*

(Teacher journal, Australian Capital Territory)

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There was reported to be less class management for teachers using the Sport Education model. Especially when the Sports Board was well briefed and maintained close contact with the teacher throughout the season.

Prior planning and preparation by the teacher was thought to be an essential part of establishing smooth class management routines.

Sport Education, through its sessions, fixtures and team affiliation, builds routines within the learning environment. These routines are generally accepted to be the cornerstones of preventative classroom management. However, if an effective teacher is first and foremost an effective manager, what other roles open up for teachers whose management and organisational roles are built into the model? Several teachers in the trial were reluctant to give the students class management responsibility. This is a big step for teachers, many of whom expressed feelings of helplessness or redundancy when the Sports Board did a good job.

*I was bored with nothing to do but sit back and watch.*

(Teacher journal, Australian Capital Territory)

Careful planning was also seen as a management issue and all teachers recognised that a carefully thought out season would be more successful.

*The better the planning, the greater the benefit.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

There is no doubt that students, given the appropriate instruction and support, are capable of assuming class management roles. By planning and training the students thoroughly for this role, the teacher inherits unheralded amounts of time to interact with groups and individuals performing instructional duties. This can only be a very positive step forward in the teaching of physical education.

### **How Much Class Management was Carried Out by the Teacher?**

There was quite a variation in response to the issue of class management. In some schools the class was able to completely run the programme, while in others the teacher did not feel the class could self-manage. There was much diversity in responses to this issue from both within and between States. Many teachers remain uneasy about relinquishing up-front management tasks.

The theme of students' managerial inefficiency came through quite strongly and suggested that teachers as well as students had difficulty with this aspect of class management. Several teachers commented that they would plan to prevent problems in this area in future seasons.

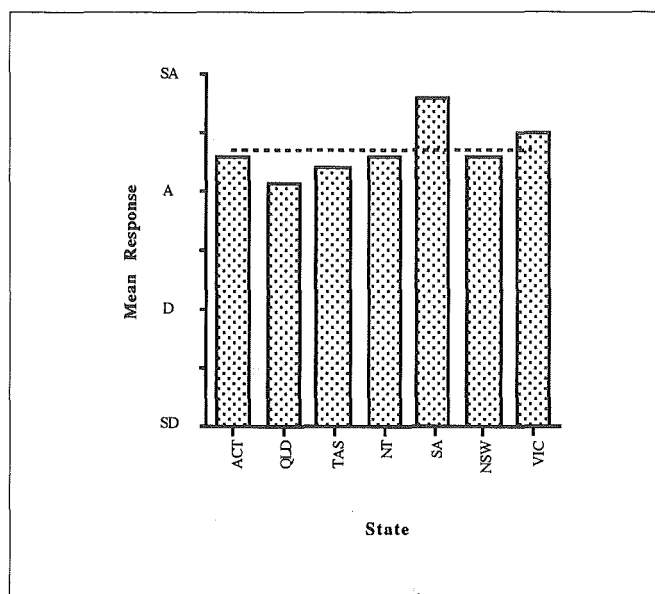
Teachers reported class management was generally less demanding with the Sport Education model. Compared to traditional models, far less teacher intervention and discipline was needed once the season was underway. In many cases, once the season was set up and running smoothly, the Sports Board were able to take on all class management issues.

*It got to my level of experience in allowing children to have the responsibility for this sort of thing. I had to put enough time into helping prepare them for that. If I were to run Sport Education again I would certainly put more time into preparing the Sports Board by giving them practice at organising and showing them how to prepare things in advance.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

*The Board tended to be involved in management overall, but they rarely needed to intervene in terms of day to day management.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)



**Figure 13: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 56: 'Most students were self-managed during Sport Education lessons'.**

The following comments reinforce that students, given the opportunity, generally showed the ability and responsibility to manage themselves:

*Class management was not a concern.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

*Sports Board ran the class with no preparation-time. They were terrific. I didn't get involved at all. They took on a lot of my teaching and discipline techniques.*

(Teacher journal, Australian Capital Territory)

In South Australia some of the students were concerned about their peers' lack of management ability:

*I think the Sports Board is really unorganised too. It is always 15 minutes into the lesson before they get themselves organised.*

(Student journal, South Australia)

*Today was a bit unorganised. The Sports Board are pretty good overall but sometimes are too unorganised. They don't set a good example with getting changed or being enthusiastic. I think maybe it's because they don't get enough positive feedback 'cause everyone's always complaining to them.*

(Student journal, South Australia)

The following quotes show how there was a great diversity of feeling towards class management, often within the same State:

*Needed to consult with Sports Board on behaviour problems. Worked with Sports Board to discipline students. Most students self managed.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Read riot act to class. Sports Board told to 'get its act together'. Sports Board said; 'Season is too long; bored, or don't like basketball; they don't listen to me'.*

(Teacher journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*There weren't really any management problems and any that came up were dealt with by the students.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

Comments such as the one below clearly illustrated some teachers' uneasiness at leaving managerial issues to their students:

*The season finished and I am glad to now be back in control where I set the standards. I suspect many of the kids will feel the same although they may not own up to it*

(Teacher journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## How Much Pre-season Planning Was Needed?

From their experiences in the SEPEP trial season, many teachers began to appreciate the benefit of sound early-season planning. All teachers agreed that pre-season planning was essential to the smooth running of the programme. Most teachers realised that many of the problems they encountered during their season could have been avoided if they had planned more effectively. Effective planning includes take into account events on the school/physical education calendar which may disrupt the season. Due to the trial nature of the programme, teachers were often unable to predict the sorts of management issues that would become relevant, tending to preclude the preventative measures that would normally characterise their teaching.

*One of the main problems with a trial like that, where we're learning about the programme as well as the kids, is that there's always going to be a few teething difficulties which you need to work through.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

*It was very successful. We'd like to think we could do better, but that's not the fault of the structure of the course, it's that we know we have learnt and that will help us next year.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

*Because this was my first experience I wanted to be very well organised. Next time around will be less demanding.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

*We had a few problems with timetabling and clashes with different things but certainly the kids were ready to try it again, especially if they could get some time that sort of flowed on and wasn't going to be interrupted.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*It does involve careful planning by the teacher and careful marketing of what Sport Education is early on in class. It normally takes a lot of time for students to understand exactly what it is all about.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)



## What Teachers Said About Equity in Sport Education

*When we did the Sport Education programme we played Touch football which was fun and taught us to share, but it would have been better if the boys would have shared the ball a bit more and given us a fair turn instead of assuming we were bad players just because we were girls.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

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### Summary of Findings

We looked for signs, in the trial seasons of Sport Education, of inequities for girls, less skilled students and for others who were socially marginalised within classes. Our view, has been that Sport Education has seemed to be a far more inclusive curriculum model than those traditionally comprising the physical education programme.

*I was surprised by the amount of female participation in every aspect of the game, whether it was playing, refereeing or being an official. I've got some girls who have absolutely no interest in moving—other than breathing—and they really seemed to involve themselves.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

However student data has suggested teachers' perceptions of equitable arrangements seemed to be overly optimistic. Students' journals and interviews conducted with students indicated quite strongly that the girls were not able to share equally, especially as players, in the coeducational Sport Education learning environment. Many teachers reported a more positive attitude shown by girls to physical education under the Sport Education model although boys still dominated in many instances.

Teachers generally reported positive outcomes in term of equity. Most agreed there were positive outcomes for both physically and socially challenged students.

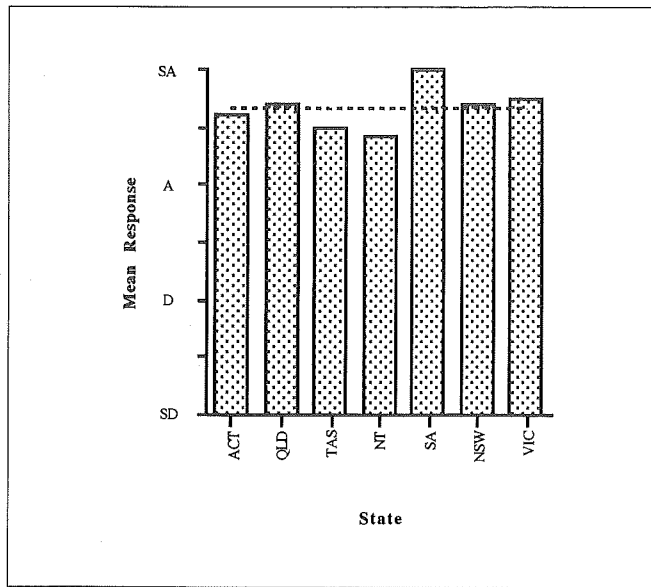
Whilst it was pleasing to learn that Sport Education appeared to be a more inclusive programme than those typically delivered to students, we must still try to ascertain what level of inclusivity is ultimately delivered by the Sport Education model. A pattern has emerged in which the girls tend to take on and do well in administrative roles, however boys appear reluctant to pursue these roles, suggesting this may not be as positive a finding as we originally thought. In many cases there appears to be unequal participation within coeducational teams. This problem is heightened in more “physical” sports such as basketball, but is also evident in sports such as Touch and volleyball.

Strategies need to be worked out to encourage equitable opportunities for girls, less skilled and less popular students. Advocates of the Sport Education curriculum model will need to demonstrate that this model generates worthwhile outcomes for all students. At this stage we cannot convincingly claim this. It is hardly sufficient to demonstrate that Sport Education generates better outcomes than other physical education curriculum models. We should take little comfort in knocking down a straw person in the form of the generally discredited multi activity curriculum model. However there seems to be much that is positive about single-sex Sport Education. Although Sport Education has already demonstrated great potential in producing student outcomes, results in this section suggest there is still much to be accomplished.

## **Gender-Appropriateness of Chosen Sport**

Research indicates that sports can be perceived along a “masculinity-femininity” continuum and that, while girls express a willingness to tackle almost any sport, boys are only prepared to play those they perceive as masculine or gender-neutral. While we expect few of the trial teachers to be familiar with the research, we acknowledge they have considerable experience in judging the suitability of most sports according to broad inclusivity criteria.





**Figure 14: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 58: 'The sport chosen for Sport Education was appropriate for both girls and boys'.**

*We thought basketball was an appropriate sport to start Sport Education with. In all the previous surveys we had done about perceived male and female sports, it came through as one that was perceived to be a fairly mixed sport, not necessarily male or female.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*I think the system of doing Sport Education with the students running it is a really good idea, but the sport should be something where girls and boys are more equal. One where you don't have to be tall or strong to do well.*

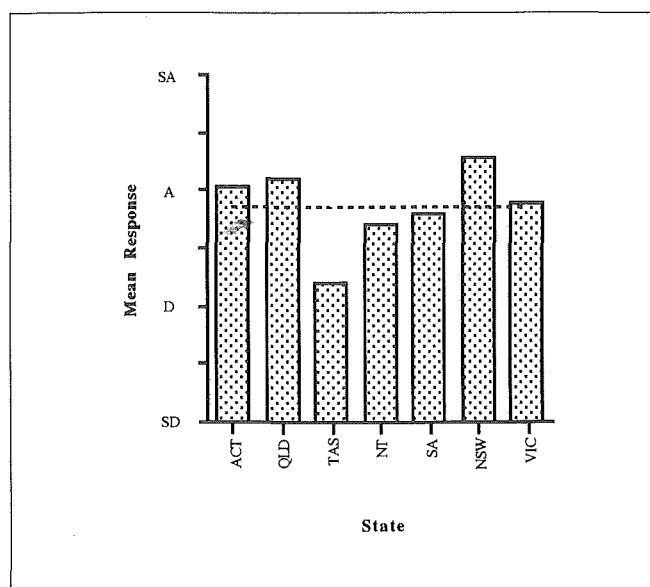
(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## Girls' Attitude Toward Physical Education in Sport Education

As stated earlier, it may be useful, for departmental programming of Sport Education into the physical education programme, to compare Sport Education to the former programme models according to their inclusivity. However teachers' perceptions need to be considered against the possibility that almost any alternative physical education curriculum model may appear superior.

Single sex Sport Education seems to present a relatively rosy picture of inclusion for girls. However, results from coeducational classes were mixed. Although teachers suggested the situation was much better than for traditional models, student responses would suggested greater attention must be paid to this area.

Figure 15 shows teachers tended to agree that Sport Education was an improvement on the gender inclusivity of their previous practices. The situation in Tasmania would seem to warrant further scrutiny.



**Figure 15: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 59: 'Girls showed a more positive attitude toward physical education under Sport Education than for the traditional model'.**

The following comments from teachers and students shed more light on girls' attitudes toward the equity of the Sport Education model. However, the following comments originated only from single sex classes:

*More positive attitude by girls to physical education than traditional model. More active involvement by girls and physically and socially challenged students.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Being needed in a team made a difference to several girls.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

*The most impressive part that we found was the female participation: they were bringing their uniforms and getting changed, plus actually taking part in the games and running around—they used to forget uniforms or just opt out.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*I was really encouraged by the girls. I have taught Touch before and I've found that, even though it is a non-contact sport, it does tend to be a bit inhibiting for them. But these girls really had a go and I think thoroughly enjoyed it.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*They (31 girls) were really good. They had their uniform all the time, they were always ready to play. They organised their own umpires; they organised their own teams; they organised their scoring; they selected their own teams from their own committees; and when they had a problem on court, they sorted it out themselves. They suspended one girl for two games because she wasn't playing nicely, and that was a good thing. The girls are still interested, even after nine weeks of three lessons a week.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*Girls played girls again. It was good as we got a better go (than in the co-ed games). I noticed that girls who used to sit out got up and tried.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

When we look beyond teachers' impressions of inclusivity and ask the students themselves about the nature of their participation in the Sport Education seasons, we find support for the conventional wisdom, in education generally, about boys' and girls' access to classroom resources, especially teacher attention. Under coeducational Sport Education girls seem pressured by boys to minimise their involvement in the mainstream physical activity requirements of the model.

We have presented a lot of quotes in this section to reinforce the need to hear more from the students about their perceptions of the quality of their Sport Education experience within the physical education programme. It seems who you listen to is important in determining the equity of instructional arrangements. Teachers report greater inclusion for girls, but girls still report a feeling of genuine exclusion when it comes to game-play. The following comments from teachers and students reflect the disparity in their perspectives on the boys' and girls' involvement:

*The girls in my group totally dominated the management side of it, and the boys let them do that.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*The Sports Board has two boys and two girls. The two boys were chosen because they thought they would do the best job and the girls were picked by popularity.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*Everyone is starting to get a team spirit and pass the ball to everyone, boy or girl.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*The chicks in my team are improving the most.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*I have noticed that the four boys on our teams only play amongst themselves and don't really share. They are greedy but I guess we still win.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*I have to admit that most of the guys played fairly but there were a few who got carried away and treated the girls poorly.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*Fantastic. The way teaching should be. Students played and umpired excellently. Everyone had a job to do and did well. Excellent interaction between sexes. Good players tried to include the girls as much as possible which helped team unity and total enjoyment.*

(Teacher journal, Victoria)

*I played on another team today and I wasn't playing very well and I got a few comments from a certain boy. I hope Sport Education teaches certain people how they should act with a team.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*Even though I don't mind the boys, it just seems to be more fun in a girls' class. It's much more relaxed because you don't have to worry about boys making fun of you when you do something wrong.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## **Involvement of Physically Challenged Students**

We were interested in the effect the model seemed to have on the lesser skilled and/or disabled students. Teachers generally believed that Sport Education enhanced the participation of this group. However there are enough data in the students' journals to cause us to question teachers' generally positive assessment of this aspect of the trials. A closer study of the quality of these students' experiences on Sport Education teams seems warranted.

*I have only had a couple of girls which we call 'non-compliant participants'—they run around behind others but don't touch the ball—but these students have taken on roles very strongly.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*I get really annoyed with the Sports Board because they don't let me umpire. It is so unfair. Sure, I don't play netball on the weekend but I know the rules. I don't think I'm ever going to umpire this season.*

(Student journal, New South Wales)

*Today I helped set up a try. It's about time I did something useful for the team. I know I drop the ball a lot, and a lot of the time it is often my fault, but a lot of the time I get bad passes which of course I don't catch. Even when it is a bad pass that I don't catch, some players get angry at me. Them getting angry at me just makes me feel like bad player.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## Involvement of Socially Challenged Students

Teachers generally believed, as they did for the less skilled students, that the Sport Education model enhanced less popular students' physical education experiences.

A challenge lies ahead for teachers to educate students about the range of criteria which deserve consideration in selecting peers for positions. This also extends to the teaching of strategies for including others in game-play. Popularity with classmates and skill in games are perhaps not the most significant or legitimate considerations.

The following comments relate to the social inclusivity of the trials:

*We had one girl who started sitting out as we got toward the finals. She is a dark kid, so I don't know if she was a bit self-conscious because she was supposed to be up with these people.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

*I was really encouraged by the blossoming of the quieter students to even get in and have a go.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*A lot of people participated really well and showed a lot of enthusiasm. Most people who are usually shy and not very sporty came out and played really well.*

(Student journal, Northern Territory)

*When the time came to vote for the Sports Board, only the most popular people were picked and others that were great at the game were a bit disappointed.*

(Student journal, Queensland)

*When the Sports Board was selected, I was disappointed to see all the popular people take the stage, even though it wasn't surprising to me.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

*[Voting for Sports Board] It was pretty amazing to see, because I never really thought some people would get in 'cause they're so quiet, so that was OK voting.*

(Student journal, Australian Capital Territory)

## What Teachers Said About Their General Impressions of Sport Education

*Sport Education doesn't cover everything, but meets participation and socialisation and establishing community links.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

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Teachers are the rightful gatekeepers of both the content and pedagogy of physical education. Teachers' general impressions of an innovation determine the probability of its initial success and long term prospects. We were fortunate that a large number of committed teachers were willing to try Sport Education. Their general impressions are uniformly positive but as thinking professionals they were prepared to offer some suggestions for future implementation and to identify some of the inherent problems in the model in their unique contexts.

The major finding for this strand is best stated as 'the context determines the process'. This should not have surprised us as we have continually been told by teachers that they need to make Sport Education suit their circumstances: The school; students and their own teaching style. Initial experiences suggest Sport Education is well placed as a curriculum model within a balanced physical education programme. Teachers, in their unique school contexts, held different ideas about which year levels should feature Sport Education. The model is in no way prescriptive in this regard but interestingly has been successfully trialed in SEPEP with children from Years 6–11.

Perceived problems with the model generally concerned management and organisation. Teachers were conscious of tying up facilities and resources for extended periods of time. Some students were worried about being stuck in an unfavourable sport for ten to twenty weeks.

## Is Sport Education a Good Way to Teach Physical Education?

The idiosyncratic nature of schools, students and teachers was frequently emphasised by teachers. Some suggested that:

*I prefer the traditional model in Years 7/8 and Sport Education in Years 9/10. But Sport Education is a good way to teach physical education.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

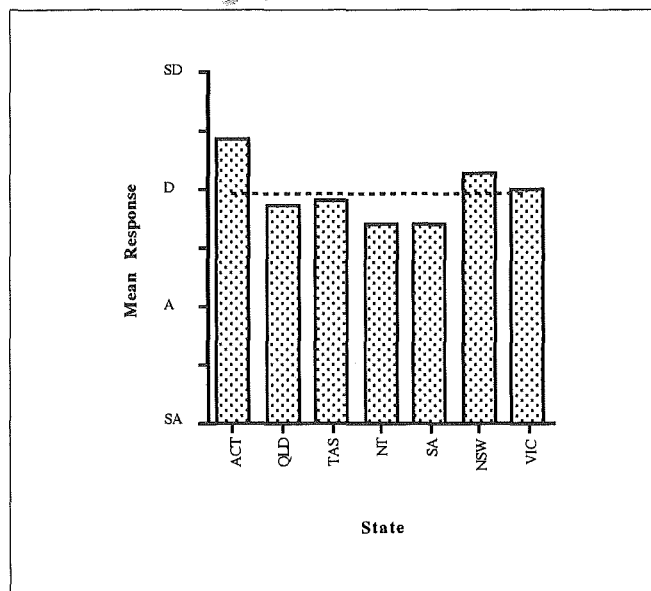
*A lot to do. Hard to keep organised.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*I think it will become easier each time you do it.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

As a result of their trials, teachers in all States and Territories were convinced that Sport Education is a good way to deliver content in physical education. To many observers Sport Education is best characterised as an alternative pedagogy for physical education, the teachers in this trial were firmly of this view. Figure 16 illustrates how teachers rated Sport Education favourably when comparing it to their traditional models.



**Figure 16:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 65: 'Overall, the model traditionally used to teach physical education is better than Sport Education'.



The level of support, for what was for many teachers a new way of delivering physical education, confirmed the strong acceptance of Sport Education as both an innovative curriculum model and a pedagogy that was in many ways superior to existing practices.

*Sport Education seems better than the other models as far as getting them into it and getting them active goes.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Queensland)

Some teachers saw the advantages of the traditional model being more units of work leading to a larger number of sports being covered. These shorter units also meant resources were not tied up for extended periods of time.

*The advantages of the traditional method is more units of work and more equitable sharing of facilities with other timetabled classes.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

## **Problems With the Sport Education Model**

Teachers were not forthcoming in providing a litany of problems inherent in Sport Education. Perceived problems usually focused on planning or management (implementation) issues, rather than more inherent flaws in the model itself.

Suggested problems of a general nature were few and varied as teachers confirmed their overall support for Sport Education. It is clear that Sport Education is a viable and readily implemented way of teaching physical education. Like any practical curriculum model it is not a panacea yet it clearly has the support of teachers around the country.

Some specific problems have been highlighted in earlier sections of this report, however in this strand problems related to general impressions were not very illuminating. Those that were mentioned included:

*Sport Education can be demanding on resources.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Problems with facilities if several classes are timetabled together, especially with small sided teams needing more court space.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

*A lot to do. Hard to keep students organised, Teacher ends up doing tasks.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Resourcing is a problem—umpires, community contacts, coaching resources are scarce.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Victoria)

## **Teachers' Impressions of Sport Education's Characteristics**

The characteristics of Sport Education have evolved as a result of teachers sharing their stories from their experiences in schools in the United States, New Zealand and Australia. The workshops emphasised the importance of the characteristics yet clearly pointed out that their level of implementation was somewhat negotiable within the given school, class and teacher contexts. Teachers were not seen as mindless implementors of the Sport Education innovation. The notion of flexibility and teacher initiative were stressed through the use of actual teacher examples of changes to "textbook" Sport Education during the workshops.

Questionnaire data, by nature, does not reveal the process of any curriculum innovation. Sport Education was no different in this regard and we really know little about the procedural reliability of some aspects of the trial. Nevertheless fidelity to the model's characteristics is very important. All characteristics should be present in a season for it to be recognised as Sport Education. However, the extent to which characteristics are implemented may be modified to suit specific contexts. Given the trial nature of the seasons in SEPEP, most teachers were tentative about a full programme implementation. Many commented they would be more 'faithful' to the model in future seasons.

*All characteristics of Sport Education are important and should not be omitted. But you need the experience to deal with all the aspects and with greater experience/expertise problems will be overcome.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*At first I felt a little bewildered by it all, but by being prepared lesson by lesson it was easy to implement relevant characteristics.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

In some instances teachers left important characteristics out completely:

*I didn't do the publicity officer role because I didn't want to increase the students' out-of-class workload.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*Final day of competition—class voted for no finals.*

(Teacher journal, Tasmania)

## **Sport Education: A Stronger Case for Physical Education?**

Given the macro-political educational world that physical education has courted for the past three years it is pleasing to note that although there was limited supporting evidence, many teachers saw Sport Education as a useful vehicle for promoting physical education in schools. Although New South Wales teachers did not share this generally positive view, their responses tended to reflect indecision or ambivalence, rather than disagreement.

The use of language is very important in communicating to stakeholders what the innovation entails. A key part of any curriculum development process is the initial naming of the package. Sport Education has been criticised as a potential “takeover for all physical education” yet teachers consistently tell us that this is not likely to be the case. Sport Education is seen as an effective addition to the current physical education programme. Teachers do not see it as the “cure of all our professional ills” nor do they see it as replacement model for physical education.

*Some areas do not lend themselves to Sport Education eg., Dance and Gym.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*Sport Education doesn't cover everything, but meets participation and socialisation and establishing community links.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

*Sport Education is best placed as a specific unit in a physical education programme.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

## What Teachers Said About Their Future Directions Regarding Sport Education

*I'd like to see some more workshops run. I have got another school to take it (Sport Education) on, but there are more schools who would be interested in doing it. They would like to be resourced as far as having a person coming over and talking to them, be it one of you or myself. I would like to see some inservice for the people that are really keen to run it.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

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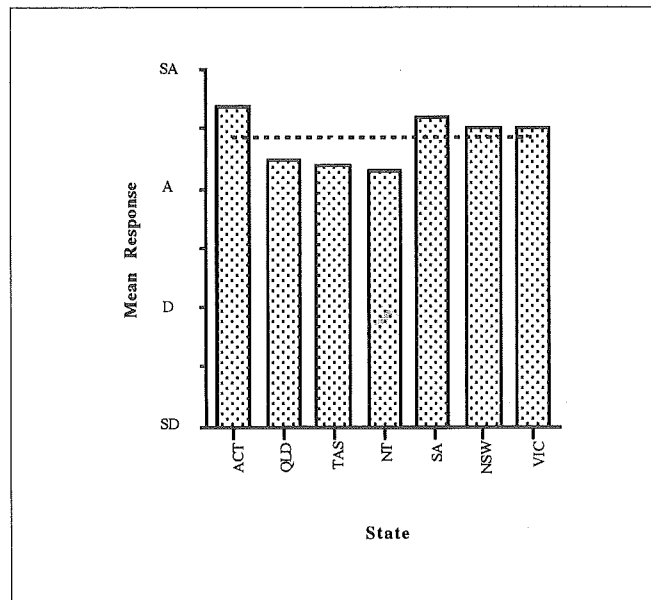
SEPEP teachers will all continue to use Sport Education, most would also like to use it with other year levels. It was clear from the responses that the teachers in the trial were enthusiastic about continuing to use Sport Education in the future. Many, having experimented in the SEPEP trial, commented on the changes they would make the next time around. In particular the importance of a longer season, smaller teams and careful planning were only seen by trialing the model. Following the SEPEP trial, several teachers went straight into a second season of Sport Education with new groups at different age levels.

Teachers were unanimous about using the model if they were teaching in a different school. Several commented on the importance of the timetable allowing an extended season. Pleasingly, most teachers were enthusiastic about sharing their Sport Education experiences with colleagues and several spoke about presenting to a wider audience in a workshop setting. These teachers are seen as a valuable future resource for programmes concerning the introduction of and professional development within Sport Education.

Teachers and Steering Committee members suggested workshop information packages would be a necessary future resource to help the continued diffusion of the model in Australian schools. Many teachers made suggestions about areas in which they would like to see future resource development. Those seen as most in need of development were student roles, competition organisation and assessment.

## Teachers' Future Plans for Sport Education

Figure 17 shows there to be a widespread intention to continue with Sport Education. These data are among the strongest responses recorded for any item on the questionnaire. Many teachers explained that they had, or soon would be starting further seasons with other year level groups.



**Figure 17: Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 69: 'I plan to continue teaching physical education using Sport Education'.**

These data tend to confirm results from New Zealand and Western Australian trials in which teachers not only decided to continue with the model at the year level at which they initially trialed, but also to move the model into other year levels within the physical education programme.

*Yes, a unit per year per year level.*

(Teacher questionnaire, South Australia)

*Each student should receive one unit of Sport Education in Years 8-10.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*Most other classes have asked for it.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

*Because of the success with the Year 10's, I've extended the trial down to Year 9's for this term. Our structure for the Year 9's is a little bit different, they have shorter units with us. So it's going to be interesting to see whether they develop the same outcomes in a short time span.*

(Teacher, teleconference, South Australia)

## Transferability of the Model

The Sport Education model would appear to be readily transportable by teachers to different educational sites. Some teachers appeared to feel worried about the suitability of the timetable to accommodate Sport Education, but this was the only real concern. In terms of the model's diffusion, these data confirm what we have already observed after two years of trialing Sport Education in Western Australia: When teachers change schools we find the model resurfacing at a new site. There can be little doubt that the model seems pedagogically sustainable in the teaching repertoires of teachers.

*I am already looking forward to next time and would continue in the future wherever I am.*

(Teacher questionnaire, New South Wales)

*I would certainly use it.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

*If there were no problems with fitting the model, or aspects of it, into the timetable I would certainly use it.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

## Publicising the Model to the 'Uninitiated'

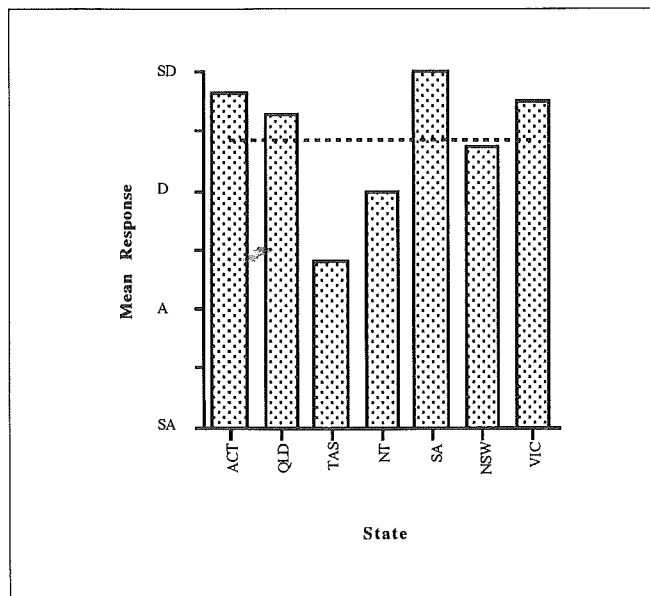
This question could be interpreted by teachers to be at a school level talking to teachers within their own school. Alternatively it could mean talking to other teachers at forums such as regional professional development conferences. Most teachers were enthusiastic about talking to school colleagues. Many would also be happy to share their experiences in Sport Education at future workshops.

*Because of the positive experiences overall, I would be happy to talk to others about the model.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Northern Territory)

*I have already talked to several other teachers, some of whom are trying the model.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Victoria)



**Figure 18:** Mean responses by State to questionnaire item 71: 'I would feel uncomfortable talking to other teachers, who were thinking about using Sport Education, about my experiences with the model'.



Figure 18 tends to indicate that with the exception of Tasmania, teachers generally felt confident enough to share stories of their experiences with Sport Education. The two Tasmanian teachers who were negative about sharing their experiences, both said they would prefer to be more familiar with the model before confidently disseminating the concept to others. One Tasmanian teacher was happy to share Sport Education experiences in an open forum:

Most teachers confirmed their feelings, identified by the questionnaire, that they were prepared to share their stories with colleagues. However most requested some instructional guidelines to assist in the more formal in-servicing duties.

*I don't think you need an outside agency [to run workshops]. Provided I had a package of information, I can't see anything too traumatic about in-servicing Sport Education.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Tasmania)

*It would be good to have an inservice and talk to people about certain ideas—what they've tried and so on. There are a few things that I've heard today which I think have helped me a lot.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

*I'd like to see more workshops run. I have got another school to take it on (Sport Education), but there are more schools who would be interested in doing it, but they would like to be resourced as far as having a person coming over and talking to them, be it one of you or myself. I would like to see some inservice for the people who are really keen to run it.*

(Teacher, teleconference, Victoria)

## Need for Curriculum Support Materials

Although the workshop materials were well received and reported to be adequate for the trial implementation, many teachers made suggestions for areas they would like to see developed in future. The areas most commonly mentioned were: Student roles; competition organisation and assessment ideas.

*It would be worthwhile including an assessment of roles and responsibilities at the end of the unit.*

(Teacher, post season comment, Queensland)

*SPARC materials very good but more from teacher to coaches regarding skill practises.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)

*Need suggestions on ways to encourage students to take roles seriously in future sessions eg Sports Board, Publicity Officer, coaches and captains did little.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Australian Capital Territory)

*Material for Sports Board showing a variety of rosters on tournament formulas, ways of recording results and doing ladders would be useful.*

(Teacher questionnaire, Tasmania)



# Recommendations

## Recommendations For Managing The Development And Diffusion Of Sport Education

SPARC'S brief was to provide the Australian Sports Commission's National Aussie Sport Unit with an answer to the following question:

*Does there seem to be enough merit in the Sport Education curriculum model for key stakeholders to consider committing resources to its diffusion beyond teachers involved in the 1994 SEPEP trials?*

To answer this question we asked teachers to share their stories about working with the model. We also asked national and State policy personnel in education and sport for their perspectives on Sport Education.

Teachers told us they would continue to feature Sport Education as a part of their physical education programs. (Incidentally, their students generally reported a desire to have more Sport Education too). As such, the model seems to have registered positively on the litmus test of curriculum innovation. What teachers do after such "innovations" go beyond project or trial status has proven to be a good measure, at least in the short term, of the value practitioners see in suggested changes to their preferred ways of operating.

In addition to teachers, sporting and educational personnel in each State and Territory with responsibilities at policy-making levels have registered their support. They are keen for teachers to continue their work with Sport Education.

SPARC's major recommendations are that:

- key stakeholders now meet to establish processes through which professional development in the use of the Sport Education curriculum model becomes widely available to Australian physical education teachers and sport personnel.
- a nationally representative working party be established to manage the Sport Education diffusion process. That group should include teachers, representatives from State and Territory education systems, professional bodies, National and State sporting organisations and the universities.
- the working party establish a reference group drawn from SEPEP trial teachers whose role will be to act as critical friends, offering opinions on the initiatives proposed by the working party.
- a second reference group be established to monitor developments in national curriculum and associated national and State policy movements with a view to ensuring the appropriate development of Sport Education.
- the processes by which Sport Education is to be disseminated recognise that its progress to the present has been dependent primarily on the personal and professional rewards teachers encounter in working with students in Sport Education.
- a national primary school SEPEP trial be conducted in the second half of 1995. Funds should be sought by the working party to mount and evaluate the trial. The evaluation should form the basis of the working party's recommendations for Sport Education in primary schools in 1996 and beyond.

Specific recommendations, based on the SEPEP trials and associated Project activities (e.g., conferences, meetings and workshops) are presented below for the consideration of key stakeholders.

## Recommendations For Teachers Seeking To Maximise The Educational Impact Of The Model

In conjunction with the Report's Findings section, we encourage teachers to consider the following recommendations:

### Recommendations about teaching Sport Education

Trial teachers have indicated Sport Education possesses considerable potential to generate educational outcomes which span physical education's traditionally proclaimed trio: skills, knowledge and social development. The following areas have been identified as those teachers must address if Sport Education is to have an educational impact approaching the model's projected potential.

Student roles:

- Strategies need to be devised for supporting students as they learn their roles within Sport Education. Trial teachers believed it is important to actively develop the role performance of students and to constantly review and reinforce their efforts throughout the season.
- Students need a fair chance to benefit from the opportunities to perform a range of Sport Education roles in addition to the key role of being a player. Who performs available roles over the course of students' time in school physical education deserves teachers' attention. Keeping records of roles performed by each student, each season and each year would seem to lie at the heart of a Departmental approach to the pursuit of equity in physical education.
- Trial teachers suggested a developmental perspective be taken in regard to students' role performance. Teachers should consider limiting the diversity and demands of roles during students' first encounters with the Sport Education curriculum model.
- Students need to be taught how to umpire by teaching them, not only the rules of the sports chosen, but also by helping them learn how to confidently manage others during game play.

Competition, team selection and affiliation:

- The selection of evenly matched teams seems to be a critical requirement for a successful season of competition. We recommend teachers view team selection as a process in which students can learn to see beyond friendship groupings to embrace a broader social objective: the achievement of evenly matched teams competing regularly in games for which the final result is unpredictable.
- Trial teachers believe students need time in teams need time to develop affiliations. However time alone is unlikely to be very effective in achieving social cohesion and cooperation with and between teams. Ultimately, any strategies used should be easy enough for the students themselves to manage and should include reflection and evaluation as key components.

Integrated learning:

- Devise strategies for linking students' Sport Education roles and responsibilities with social development and academic studies in other subject areas across the school curriculum.

Playing sport well:

- Teachers and students stand to benefit when their teacher is well versed in the sport chosen for the Sport Education season. When teachers update their own knowledge of strategy and game play by working more closely with particular sports and their support personnel they can, in turn, help student coaches and players pursue more advanced forms of participation in selected sports.
- Greater teacher expertise in particular sports should be capitalised on by assisting students to become more skilled at working with available coaching resources, running more effective skill practices without the direct supervision of the teacher.

## Evaluating the place of Sport Education in school physical education programs

Arranging for students to express an opinion about the quality of their physical education is consistent with the student-centredness of the Sport Education model itself. In evaluating SEPEP we have become even more convinced that the Sport Education model provides teachers with a genuine opportunity to evaluate student learning as well as to formally engage in an oft-neglected aspect of teaching, i.e., examining the educational worth of the program itself.

Under Sport Education, teachers have more time to assess student learning and students are able to comment on the quality of their programs without necessarily criticising, in a personal way, their own teacher's performance. For students involved in teacher centred approaches to instruction, a comment on the program would often involve a personal reflection on the teacher. However, because the Sport Education model has characteristics which allow students to identify it as a learning environment in which the responsibility for successful participation is shared between teachers and students, implied criticisms can more easily be avoided. Students seem more ready to appraise the model itself, avoiding the tensions often created when less positive comments are directed at programs in which teachers are solely responsible for decisions.

We recommend that teachers:

- use some of their time in Sport Education to collect information about student learning which will both enhance the educational outcomes for students and satisfy Departmental, School and System-wide assessment and reporting requirements.
- explore opportunities, perhaps in conjunction with students in roles such as Sports Board member or Publicity Officer, to ascertain students' opinions on the program itself.
- combine student achievement and program evaluation data to demonstrate the degree to which short and long-term program and Departmental goals have been achieved.



## Recommendations for the development of curriculum support materials

Each of the recommendations listed above has implications for the nature of support materials which trial teachers believe would be beneficial. We recommend that:

- Professional development modes of delivery should be investigated to ensure relevant groups are offered adequate access to the model.
- One of the working party's tasks should be to develop a strategic plan which ensures regional and remote centres are well catered for.
- National and State Sporting Organisations consider funding the preparation of specific Sport Education-oriented materials for their particular sports.

## Recommendations For Research

Much of Sport Education's development has its origins in the work teachers do daily in testing their theories about teaching; by seeing how the characteristics of the model work in practice. Whether we call this action research or simply sharing the stories of reflective practitioners, we need to recognise that the overwhelming proportion of research on Sport Education has been, and probably will continue to be, conducted by teachers as they teach physical education. SPARC recommends that:

- teachers' reflections on their work be viewed as an important form of educational research and considered a legitimate and important source of information about the educational impact of Sport Education.
- professional development in pre- and in-service settings draws on teachers' research in further developing and refining, not only the model itself, but the form and substance of professional development programs as well.

There needs to be research undertaken which seeks answers to questions arising from all sections of the Report. For example, if students are to assist the teacher by themselves becoming the “mediators” of instruction (i.e., a key means by which the teacher’s educational goals are met), questions about how best to help students acquire such skills should be pursued. Other questions concerning the skills, knowledge and social development achieved during Sport Education should also be asked, as should those concerning students’ opportunities and achievements in the area of equitable participation.

This report stops short of proposing a research agenda for Sport Education. (SPARC has already shared such an agenda with other Australian university researchers in physical education—Alexander, 1994). One of our major recommendations is that the tertiary sector be represented on a working party established to diffuse Sport Education nationally.



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