

7 Equality, equity and inclusion in physical education and school sport

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Introduction

In recent years, sport organisations in the UK and internationally have increasingly been called upon to address ‘equal opportunities issues’ and specifically to consider the degree to which they have recognised and provided for the needs of all individuals in communities. As we will see in this chapter, initiatives forthcoming from governments and sporting bodies have approached and interpreted the notion of ‘equal opportunities’ in various ways. In physical education, equal opportunities has similarly become established as ‘an issue’ to be addressed by policy-makers and practitioners alike. In England and Wales the development of a National Curriculum was heralded as a significant step towards, if not a guarantee of, equal opportunities in education. The introduction of the National Curriculum established that it was a statutory requirement for all state (i.e. government funded) schools to provide all children with a broad and balanced curriculum that would include physical education (see DES, 1989). However, there was open recognition that the implementation of the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) would see children in different schools experiencing a different range of activities, taught in different ways. The curriculum, teaching and learning in physical education would certainly not be the same in all schools, nor for all children in any school. The extent to which the introduction of the NCPE would facilitate or precipitate advances in physical education in relation to the matters of equality and equity remained to be seen, as statutory requirements were interpreted and implemented in various ways in schools throughout England and Wales.

Reflection on the ways in which equality, equal opportunity and equity have been approached in contexts of physical education is undoubtedly timely. The most recent revision of the National Curriculum in England (that established new requirements to take effect from September 2000 for the curriculum in key stages 1, 2 and 3, and September 2001 for the key stage 4 curriculum)¹ featured a new explicit emphasis for schools and teachers within them to ensure that their practices are ‘inclusive’, prompting us to consider how inclusive the provision of physical education and sport is, but perhaps more importantly, how inclusive it can be in the future. But before we can make any judgements or predictions in relation to these concerns, we need to address the far from simple matter of what

we mean by 'inclusion' in contexts of physical education and sport, and of how talk of 'inclusion' and 'inclusive practices' relates to concerns for greater 'equality' and/or 'equity'. These are terms that are often interchanged without a distinction in meaning being either acknowledged or explained. Arguably they are terms that are frequently misused and misunderstood. This chapter will emphasise that equality, equity and inclusion are not easily defined, that their meaning is contestable and that consequently there is a need to pursue the understandings that underpin their use in particular contexts. In addition, we will see that when addressing issues of equality, equity and inclusion we cannot restrict our inquiries to the 'immediate' contexts of physical education and school sport. Rather, these contexts need to be recognised as being in a dynamic relationship with wider social, cultural, political and economic contexts. The ways in which equality and equity are expressed in physical education and school sport is unavoidably influenced by, but also plays a critical role in shaping, the interests, values and expectations of individuals and societies. Any genuine concern for promoting greater inclusivity and equity in physical education and school sport needs to address this dynamic relationship and furthermore, explore the potential that it presents for developments in physical education and sport to challenge inequities in society. This chapter will therefore consider characteristics of wider sporting, social and political contexts that impact upon the provision of physical education and sport in schools, and explore the ways in which initiatives in school contexts serve either to reinforce, or play a role in prompting, changes in these wider contexts. To begin with, however, the focus is upon terminology and the perceptions, understandings and issues that are variously associated with 'equality', 'equity' and 'inclusion' in physical education and school sport.

Equality, equity and inclusion

I have indicated that these terms are often interchanged and that understandings of them will vary. However, in important respects, they are concerned with 'the same things' and it may be useful to address some points of commonality before seeking clarification of differences in meanings. Invariably, concerns to address equality, equity and/or inclusion can be associated with two things: difference; and fairness or justice. Although these are matters of common concern, a key issue in understanding the distinctions between the various terms is the particular ways in which notions of difference and justice are understood and approached in initiatives relating to the provision and development of physical education and sport.

Equality, access and opportunity

Concerns to see greater equality in physical education and sport have often been a response to recognition that different people do not have the same opportunities to experience, enjoy and develop their ability in sport and that certain factors, such as

the location of facilities, the prices charged for entry and activities and the scheduling of activities, act to exclude certain people from involvement in sport. Characteristics of provision and characteristics associated with the potential participants have been identified as 'barriers', meaning that for certain individuals and/or groups of individuals, access is effectively denied.

In the context of physical education school facilities vary and variations are likely to be reflected in the range of activities provided. The availability of particular facilities thus plays a part in shaping who has access to particular activities in physical education and school sport. But the provision of facilities does not ensure that all pupils will be able to access the activities on offer. We need to pursue who the facilities and the activities provided are really available to and the ways in which differences between individuals will influence their ability to access 'opportunities'. We can note, for example, that pupils living in rural areas are often disadvantaged in terms of their ability to access and enjoy extracurricula physical education and school sport. If pupils are reliant upon school bus services to get home, it is likely that they will be unable to stay after school for activities. They may also find it difficult to reach sport facilities that exist in their nearest town. Similarly, family circumstances may prevent some children participating in these activities. Some children have to look after younger brothers or sisters after school and thus again, may not be in a position to take up the opportunities provided for them to be involved in school sport. In short, children are not all equally positioned to participate in physical education and sport, and social and economic issues can play a key role in shaping who has access to activities.

Having recognised these issues we can pose the question of whether the situations observed are fair or just. Is it right or fair that some people, by virtue of where they live, of how wealthy they are, of whether or not they can afford to own and run a car, have very different access to sport? Should more be done to extend access to more people? In recent years there has been growing awareness of variations in the opportunities that different people have to participate in sport as a result of firstly, their personal circumstances, and secondly, the location and other characteristics (such as scheduling or pricing) of provision. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s many policy-makers and providers in the UK acknowledged the different circumstances (and particularly resources) of different population groups, and established that things could and should be done to extend sporting opportunities to more people, and particularly, to those identified as disadvantaged groups. Thus, women, young people, disabled people, the over-fifties and members of ethnic groups have all, at various times, featured as 'target groups' in sport policies and initiatives that have sought to address issues of access under the umbrella of 'equal opportunities'. Developments have increasingly acknowledged that if we are to extend participation then there is a need for providers to respond to the different needs and interests of various groups. In particular, we have seen a growing recognition that different arrangements are needed if sporting provision is to appeal to and be accessible to particular groups. For example, many leisure centres now include specific

sessions for women only, having acknowledged that many women feel more comfortable in a single sex context and may be more inclined to participate if activities are provided on this basis.

To some extent, therefore, we have seen policy-makers and providers acknowledging that differences between individuals are significant in relation to their concerns for sport to be accessible to and enjoyed by more people. However, arguably, attention has focused on only certain differences, and in particular, pragmatic matters that influence people's ability to access forms of physical activity that are dominant in our society. Issues such as the cost of participation, or transport to facilities, or the timing of sessions have been amongst matters frequently addressed. Essentially the interest has been in extending access to particular opportunities. There has been little to indicate an appreciation that what different people recognise and value as 'an opportunity' will vary. The discussion that follows seeks to highlight some of the gaps or silences in many debates concerning issues of equal opportunity and equality in physical education and sport, and consider some of the implications for future developments of the different conceptualisations outlined. My starting point is to take a closer look at what have been regarded as 'equal opportunities issues' in contexts of physical education, and the developments initiated in response to identified issues.

Activities, outcomes and opportunities

One of the longstanding characteristics of physical education in England and Wales is its gendered pattern of organisation. Many schools have retained situations in which the provision of physical education for girls is the responsibility of female staff, while that for boys is the responsibility of male staff. In some schools different activities are included in the curriculum for girls as compared to that for boys. Even if physical education provided in curriculum time is not structured and organised in this way, the vast majority of extracurricula provision is organised on a single-sex basis (see for example, Penney and Harris, 1997; Bass and Cale, 1999). The introduction of the National Curriculum prompted renewed questioning of whether such differences are fair, just and/or can be justified on educational grounds. Is it fair that, for example, boys' experiences of games typically involves them participating and becoming skilled in the sports of soccer and rugby, while girls are more likely to experience netball and hockey? The learning experiences and opportunities in the area of games are invariably different for girls and boys. There is not equal access to particular activities.

On the one hand we need to contemplate whether a call for 'equal opportunities' demands a change to such arrangements. However, we also need to consider whether provision of the same range of activities for both boys and girls is an essential characteristic of 'equal opportunity' in physical education. During the past decade debates in some schools will have focused upon how the 'same curriculum' could be provided for all pupils. For some physical education departments, this has led to questions about pupil groupings and particularly whether single-sex and/or mixed-sex groupings should be adopted in the interests

of 'equal opportunities' in physical education. Dilemmas regarding groupings have usefully served to highlight the shortcomings of simplistic conceptualisations of 'access' and 'opportunity' and that 'access to the curriculum is not synonymous with access to learning' (Williams, 1993:128). Moves to mixed-sex groupings have frequently given rise to reports of boys dominating mixed-group games settings, with the grouping arrangement therefore regarded as having a detrimental effect on girls' enjoyment of and progression in physical education (see for example, Scraton, 1993). In such circumstances, we can see very clearly that the experience of an activity or lesson, and thus the opportunity provided, is not the same for all pupils. Nor are gender issues the only matters influencing the experiences and learning of pupils in mixed-group settings. As I discuss further below, gender issues may well be important and it is critical to address their influence, but we all have multiple identities and furthermore, are also potentially subject to 'multiple forms of oppression and discrimination' (Cole and Hill, 1999: 3). Cole and Hill point out that 'teachers, student teachers and others [including pupils themselves] may, usually unwittingly, also demean, discriminate against, label and stereotype in all sorts of ways' (3).

Irrespective of whether or not mixed or single-sex grouping is employed, there is no guarantee that all pupils are being given access to the same quality of experience or the same potential advancement in their learning in physical education. In single-sex settings just as in mixed settings, some pupils may dominate lessons. In neither setting can we be assured that lessons will feature activities that enable all pupils to develop their skills in, and knowledge and understanding of, the subject. Ability is a key variable shaping (creating for some and inhibiting for others) pupils' experiences in physical education and school sport and their potential to access the opportunities on offer. In the curriculum context recognition of this variable has been at the heart of efforts to develop differentiation in physical education teaching, and specifically, moves to structure activities and design learning experiences in ways that will mean that teaching accommodates and provides for pupils' varying levels of skill development. However, differentiation has also frequently been identified as an area of weakness in physical education teaching and it remains an issue demanding attention.

So how do developments such as these relate to our interests in pursuing the matters of equality, equity and inclusion? Addressing differentiation signals a recognition that some pupils may effectively be excluded from some or all of the aspects of learning that a physical education lesson is designed to facilitate, and that individual differences between pupils, particularly in relation to prior learning and levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, are important matters to address in curriculum planning. Arguably differentiation is very much about inclusion, driven by the desire to create learning environments and learning experiences that are inclusive of all pupils with often very diverse levels of ability. As teachers taking a new group of all pupils will be particularly aware, by virtue of their different (and often notably gendered) backgrounds and past experiences in and of sport, pupils are positioned very differently when they come to physical education (Evans *et al.*, 1987; Williams, 1993). Addressing these differences is

clearly critical if teachers are to succeed in facilitating learning and enjoyment for all in contexts of physical education and school sport.

We also need to note that it is not the task of the teacher to attempt to eradicate these differences. A key point to recall here is that differentiation is designed to provide different pupils with access to different learning opportunities. As Talbot (1993) has observed, if we view equality in terms of 'equal outcomes' we are in danger of reducing attainment to the lowest common denominator. In these respects physical education is no different to any other subject. The aim in differentiation should be to address the ways in which the curriculum and teaching can ensure that all pupils are enabled access to the skills, knowledge and understanding that is appropriate to their different levels of learning and different learning potentials. This task is far from easy, particularly in the current very pressured contexts of teaching. However, it is arguably one of the most important challenges for teachers concerned to develop inclusive physical education curricula.

Gender and ability are just two of a growing list of 'issues' that teachers have been prompted to address in the interests of equal opportunities in education and physical education. The list (encompassing gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexuality) has reflected recognition of the many dimensions to 'difference' between individuals and an appreciation of the potential impact that various differences may have on participation in physical education and sport. Research has drawn attention to the ways in which individuals may variously be disadvantaged as a consequence of being perceived as in some way 'different from the norm' (see for example Benn, 2000; Wright, 1996). It has also sought to raise awareness of the complexities of difference and in particular, the diversities within identified groups. It has highlighted the need to avoid simplistic categorisations if we are to avoid creating new and as potentially damaging stereotypical images and understandings as those that we are seeking to challenge and/or avoid. Arguably physical education and sport still have a long way to go before they can be regarded as embracing the insights that research has provided in relation to, for example, sexuality or ethnicity, or the identified need to explore and respond to differences within identified groups as much as those between them. In part, researchers themselves have to take some of the blame here. In frequently focusing upon a single 'issue' researchers may be inhibiting the development of understandings, policies and initiatives that privilege the individual with their inherent multiple identities. There is a strong case for more work that seeks to transcend the potentially misleading and damaging divisions between equality issues that still appear to be portrayed as notably distinct.

In now moving towards a focus upon equity in physical education and sport, I am concerned to pursue whether or not this recognition of and focus upon an increasing number of 'issues' can be seen as a sound foundation from which to consider questions of inclusion in physical education and sport. Specifically I point to the need to consider the particular ways in which policy-makers, teachers in schools and others involved in the provision of sport are viewing the differences between individuals that they have recognised; what differences they

are in fact recognising, and what differences they may be overlooking in their responses. These matters are central to a related concern, of whether or not the actions taken in contexts of physical education and school sport are serving to reinforce and reproduce, or by contrast challenge, prejudices and inequalities in wider society.

In relation to this latter point, research focusing on gender issues has usefully highlighted the potential shortcomings of well-intentioned developments. Scraton (1993) has drawn attention to the tendency for extension of access to constitute an extension of access to traditionally male activities, with physical education thereby reinforcing the dominant and privileged status of these activities in wider society; and for mixed-group settings to reinforce gendered power relations, with 'boys reproducing their dominant role and girls learning their subordination' (Scraton, 1993:145). Talbot (1993) has similarly highlighted the tendencies for "me-too feminism", in which boys' activities are used as the norm...and boys' performances always regarded as the norm or benchmark against which girls' performances should be measured' (83). Other work has usefully reminded us that it is not only gender identities and relations that physical education has the scope to reproduce or challenge. Shilling (1993) for example, rightly identifies our tendency to overlook the powerful ways in which physical education bestows different values not only on different activities, but also on different bodies, such that certain bodily forms (inscribed with but also judged in the light of, multiple identities) come to be accepted and celebrated within but also beyond arenas of physical education and sport, while others remain marginalised or openly rejected in these arenas. Shilling also draws attention to some of the key assumptions that may underpin many initiatives that have arisen under the banner of 'equal opportunities' in physical education and sport; that participation (and I would add, more specifically the pursuit of elite performance) in sport, 'is a "good thing" which can yield similar benefits to all sections of society' (56). As Shilling explains 'This assumption fails to explore how sports may carry different meanings and unequal benefits and risks for their participants' (56). While Shilling associates these differences with social-class background, there is clearly a need to recognise that it is not only social class that has an impact in these terms. Carroll and Hollinshead's (1993) and Benn's (2000) work has drawn attention to the ways in which race and religion result in participants being positioned in particular ways in contexts of physical education and has usefully demonstrated the dynamic interplay between matters of race, religion and gender, reminding us of the need for analyses to embrace the multiplicities of individual identities, not all of which can be expanded upon here. There is certainly a need to pursue in greater depth the various differences that have been explored in research in physical education, but we also need to direct attention towards some underpinning matters that have relevance 'across the board' in relation to equal opportunities 'issues' in physical education and sport. The next section therefore returns to these generic concerns.

From equality to equity: viewing difference differently

It is useful to reflect on some of the issues discussed above from a personal perspective. How do you view other young people in the UK today and particularly those with apparently fewer opportunities than yourself to participate in physical education and sport? How do you view those who are less proficient in sport than yourself? Quite possibly, you see such individuals as ‘lacking’ in some way and thus view the differences between them and yourself in ‘deficit’ terms. This is typically how differences between individuals and/or different groups of individuals have been framed in discussions relating to the matters of equality and equal opportunities in physical education and sport. Differences in patterns of participation and in provision are viewed as signalling gaps or shortfalls that represent ‘a problem’. As explained, target-group initiatives have invariably regarded some individuals as disadvantaged compared to others and have reflected the view that efforts (and resources) should therefore be directed towards redressing imbalances in the provision for different groups in society. There are two dimensions that I want to consider here. On the one hand we need to look at the way in which the existing situation and particularly the identified differences are being viewed. On the other, we need to explore what is being proposed as an appropriate response to the situation. The two matters are inextricably linked, but it is important to recognise that there are two issues. Essentially, we need to be concerned with what is considered ‘the problem’ and what are then deemed to be suitable courses of action in arenas of physical education and sport.

To reflect on the former, the label of ‘deficiency’ and identification of deficiency as a problem is important. In assigning this label and defining deficiency as a problem, we are making a judgement on particular grounds. It is a judgement made on the basis of particular social and cultural values, with the assumption that these values are and/or should be shared by all. Thus initiatives designed to extend access to and opportunities in activities need to be recognised as being instigated from a position of social and cultural dominance. Typically, they are destined to promote patterns of behaviour that will reinforce this dominance. Invariably there is a failure to acknowledge that the activities and behaviours that we may regard as appropriate, desirable and/or worthy of public recognition are not necessarily viewed in the same light in other social or cultural contexts. There is also an accompanying failure to recognise that there may be much that we can learn from other societies and cultures and the values and behaviours that they privilege. Values and practices dominant in other societies and cultures may serve to reveal new ways of thinking about our lives, lifestyles and sport and physical education within these, and as such provide important insights for future developments in physical education and sport. Bale and Sang’s (1996) account of the development and transition in *Kenyan Running* provides vivid insights into the different values and practices that have characterised and defined the sport in different historical and cultural contexts and the way in which particular, modern and western values have progressively redefined the sport and its inherent ‘movement culture’. They explain that ‘The athletic body, as well as

the cultural landscape, had changed. The relatively unrestricted and free movement of the pre-colonial period had been replaced by the corset of running as racing with its starting and finishing lines and its geometrically arranged lane marking' (98–99). Bale and Sang (1996) thus direct us to the potential for sport and physical education to take different forms to those we regard as the norm, but also remind us of the dominance of particular forms of sport in the modern world. They comment that 'Although sport does not have to be as serious as it currently seems to be, it is difficult to resist the pressures which are made explicit in the Olympic code—higher, stronger, faster—with its emphasis on centimetre, gram and second. In our modern society there are no prizes for slow running, there are no prizes for style, and results are often regarded as being more important than performance' (21) and reflect that 'Success in sport can only be achieved in most of the modern world by a particular kind of sporting culture' (17).

When we recognise that the price of international recognition for Kenyan running has been the disappearance of other body and movement cultures, the increased profile of Kenya and Kenyan athletes in international sporting contexts takes on a different perspective. Gaining acclaim in international sporting arenas has demanded the acceptance of the superiority of certain practices, sporting and cultural identities over and above others; and the consequent sacrifice or rejection of practices and identities that were previously highly valued.

Pursuing equity in sport and physical education is fundamentally about valuing the differences so vividly reflected in Bale and Sang's account of the 'development' of Kenyan running. Having a commitment to equity demands that we do not merely recognise or respect individual and cultural differences, but instead, see them as a resource. Evans and Davies (1993) explain '...the issue must not be whether differences can be dissolved...but how they can be celebrated in ways which negate prejudice and stereotyping and at the same time respect individual cultural identity' (19). Thus, from an equity perspective, no one set of values or behaviours should be regarded as superior to others, or as 'the norm' against which others are measured or judged. There is recognition that behaviours and values always need to be located, temporally and culturally, that at different times, in different places and cultures, different behaviours and values will be regarded as normal and desirable, and that there is richness to be gained from diversity. Recognition of these issues is particularly important when we consider inclusion or inclusivity in contexts of physical education and sport, and specifically, what sorts of development will signal progress towards greater inclusion in these contexts.

Equality, equity and inclusion—policies and practices in physical education and sport

In seeking to illustrate the implications of different understandings and conceptualisations of 'equal opportunities' in relation to what may then be regarded as a means of achieving greater inclusion, it is useful to again focus upon extracurricula physical education. In England and Wales this has often been identified

as a context that is accessible to and directed towards the interests of relatively few pupils. Various studies have highlighted that the focus of attention is invariably a schools' representation and achievement in formal competitions with other schools (see for example, Bass and Cale, 1999; Mason, 1995; Penney and Harris, 1997; Sports Council for Wales, 1995). Extracurricula activities typically comprise matches and practices for those pupils selected for school teams. If we consider what would signal a move towards greater inclusivity in provision, we can begin to see that there is the scope not merely for various suggestions as 'solutions', but also for different views in relation to what is regarded as the shortcoming or problem. The current situation could be seen as signalling an absence of sufficient numbers of school teams and/or leagues for more teams to play in. Running a second or third team could be regarded as a notable step towards extending opportunity to more pupils and thus addressing concerns that some pupils may be excluded if they are not selected for the first team.

But is the development of more teams 'the answer'? It is an answer that assumes a particular problem and furthermore, particular needs and interests for all pupils. Organising more school teams assumes that the representative team structure and/or coached practice sessions that focus on skill development will be suitable for all pupils and that all pupils desire these sorts of sporting experience. What is not acknowledged is that some pupils may not have aspirations to participate in this structure, or feel comfortable doing so. Where are the opportunities to participate informally, for fun with friends of varied abilities? Why is it that participation in a formal structure is viewed differently from (and invariably, as superior to) casual participation? Why is it that participation in certain sports or activities is valued over and above others? In confronting these matters we come back to the dominance of particular values and behaviours associated with them, and see that contexts of physical education and sport are inevitably influenced by and invariably reflect the values that are dominant in wider society. We can not escape the fact that 'gold standard' is what matters for most people. It is what is celebrated by the media and public and it is what many pupils and their parents expect and assume that physical education and school sport will be directed towards.

If we now regard current patterns of extracurricula provision from an equity perspective, very different issues arise. As Evans and Davies (1993) have explained, having a commitment to equity demands that we do not merely recognise differences between pupils but rather, seek to celebrate their individual identities in and through physical education and school sport. Extending participation, from this perspective, has different implications and involves a different view of 'what the problem is'. It demands that we develop provision that is sufficiently varied so as to provide a context in which different identities and interests may be expressed and celebrated. This means being open to the introduction of new forms of physical education and sport that reflect different interests and values to those that we are most familiar with and have come to regard as those that it is 'only natural' to adopt. It may involve extending the range of activities on offer and/or ensuring that provision is not solely directed towards

the pursuit of Olympic ideals. There needs to be both the scope and encouragement for 'other' values and interests to be pursued in and via physical education and sport, not least of which are fun and friendship. These benefits of participation are surely deserving of greater attention and status in schools.

Initiating practices that challenge established norms and expectations is far from easy and there are barriers to such developments both within and beyond the arenas of physical education and school sport. As Talbot (1993) states 'To recognise homophobia in the classroom is one thing; to offer alternatives which are seen as possible and relevant by boys and male colleagues is quite another' (85). This serves to remind us that it is not only our own perceptions and expectations of and for physical education that we have to consider. Parents, our immediate colleagues, senior managers in schools, pupils and individuals in policy-making arenas all have particular visions of what physical education as a subject is essentially 'about', what typical lessons can therefore be expected to 'look like' and what children should learn. In addition, however, Talbot (1993) prompts us to acknowledge the 'active and positive' characteristics of situations that for her, distinguish provision of opportunity from provision of access; 'freedom *from* constraint confers access, while freedom to *do* as one wishes confers opportunity' (85, my emphasis). For Cole and Hill (1999) the issues go further and, specifically, need to be seen in relation to the matters of social structures and social mobility. This they regard as the key to distinguishing 'between equal opportunities on the one hand, and equality on the other' (1). They explain:

Equal opportunities policies, in schools and elsewhere, seek to enhance social mobility within structures which are essentially unequal. In other words, they seek meritocracy, where people rise (or fall) on merit, but to grossly unequal levels or strata in society: unequal in terms of income, wealth, lifestyle, life-chances and power.

(1)

They continue:

Egalitarian policies (policies to promote equality) ...seek to go further. Firstly egalitarians are committed to a transformed economy, and a more socially just society, where wealth and ownership are shared far more equally, and where citizens...exercise democratic controls over their lives and over the structures of the societies of which they are part and to which they contribute.

(2)

Cole and Hill thus prompt us to address the ways in which developments in physical education relate to (reinforce and/or challenge) inequalities in sporting structures and the need for us to recognise and seek to challenge inequalities beyond schools. In the discussion that follows I focus attention on contemporary policy developments relating to physical education in England and Wales. I specifically consider the

extent to which, and the ways in which, these developments can be regarded as prompting moves towards greater equity and inclusion in contemporary physical education and sport, and how the developments relate to wider sporting and social contexts (with their inherent inequalities). As indicated above, such inquiry demands that we consider the values recognised in and promoted by developments, explore which individuals are likely to feel able to access the opportunities provided in physical education and school sport, and consider the opportunities that experiences in physical education and sport create ‘for whom’ in wider society. Quite deliberately the discussion is not confined to a description and analysis of ‘what is’ but also aims to address the ‘yet to be realised potential’ inherent in contemporary contexts of physical education and school sport. My interest is in considering the ways in which the actions of schools and teachers within them may, in the future, present stronger challenges to longstanding inequities in physical education, school sport and wider sporting and social contexts. However, I also emphasise the importance, when pointing to such potential, to retain connections with the realities of contemporary contexts, and thus to acknowledge clear barriers to the development of sustainable challenges to identified inequities.

Physical education: an entitlement for all children

The National Curriculum established a ‘broad and balanced curriculum’ as a statutory entitlement for all pupils in all state schools in England and Wales, but as noted, it was always acknowledged that the statutory entitlement would not, and could not, be the same in all schools. The development of the National Curriculum for Physical Education can therefore be seen as signaling some commitment to equality—but a limited commitment, compromised by pragmatic and economic agendas and constraints. Although the ‘flexibility’ inherent in requirements may have repeatedly been claimed to reflect a desire to respect the professionalism of teachers, it was also clearly associated with the recognition that implementation was set to occur in very varied school contexts, and furthermore, needed to be possible in these varied contexts. The statutory requirements did not, therefore, seek to prescribe the detail of school curricula, nor the ways in which teachers should teach. It was accepted that there would be differences in the opportunities and experiences arising in different schools, but also, for different pupils within any one school. Decisions taken by teachers in schools would play a critical role in determining the degree to which the National Curriculum catered for the diverse needs and interests of pupils.

However, it is also important to note that although the entitlement curriculum was destined to be different in different schools, it would nevertheless be a particular entitlement. The development of the NCPE was shaped not only by economic concerns, but also by the dominance of a particular ideological stance in relation to what the focus of attention in physical education should be. As Penney and Evans (1999) have emphasised, its structure and requirements privileged certain knowledge over and above other knowledge and were certainly not neutral or value free. Penney and Evans (1997; 1999) have discussed the dominance of particular discourses within the official texts of the NCPE, the marginalisation

and/or exclusion of others, and the political pressures and influences underpinning these characteristics of the texts. They contend that in the way in which the NCPE is structured, in the specific requirements relating to the activities to be included in the curriculum and in the different value thereby accorded to some experiences as compared to others, the NCPE can be seen as reinforcing the privileged position of discourses of elite performance and interests in 'traditional' team games. In these respects the NCPE can be seen to mirror and serve to perpetuate the dominance in wider society of particular sports and a particular focus in relation to participation in sport. Far from pointing towards the egalitarian interests that Cole and Hill (1999) have stressed signify an interest in equality, the NCPE has openly privileged restorationist interests that seem destined to reinforce rather than challenge social inequalities. Furthermore, as Penney and Evans have also emphasised, the NCPE was clearly shaped with this perpetuation in mind (Penney and Evans, 1999).

The dominance of restorationist discourses in the development of the NCPE is an important issue in relation to concerns to establish physical education as a subject that expresses and promotes equity. However, this should not detract from recognition of the positive contribution that the development of the NCPE has made to the pursuit of equity in physical education, nor exploration of the potential to establish practices within the framework of the NCPE that represent important steps towards greater equity. Early NCPE documents were notable for their emphasis on the need to recognise the distinction between access and opportunity in contexts of physical education (see Talbot 1993), prompting the development of more complex conceptualisations of 'equal opportunities' in physical education. Perhaps more significantly, it has always been emphasised that the National Curriculum is merely a framework for curricula, leaving schools and teachers within them with important decisions to make. These decisions have included the specific activities to be incorporated in physical education, the time to be devoted to each, grouping arrangements and the teaching approaches to be employed. Thus, although the government's texts may have lacked much in the way of a positive lead for teachers to develop curricula that express a commitment to challenge matters such as racism, sexism and homophobia in physical education, school sport and wider society, absences in the text can provide openings for such action. In the implementation of the NCPE there is important scope for individual teachers to raise the profile of equity. Clarke and Nutt (1999) have pointed to some of the ways in which teachers can be proactive in this respect, suggesting for example, that games such as korfbal or tchoukball and modified versions of games such as rugby may provide positive learning experiences for more pupils (both girls and boys) regardless of ability, and explaining the ways in which different grouping arrangements can actively challenge conventional role expectations. Via such initiatives we may see the implementation of the NCPE prompting greater equity not merely within, but also beyond arenas of physical education and school sport.

Regrettably, the type of developments that Clarke and Nutt (1999) outline may well be more the exception than the norm in schools in England and Wales.

The potential inherent in the NCPE for the development of notably ‘new’ or ‘different’ curricula and teaching approaches that consciously challenge stereotypical views and practices in physical education and sport seems to have largely remained a matter of ‘potential’. Bedward and Williams (2000) recently reflected that ‘It would seem that the introduction of the National Curriculum physical education constituted a missed opportunity to revise out-dated practices of gender-differentiated physical education’ (115). Penney and Evans (2000) have stressed, however, that the opportunity should not yet be deemed ‘missed’, saying that with yet another revision to the statutory requirements, we once again ‘...stand on the edge of opportunity, either of progressive development, or surface level change’ (28). In the final section of the chapter I therefore focus on this latest revision to the NCPE. Specifically, I address the new expectations and demands that accompany the new agendas and new language that features in the latest documentation issued to schools in England, and explore the implications of the government’s stated commitment to the development of a National Curriculum that is ‘inclusive’. I again stress the need (particularly when considering the responses that may be forthcoming in implementation of the new requirements) to address the dynamic between developments in physical education and school sport and interests and agendas relating to wider sporting and political arenas.

From entitlement to inclusion: The ‘new’ National Curriculum for Physical Education

The revision of the National Curriculum in 2000 brought new discourses to the fore of government texts, specifically, of inclusion in education and physical education. In the forward to the revised NCPE the Secretary of State for Education and Employment emphasised that:

An entitlement to learning must be an entitlement for all pupils. This National Curriculum includes for the first time a detailed, overarching statement on inclusion which makes clear the principles schools must follow in their teaching right across the curriculum, to ensure that all pupils have the chance to succeed, whatever their individual needs and the potential barriers to their learning may be.

(DfEE/QCA, 1999:3)

In all subject areas teachers are now required to plan and teach the National Curriculum with ‘due regard’ to three principles for inclusion:

- Setting suitable learning challenges;
- Responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs; and
- Overcoming barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

(DfEE/QCA, 1999:28)

We have yet to see the ways in which these principles will be developed in practice in physical education and can therefore do no more than hypothesise about the understandings and conceptualisations of equality and/or equity that will inform and be apparent in responses. In some respects the text seems in danger of directing teachers towards a limited focus on access to curricula that have predefined learning outcomes. In physical education attention may focus upon different ability levels amongst pupils and the need for learning experiences, teaching approaches and assessment to address these differences. Differentiation is important, but there is also a need for developments that go beyond measures that seek to include more pupils within relatively fixed boundaries to learning. There are prompts in the text for initiatives that challenge established boundaries and specifically, that challenge stereotypical views and encourage pupils to 'appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability' (DfEE/QCA, 1999:29).

But while the NCPE now features these discourses of inclusion, it has also retained many long-established and familiar discourses. With the exception of the new requirement that curricula at key stage 4 must address two areas of activity and the freedom of choice as to which areas these are, there is little to prompt a move away from curricula that are dominated by 'traditional' team games. In some respects, the new NCPE can be seen to strengthen the dominance of discourses of elite sports performance in physical education. Elsewhere (see Penney, 2000) I have argued that the statement below, describing 'exceptional performance' in physical education fails to encompass the breadth of learning that many both within and outside the profession claim it facilitates, and that it has the potential to facilitate.

Pupils consistently use advanced skills, techniques and ideas with precision and fluency. Drawing on what they know of the principles of advanced strategies and tactics or composition, they consistently apply these principles with originality, proficiency and flair in their own and others' work. They evaluate their own and others' work, showing that they understand how skills, strategy and tactics or composition, and fitness relate to and affect the quality and originality of performance. They reach judgements independently about how their own and others' performance could be improved, prioritising aspects for further development. They consistently apply appropriate knowledge and understanding of health and fitness in all aspects of their work.

(DfEE/QCA, 1999:42)

There is a danger that statements such as this may prompt a narrow focus upon improved performance in specific sports and in so doing, mean that physical education recognises and provides for the skills and interests of only a minority of pupils. Extending the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that are incorporated in descriptions of learning in physical education extends the potential for the subject to be inclusive of the varied educational needs, abilities and interests of all pupils. Notably, at key stage 4 the NCPE now encourages the development of

knowledge, skills and understanding that relate to ‘other roles’ in activity settings, such as coaching or officiating, and develop leadership skills. Developments such as this are critical if the subject can genuinely claim to be ‘responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs’.

But in contemplating likely responses to the new NCPE requirements and its inherent mix of discourses, we need to reflect upon some of the characteristics of contexts of implementation. Regrettably, many school contexts may be less than supportive, with physical education remaining a low priority in curriculum developments and in-service training provision. Increasingly, the key sources of support for the development of physical education are agencies and organisations associated with sport. This support is invaluable, but in a situation in which the boundaries between physical education, school and junior sport are so blurred, there is certainly no guarantee that attention will focus upon establishing greater equity in provision. The government’s strategy for sport, *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) was notable in identifying physical education as having a critical role to play not merely in sport development, but elite sport development. The strategy established the growing number of specialist sports colleges in England, each with links to other secondary and primary schools, as an integral element of the elite sport development network. The provision of opportunities for more children to engage with elite structures is a move to be welcomed. However, such provision needs to be accompanied by parallel developments that offer alternative pathways for those children who may not have either the interest or ability to pursue an elite performance route.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the complexities inherent in attempting to address matters of equality, equity and inclusion in physical education and school sport. The challenges that these matters pose are considerable and regrettably, the support needed in responding to them may not always be forthcoming, either within or beyond schools. Implementation of the revised National Curriculum for Physical Education can be regarded as once again signalling a notable opportunity for moves towards greater equity in physical education. However, implementation is set to occur at a time when developments both within and beyond physical education mean that there may not be encouragement or support for establishing the egalitarian agendas that I have indicated are critical if developments in physical education are to have impact and meaning in wider sporting and social contexts. Instead, restorationist agendas may well continue to dominate not only ‘official policies’ relating to physical education and school sport, but also much practice in schools. In relation to concerns to develop greater equity in physical education, the ‘flexibility’ inherent in the NCPE and the scope that this presents for individual action remains arguably the most critical characteristic and valuable resource for us to pursue.

Note

- 1 The requirements for the National Curriculum are expressed in relation to four 'key stages' of education, with key stages 1 and 2 encompassing the primary years (to age 11) and key stages 3 and 4 encompassing the secondary years of schooling (for ages 11–16 years).

Reflection questions

- 1 If we are interested in promoting equity within and beyond physical education, how important is it that the curricula for girls and boys feature the same activities?
- 2 Are characteristics of teaching, rather than the particular activities, of greater significance in shaping the degree to which physical education expresses and promotes equity and inclusion? How can teachers enhance equity and inclusion via different grouping strategies, teaching approaches, and different forms of assessment?
- 3 Pupils play an active part in challenging inequities in physical education and sport. Reflect on ways in which you have been marginalised and have marginalised others in contexts of physical education and school sport. Consider the prejudices (relating to who can legitimately participate in sport and whose participation is valued) that may underpin these actions and experiences.

Tasks

- 1 Look at the statement for 'exceptional performance' in the National Curriculum for Physical Education. Consider what other skills, knowledge and understanding that we may associate with physical education but that are not obviously identified in the statement. You may find it useful to consider the claims that are made about what learning and qualities physical education develops in children. Examples of these 'claims' can be found at the following internet sites:

- British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education
<http://www.baalpe.org/>
- The Physical Education Association of the United Kingdom
<http://www.pea.uk.com/>
- The National Council for School Sport
<http://www.schoolsport.freemove.co.uk/>

Now develop a new statement for ‘exceptional performance’ that reflects the wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding that physical education is often associated with.

- 2 Make suggestions about the ways in which teachers might respond to each of the three principles for inclusion (below) in contexts of physical education in order to promote equity and ‘celebrate difference’:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

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8 Socialisation and participation in sport

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Introduction

Socialisation into sport does not happen in isolation from the rest of society. 'Sport is a social representation of historical, social and cultural forces, and at the same time it affirms, legitimates and reproduces those very same conditions. In other words, sport reproduces social reality and transmits those aspects of culture that convey meanings about the social, political and the economic order of society; about gender, race, and class relations; about the body and physical activity' (Greendorfer and Bruce, 1991:137).

Eitzen and Sage (1987) described socialisation as the 'process of learning and adapting to a given social system' (77). Socialisation is described by Coakley (2001) as the 'active process of learning and social development, which occurs as we interact with one another and become acquainted with the social world in which we live' (82). The purpose of this chapter is to describe how individuals are socialised into and continue to participate in sport. When examining socialisation and sport, there are two related aspects of the socialisation process: (a) socialisation into sport, which studies the factors that influence the ways children become involved in sport, and (b) socialisation via sport, which examines how involvement in sport has influenced others, including sport participants.

Socialisation into sport: getting involved

One of the first theories used to guide socialisation research was Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which falls under a functionalist approach, and emphasises the importance of observing and modelling others. Bandura stated 'Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Because people can learn from example what to do, at least in approximate form, before performing any behavior, they are spared needless errors' (22). 'According to social learning theory, modeling influences produce learning principally through their informative function. During exposure observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of the modeled activities which serve as guides for appropriate performances' (22; 24). These