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Children's Experiences of Fun and Enjoyment During a Season of Sport Education

Ann MacPhail, Trish Gorely, David Kirk, and Gary Kinchin

This paper reports on a 16-week sport education (SE) unit with just over 70 year 5 students (M age = 10.04 years) in one United Kingdom school during the spring and summer terms and discusses students' SE experiences. Student interviews were conducted throughout the season and a questionnaire on different motivation aspects was administered prior to and before completing the SE season. We report and examine the data in relation to hypothesized influences on fun and enjoyment, including being part of a team, autonomy, and improving game play. The principal reasons SE may be more enjoyable than previous physical education lessons include the greater opportunities for autonomy, affiliation, and competition, plus perceived learning.

Key words: autonomy, motivation, perceived competence.

Participation in physical activity provides physical and mental health benefits to young people (Biddle, Gorely, & Stensel, 2004). There is, however, concern over the participation levels of young people and the links with the rise in obesity rates in particular (Goran & Treuth, 2001). Physical education is an important way to promote physical activity because of its potential to reach young people. A desired outcome of physical education is the development of lifelong participation in active lifestyles (Piotrowski, 2000; Prochaska, Sallis, Slymen, & McKenzie, 2003). To achieve this aim, physical education teachers need to positively influence students' motivation to continue in physical activity

outside the school (Weiss, 2000). A major motive (reason) young people give for participating in sport and physical activity is fun and enjoyment (Crocker, Hoar, McDonough, Kowalski, & Niefer, 2004). By providing fun and enjoyable physical education, we may positively enhance young people's attitudes toward physical education and, ultimately, physical activity participation (Garn & Cothran, 2006; O'Reilly, Tompkins & Gallant, 2001; Prochaska et al., 2003).

Several studies have shown that physical education enjoyment is positively associated with extracurricular activity levels (Sallis, Prochaska, Taylor, Hill, & Geraci, 1999; Terre, Drabman, & Meydrechl, 1990; Trost et al., 1997). Other studies reported on the level of fun and enjoyment students experience through physical education (Fisher, 1996; Goudas & Biddle, 1993; Laws & Fisher, 1999). We use fun and enjoyment as interchangeable descriptors of the positive experiences we believe physical education should promote, while we acknowledge it is possible to identify distinct phenomenological and interactive processes between the two (Podilchak, 1991). Launder (2001) noted the major differences between fun and enjoyment and implied that the major difference was in the sense of achievement and competence, "...children can have 'fun' when simply playing, no matter their level of performance, but below a certain level of competence, players will gain little enjoyment and will sensibly move

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on to other things" (p. 46). Siedentop (2002) voiced concern not only with the tendency to disassociate fun and competence but also the implication that striving for competence somehow ruled out having fun. He stated, "...having fun in physical education, for too many students, has come to mean doing something that is typically momentary and trivial" (p.13). Siedentop (2002) advocated that the experience rather than the outcome sustains individuals' sport enjoyment and that the experience of total involvement (involving competence) is a key to developing sport participation lifestyle habits.

A considerable body of literature in sport psychology has also examined sport enjoyment in young people (e.g., Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simons, 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Scanlan, Simons, Carpenter, Schmidt, & Keeler, 1993; Wankel and Kriesel, 1985; Wankel & Sefton, 1989; Weiss, Kimmel, & Smith, 2001). According to Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986), the sources of sport enjoyment are found along two dimensions (extrinsic-intrinsic and achievement-nonachievement), thus, creating four source categories (see Figure 1): (a) intrinsic-achievement—perceptions of personal competence, such as mastery, improvement, and perceived ability; (b) extrinsic-achievement—perceptions of competence arising from feedback or achieving recognition; (c) intrinsic-nonachievement—movement- or competition-related factors, such as movement sensations and the excitement of competition; (d) extrinsic-nonachievement—nonperformance or context-related sources from outside of the person, such as affiliation and making, or being with,

friends. Creating an environment to maximize the outcomes in each category is likely to enhance enjoyment. Other work has demonstrated that under experimental conditions manipulating perceived autonomy, success, and competence increased interest and enjoyment and reduced boredom, resulting in increases in adherence (Whitehead, 1993).

There is a notion that concentrating on fun and enjoyment can trivialize physical education. Others, such as the teachers interviewed in the O'Reilly et al. (2001) study, seem happy to forego learning objectives for the sake of "fun." We argue that neither of these situations needs to arise. To maximize enjoyment is not to trivialize physical education; enjoyment has consistently emerged as an important motive for participating in physical activity or sport, and it is the strongest predictor of commitment, or the desire and resolve to continue participation in an activity (Scanlan et al., 1993; Weiss, et al., 2001). As an outcome then, enjoyment is critical. A focus on fun does not have to equate to nonpurposeful activity and a foregoing of learning objectives. As Griffin, Chandler, and Sariscsany (1993) pointed out, a perception that one is improving skills, demonstrating mastery, and being challenged is important to a sense of enjoyment. These are important goals within any curriculum area and not likely to be achieved without effective planning and organization of lesson content. Perhaps the problem lies more with restrictive pedagogical practices combined with a narrow perspective on fun and enjoyment as an easily obtained success.

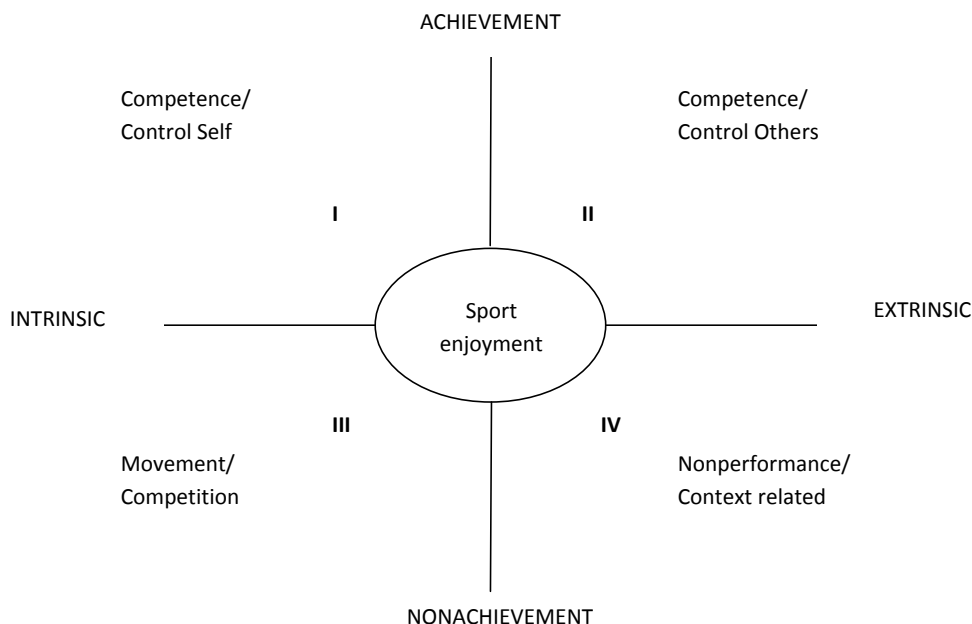


Figure 1. Model of sport enjoyment (from "Social psychological aspects of competition for male youth sport participants: IV. Predictors of enjoyment," by T. K. Scanlan and R. Lewthwaite, 1986, *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 8, 33. Copyright 1986 by Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc. Reprinted with permission).

Moving away from the more traditional approach to teaching physical education allows us to examine different pedagogical practices that can enhance and promote fun and enjoyment. Sport education (SE) has demonstrated the positive experiences pupils gain when physical education is more student-centered than teacher-centered, with some students preferring SE experiences to previous ones (Hastie, 1998a). Siedentop (2002) suggested that fun, along with play and increasing competence, could be integrated to absorb players and, consequently, increase the likelihood of players remaining actively involved in sport. Siedentop (1998) referred to the work of Johan Huizinga and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, emphasizing that the experience rather than the outcome sustained involvement and enjoyment in sport and physical education. Consequently, he strongly suggested that we need to promote a version of fun that absorbs students intensely and completely and clearly involves competence. This paper illustrates what such a deep notion of fun may consist of. Students have reported that winning contributes to the fun of SE, although it is not as important as having fun (Carlson & Hastie, 1997).

An attraction of the SE model has been its effectiveness in catering to highly skilled students, less skilled students, girls, and less "popular" students (Alexander & Luckman, 1998; Carlson, 1995). Improved outcomes for lower skilled students include increased opportunities for involvement and greater peer support (Alexander, Taggart, & Thorpe, 1996; Carlson, 1995; Hastie, 1998b). Hastie (1996, 1998a) reported that irrespective of the skill level with which students started a SE season, they felt they had improved during the season. The opportunity to be affiliated with a team and appreciate the increased responsibilities they have with their team may also contribute to students' fun and enjoyment (Carlson, 1995; Hastie, 1998b; MacPhail, Kirk, & Kinchin, 2004).

SE has six features characteristic of sport (Siedentop, 1998; Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2004). The first is Seasons, which encompasses both practice and competition over a significantly longer time period than is currently promoted in multiactivity physical education programs. The second, Team Affiliation, is promoted by encouraging players and team members to remain in the same team throughout the season. The importance of team affiliation throughout a season is what Siedentop termed a persisting group. Also, team affiliation through SE is applicable to almost any activity, including dance, tennis, and gymnastics. The third feature, Formal Competitions, including round robins and league schedules, are fixed prior to the season and interspersed with practice sessions. The fourth, Culminating Event/Festival Day, establishes the best team for the season and motivates students to work throughout the season. Scoring/Record Keeping requires students to experience various roles and provides feedback and goals

for individuals and teams. The final feature, Festivity, adds an important social element to the experience and enhances the meaning of participation for students.

Siedentop et al., (2004) listed the three primary SE goals as helping students become competent, literate, and enthusiastic sports persons. A competent sports person can participate as a knowledgeable games player, having acquired sufficient skill and an understanding and ability to execute play strategies appropriately. A literate sports person understands and values the rules and traditions of sports, is able to distinguish between good and bad sport practice, and is willing to uphold good practice to improve the sport. A concern of SE is sporting etiquette, showing respect for opponents and officials. Such behavioral expectations are often not evident in adult sport participation. An enthusiastic person participates in sport as part of a physically active lifestyle and in doing so highlights the importance of sport accessibility to individuals.

This paper examines the extent to which the results from interviews and completed questionnaires verify, contradict, or introduce observations of students' SE experience, with particular reference to fun and enjoyment and its antecedents. We report and examine the data in relation to a number of hypothesized influences on fun and enjoyment, including being part of a team, autonomy, competition and winning, and improvement in game play.

Method

Participants

All fifth-year students (M age = 10.04 years, range = 9.3–11.0 years) from one school were involved in a SE season (16 weeks). The school was located in the Midlands of England. Each week a 90-min SE lesson was conducted outside when students from all three fifth-year classes came together. Following procedure, the school notified the parents of all fifth-year students of the SE season via mail. The letter asked parents with any objections to their child's involvement in the season to contact the school. There were no objections. A total of 76 students from three classes were involved, with children from one class being members of a composite year 5/6 class. There were 10 SE teams, four each from two classes and two from the composite class. Each team was coeducational with mixed ability. The teachers determined mixed ability, and after the first 2 weeks of the SE season, only 1 student was moved from one team to another to balance the teams' playing ability. Throughout this paper, the school is referenced by its pseudonym, Forest Gate Primary School.

The head teacher and two fifth-year classroom teachers were involved in delivering the SE season. The research team worked with the teachers prior to beginning the season to introduce them to the key SE elements. This helped teachers construct a generic game to use throughout the season and a week-by-week plan for the season. None of the teachers had any experience in teaching SE, and there were no physical education teachers in the school. All were primary teachers working in a school that supported students' involvement in strong physical education and after-school programs.

The SE Season

The season schedule at Forest Gate Primary School appears in Table 1. An invasion game adapted from netball and basketball was chosen for the season. A modified game matched an appropriate level of challenge to the learners' developmental status (Siedentop et al., 2004). The aim was to score a point by bouncing a ball in a hoop placed on the ground behind a back court line. All team members were allowed to score from behind the shooting line. A free shot was awarded for deliberate contact. Opponents had to stand at least 1 m from the player who had the ball. Players who had the ball were not allowed to move with it; if they did so, the opposition was awarded a sideline throw. A ball going out of play resulted in a free throw from the opposition's sideline. A jump ball started play. The students played 3 versus 3 during preseason and 5 versus 5 in the round-robin tournament (Weeks 10–13) and Festival Day (Week 16).

Data Sources

Interviews. The first, third, and fourth authors interviewed students and teachers. Students were randomly

taken out of the classroom to talk to a member of the research team or approached while involved in SE in the playground. Teachers accommodated the days and times the research team were available to conduct the interviews; as a result, students were interviewed on various days at differing times. The interview questions were exploratory, because SE was implemented to allow themes to be generated through the data rather than seeking to determine the extent of particular attributes. One theme was fun and enjoyment. The number of students and teachers interviewed, the point of the SE season at which they were interviewed, and sample interview questions are shown in Table 2. The length of student interviews varied between 7–10 min for individual interviews and up to 25 min for team interviews. Each teacher interview lasted just over 60 min.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Interview data were analyzed inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Repeated examinations summarized the text segments into preliminary categories (Merriam, 1998). Labels were attached to the segments, and all that related to a specific category or theme were sorted. Similar to the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the data were reviewed repeatedly and continually coded to identify similarities and differences, groupings, patterns, and items of particular significance across participants (Mason, 1996). The first author completed an initial analysis of the data, and the third author verified the choice of themes and supporting categories of interview quotes within the themes. Categories were ultimately refined to represent the factors participants believed to be important in relation to fun and enjoyment. Care was taken to ensure the data supported all themes, while nondiscriminant cases were also noted to strengthen the trustworthiness of the interpretation. Based on a comparison of these

Table 1. Sport education season schedule

School year	Lesson	Content
Late February	1	Teachers observed and assessed ability of students.
Late February	2	Further teacher observation and assessment of students and formation of mixed ability teams.
March	3	Meeting with all Year 5 students to explain and discuss sport education. Students informed of teams and encouraged to discuss and agree a team name. Introduction of portfolios and team display boards.
March	4–6	Preseason training—teacher led. Students encouraged to practice the role of reporter, warm-up officer, scorekeeper, and equipment officer while being an active playing member of the team.
April	7–9	Continuation of pre-season training. The student coach of each team now leads the sessions and not the teacher. Play 3 versus 3 within teams.
April/May	10–13	Round robin formal competition (5 vs. 5). Team tee shirts designed and printed.
May/June	14–15	Sessions cancelled due to bad weather. Time spent concentrating on team display board and portfolio work.
July	16	Festival Day. All teams played one match (5 vs. 5) to decide their finishing position. Medals awarded to all students, the winning team, most improved team, and most improved performer.

categories, a number of major themes were generated (Patton, 1990) and are detailed in Table 3.

Questionnaires. All fifth-year students were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of enjoyment measures, perceived competence, achievement goal orientation, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. These psychological constructs were selected because they reflect important elements of enjoyment and motivation for sport and physical activity in young people (Treasure &

Roberts, 1995). Demographic information (age, gender, sport, and exercise participation) was also collected. The questionnaires were administered in January (before starting the SE season) and in May (before the SE season ended). On both occasions, students were collected in the school gymnasium to complete the questionnaires; a classroom teacher read each question in turn and waited for students to complete their response before moving on to the next question.

Table 2. Sample interview questions

Interview context	Sample questions
Two teams (15 students total) and 2 individuals (May)	What do you like about sport education? What do you dislike about sport education? Is sport education similar or different from your usual physical education class? How would you explain sport education to others who do not know what sport education is about?
24 student interviews (May)	When somebody says to you the word sport, what does it mean? Do you watch sport on television? Are you involved in sport? Is the sport education class like sport?
20 student interviews on Festival Day (July)	What is happening today? What is it all about? What does this day mean to you? How important is your team to you?
Three teams (20 students) after Festival Day (July)	Is sport education important to you? Is sport education similar to other school experiences? How would you explain sport education to someone from another school who had not been involved in sport education?
Two teacher interviews during season (April)	How did you plan the season? Are you making changes as the week's progress? How are the students coping with sport education? Have there been any problems? Do you see a difference in their game playing abilities?
One teacher interview postseason (July)	Has your approach to teaching changed? What positive and negative impacts arose through sport education? Would you do anything differently if you were to do another season? What recommendations would you make to other teachers thinking of introducing sport education?

Table 3. Main qualitative themes

Main themes	Reference made to:	Representative quote:
Team affiliation	Working together as a team, competing against other teams, relations to others, investing in the team	"I enjoy the team spirit that's created when you play in a team and I like playing in teams more than individually so I quite like this [SE]."
Autonomy	Increase in student responsibility, students appraising their own team performances	"You have to organize most of the teams yourself and most of the other things we do at school the teachers organize it."
Perceived sport competence	Involvement in game play, learning new skills	"I'm definitely better, because when we started I didn't concentrate much on the game, I day dreamed a lot, but now my passing has got a lot better and I find it easier than when I started."
Fun and enjoyment	Being part of a team, playing the game	"Sport ed is usually playing proper matches and having fun."
Formal competition	Winning, scoring, trophies and medals	"The final match is going to get the cups and medals...so everybody is trying their best to win."

The interest-enjoyment subscale from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (McAuley, Duncan, & Tammen, 1989) was used to measure enjoyment. This subscale was modified to replace “activity” with “PE and sport” to reflect the focus of the current study. The internal consistency of the original subscale was 0.78. Perceived competence was assessed using a modified version of the subscale from the Physical Self Perception Profile (PSPP; Fox & Corbin, 1989). Pilot work with twenty 9–11-year-olds at an athletics club showed that, similar to earlier work (e.g., Vlachopoulos & Biddle, 1997), the participants had difficulty understanding the alternative format of the original PSPP. As a result, the bipolar statements were converted to unipolar ones, and the participants were asked to rate each statement on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all like me, 5 = a lot like me). These modifications have been used successfully elsewhere (Biddle, Soos, & Chatzisarantis, 1999; Vlachopoulos & Biddle, 1997), and adequate internal consistency has been demonstrated (Cronbach’s alpha = .70; Biddle, Soos, & Chatzisarantis, 1999). Achievement goal orientation was assessed using the English (UK) version of the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ; Duda, Fox, Biddle, & Armstrong, 1992). The TEOSQ produces two subscales: task orientation (reflecting the degree that individuals define success in mastery or task improvement) and ego orientation (reflecting the degree they define by winning or outperforming others). Adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) has been demonstrated previously (task = 0.71, ego = 0.80, Goudas, Biddle, & Fox 1994a). Two subscales from the motivational orientation scale used by Goudas, Biddle, and Fox (1994b) were used to assess the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) has previously been reported for these two subscales (intrinsic = 0.88–0.90, extrinsic = 0.75–0.81, Goudas et al, 1994b). Principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted on all measures within this study. This process yielded factor structures similar to the original for all but

the interest-enjoyment subscale. In that case, one item (PE and sport doesn’t hold my attention) did not load with the other four items and was not included in the subscale formation. Within the current study, internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) was satisfactory (≥ 0.70) for all subscales except extrinsic motivation, where it was slightly below the cutoff (0.68) but still considered acceptable (see Table 4). Paired *t* tests were used to examine pre-post differences in psychological constructs. A *p* value of .05 was used to determine significance. The main findings from pre- and postadministration of the questionnaires are provided in Table 4.

Results and Discussion

Demographic and contextual information from the questionnaires are reported prior to the discussion. Concepts were explored to identify particular SE characteristics that may increase students’ positive experiences in a physical education context.

Pre- and post-SE questionnaires were completed by 63 students (62% of the sample was boys, which reflected the proportion of fifth-year boys at the time of the study). Most students were very likely (39.7%) or likely (27%) to participate in sport/exercise three times a week for the next 2 weeks, with only 12.7% rating such participation as unlikely or very unlikely. Almost 62% of students reported playing a sport (not including physical education) more than twice a week, and 24% reported playing a sport one to two times per week. Most sport participation was done at a recreational level (55.6%) followed by competitive level (27%). A minority (17.5%) reported not very much participation in sport. In relation to the hours per week they participated in sport, 22.2% reported less than 1 hr, 23.8% reported between 1 and 3 hr, 23.8% reported between 3 and 6 hr, and 30.2% reported more than 6 hr.

Table 4. Alpha coefficients, descriptive statistics and *t* scores for psychological variables

Variable	Alpha coefficient	Pretest		Posttest		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Enjoyment	0.90	4.05	1.12	4.11	.96	-.49	49
Perceived competence	0.72	3.29	.88	3.19	.80	.87	50
Extrinsic motivation	0.68	2.16	1.02	2.26	1.17	-.58	53
Intrinsic motivation	0.76	4.21	.98	4.06	1.07	1.04	53
Task goal orientation	0.79	4.15	.74	4.19	.67	-.31	53
Ego goal orientation	0.77	2.93	.92	2.62	.93	2.02*	50

*Significant at *p* < .05.

Fun and Enjoyment

It is evident from the interview data that students found the SE module fun and enjoyable. When asked what they liked most about it, students responded “having fun” (Sally), “enjoying it” (Colin), and “it’s fun and enjoyable” (Issac). Sally believed the most important part of the Festival Day was “to enjoy yourself and have fun.” Billy, from the winning Invaders team, also prioritized fun and enjoyment. When asked about the Festival Day, he said, “It was about having fun and enjoying the new sport that was made up in our school, having fun and playing and winning.”

The questionnaire data demonstrated that students found SE enjoyable (mean enjoyment score 4.1). However, this score did not differ from the initial enjoyment rating for the previous physical education program (see Table 4). This was unexpected, as the fun element of SE was prominent in student responses to questions asking them to compare SE to their previous physical education program. For example, John was adamant that SE was better than physical education, because it was “different” and “more fun.” Jo elaborated “[it’s] very different, PE is just like jogging around and just doing exercises. Sport ed is usually playing proper matches and having fun.” This discrepancy between interviews and questionnaires might have resulted from a ceiling effect in the questionnaire scores. That is, because the students reported high levels of physical education/sport enjoyment prior to the SE season, there was little room left, on a finite scale, for a significant increase. This would suggest that while the students at this school found physical education to be fun, they simply found SE to be *more* fun. Another possible explanation is that the general questions about fun, enjoyment, and liking did not actually capture what made SE fun. As a result, this instrument was not sensitive enough to capture changes in perceptions of enjoyment during the SE season. Hints at possible reasons for students enjoying SE more than the physical education program are evident in the following extract:

Interviewer: If somebody from another school was to ask you what you’ve done in sport education, how would you explain it to them?

Ahmed: Fun and that’s it, fun.

Billy: It’s like basketball and netball, and it’s a lot more fun than other sports.

John: You have to organize most of the teams yourself, and most of the other things we do at school, the teachers organize it.

Anne: That’s one of the best parts of it.

Ella: Basically there are five players that play in the game, and it’s about a team playing

another team and seeing who will win or not, and it’s about working together.

Potential sources of enjoyment were positioned within the four quadrants identified by Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) to show how and why SE might lead to greater enjoyment. An overlap of sources is evident. For example, learning skills (an important enjoyment source) is linked to teamwork and affiliation (both important sources). From an educational point of view, it is worth noting that many of the enjoyment sources, such as task mastery and improving skills, are also important learning objectives.

Being Part of a Team

An important source of sport enjoyment is a feeling of affiliation and being part of a team (Quadrant IV, non-achievement/extrinsic factors; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986). Others have linked being with friends and assisting teammates to having more fun (Carlson & Hastie, 1997; Laws & Fisher, 1999). Promoting team affiliation through SE at Forest Gate Primary School has been discussed in a separate paper (MacPhail, Kirk, & Kinchin, 2004), and the link between affiliation and enjoyment is highlighted here. The students clearly appreciated the opportunity to work for an extended time with the same group (team) and commented how this contributed to their enjoyment through a sense of belonging, learning, and building friendships. Maxine commented, “I enjoy the team spirit that’s created when you play in a team, and I like playing in teams more than individually, so I quite like this.” Laura noted how, “...it [the team] made you feel part of it. It made you feel nice.” David expanded on the importance of belonging, remarking that:

It’s [the team] quite important, because when you are just playing football then you don’t feel as if...you just get picked, you don’t feel you’re really needed. When you’re in a team, you feel like the team needs you.

Ahmed admitted “I like being in a team, since Christmas because...you don’t have to keep swapping teams so you get to know them and play with them.” John commented that remaining in the same team had been “...quite good, because if you swap teams around all the time, then you just wouldn’t get to know how all the other players do it, and you wouldn’t be very good at sport.” This last quote highlights some of the entwining mentioned earlier. Knowing your teammates and what they were going to do was both a source of enjoyment and a contributor to perceived competence (a further source of enjoyment).

Interviews with the teachers gave insight into how team membership might improve the students' learning through realizing the team needed to work together to be successful. The teachers further explained how they believed the social skills promoted by SE brought students together as teams and accommodated less able students who might not have felt involved in previous physical education classes. Teachers commented that students began communicating more with their peers and rather than dismissing a team member who could not successfully carry out a particular skill; other team members encouraged and advised them on how to improve. Teachers also implied student appreciation of the increased responsibilities they had for their team:

Teacher A: ...having a specific role, they've got to talk to people and it's working very well, the children are working well as a group...there's some very mixed children in that class, there's some very good children in that group, some are really excellent at sport...others are very quiet and didn't really push themselves to an awful lot before, so I didn't really see their true ability, and others just couldn't be bothered. But now, because they are part of a team and they don't want to let their team down and because of the general working together they can't wait to get out there on a Thursday afternoon.

Getting to know team members and developing new friendships was also highlighted as an important outcome of SE. Sue commented that working in a team not necessarily made up of your friends might let you find out that someone you thought was "really horrible" is "actually quite nice." Billy and Leigh commented that the SE teams allowed them to get to know other people and make new friends. Jack admitted:

...it's [SE] made me get a lot more friends, because Isaac is in my team and before this started me and Ahmed didn't like each other very much but now we're best friends, just because we're in the same team....

Comments suggested that the broader range of activities in the SE approach leads to greater opportunities to get to know people and more positive outcomes. The impact of friendship within a team was also reported.

It was evident that being part of a team for an extended time was an attractive and enjoyable experience for the participants. This aspect of the SE experience should not be underestimated. Social relationships such

as peer acceptance and friendship quality have previously been shown to be linked to positive motivational outcomes, such as intrinsic motivation and enjoyment (Ullrich-French, 2002).

In addition to improved game play and individual skills, the young people noted greater sense of how individual differences strengthen a team and its performance. Anna commented that at the start of the SE season her team chose boys to play while the girls sat out. However, when the team got to know each other and it became evident the girls "could play good and as strong as the boys," there was no clear separation between them. Anna's fellow teammate, Rebecca, verified the initial perceptions of ability across genders by reporting that even when a girl played at the start of the season, boys never included her in the game and refused to pass to any girl. However, Sarah reported that her group had made a conscious effort to address potential gender segregation and accepted the different attributes the two groups brought to the team:

We always made sure when we were practicing...with our teams we would not have all the boys playing against all the girls as that's not really fair. Boys have certain things that they can do better and girls have certain things they can do better, and you need a bit of both on each team.

This recognition of competence and ability by others would enhance enjoyment through the achievement/extrinsic (Quadrant II) of the Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) model. Although this appeared to be most strongly associated with gender differences in this group, there were other examples of how feedback enhanced a sense of competence. Emma mentioned:

I think it's super. They think I'm a really good player because I used to play netball at my old school, and I think it's really nice that they appreciate me like that. It means quite a lot to be a member of this team.

The notion of team affiliation and its potential impact on winning was popular with students. Laura explained that SE meant working as a team to win as many games as possible, and Mineeta stated that her team was very important to her, "...because if we don't get along with our team then we won't win, because we can't work together." Along with team affiliation, students' perceived sport competence was also a factor in relation to winning: "Without the team we wouldn't have won" (Olly), and "Without some of the players we wouldn't

have won. I think Danny and Ben made the team quite good because they always scored the goals" (Anna).

Autonomy

There is support for the argument that student motivation in physical education is enhanced if teachers create an autonomy-supporting environment (Biddle, 1999). SE promoted a lot of support for students' increased responsibility, with students appreciating and enjoying the autonomy they were encouraged to have by practicing a number of roles through SE. Students appeared comfortable in dealing with the level of autonomy promoted. Claire stated, "It's really fun, because you get to do things that you don't usually do. Like, you get more responsibilities and you have to do things for your team." Lewy believed that:

...it's more fun than normal sport, because you can work together as a team with your team rather than just picking a different one everyday. It's more independent and not to do with teachers as much...it's like the teachers aren't bossing us about all the time. We can do our own stuff.

Jacob commented, "You have to organize most of the teams yourself, and most of the other things we do at school the teachers organize it." Laura stated:

I think it's good because you get to work as a team, and you can become more independent and work out what's good and what's bad and work things out and do stuff that teachers wouldn't normally let you do.

To some extent, teachers attributed student learning during SE to the level of autonomy they were encouraged to have in reflecting on and discussing issues pertinent to their teams. As a team, students appraised their own performance and discussed how they could improve:

Teacher M: ...within that group they might say, "We need to practice going into space," whereas in a group of 30, I do what the majority want or what's in the curriculum, so they've got flexibility within that small group to say we're not working cooperatively or we need to do some more passing practice, and you can't do that as a teacher, and they need to practice that themselves.

Competition and Winning

A key source of enjoyment derives from intrinsic nonachievement factors such as competition and excitement (Laws & Fisher, 1999; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986). Often in physical education, competition has been removed due to concern for the impact losing and negative social evaluation may have on students (Leah & Capel, 2000). However, Siedentop (2002) argued that the issue should not be about too little or too much competition but about appropriate competition. He asked that competition be promoted as a festival or related to the pursuit of competence rather than referring to various states of rivalry. In previous SE work, winning was reported as contributing to fun (Carlson & Hastie, 1997).

The teachers at Forest Gate Primary School were more than aware of the role of competition in SE and attempted to promote competition through match play, emphasizing it was important for teams to try their best rather than focus solely on winning. There was an implication that if winning became more important in the SE model than in previous physical education classes, students would work harder to achieve their goal. "Winning," "trying our best," and "having fun" were related by students on a number of occasions, particularly on the final day of the season "The final match is going to get the cups and medals...so everybody is trying their best to win" (Krishna), "It [Festival Day] was about having fun...having fun and playing and winning" (Ben), and "It's finals so everyone's trying hard to win and we're trying our best" (Katie).

Despite including competition and focusing on the festival day as the culminating event, students demonstrated a significant decrease in ego orientation pre- to post-SE. This implied that at the end of the SE season students were less likely to define success in terms of 'beating others' or being the best. No significant change in task orientation was observed. This is not surprising, as students were already high in task orientation at pretest, leaving little room for the response to increase significantly at the posttest stage. These goal orientations suggest that including an element of competition can be motivationally adaptive (or neutral) providing the focus is on performance and effort during competition and not simply the outcome. It is possible the nature of SE creates a climate whereby students can experience the positive elements of competition (e.g., excitement, exhilaration, challenge) while reducing the potential negative effects of normative comparison. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores also showed no change from pre- to post-SE.

Improvement in Game Play

From the interview data, and similar to Hastie's work with older students (1996, 1998a), it was evident that

most students at Forest Gate Primary School believed they were better at physical education after undertaking SE. According to Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986), these intrinsic/achievement (Quadrant I) improvements should be linked to a greater sense of fun and enjoyment. Students believed they had improved their game-playing ability in a number of ways, including physical and mental skills. In many cases, they attributed this to working as part of a team: "I'm learning how to get it in a short space of time...and how to move about... I couldn't aim properly before with the ball and now I can. I've learnt more things than I have before" (Kieran), "I'm learning about how to pass the ball and how to move your feet when you've got the ball, where to go when you've got a space...my friend taught me how to do it" (Krishna), and "I'm definitely better, because when we started I didn't concentrate much on the game, I daydreamed a lot, but now my passing has got a lot better and I find it easier than when I started" (Lewy).

Affiliation, intrinsic motivation, and relatedness appear to have enhanced personal improvement and learning skills:

Interviewer: What was the benefit of being involved in Sport Education? Do you think it's [SE] important?

Martha: Yes, because you got better at it because you got to keep on playing and you got to work as a team together.

One student, although a member of the team that won the SE tournament, focused on her team's improvement rather than mentioning winning the tournament, "We were ok to start with, and then we got better and we won the best improved team award" (Anna).

Isaac was one of if not the most physically talented fifth-year student at Forest Gate and was able to identify characteristics of his sport performance that improved by his involvement in SE:

Interviewer: Are you any better now at PE than you were before Christmas?

Isaac: A bit, because now I know how to play with different team members and I used to not really.

Interviewer: Tell me about that; what have you learnt?

Isaac: I used to have one friend and I'd always pass the ball to him and he'd always pass the ball to me, I wouldn't pass to anyone else, just him. It wouldn't be fair, but now I pass to other people.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Isaac: It makes me feel happy that I've improved.

One teacher reported that students were aware of their increase in sporting competence and how it consequently resulted in much more demanding game play:

Teacher A: ...they're a lot more tactical, tactically aware. One of the groups was saying to me the other week, "It's a lot harder now," and I said, "Well, why is that?" and they said, "It's because we're marking properly and we haven't got people to pass to as much, and if people can't find a space you're stuck." It has become a lot harder for them and they're handling it well.

Perceptions of competence were also explored within the questionnaire. However there were no changes in this measure from pre- to post-SE (see Table 4). A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that the competence changes students mentioned in interviews were based on the fact that they believe they learned something specific, an aspect not included in the questionnaire, which was more concerned with a general sport competence.

Conclusion

Supporting the large volume of previous research in young people's experience of sport and physical activity, it is clear that fun and enjoyment are major factors. Although students' responses to the questionnaires indicated no change in enjoyment scores pre- to post-SE, the data illustrate more clearly that students experienced SE as being more fun than previous physical education lessons. The Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) model of sport enjoyment showed that the reasons SE could be more enjoyable seemed to include the greater opportunities for autonomy, affiliation, competition, and perceived learning. While this is not necessarily new, it reaffirms the need to facilitate these factors in relation to young people's involvement in sport and physical activity. This paper does not contribute to developing our understanding of fun by promoting a different way to think about fun and enjoyment in physical education. Too often fun is trivialized, and we have attempted to show what a deep notion of fun may involve. Experiencing fun in physical education includes opportunities to exercise autonomy, be part of a team, and perceive a level of learning and success. Numerous examples in this paper illustrate students' support for the SE experience and the related outcomes that resulted in their enjoyment. Prochaska et al., (2003) argued that enjoyable physical education may increase student engagement, which in turn may increase or maintain participation in physical activity out of school. SE provides a vehicle to achieve

increased enjoyment for students of all abilities without compromising learning objectives or trivializing physical education.

This paper refers to issues of fun and enjoyment in one physical education setting over a 4-month period. However, there is a paucity of longitudinal research that focuses on a series of SE seasons with persisting learner cohorts to determine whether fun and enjoyment can be sustained or if the novelty effect begins to wear off. This paper does not provide insight on this area. Whether the level of fun and enjoyment can be sustained at Forest Gate is also unknown; however, a strength of the paper is that SE served, in this setting, to advance both the student experience of the subject and pedagogical practice within the school. A further strength of this paper is its contribution to developing our understanding of fun by offering an alternative way to think about fun and enjoyment in physical education. Numerous examples in this paper illustrate students' and teachers' support for the SE experience and the related outcomes that resulted in enjoyment for all. Specifically for teachers, we are confident there are plans for a sustained focus on SE at Forest Gate, as these practitioners will continue to pursue their vision of this approach to achieve real change in their practice.

It has long been felt that SE seasons have typically operated internally within a particular school or physical education program (Penney, Clarke, & Kinchin 2002; Wallhead & O'Sullivan, 2005) and that there is a need to extend the model to other settings and sport cultures (e.g., interschool events, youth sport settings, community provisions). It could be argued that the current internal positioning of SE may limit the extent of student interest, engagement, or sense of authentic participation.

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