

# Sport Education: What Do Students Learn?

## What Was the Question?

The goal of the sport education (SE) instructional model is to produce competent, literate, and enthusiastic sports people. Sinelnikov and Hastie (2010) examined students' recollections of their participation in SE over an extended period of time to learn whether such participation helps students to develop a sense of themselves as competent, literate, and enthusiastic sports people.

## What Was Done?

A cohort of 34 students participated in multiple seasons of SE during the sixth through eighth grade. Each SE season (basketball, soccer, and badminton) lasted 18 to 20 lessons. With each season, student roles and responsibilities were expanded, and less time was devoted to the explanation of SE by the physical educator. The researchers solicited students' memories of the SE seasons using autobiographical-memory-theory techniques to collect data. The researchers also collected data from focus group interviews where students shared

their most vivid memories. Findings from the data collection were presented as themes relating to student experiences.

## What Was Found?

The student responses matched key features of SE, including clearly defined seasons, team affiliation, formal competition, a culminating event, record keeping, and the opportunity to converse openly with the teacher. Students' recollections of their SE experiences consisted mainly of general events, such as an entire SE season, but also included specific memories of a single, brief event.

Among the general events that students remembered were "playing games" and SE being "different from regular physical education." When reflecting on the differences between other physical education experiences and SE, a number of students commented that SE was "more organized and serious." For many students, game play was the most memorable and recognized event.

"Deeper understanding" and "officiating" themes were identified as event-specific memories. "Deeper understanding" referred to students' understanding of the strategies and rules in the sporting context long after the SE season ended. Many students also remembered specific strategies that they used in competition, while others could recall specific events and sequences when the strategies were successful.

## What Does the Study Mean?

This study is the first to examine student recollections of their participation in multiple SE seasons. From this, physical educators learn that students' strongest and most detailed memories were related to those features that provide SE participants with authentic sport experiences. Another

important finding of this study is the evidence that students feel more comfortable communicating with the physical education teacher during SE. Because of the gradual shift of responsibility from the teacher to students in each successive SE season, physical educators have additional time for individualized instruction during SE, which is likely to contribute to an environment where students feel more comfortable in physical education. As a result, physical education becomes more meaningful to more students.

## Reference

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## Editorial

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Readers may send Research Works abstracts to John Todorovich at [jtodorovich@uwf.edu](mailto:jtodorovich@uwf.edu).

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- Abstracts should follow the Research Works structure.
- Research results should be applicable to practitioners.
- Also send the full text of the source paper.
- Length should be no more than two double-spaced pages.