



Relationship Among Culture, Education, and Sports



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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to place sport in a social, cultural, and educational context. This implies definitions of culture, education, and sport, and the academic association of each with the others. However, it is seen that culture, education, and sport have commonly-held meanings which, in some cases, eradicate the need for further clarification. So, apart from defining these important concepts, this article will also deal with the pervading nature of sports in society, sport as a system of subcultures, and the degree to which sport has become an important symbol for individuals and societies worldwide. Sports have a variety of functions for different segments of society and therefore different meanings to those different populations. Everyone knows what a culture is. Everyone knows what education is. And everyone knows what sports are. But everyone has slightly different definitions of culture, education, and sports. What we require are commonly understood definitions of terms for this article. The mere reality is that we need to define these terms for this analysis, which highlights the difficulty that definitions and meanings are context-specific and will vary as the contexts of their usage change.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this article is to place sport in a social, cultural, and educational context. This implies definitions of culture, education, and sport, and the academic association of each with the others. However, it is seen that culture, education, and sport have commonly-held meanings which, in some cases, eradicate the need for further clarification. So, apart from defining these important concepts, this article will also deal with the pervading nature of sports in society, sport as a system of subcultures, and the degree to which sport has become an important symbol for individuals and societies worldwide. Sports have a variety of functions for different segments of society and therefore different meanings to those different populations. Everyone knows what a culture is. Everyone knows what education is. And everyone knows what sports are. But everyone has slightly different definitions of culture, education, and sports ([Chen, 2011](#)). What we require are commonly understood definitions of terms for this article. The mere reality is that we need to define these terms for this analysis, which highlights the difficulty that definitions and meanings are context-specific and will vary as the contexts of their usage change. The likely differences in the meanings of "sports" have already been touched upon, but the term "culture" can carry different interpretations. There is a certain and associated relationship between culture, education, and sports. Education and sports are two of the major institutions of our society ([Fynes et al., 2008](#)). In this way, neither education nor sports is ideologically neutral because they have implicit values that we incorporate into the recognition of both culture and society. This incorporation of sports and education into the meaning of society and culture authenticates them and gives them both value and a place ([Guldenmund, 2000](#)).

2 Culture

There is a commonly held view that culture is art; paintings, sculptures, drama, and the like, but that is mistaken. The artistic view of culture is limited by its narrowness of application—it is only one aspect of culture, and is sometimes referred to as ‘high’ culture. The converse is that a ‘low’ culture also exists. A culture is a system of shared values, meanings, and symbols that enables societies and individuals to operate effectively without continually redefining these values, meanings, symbols, and points of reference. Imagine the impossibility of having to say what we meant by religion, for example, every time we used the term, or what morality meant to us, or what we understood by the word sports. As well as being things and items, symbols can be found in actions and language. Hand gestures, facial expressions, body language, and head movements sometimes have specific meanings in different cultural contexts. These differences within shared meanings are what make separate cultures unique. People within the culture do not have to define their symbols at every social interaction. The commonly held perception of meaning lubricates the social process. Within cultures, there are subcultures. These smaller groupings of individuals also share systems of values and meanings, which develop their clear and separate identities ([Nadiradze, 2020](#)).

3 Education

We all have a view of what education means. In one role or another, we have all experienced education. We were children at school, so we know what it is like to be a student. We know what goes on in schools, even if only casually, so we know what schools are like to work in. And many of us have seen school through our own children’s eyes, so we think we know a lot about school, and therefore about education. This interpretation is similar to other people’s interpretations because they have also been through the same process and

experiences. Therefore, this interpretation gets reinforced, and every time we use the word education, we do not have to explain what we mean. The meaning of education is a commonly held meaning that is the culturally acceptable one. Mention education to most people, and they will get a mental image of a school; a lesser number will also think of higher education, perhaps in a university. So, although the common perception of education may be limited, the possibilities for inclusion are many and would have a consensus of approval. Dictionary definitions can be illuminating when considering cultural meanings. It implies that knowledge is a product held by a few, to be packaged and made available to the many, who are then led to this knowledge as if it were an enlightenment. Critical theorists take this view and have produced a wealth of commentary on just this aspect of the education process. This sociological interpretation of education illustrates why definitions vary and why sometimes technical definitions are required. For many, education is what we get at school; for teachers, education is an enlightening teaching and learning process; and for critical theory sociologists, education is a socially controlling mechanism. It could be assumed that this would lead to confusion. However, the context in which the term is used refines the definition and allows a commonly held meaning to prevail. So, in general terms, parents talking with each other about education would probably be referring to the package of knowledge that children receive at school; teachers in a staff meeting would be discussing the process of teaching and learning; and critical theorists writing in academic journals would refer to the sociologists' meaning of education.

4 Sports

As with education, sports have a common core of shared meaning and a periphery of additional meanings that are very much context-dependent. In other words, although most of us have a common understanding of what sports are, it can still mean different things to different people. In general terms, we identify that football is a sport, but that ballroom dancing is not; motor racing is a sport, but driving to work is not; sailing a boat on an ocean is a sport, but sailing on a tanker delivering oil is not. It is not necessary to define what we mean by sports whenever the word is used. However, the same sports can have different meanings to different groups of people. As an example of these differing meanings, let us consider the sport of tennis. To a professional tennis player, tennis is a job; to a club player, however competitive, tennis is essentially a recreation; to a spectator at Wimbledon, tennis may be a temporary diversion or an all-consuming vicarious passion. In short, a sport, and sports, mean different things to different people, even though there is an over-riding perception of what a sport is, and what sports are. If we look more closely at a set of meanings of the sports experience, we can more closely approach the function of sport. Sport for a group of hillwalkers will mean things like freedom from everyday worries, possibly a sense of curiosity and wonder, and an exhilaration at being in a natural and remote environment. Sport for a group in an aerobics class could mean getting and staying healthy, socializing, and stress reduction. The groups mentioned here have positive interpretations of sport. Unfortunately for some children, the experience of sport is not always positive and can come to mean getting wet and cold and being exposed to failure, and may lead to a complete lack of enthusiasm and enjoyment. It can clearly be seen that in promoting the benefits of sport and an active lifestyle, school sport and physical education have a major contribution to make. Thus, sport has different meanings for different groups in different contexts. Outside school, sport has several different functions. The most obvious of these is as a form of recreation. The vast majority of those who take part in sport outside an educational environment do so as a form of recreation. There is a sub-category of these recreational sports people, those for whom physical activity is merely body maintenance, a way of keeping fit to preserve or improve their health. This group may or may not find enjoyment in their participation. However, if enjoyment is not part of their experience, they are unlikely to remain participants for long. The enjoyment of the body maintenance group usually comes from the knowledge that they are fit and healthy, and possibly from improvements in physical performance and fitness levels. The sense of enjoyment in sport is what motivates recreational participants. Joy in movement, joy in the surroundings, and shared joy in shared company are powerful motivators in encouraging and maintaining sporting participation. This carries a strong message for those involved in recreation and sports provision and also for those involved in sport in education, i.e., physical education and school sport. That is, that enjoyment has to be at the heart of the process if continued participation is to be a

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realistic aim. The basis for taking part in sport is linked to the notion of attaining some kind of benefit from that participation. As discussed, the benefit for recreational participants is, most notably, enjoyment. Professional sportspeople obtain a different kind of benefit from their participation; they take part for monetary gain. Provision of an income is the benefit they derive by being involved in sport. Of course, this also applies to a variety of occupations that revolve around sport and is not limited to active, professional sportsmen and sportswomen. So, sports coaches, recreation managers, physical education teachers, agents, promoters, and a whole variety of associated occupations use sport and physical activity as a provider of income. Of course, there are also many drawbacks, or costs, to sports participation for these groups. Recreational sports people pay for their enjoyment both financially and with the use of their time; they have restructured that their participation is worth the balance of costs. Professionals pay in other ways. Obviously, they devote their time to sport, as others devote their time to their jobs, but in many sports, there is a risk of long-term injury and possible delayed disability. This is a cost often forgotten when the big salaries of sports stars are discussed. So, although participant groups perceive a benefit from sport, there are also costs that must be accounted for.

5 Sport in Education

School sport and physical education are defined by a commonly held perception. Physical education means playing games. That, unfortunately, is the most prevalent interpretation of the school subject. However, viewing a curriculum within a school very clearly dispels this notion, and it can be seen that physical education is an educational process that uses human movement as its medium. Students learn physical skills; they learn about human movement and through human movement. In our country, there is a National Curriculum designed by C.B.S.E. that dictates what all schools must do in physical education, so there is very little variation between schools. Physical education uses games extensively, but not exclusively, as its medium of instruction. Gymnastics, dance, track and field athletics, swimming, and outdoor pursuits are also used to one degree or another as part of physical education programs in many schools. These common definitions are reinforced by the hegemonic process that pertains in many societies and institutions. The selection of activities in any curriculum implies that those activities have some benefit over other activities and are therefore of more value than other activities. In this way, a dominant segment of society constructs an authorized view of sport and physical education. This version represents the privileging of one set of ideas over other sets of ideas. Sport education, with its attention to team affiliation, seasons, recording, varying roles for participants, and the celebration of sport through culminating festivals, is far better at promoting sport in this way. Schools can play a part in using physical education and school sport to inculcate this well-rounded sporting development, so that not only are psychomotor skills and talents developed, but so are ideas of sport's place in society and sport as an important part of our cultural heritage.

6 Sport as a Cultural

The significance of sport is no longer at issue. To be an effective citizen requires that one has an understanding of the culture in which one exists and operates, and sport is an integral part of that culture. Therefore, one's knowledge of one's culture is greatly enriched by a knowledge of sport. This knowledge of and about sport also extends to the ability to take part in a sport of some kind, thus indicating physical and kinesthetic development. Not only does it pervade our culture, but it has an important place in a multitude of other cultures. Thus, sport provides a commonality of experience on a global scale. Sport provides a common language that can be used to communicate within and between cultures. This shared experience is therefore important on a small scale locally and in community settings; it is important on a national, cultural scale, and it is important on an international, global scale. An increasing cultural diversity in Indian cultures enriches the experience and has much to offer in broadening a culturally diverse appreciation. Sporting acculturation is enhanced by such diversity and extends the boundaries of personal development and cultural awareness. Young people, or indeed any informed, rational, and educated people, need to know about the society and the culture of which they are a part. This 'necessary knowledge' covers huge areas of custom, tradition, and

history as well as more recognizable areas of knowledge. Thus, knowing about academic subjects, taking part effectively in the democratic process, knowing about current affairs, and knowing about the place that sport holds in culture are some of the disparate elements of the informed, rational, and educated person. Too often, this knowledge is limited to school knowledge. To omit one or more from a person's development would be to restrict that person's development. In a similar way, these intelligences approximate the qualities necessary to understand one's own culture. It is necessary to have a knowledge of literature, and music has an important place in a culture; art is important in enhancing cultural richness, and a knowledge of sports and their histories and traditions has a place as well. In this way, one can make an argument for the potential of any of Gardner's intelligences to contribute significantly to one's knowledge of one's own culture.

7 Conclusion

Culture, education, and sport have strong links with each other. The relationships between them demonstrate the importance of sport in education and culture. Each of these concepts has commonly held definitions that enable discourse and debate on an academic level, but also contribute greatly to the social interactions of everyday life. In addition to enabling discourse and interaction, sport has many functions in society. It allows the relatively safe experience of emotional extremes, it adds to and embellishes our language, and it contributes a traditional and mythical component to our existence. Sport aids in the process of cultural and social reproduction. In this, it can possibly be seen as a functionalist mechanism leading to conformity and control. Alternatively, sport can be viewed as a cultural strand that enhances our sense of community and provides a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding on a global scale. Sport has a place in schools because society has determined that the aspect of intelligence that is kinesthetic has value and is worthy of inclusion in school education. This educational manifestation of sport should not limit itself solely to the psychomotor component of the subject but should explore all aspects of sport. Similarly, the complete beneficial potential of sport will only be understood by taking note of the full role of sport in culture and society.




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