Students' Perceptions of the Influence of the Sport Education Model on Their Sport Thinking and Actions.

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Research Project Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Teaching and Learning

Christchurch College of Education

March 2006
Acknowledgements

The ongoing nature of a research project allows time for thought and reflection and at times doubt and a lack of motivation. I would like to acknowledge those who have given me encouragement and support throughout the process, alleviated the doubt and pushed me onward.

Thanks to Lynn Kidman who brings a 'student centred' approach to supervising. Your 'matter of fact' feedback gave me the confidence to trust in my own thoughts and believe in my ability. Your friendship kept the process enjoyable.

Thank you to my husband, Mike, for continued support over the years I have been working toward the goal of achieving a Master of Teaching and Learning degree. The road has been made so much smoother by you giving me the time and space to get on with my study in a selfless and cheerful way. Thank you for being my partner in this and in life.

Thanks also go out to my colleagues at the Christchurch College of Education. A project like this is more easily undertaken in a conducive and supportive environment. I have learned from your own research experiences and have been encouraged by your helpful comments and genuine interest in my project.
Abstract

A well established curriculum model which some claim has a socio-cultural component is the Sport Education model (Siedentop, Mand and Taggart, 1986). Others suggest that this model, with development, could be an appropriate vehicle for socio-critical learning outcomes that have lifelong meaning and value (Penney, Clarke and Kinchin, 2002, Taggart, 2004).

An interest in developing an understanding of the relationship between the philosophical underpinnings of a Physical Education curriculum and teaching methods used to facilitate socio-critical learning outcomes is the motivation behind this research project. Through interviewing two secondary school students, their perceptions of the influence of Sport Education on their sport thinking and actions were explored to ascertain if, socio-cultural and socio-critical learning may indeed be realistic outcomes of the Sport Education model.

The research provided evidence that students gave a lot of thought to specific incidents within the Sport Education unit and acted on these thoughts within the unit. Elements of critical thinking and critical action are evident in the research. Students also reported thinking about their sport involvement both from a participation point of view and also about the nature of their involvement, for example helping others, in out of school contexts. Both expressed intentions of actions they may take in sport out of school due to the influence of Sport Education. The two students’ perceptions of the influence of the Sport Education model on their sport thinking and sport action has shown that educational outcomes of a socio-cultural nature can be achieved through the model.
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Introduction

Education has a role to play in preparing students for the future (Hicks & Slaughter, 1998). The world is changing rapidly and in response to this physical education needs to be relevant and engaging youth of the future (Penney & Chandler; 2000, Taggart, 2004; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992; Wright, MacDonald & Burrows, 2004). Those who advocate a critical pedagogical position in physical education (for example Culpan, 1998; Fernández-Balboa, 1995; Kirk, 1997; Laker, 2000; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Penney, Clarke & Kinchin, 2002; Sage, 1993) argue that physical education needs to reflect a socio-cultural emphasis which "foregrounds social and cultural factors as key constituents of learning" (Burrows, 2004, p. 105) for the subject to make a positive contribution to society now and in the future.

Recent physical education curriculum changes in New Zealand reflect a socio-cultural approach (Wright, 2004). The guidance offered in the Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum (1999) (HPENZ) suggests that the socio-cultural perspective can be realised by engaging students in critical inquiry, or in other words by adopting a socio-critical pedagogy. Teachers adopting a socio-critical position encourage students to "examine and challenge the status quo, the dominant constructions of reality and the power relations that produce inequalities, in ways that can lead to advocacy and community action" (Wright, 2004, p. 7). Through this interpretation of critical thinking (Culpan, 1998; Gillespie & Culpan 2000; Wright, 2004) and resulting critical action (Ministry of Education, 1999) the physically educated person of the new millennium is encouraged to apply that learning in appropriate and meaningful ways to their community and society.

The challenge for New Zealand Physical Educators is to match the vision of new and enlightened physical education, presented in curricula, with programmes and pedagogies that can deliver the desired outcomes (Taggart, 2004). In this research project I take the opportunity to study a curriculum model, Sport Education, as a precursor to understanding its potential as a socio-critical pedagogical tool in New Zealand.
It has been claimed that the Sport Education model (Hastie, 2004; Penney et al. 2002; Penney, Clarke, Quill, & Kinchin, 2005; Siedentop, 2002; Wright et al. 2004) has the potential to bring a socio-critical emphasis to physical education. The original assumptions underlying the model refer to the institutionalised nature of sport in society, its role in contributing to a more humane and worthy culture and the claim that positive sport experiences are important in physical education (Siedentop, Mand & Taggart, 1986). The Sport Education model aims to create authentic sports’ experiences which enable students to learn through sport about sport. This method of instruction is largely student-driven and has elements of cooperative learning and problem solving. Originally the socio-critical perspective was not highlighted explicitly. However since the model has become more widely used and developed, and when considered along with curriculum development (Taggart, 2004; Penney et al. 2002) this aspect has been given more attention.

Siedentop, Mand & Taggart (1986) suggested that learning through authentic sport experiences affects the students’ ability to connect what they have learned with real life situations outside of school. This connection between what is learned in physical education and its application in out of school situations is also mentioned by Penney et al. (2002). They see this connection happening in two ways, involvement in sport outside of school and changes in the way students think about sport that is, adopting a socio-cultural perspective, which may in turn lead to critical action.

Siedentop (2002) highlighted as a ‘future issue’, the need to do more in physical education to focus on the socio-cultural purpose (that is, students applying their learning about sport in their experiences of sport outside of school) of the Sport Education model is met in physical education. Sharing this concern, Penney et al. (2002) examined the Sport Education model and concluded that the development of Sport Education has so far failed to address the socio-critical purpose. However they suggested that the development of the model could involve applying a socio-critical pedagogy. The critical thinking and resulting critical action, reflective of a socio-critical pedagogy, when applied in the
community rather than just curricula contexts is a form of social action thus meeting the socio-cultural intent of the Sport Education model.

This research project provides an opportunity to determine whether students transfer learning from the Sport Education model to contexts other than the classroom and physical education lessons. In particular it examines whether involvement in the Sport Education model facilitates critical thinking that then results in students’ taking critical action.

**Research Questions**

What are students’ perceptions of the influence of Sport Education on their sport thinking and actions?

What critical action is taken by students as a result of the critical thinking and learning associated with the Sport Education model?
Literature Review

Learning Needs in the New Millennium
Wright (2004) looked to the future when she wrote about schooling for new times and stated that we “live in times characterised by profound social and cultural changes which are recognisable globally, but reach into the everyday lives of the individual” (p. 3). She attributes much of this change to the rapid and large scale advances of technology. For the individual this has resulted in an information explosion, exposure to a wide range of values and increasing uncertainty and complexity in their lives.

Penney and Chandler (2000) developed the ideas of Young (1998) about the changing nature of the world of work. They encourage study in the area of work and also in other arenas where rapid change is having an impact. Of particular relevance for physical educators is leisure, the changing relationship between work and leisure, the changing nature of leisure time activities (such as sport) and the changing relationships between individuals.

Consequently there are implications for education programs and curricula (Fernández-Balboa, 1995; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Wright, 2004). It is argued that it is the responsibility of schools to “assist the student in developing skills and qualities and particular forms of learning practices that will enable them to participate in a changing workplace” (Wright, 2004, p. 5). Thus it is important to explore current trends in physical education to determine if these needs are being met.

Among those who highlight the importance of the role of physical education in contributing to societies in the future, Penney et al. (2002) suggested that physical educators need to have a vision for the future. They challenge physical educationalists to consider the type of citizen and the type of learner physical educators play a part in developing, the implications of the vision for the future for the subject of physical education and how physical education will contribute to the development of societies that physical educators endorse.
Traditional Physical Education Paradigm

The new millennium provides fresh challenges for physical education and physical educators. Questions then arise about previous or traditional physical education practices and if they met the needs of learners in the new millennium. Traditionally physical education focussed on technocratic and scientific aspects which enhanced the subject’s academic credibility but at the expense of consideration of socio-cultural aspects (Culpan, 1996, 1997). In the traditional paradigm there was an emphasis on sub disciplines such as anatomy, exercise and physiology and biomechanics. Individual responsibility for physical health, via physical activity was promoted without any consideration of the social context and influences which reflected a healthism perspective (Culpan, 1996, 1997).

Fernández-Balboa’s (1995) examination of the assumptions demonstrated his motivation to achieve social justice through physical education. He claimed that physical education is in crisis due to a ‘faulty and disordered’ traditional paradigm. Unquestioned acceptance of the traditional paradigm and therefore professional beliefs, values and behaviours that underpin it perpetuated the crisis,

Those of us who are truly concerned with equity and social justice must realise that insofar as we, as members of this discipline, continue to think in dichotomous terms, to operate under hierarchical principles, to participate and support relations of power that marginalise the less powerful and suppress differences, and to regard scientific knowledge as neutral and apolitical, we will be limiting ourselves and oppressing others (p. 98).

In practice, these traditional assumptions surface as examples of pedagogy that have a social reproduction orientation rather than a social justice orientation. For example, discriminatory practices as a result of dichotomous pairs such as perpetuating gender inequality, privileging the physically capable, dehumanising practices such as treating the body like a machine, ignoring the social context in which physical education takes place
and implicitly reinforcing established hierarchies and power relationships, are left unchallenged in traditional physical education programmes. Contemporary issues such as the impact of technology on physical activity, obesity and low levels of physical activity contribute to the need for challenging traditional practices through adopting socio-critical pedagogy.

**Physical Education Philosophy and Pedagogy for the Future**

With regard to physical education in the future, Tinning and Fitzclarence (1992) mirrored the sentiments of Siedentop, Mand and Taggart (1986) when they suggested that future physical education curricula needs to be relevant and engaging for youth of the future. They agree with Sage (1993) and Wright (2004) in suggesting that there needs to be a rethinking of the nature of school physical education to address contemporary issues, engage students in positive physical activity experiences and achieve positive social outcomes.

As Sage (1993) indicated, to produce a different, better future, physical education teachers need to adopt a critical and progressive orientation that aspires to challenge traditions and assumptions. Similar thoughts are expressed by Penney and Chandler (2000), who sought curricula and pedagogical change directed towards the development of critically informed citizens prepared to take critical action and play a part in establishing equitable societies. A physical education teacher willing to work towards these ideals needs to understand, apply and evaluate teaching methods that will change thinking, understandings and critical action about physical activity and sport. Sport Education provides a model that could enable students to engage in this critical thinking.

The need to take a critical look at physical education practice against the backdrop of the new millennium is supported by Taggart (2004) who, like Wright (2004), acknowledged that the world is a rapidly changing place and is concerned that children, adolescents and adults are being seduced by the increasingly sophisticated technology and are becoming less active due to their desire to be consumers of technology. He states that physical education must respond to these changes with pedagogies that promote a positive attitude.
towards activity and provide life skills appropriate for the new millennium. He believes that these changes are possible by facilitating outcomes that develop the physical and inter-personal skill necessary to participate in physical activity and also empowering students to think critically about social and cultural factors impacting on their physical activity choices.

In New Zealand, the HPENZ (Ministry of Education, 1999) signalled the rethinking of physical education pedagogy. Traditional physical education practices did not give due time or thought to developing students' knowledge and understanding of the social context within which sport and physical education took place (Culpan, 1996, 1997). In the HPENZ teachers were encouraged to shift away from a scientific, technocratic approach to physical education, reflective of traditional thinking, to an approach that represented a socio-critical pedagogy applied to the movement culture. Whether Sport Education is a model of teaching that enables a teacher to simultaneously meet needs of students, reflect the philosophy of the HPENZ curriculum and encourages students into social action is a contemporary issue for physical educators, which deserves examination.

**The Sport Education Model**

Sport Education is a curriculum and instruction model designed to provide authentic, educationally rich sport experiences for girls and boys in the context of school physical education (Hastie, 2004). At the heart of this approach is a 'play education' (Siedentop, 2002) curriculum theory which supposes that cultures embrace physically active play because of its fundamental importance to collective social life. With this belief and after a decade of observing physical education while researching effective teaching, Siedentop (2002) began to see the connection between “strategies for truly important physical education experiences ... effective teaching practices and imaginative curricula (p. 30).” The combination of thoughts around play theory, effective teaching and keeping physical education relevant to students, gave rise to the development of the Sport Education model and in 1982 the idea of Sport Education was first revealed by Siedentop. Since then there has been wide application and research of it in many countries (Penney et al. 2002; Siedentop, Hastie & van der Mars, 2004).
The long term goals of Sport Education are to develop and promote 'sport for all'. The short term goals of Sport Education are to develop competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportspersons (Siedentop, Mand & Taggart, 1986). Competent refers to developing an understanding of the rules, tactics and skills involved in the sport. Literate means players will understand and value sport and be analytical of sport practices. Enthusiastic is interpreted as sportspeople who participate and behave in ways that promote positive sport practices. Expansion of these goals through socio-critical pedagogy indicates how this model of instruction may indeed be a practical way in which physical educators can address the socio-cultural learning needs of students and the concerns for physical education in the future.

The model provides an opportunity to engage students in relevant and meaningful physical education (Taggart, 2004; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). Hastie's (2004) research indicated that experiencing physical education through the Sport Education model results in increased student motivation for physical education. Capturing this increased motivation is a pre-requisite for raising student and teacher expectations of the learning that can occur and in this way Sport Education can contribute to producing a classroom learning environment where teachers are inclined to engage students in critical thinking and action processes.

As well as developing motor and social skills the Sport Education model is also a medium through which students learn to take responsibility for their actions in a social setting based on expectations of them as a team member or member of a society (Hastie & Buchanan, 2000). These are outcomes consistent with a socio-cultural perspective. This research project will attempt to uncover whether the learning that leads to such outcomes has a critical thinking component which leads to critical action.
Research on Sport Education

While Sport Education is a model applied in schools, Siedentop (2002) believed that competent, literate and enthusiastic players contribute to a process through which the sport culture is enhanced by applying their learning in wider, non school contexts. It is this contention that Penney et al. (2002) took issue with in their examination of the Sport Education model. They acknowledged that the Sport Education model was developed specifically to "facilitate enhanced and explicit links between experiences in physical education and those in the wider world of sport" (p. 56), but argued that developments to date have not resulted in this type of application. They suggested that with development of the Sport Education model, physical education could become a connective specialism, that is, what is learned through the specialism, in this case physical education, is applied in other contexts by the student. Siedentop (2002) in his retrospective of Sport Education agrees and signals that more can be done to encourage learners to link what they learn to sport practices in the community.

Other research on Sport Education (Hastie, 1996; Hastie & Carlson, 1998; Taggart & Alexander, 1993) revealed that students have a preference for such a method of instruction. Boys and girls self report that they work harder during Sport Education than in traditional units of physical education. Students enjoy the team affiliation, and lower skilled students feel useful and able to make a serious contribution to their team (Hastie, 2004). Descriptive and empirical studies (Bennett & Hastie, 1997) described outcomes that reinforce the functional roles of sport, that is, 'good sport' experiences produce people who reflect the attitudes and values of the governing bodies and can make a positive contribution to society. Little research is done however to see if the perceived connected specialism results in critically aware individuals who then through their actions and decisions act in socially just ways.

Hastie (2004) contended that Sport Education is an appropriate context for critical inquiry, a view supported by Siedentop (2002) and Penney et al. (2002). However, his research showed that students' critical thinking is concerned with in class practices, for example organising fair teams. There is no learning activity or outcomes reported that
suggests transfer of the learning into contexts outside of the classroom. Therefore this project will determine if students see connections between their learning in Sport Education and their sport related actions outside of the classroom.

Sport Education has also been examined by Jewett (1994) who commented on curriculum development and research. She suggests that socio-critical outcomes result when either an ecological integration or social reconstruction value orientation underpin the physical education model of choice. If this is the case then her classification of Sport Education, in the discipline mastery category would suggest that the socio-cultural and socio-critical outcomes cannot be achieved through the model, a view which conflicts with those expressed by the developer of the model, Siedentop (2002) and other physical education researchers and commentators (Hastie, 2004; Penney et al. 2005; Taggart, 2004).

Jewett (1994) justified this placement of the model by referring to objectives that reflect a subject matter focus, such as learning specific skills, understanding rules and strategies and improving attitudes towards participating in sports. These are undisputed and valued outcomes of Sport Education (Penney & Chandler, 2000), and functional in nature but not representative of potentially what can be achieved through the model.

Summary
Teachers have a responsibility to prepare students for the future and to respond to students' learning needs in relevant and meaningful ways. This requires pedagogical approaches that take into account socio-cultural factors and approaches that can also deliver the stated aims and objective of physical education curricula. The Sport Education model is purported to be a curriculum instruction model that can deliver on both accounts. Research to date indicates that many desirable physical education outcomes are achieved through the model. However, calls have been made for more development of the model to facilitate the achievement of socio-cultural learning outcomes such as thinking and acting critically in sport situations outside of the school context. This research project aims to discover what students perceive the influence of the Sport Education is on their sport thinking and actions.
Methodology

This research project was guided by the theoretical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism, defined by Abercrombie, Hill & Turner (2000) as "the study of the self-society relationship as a process of symbolic communications between social actors" (p. 353). How students make meaning from social interactions, such as a physical education class experiences (Sport Education in this research context) was at the heart of this project. The students discussed their perspectives on learning in the Sport Education model and an assumption of the symbolic interactionism framework is that people largely act on their perceptions (Neuman, 2000). This was particularly relevant to the research as students were asked questions relating to critical thinking and resulting critical action.

This qualitative methodology of social research is an interpretive approach (Neuman, 2000). The goal of interpretive social research is to develop an understanding of social life and to discover how people make sense of their lives. In a discussion of the origins of the interpretive approach, Neuman (2000) referred to the belief of German sociologist, Max Weber, who argued that social science should concern itself with the study of meaningful social action, that is, action that has a purpose or intent and to which subjective meaning has been attached. This research project is interpretive as it examines whether Sport Education influences students’ thinking about sport related matters and if there is any critical action as a result of it. It therefore sits comfortably within the interpretive approach.

A common feature of a qualitative approach is the concern with process rather than with outcomes or products (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998). This social research project has developed from an interest in how students construct meaning in a particular physical education context and what processes occur that shape their thinking, and if this thinking is translated into critical action. This methodology has a practical orientation where the researcher is the main instrument of data collection.
Sample selection

A secondary school was purposefully selected for the following reasons; I knew they used the Sport Education model in the first part of the year, I had experience of teaching using the model in this school, and I knew I could count on the support and help of the Physical Education department with subject selection and contact details.

Once ethical approval had been granted by the Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee the school was contacted requesting permission to conduct the research. Letters outlining the research and asking for this consent were sent to the Principal (Appendix 1) and the Head of Department, Physical Education (Appendix 2) of the selected school. The Principal gave his consent in an email and verbal consent was received from the Head of Department, Physical Education.

The Head of Department, Physical Education provided me with the contact details for two students who had been part of his Sport Education, Year 11 class. They were chosen by him on the basis that they would be able to communicate about their experience in Sport Education. Students were contacted by phone and both students indicated they wanted to be involved. A letter (Appendix 3) and consent form (Appendix 4) was sent to them. When consent was received interview times and dates were arranged by phone. To protect their privacy, students have been referred to as Helen and Erin (not their real names).

At the same time as the students were contacted by phone I also spoke to the parents about the research and followed this up with an information letter (Appendix 5) and consent form (Appendix 6), that they both signed.

Helen and Erin are in the same Year 11 Physical Education class. Helen is actively involved in sport at school and in the community, as a player and a coach. She loves physical education and may pursue a career in sport coaching. Erin has played some sport and in recent years has been more involved in horse riding. She enjoys physical education because she gets to try new things and is encouraged to take on leadership roles.
Interviews took place at a time and place that suited the students. Helen was interviewed at the College of Education where the researchee worked after school. This was convenient for us both and she felt comfortable there. Her interview took approximately one hour and was taped. Due to poor quality of the initial recording we arranged to meet again so I could clarify some of the inaudible answers on the original tape of the interview. The second meeting took half an hour. Erin was interviewed in the physical education classroom at her school. This interview also took approximately one hour and was recorded.

**Interviews**

The scope of this one paper research project puts limitations on the time available and amount of data gathered and used. Therefore only two secondary students were interviewed. The interviews were semi structured and face to face. An interview guide was used to keep the interview related to the research topic (Appendix 7), however the wording and order of the questions was not fixed. Prompts were used to encourage the subjects to further expand on issues relevant to the research. This resulted in greater flexibility in the process, increased depth of responses and more confidence that the responses were representative of the participants’ perceptions (Burns, 1997).

The interviews were taped and then transcribed. The recording quality of the first subject’s interview was poor and as a result ‘inaudible’ often appeared in the transcript. This necessitated a second meeting with the subject and some questions were asked again while other parts of the transcript were checked by the student to ensure that what was written was in fact what she had said. This process facilitated content validity for this particular subject which contributed to the reliability of the research.

There were no such problems with the second subject’s interview. A copy of the transcribed interview was sent to this subject with a request to read over the material and to make any comments on the transcript and return it to me in the self addressed and stamped envelope. The transcript was not returned.
Content validity, a check to ensure that the questions were appropriate given the research question (Neuman 2000), was also attended to by conducting a pilot interview and submitting the proposed interview questions for academic analysis. The main insight from the pilot interview was that the subject interviewed found it hard to recall the Sport Education experience as she was involved in it eight months prior to the interview. The final interview guide was altered after the pilot. Once ethical approval was granted, I arranged for the interviews to occur as soon as possible so the experience was more likely to be recalled accurately. The pilot study also provided an opportunity to practise an interview technique.

**Data analysis**

The first stage of the data analysis was to code the data from the transcripts using content analysis (Neuman, 2000), where the data was examined and common themes within the transcripts and across the two transcripts identified. Codes were assigned to students’ responses, this first stage of coding referred to as open coding (Gratton & Jones, 2004) and some structure was achieved in organising the data. The first stage can be followed by a second stage, axial coding (Gratton & Jones, 2004), where the focus is more on the themes than the data, although relevant quotes from the data are also noted. In my analysis of the data, axial coding took the form of taking the themes which emerged from the open coding and using them in a mind map exercise, where themes, specific quotes and links to the literature transcripts were written on a large piece of paper. This was followed by further reading of the transcripts which resulted in some changes to both the codes being used and the development of themes.

Having data from two students allowed me to make a comparison of the two transcripts where points of difference and similarities were noted, based on analytical comparison (Neuman, 2000). The similarities supported the identified themes which gave me confidence in both the theme and the findings. Interestingly, the points of difference between the students’ responses were not contradictory in relation to each other’s story,
rather they were examples of something that one had mentioned but the other had not. These 'different' answers also supported the themes.

**Researcher's background**

An interest in developing an understanding of the relationship between these two factors, philosophical underpinnings of a Physical Education curriculum and teaching methods used to facilitate socio-critical learning outcomes, with a view to informing current practice, is the motivation behind this research project. Currently I am a visiting lecturer in Physical Education, Health and Coach Education Curriculum Centre at Christchurch College of Education. I am responsible for delivering the Sport Education unit to preservice physical education teachers.

I have been a secondary school physical education teacher for eleven and a half years, five of these as Head of Department, Physical Education. Sport Education was a part of all programmes that I have been involved in designing and teaching.

For a period of two years, I was Physical Education Advisor and Contract Facilitator for the HPENZ covering the top half of the South Island. This required extensive knowledge and understanding of the HPENZ document and also the philosophy underpinning it.

Recently I was involved in contributing to a Ministry of Education resource, *The Curriculum in Action. Making Meaning: Making a Difference. Ideas for learning about the socio-ecological perspective and health promotion approaches at year's 11 – 13* (Ministry of Education, 2004). As the title suggests there was extensive thinking around the socio-ecological perspective and health promotion when writing for this resource. This has prompted me to give consideration to ways and means of bringing a socio-cultural pedagogy to my teaching and encourage others to do so as well. I have a desire to advance my practices in physical education to reflect the needs of students in today’s society. I believe that through physical education, students can develop a wide range of skills and also attitudes that will help them to navigate their way in a complex society and be better prepared to make some of life’s decisions.
For these reasons I am in a position where I have critically analysed teaching methods and resources that may help teachers develop a socio-cultural pedagogy. My practical experiences and philosophical understandings have led to this research project. Based on my abovementioned experiences I believe that the Sport Education model has the potential to develop connections between student thinking and critical (social) action in sport in the community but that this potential is not being realised and furthermore that the need for this type of learning is not identified or understood by many physical education teachers.

**Limitations**

The major limitation of this research was the sample size, only two students were interviewed. The size of this paper did not allow for a wider representation of students in the sample. Therefore what is reported cannot be taken as representative of the perceptions of the class as a whole or students experiencing Sport Education in general. Both of the students were female therefore there is no representation from a males perspective.

It would have been very useful to get information first hand from the teacher about the intended learning outcomes of the Sport Education unit. An assumption was made given my experience of working in the school about the intended outcomes of the Sport Education unit and the development of the model in this particular school. This and other information such as the influence of HPENZ (Ministry of Education, 1999) curriculum while of interest was not within the scope of the research project.
Results and Discussion

The students interviewed went to a co-educational, urban school. I taught in this school’s Physical Education department for two and a half years and therefore have a theoretical and practical understanding of the Physical education programme. At the time of interviewing, I was not a teacher in this school. The Physical Education department in this school fully supports and aims to implement the *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1999) and their programme has an emphasis on Hauora (holistic concept of health) and interpersonal skills as well as physical skills. In Year 11 there is a deliberate and explicit goal of students developing their interpersonal skills and being more aware of the impact of their actions on others. For this reason, students are put into teams or groups in most of the units in the Year 11 programme. I have team taught with and also observed the teacher of the two students interviewed on numerous occasions and he is explicit and consistent in his attempts to encourage students to think of others and to use appropriate interpersonal skills in the various situations that arise.

Students’ Awareness of the Sport Education Model

To get a sense of the students’ Physical Education experience I asked them to describe their Year 11 Physical Education programme. It became evident from interviews that basketball was the sport used in Sport Education. Both students recalled what they had done in Year 11 Physical Education mentioning specific sports and outcomes. For example, Helen mentioned two activities, a skill and a concept:

*We did basketball and dance and interpersonal skills and that was helping our Hauora and well-being...*

Erin gave a comprehensive account of the physical activities she participated in during the year in physical education:
... the first thing we did was an Activate, which was basically [fitness], so it's very high, there's heaps of running and not much talking. So there was lots of running and it was... tiring. And I think we did the beep test once. We did it as a team, and the next thing we did was basketball and we played in a couple of basketball [games], all the skills, we got put into teams and did a little tournament. And then we did dance, which was completely different and we just went around ballroom dancing and then we got into groups again and then worked a dance and performed it to the rest of the class... And then we've just been doing badminton and I think that's the only sport that actually mattered whether you were good at it because we actually got marked on our performance rather than how well we worked in a group... and now it's touch...

Neither student referred to the Sport Education model specifically and when questioned had not heard of it, although this was the model of instruction for the basketball unit. I find this interesting, as I believe that an opportunity to learn about sport through the Sport Education Model (Alderson & Crutchley, 1990) may be lost by not highlighting to the students how and why the basketball unit is different to other units in the physical education programme, that is, the purpose is to create an authentic sport experience. Such an introduction might start the ball rolling with regard to thinking from a socio-cultural perspective. Knowing the name of the ‘Sport Education’ model is not what is important for students, deriving learning from the experience is (Siedentop, 2002).

**Students' Description of the Sport Education Unit**

Although neither student could recall any mention of the Sport Education model, when asked how basketball differed from other physical education units their accounts in effect matched what Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars (2004) described as a typical Sport Education unit. An example of this is Erin's description of how the class went from 'learning things from the teacher' to organising themselves in teams and playing in a tournament:
... each lesson we’d learn a different [skill], like dribbling, and then we practised dribbling for a week and then we played mini-games and tried to put ourselves into even groups and we got put into three groups, and we had to go away and design team names and uniforms and the idea of it was to organise the actual event, so you had to have score sheets. There had to be a time keeper and two refs and stuff like that, so we had to know all the rules. We didn’t have a set play exactly like normal basketball because we made it more versatile and we just rotated around, there was a duty team and they would each have refs and score keepers and stuff like that and then at the end of each period you got marked on how well you organised the game, and you get marked on how well you played as well...

The students’ experiences were similar to those reported by Hastie (2004) where students indicated a preference for the Sport Education model format, increased levels of enjoyment in particular from being involved in a team, and feeling useful even if they were not skilled in the sport. The students suggested that roles were allocated within the team and everyone was able to contribute. According to Helen:

In our teams we did have turns at being the coach, but there was one manager, and there was a captain, and there were people who did the lesson skills. So, everybody had a lesson planned.

Roles such as those mentioned by Helen and also the expectation to be a playing member of the team (Grant, Sharp & Siedentop, 1992) provided opportunities for student involvement. Hastie and Buchanan (2000) reported high levels of student engagement in physical education where Sport Education was the model of instruction. This was attributed to, in part, to the “content-embedded accountability inherent in the curriculum model” (p. 355). Both subjects’ account of the unit include being busy and involved and both mentioned that their team needed to be organised to get through the activities, skills tests or games. Erin’s comments support Hastie and Buchanan’s (2000) research:
... because we tried to get two games in each period, which was quite a tight fit, so you'd have to get dressed really fast and be warmed up and ready by like ten past or whatever, and if you were late you got points off and stuff like that.

A feature of the Sport Education model is team affiliation. Siedentop (2002) in a retrospective of Sport Education highlights the importance of 'persisting groups' (teams) and refers to the literature (Cohen, 1994; Wynne & Walberg, 1994 both cited in Siedentop, 2002) on group work, the cooperative nature of learning in groups, and how it improves educational outcomes. Helen alludes to one such educational outcome, (that is, developing interpersonal skills) and gives her opinion of why they were put into teams for the basketball unit:

\[ \text{It was quite different, but it was learning all the different skills that people came up with. It was basically another way of developing our interpersonal skills because we got put into groups of people that we didn't know... in the class.} \]

Given this particular school's emphasis on interpersonal skill development, it is not surprising that Helen identified this unit as another opportunity to develop them. Other consequences of being in teams in the unit are included further on in the discussion of issues that arise in Sport Education.

**Students' Perceptions of their Learning**

Some researchers (Hastie, 2004; Penney et al. 2002; Penney et al. 2005; Siedentop, 2002; Wright et al. 2004) suggested that the Sport Education model has something to offer in terms of socio-cultural and socio-critical learning about sport and its connectiveness with society. Penney et al. (2002) concluded that development of the Sport Education model was needed if it was to "realise its potential to promote 'sustained connections' for more pupils in relation to engagement in sport" (p. 1). These connections can take the form of ongoing involvement in sport outside of school and students adopting a socio-critical perspective when participating in sport and taking social action when necessary. I viewed this as 'potential learning' that could occur through using the Sport Education model and
therefore needed to ascertain what students thought the learning was in their basketball (Sport Education) unit.

Erin commented on what she thought the teacher was trying to get them to learn about:

*I think he was trying to get us to understand how much effort goes into events and how much it takes to organise it and what you have to do, rather than just playing a game.*

When questioned about her personal learning Erin said:

*To play basketball better, and I think, getting everybody organised, I learned to do that a bit more quickly. I think, I kind of organised people and bossed them around a little, but we were playing games and I was kind of allocating people where to go, like who’s timekeeper and stuff like that and my team was really good.*

Helen recalls that she learned:

*Different skills and interacting with other people as well as helping people that didn’t have much skills.*

From their responses, it would appear they were both aware of an intended outcome related to interpersonal skills and that they developed management skills and an awareness of what is involved in organising sport. Contrary to Penney et al.’s (2002) conclusion about the lack of evidence of learning of this kind, social factors were identified in the students’ responses providing evidence of socio-cultural aspects being discussed and or thought about in the unit.
As with some other units in the Year 11 Physical Education programme, students were organised into teams, however in this unit of work they also participated in a tournament situation. Comments from the students about perceived learning produced some evidence that they had an opportunity for learning through interacting with other team members to improve their chances in the tournament. When asked for examples of how people developed their interpersonal skills, Helen commented:

As in team leading and getting everyone involved. Oh well I've learned to help people with the skills that they need help with.

Teams were awarded points in this unit of work for behaviours observed or tasks that had been completed indicative of a discipline mastery orientation (Jewett, 1994). Erin described how the points system worked:

... we were assessed [awarded points] on our organisation of the season of basketball, so if you were playing, you were marked on how fair you played, if there was fouls you'd get marked down and if you turned up late you got marked down. If you didn’t all have the same uniform, you’d get marked down, so it was like you had to be a team to play. If you weren’t playing and you were on duty group you got marked on whether the game started late because you were disorganised you got marked down. If there was dodgy refs, like you couldn’t decide who’d forwarded or whatever, you got marked down. Or if you weren’t very positive and if you were on duty you had to encourage people to be really positive and stuff.

Helen describes how activities in the lesson were used to award team points and also mentions the importance placed on the team working together for to achieve maximum points:

... well first was our lesson plan, and how we did that, and then we got straight into our warm up, well, we had to make sure our whole group was changed, and
then we gave our teacher our lesson plan. And then he marked the lesson plan on how good it was, and then after that, we had to go warm up, and after we warmed up, we got into the lesson. And then he stopped us, and told us what one we had, and then we had our skills test.

Allocation of team points appears to reinforce the interpersonal skill development aspect of this unit and team organisation. It is therefore not surprising that the students perceive their learning to be about these two factors.

**Students' Sport Thinking**

What the students’ thinking revealed was a level of socio-cultural awareness that although seen as a possible outcome of the Sport Education model (Taggart, 2004), goes against Penney et al.'s (2002) argument and what I expected as an outcome of this research. Students described thinking about other people and issues that arise in sport and considered how individual actions and actions of others affect the class environment and society. As an example, Erin made a comment about why people may not participate in sport:

*I don’t think it's [sport out of school] as much, because people don’t mark you on turning up on time and stuff, but I think out of school its way more about your physical skill. That’s probably why I don’t do it.*

Helen offered an opinion about sport that shows she too is making comparisons between sport as it is experienced in Sport Education and sport in society:

*The similarity is everybody getting along with each other, and the differences is when someone new comes in, they have to be taught everything again. So, if you get some person new coming along [in sport outside of school], they can just pick up on the skills that they’ve got.*
From this research, it is not possible to determine whether this thinking resulted from the Sport Education experience, the teacher’s emphasis on interpersonal skills, the influence of the HPENZ (1999), the students’ previous sport experiences, or a combination of all of these factors. What is does show is that situations occur in physical education, possibly through the Sport Education model, that support socio-cultural learning. Erin has developed an understanding of how sport operates in a club situation:

... well I sort of learned how much everyone relies on one person... say you were organising it out of school, it all sort of relies on one person... everyone has to look up to the boss or whatever, and in my team, I think I was that, but it’s not as though it was a hard job, they just sort of rely on you and I think that’s like society in a way. Everyone needs to follow one person or, group of people.

Erin’s above comments are an example of how sport is a powerful socialising agent which replicates social realities; in this case, it could be hierarchies and power (Fernández-Balboa, 1995) or equally the notion of a shared community responsibility for active participation by all. When sport situations are mirrored in physical education as for example in Sport Education, it can be expected that these social issues will arise. Whether the issues are identified, discussed and explored depends to a large extent on the intentions of the teacher and the philosophy of the physical education programme. If a socio-critical pedagogy was in used in this example students might be encouraged to examine and challenge existing power relationships in sport firstly within the Sport Education model experience of sport and then sport in society. Similarly they could develop their thinking about contributing to sport in society and what form this could take for example, volunteering. Erin identified the need for people to take responsibility for organising themselves and others to promote participation. Whether or not her thoughts translate into her taking action or not cannot be determined from this research.

Based on this research it seems that this Sport Education unit encouraged thinking from a socio-cultural perspective as replicating sport through in Sport Education gave students an experience of sport with which to compare sport out of school with. Hastie (2004) in
agreement said that the deliberate changes made in the delivery of sport in physical education because of the model provide ways in which “we can assist students in becoming critical of the practices associated with popular physical culture” (Wright et al. 2004, p. 64). However if students are not given the opportunity to identify and discuss issues that arise or have relevance then the sport experience in fact perpetuates some aspects of sport that are not desirable, such as issues of fairness. Helen’s comment about an issue that arose in basketball and softball illustrates the undesirable aspects of sport:

We got that [issues over fairness] a lot with the other teams when we were playing basketball and softball. We had the basketball teams I was put into, three of us were Canterburies, and they didn’t find that fair. And then it was the same with softball, because three of us had played softball for a club and they managed to put us all in the same group.

This situation was identified by the students as unfair but I am not sure if it was discussed as a class. It is examples like this that reinforce my belief that the Sport Education model can be used to facilitate socio-critical learning outcomes such as the issue Helen raises. As previously mentioned I believe discussions about how and why Sport Education is different to other units in physical education may mean that students and teachers are primed to identify the issues and discuss them. For example Siedentop, Mand and Taggart (1986) believed that through Sport Education, authentic sport experiences can be created. A Year 11 class could develop their own definition of ‘authentic sport’ and then consider whether choosing fair teams was consistent with this definition and how sports teams are actually organised in ‘out of school’ sport. Penney and Clarke (Penney et al. 2005) comment on this paradox within Sport Education, and go on to suggest that the potential for socio-critical thinking exists within the model because behaviours and practices in sport are experienced by the students. For this potential to be realised the teacher needs to be explicit about intended socio-cultural and socio-critical outcomes in their planning of the unit (Gillespie & Culpan, 2000).
Helen said she thought more about strategy and relationships between players in her sport teams now than she did in the past when playing sport. She also thought that the basketball experience may leave some students, in this case one she had helped, with a more positive view of sport:

_We have one girl... when she first came into our class, she wouldn't do anything, she sat in the corner. Well, she ended up coming into our class and we were starting to do basketball. And she just stood in the corner and so I went over and talked to her, and was like ‘what are you doing?’ and then Mr. talked to me to see if I was OK about her being in my group and then we got put in the same group for basketball, and so then we’ve kind of been helping her out with her skills and her interest of being in PE._

Helen’s awareness of how the other girl may have felt and her willingness to take action reveal a socio-cultural perspective that in this case resulted in action. While it is tempting to attribute this outcome to the Sport Education model, other variables need to be considered such as this student’s sport experiences and previous coaching experience. It appears that the Sport Education model can indeed support such learning but it cannot be taken for granted that this learning is occurring for all students in this class.

The Sport Education experience was also a positive one for Erin and she is of the opinion that her classmates enjoyed the unit too because of the way it was structured with things other than just winning being rewarded. Other comments also reveal how she perceives teenagers felt in this unit:

_... when people play sport like now, teenagers, they think it’s all about who’s the best when really that was like, we won because we were organised and there was a lot more rather than just ‘I am better at doing lay ups than you are’. I think it’s really good that we did it that way because the other people in my class who aren’t exactly great at lay ups and can’t play that way, they had a chance to make the team win..._
Students' comments reveal that they are thinking about strategy, how they may be more inclined to help others now and enjoyment levels in physical education during the Sport Education unit. Students' reflections support the view that the Sport Education model is an appropriate model through which to stimulate thinking about sport, its role in society and how sport and individuals involved in sport can contribute positively to society (Penney et al. 2005).

As previously stated student thinking will be influenced by the philosophy and goals of the department and the teacher. According to the students' comments this particular teacher explicitly encouraged the students to think about the concept of winning, fairness and consideration of other peoples' feelings. From the students' comments, it is clear that the teacher had communicated the learning associated with the Sport Education model in some form. Erin highlights his communication

_He [the teacher] didn't really care who won the game. That's one thing that was clear from the start, that it wasn't about winning and he just really encouraged us to just get everyone in the team to think about rotating because we had like subs and stuff, we were trying to get not the best people on all the time, to like play your best game. And he always tried to get us to think if your group was so good and you were always getting subbed off, how that would feel, so, like thinking about everybody in the team._

Just as sport is socially constructed so too is the emphasis placed on winning in a sporting context. Erin's quote above is further evidence of issues that arise in Sport Education which warrant further investigation of a socio-cultural and socio-critical nature. Hastie (2004) encouraged teachers to provide students' opportunities to "give voice to their physical education experiences" (p. 67) which would include, in this case, the tension created by being in a competitive tournament where the goal is to win and being encouraged to rotate players regardless of ability. Of particular relevance to this research question is his opinion that the issues that exist in community sport, such as gender
discrimination, can also be given thought in Sport Education. He goes as far as saying what the issues are that they should focus on but there is no suggestion of the 'how'. This is one area of broader development that is needed if teachers are going to use Sport Education to achieve socio-cultural and socio-critical aims.

In general these students’ thinking about sport cannot be claimed as a result of participation in the Sport Education model. When asked if the Sport Education experience made her think any differently about sport, Erin commented:

Well, I think I’ve always thought that, I'm that sort of person.

However she did go on to say:

Yes, I do think that the basketball module has influence[d] the way I think because... of that basketball thing, I think everyone is worthy to play sport...it doesn't matter how good you are... I reckon there is always a place for you in the team.

In this instance, a situation had been created whereby students had to think about their contribution to a team, the effect of their actions on others and how to actually play basketball.

**Critical Thinking and Action**

The aim of this research project was to determine if Sport Education influences students sport thinking and actions. When considering this in conjunction with the aims of the HPENZ (Ministry of Education, 1999) and the relationship between a socio-cultural perspective and its development into a socio-critical pedagogy for which critical thinking is a tool, the nature of the thinking and actions warrants investigation, that is, do the examples of student thinking and actions constitute critical thinking and critical action?
Expansion of the underlying concepts of the HPENZ (Ministry of Education, 1999) reveals how critical thinking is a means of achieving the socio-critical objectives of the curriculum. Health Promotion, as it relates to physical education requires students to identify situations where a person’s well-being needs to be enhanced, analysing these needs and identifying positive outcomes in relation to the need. Students plan and take individual or collective action and then reflect and critically evaluate the processes used and the consequences of the action (Ministry of Education, 2004). Helen’s example of individual action reflects some of the abovementioned points:

There was one girl, she didn’t know anything about PE, she didn’t know how to do any skills, and I took her away from the team, so they could work on the skills they were working on, and I went and taught her how to do some basic skills, like passing, dribbling. I felt quite proud and happy that I’d helped her.

My questions about the experience may have been the first time that she had articulated what had occurred. Whether she had evaluated the process and considered the consequence of her action, as per the critical thinking and action process, prior to the interview was not established. Her story illustrates how the Sport Education experience coupled with time to process experiences, in this case through my interview, gives students opportunities to achieve learning outcomes that reflect a socio-cultural perspective. Perhaps this is an example of how the model can be developed, that is, build in time to explicitly discuss and process situations and actions, to achieve the potential of the model in terms of socially transformative (Penney et al. 2002; Sage, 1993) outcomes.

When asked whether she had heard of critical thinking Erin said she thought critical thinking was about judging people, first impressions and thinking negatively about people. She also interpreted the term as being critical of a situation. However her descriptions of how her team operated revealed an implicit degree of critical thinking on her behalf. She gave this example of someone in her team taking action to be inclusive which illustrates Health Promotion (HPENZ) in action:
Well, I think every time you play a basketball game, who you throw to, determines how you respect them, because there was Brucie and he was a really good player, and he could have only passed the ball to you know, three guys, and won the game every game, but instead he passed to everyone and he was really fair and I reckon that was really good... just the fact that he passed the ball to me even though he knew I could drop it, you know, I thought that was really nice.

The Socio-ecological Perspective (HPENZ) encourages students to challenge assumptions that influence their personal attitudes, values and behaviours and those of society. This perspective involves a critical analysis of the determinants of health and an understanding of the inter-related nature of these determinants. Physical education students may evaluate management and organisational practices, policies and regulations related to sport and consider how these contribute to an equitable society. This perspective also emphasises an individual's active contribution to their own well-being and that of other people and society (Ministry of Education, 1999; 2004).

Helen who also had not heard of ‘critical thinking’ describes how she dealt with the problem of team members not completing their lesson plans and therefore letting the team down:

Well, I got the whole team to [plan for] basketball, and we all came up with some ideas for our lesson plans, and then the girl... Kate, she didn’t have hers and then we went from there. But ever since then, I’ve took everyone’s number, and then to make sure that they’re coming to school and doing it I rang the players the night before.

The examples of the thinking and action taken by individuals include aspects of a critical thinking process. Their responses indicate that on a continuum from functional to critical thinking they would be placed closer to the critical end as they reveal an interpretation of the situation that goes beyond accepting the status quo and involves taking action to improve the situation for themselves and others.
There are examples are of actions taken within the unit but whether these actions transfer to sport situations outside of school is a question left unanswered given the scope of this research. This transfer which Penney et al. (2002) describes as a connective specialism (an explicit link between experiences in physical education and those in the wider world of sport) would constitute critical action and when practised in contexts outside of physical education, social action.

**Students’ Intentions of Critical Action**

Two types of intended actions have emerged from the students’ comments. One, an intention to get involved in sport, and two intentions of how they will conduct themselves and contribute to the teams they will be involved in. This is significant as Penney et al (2002) suggested that these two outcomes have not been realised to date and would only result from further development of the model. This gives rise to questions about the nature of these students’ particular experience of Sport Education and how these results may be explained when compared to the research undertaken by Penney et al. (2002) and how the model has been developed in this school.

When asked if the basketball unit had triggered an interest in being involved in sport outside of school Erin answered:

*Yes, it has, I think it would be cool to do that like as a club team, you know how they have those sort of relaxed ones ... I'd probably do that.*

She went on to say that she would probably be involved in the organisation of the team:

*I think I'd like to play basketball and I think I'd probably be like, what are they called, organiser or secretary of the team or something like that.*
Helen intends to keep coaching and to take an interest in her team mates’ development more so than be concerned with her own competitiveness. Helen also expressed a desire to share her enjoyment of sport:

*I love the sports that I do and I just like being with other people and trying to get it [enjoyment] into them.*

Helen shared that her experience of helping someone in the Sport Education would make her try to help people in her sports’ teams. When asked if she would have done this anyway she replied:

*No, I was thinking about being competitive. Now I think about being a team more.*

It appears that the experiences have been a catalyst for students’ thinking about their personal involvement in sport and wider sport issues. Whether these thoughts about participation in sport outside of school actually get translated into action cannot be determined from this research. This research suggests that without development of the model in the way Hastie (2004), Penney et al. (2002 and Siedentop (2002) allude to students’ experience of Sport Education in this school still gave rise to critical thinking and intentions to transfer this thinking into critical action. To be confident in these outcomes being realised for a class as opposed to individuals (as per the research) I would advocate for intentions of this nature being made explicit in the discussion and planning of the Sport Education model, hence the model would require further development.
Summary

Without knowingly participating in a unit using the Sport Education model the students' description of the unit illustrated many of the features that characterise Sport Education. There is strong evidence that these students' perception of learning included interpersonal skills and team responsibility, which reflects the Physical Education department's and this teacher's, in particular, physical education philosophy.

There is evidence of thinking about socio-cultural matters and of the students taking critical action or witnessing it in others within the unit. This reaffirms the belief that Sport Education gives rise to situations and experiences that can extend students by encouraging them to think critically about what is going on, both in and in their personal lives (Penney et al. 2002; Taggart, 2004). This thinking, while reported as occurring during the Sport Education unit, cannot solely be attributed to the influence of the Sport Education model as per the research question.

This research has added to what we know about students' Sport Education experience by revealing outcomes of a socio-cultural and socio-critical nature. However, it brings into question the influence of other variables on students' thinking such as; the teacher's philosophy and intended outcomes of the unit, the students' own sporting experiences and the influence of the HPENZ (1999).

There is evidence of socio-cultural thinking taking place within the unit, consistent with the research of Hastie and Buchanan (2000). There is also evidence that the students in this case are connecting what they have learned in Sport Education with their out of school sport experiences which appears to contradict Penney et al. (2002) and Siedentop (2002) who suggested more development of the model is needed to achieve these aims. That is not to say that development should be halted, it may mean that in this particular school it is more developed than in the schools where Penny et al.'s (2002) research took place. The findings challenge to some extent the view that without development socio-cultural outcomes of a socially transformative nature will not be realised, but do not
suggest that the Sport Education model will always result in such thinking without development or indeed explicit intentions to do so.
Conclusions

The Sport Education model creates numerous opportunities for socio-cultural learning outcomes. The aim of Sport Education is to create an authentic sport experience in the classroom environment however the manipulation of the setting brings this authenticity into question (Penney et al. 2000). What does result though is an experience of sport that gives rise to situations, problems and observations that when given attention and problematised result in learning of a socio-cultural nature. This learning can be facilitated by employing a socio-critical pedagogy, that is, developing critical thinking skills and the personal skills and attitudes to take action.

Therefore development of the Sport Education model could include applying a critical thinking process (Ministry of Education, 2004) to analyse the issues that arise within the unit as a result of the students being involved in various aspects of ‘sport’. A challenge for ongoing learning is to sustain this type of learning throughout the physical education programme. Students may then develop their awareness of socio-cultural issues that impact on their experience of sport, others’ experience of sport and the nature of sport in their society throughout the programme not just in Sport Education.

A second challenge is to achieve the transfer of learning in Sport Education to contexts other than the classroom (Penney et al. 2002). This includes other sport experiences within the school and sport experiences and involvement outside of school. Through a socio-critical pedagogy, a socially transformative outcome may be realised. In this sense Sport Education can be a means through which physical education becomes a connective specialism (Penney et al. 2002). Although there is evidence to suggest that this can occur through Sport Education it cannot be assumed that it will always be so without such outcomes being deliberately and explicitly planned for and communicated to the students. This is an important stage in developing the model.

The impetus to develop the model as a socio-critical tool can be found in physical education trends and resulting physical education curriculum changes (Ministry of Education, 1999; Penney et al. 2005). Development of physical education in and for the
new millennium includes a more socially and culturally aware and responsive subject (Sage, 1993; Tinning & Fitz Clarence, 1992), a subject that can support students development in citizenship (Penney et al. 2005; Wright, 2004) and one that “empowers students to be critical consumers and to exercise social responsibility while they develop skills and understandings to maintain healthy active lifestyles” (Taggart, 2004, p. 2). Taggart (2004) highlights the need for programmes and pedagogies that facilitate the abovementioned developments and further development of Sport Education would appear to be a logical extension of this.

In New Zealand these trends are captured in the HPENZ (1999). Consideration of this document and taking into account student needs steers teachers towards pedagogies that reflect a socio-cultural perspective and utilise a socio-critical pedagogy. As previously mentioned, this is the starting point for development of curriculum models such as Sport Education, for purposes of a socio-cultural nature. This may bridge the gap between what a curriculum suggests, that is, the theory, and the reality of teaching it, that is, the practice.

Students also report enjoying physical education when the Sport Education model is used and utilising this enjoyment and motivation may make the learning about socio-cultural factors more achievable. Any development of the model should therefore take into consideration the essence of Sport Education that contributes to the development of socio-cultural outcomes and this enjoyment factor and aim to capture it and sustain it alongside extending students thinking not at the expense of it.

There is evidence that students perceive their thinking about sport was influenced by participation in the Sport Education model. There is also evidence of action being taken in Sport Education that occurred as a result of critical thinking about situations that arose in the Sport Education unit. There is the indication of intended actions and thoughts being applied out of the school situation but a limitation of this research is that intentions can be reported but whether in fact they are acted upon cannot be determined without further
research. In this case it would be interesting to talk to the same students at a latter stage to see if their intentions had in fact become reality.

Another limitation of this research is the multi-variates reasons that may explain the relationship between students' sport thinking and actions. The Sport Education model dictated the way the unit was organised however it may have been the influence of the teacher that led students to consider socio-cultural factors. Similarly their previous sport experiences may have shaped their views on sport and through Sport Education they have an opportunity to express them but it may not have been where they developed them. Consideration of all the variables in the learning experience is necessary to achieve effective learning experiences but the conclusion from this research still holds, that is, development of the Sport Education model can result in socio-cultural learning outcomes for students, as through the development of the model each of the variables would be attended to.

In summary the two students' perceptions of the influence of the Sport Education model on their sport thinking and sport action has shown that educational outcomes of a socio-cultural nature can be achieved through the model. Students enjoy physical education when delivered through the model and the factors that contribute to these good feelings need to be harnessed rather than lost when developing the model. Development of the model is an exercise that can lead to learning as suggested in the HPENZ (1999) curriculum, teachers' professional confidence and competency in employing a socio-critical pedagogy and connections between what is learned in Sport Education with what is practised in out of school sport.
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Appendix One
Sample of Principal letter

CHRISTCHURCH
COLLEGE of EDUCATION
Te Whare Wātea Mātauranga Ki Otautahi

The Principal

Dear

I am a student in the Master of Teaching and Learning degree at the Christchurch College of Education. I am asking for your consent to interview two students from your school as part of my research project. The students will be randomly selected from physical education students who have completed a Sport Education unit at ...... The project is being supervised by....., principle lecturer at the Christchurch College of Education.

The general aim of this research is to explore how students’ experience of the Sport Education unit in the Physical Education programme may have influenced their thoughts and actions related to sport.

The interviews will take place at a place and time suitable to the student.

The interviews will be taped and all recorded information is confidential. The student will get a copy of the interview transcript so they can check it for accuracy. The information provided will be stored in a secure location, available only to my college supervisor and me. All data will be destroyed 12 months after the examination of the project. The participants' names will not appear in the research report, but I ask for their permission to quote them from the interview. If for any reason the participant wishes to withdraw from the study they may do so. A summary of the final report will be made available to the students and their parents or guardians on request.

You may contact my supervisor to discuss this research project. She can be contacted on (03) .... or email, ......

When I have your approval I will contact the Head of the Physical Education department to ask for their approval and assistance with this research project.

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.
The college requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred to:

The Chair
Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P O Box 31-065
Christchurch
Phone: (03) 348-2059

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I will make phone contact within the next week to discuss this and obtain verbal consent.

Yours truly,

Sharyn Pratley
Appendix Two
Sample of Head of Department, Physical Education letter.

The Head of Department, Physical Education
Christchurch

Dear

I am a student in the Master of Teaching and Learning degree at the Christchurch College of Education. I am asking for your consent and assistance to interview two students from your school as part of my research project. With your help the students will be randomly selected from physical education students who have completed a Sport Education unit at ........

The project is being supervised by ........ principle lecturer at the Christchurch College of Education. She can be contacted on (03) ..... or email ..... 

The general aim of this research is to explore how students’ experience of the Sport Education unit in the Physical Education programme may have influenced their thoughts and actions related to sport.

The interviews will take place at a convenient time and place suitable to the students.

The interviews will be taped and all recorded information is confidential. The participant will get a copy of the interview transcript so they can check it for accuracy. The information provided will be stored in a secure location, available only to my college supervisor and me. All data will be destroyed 12 months after the examination of the project. The participants’ names will not appear in the research report, but I ask for their permission to quote them from the interview. If for any reason the participant wishes to withdraw from the study they may do so. A summary of the final report will be made available to the participant and their parents or guardian on request.

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.

The college requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred to:
The Chair
Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P O Box 31-065
Christchurch
Phone: (03) 348-2059

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I will make phone contact within the next week to discuss this, obtain verbal consent and help select two students.

Yours truly,

Sharyn Pratley
Appendix Three
Sample of participants’ letter

Dear Student

I am a student in the Master of Teaching and Learning degree at the Christchurch College of Education. I am asking for your consent to be interviewed as part of my research project. The project is being supervised by ……., principle lecturer at the Christchurch College of Education.

The aim of this research is to explore how your experience of the Sport Education unit in the Physical Education programme may have influenced your thoughts and actions related to sport.

I would like to interview you at a place and time of your choosing. The interview is part of the research project and is not part of the physical education course.

The interview will be taped and all recorded information is confidential. You will get a copy of the interview transcript so that you can check it for accuracy. The information provided will be stored in a secure location, available only to my college supervisor and me. All data will be destroyed 12 months after the examination of the project. Your name will not appear in the research report, but I ask your permission to use quotes from the interview. In this case a false name will be used. If for any reason you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so. A summary of the final report will be made available to you at your request.

The Principal and the Head of Department, Physical Education, are fully informed about my research. You may like to talk over your decision about participating with him/her. You may also contact my supervisor if you have any queries about the research project. She can be contacted on …… or email, ……

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.
The college requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred to:

The Chair
Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P O Box 31-065
Christchurch
Phone: (03) 348-2059

If you agree to complete this research, would you please sign the consent form and return along with your parent or guardian's signed consent form? I will be in touch to arrange a suitable time and place for the interview. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Yours truly,

Sharyn Pratley
Participant Declaration of Consent

I consent to participate in the research project being conducted by Sharyn Pratley.

I have read and understood the information provided to me concerning the research project and what will be required of me if I participate in the project.

I understand that the information I provide to the researcher will be used in her research project report. I understand that my name will not be used in the report but what I say may be quoted in the report. I understand that I can read a copy of the interview before it is used by the researcher.

I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.

Name: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Signature: ________________________
Appendix Five
Sample of parent/guardian letter

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am a student in the Master of Teaching and Learning degree at the Christchurch College of Education. I am asking for your consent to interview (student's name) as part of my research project. (Students name) was randomly selected from physical education students who have completed a Sport Education unit at (name of school selected). The project is being supervised by .... principle lecturer at the Christchurch College of Education.

The general aim of this research is to explore how students’ experience of the Sport Education unit in the Physical Education programme may have influenced their thoughts and actions related to sport.

I will be interviewing two students from the school. The students will be interviewed separately. The interview will take place at a place and time suitable to the student.

The interview will be taped and all recorded information is confidential. The student will get a copy of the interview transcript so they can check it for accuracy. The information provided will be stored in a secure location, available only to my college supervisor and me. All data will be destroyed 12 months after the examination of the project. The participants name will not appear in the research report, but I ask for their permission to quote from the interview. If for any reason the participant wishes to withdraw from the study they may do so. A summary of the final report will be made available to you and the your son/daughter on request.

The Principal and Head of Department, Physical Education are fully informed about my research. You may like to talk over your decision about giving consent for (student’s name) to participate, with the Physical Education staff. You may also contact my supervisor if you have any queries about the research project. She can be contacted on (03) ..... or email........

The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.
The college requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred to:

The Chair
Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P O Box 31-065
Christchurch
Phone: (03) 348-2059

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you are in agreement please sign the consent form and return along with the student’s signed consent form.

Yours truly,

Sharyn Pratley
Appendix Six

CHRISTCHURCH
COLLEGE of EDUCATION
Te Whare Wānanga Ki Otautahi

Parent/Guardian Declaration of Consent
(only if student is 16 years old or under)

I consent to (student’s name) participating in the research project being conducted by Sharyn Pratley.

I have read and understood the information provided to me concerning the research project and what will be required of (student’s name) if he/she participates in the project.

I understand that the information provided to the researcher will be used in her research project report. I understand that the participant’s name will not be used in the report but what is said may be quoted in the report. I understand that (student’s name) may read a copy of the interview before it is used by the researcher.

I understand that (student’s name) participation in the project is voluntary and that she/he may withdraw from the project at any time.

Name: ___________________________ Date: __________

Signature: ________________________
Appendix Seven

Interview Guide

Do you enjoy PE. Why? Why Not?

Tell me about some of the things you have done in PE this year.

What has been your favourite topic/unit so far?

Can you remember about the basketball unit that you did?

How was it different from other units you have done in PE?


Can you tell me if there is anything you have learnt in sport ed that you will apply or think more about in sport or non school situations?

Has sport education changed how you feel about sport?

What did the teacher encourage you to think about?

What were you assessed on in sport education?

Were there any examples in sport education (basketball) where you had to deal with an issue? Can you tell me what happened and what action you took?

Can you think of a similar situation in sport outside of school? Your sport or sport in general.

Can you see any connection between the sport you are involved in at school and sport outside of school? Any connection between PE and sport outside of school?

When you are involved in sport what do you think about?

What do you understand about the phrase critical thinking? Can you give me any examples of things you have thought critically about? Any ideas of things related to sport that need critically thinking about?

What do you understand about the phrase critical action? What is an example of critical action?