

Physical Education – No More

Muska Mosston

Chairman, Department of Physical Education
Rutgers College
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Presented to the Forum in Physical Education
(One response to the Susman report)

New Brunswick
December 9, 1968

I welcome the opportunity to speak to this forum which has convened to examine Dr. Susman's recommendations concerning the fate of the required physical education program at Rutgers College.

As you know, the report has proposed a sweet solution to the vexing program: Let us make it a voluntary one.

I would like to address myself not to the solution but rather to the problem and the causes of the problem.

I stand here today NOT in defense of the required physical education program, but in defense of an emerging discipline that Rutgers students knew not.

I stand in defense of knowledge in the arts and sciences of human movement of which Rutgers students have been deprived Abernathy and Waltz (1964), Fraleigh (1967), Henry (1964), Rarick (1967).

I stand in defense of the spirit of experimentation and free inquiry which so highly characterizes current works in the discipline of human movement – a spirit of which Rutgers students have been deprived Bruner (1963), Cratty (1964 and 1968), Mosston (1966).

I stand in defense of the constant flow of concepts in modern pedagogy and psychology of learning which have strongly affected change in the conduct of this discipline – a change of which Rutgers students have been deprived Bruner (1963 and 1966), Mosston (1966).

I stand in defense of research in the physiology of motor performance which is eradicating motoric clichés' and has set us on clear scientific course – of this of this Rutgers students have been deprived Cratty (1966), Mosston (1965).

And I stand in defense of several major contributions made by the majors program (here at Rutgers) – contributions which are being sought after throughout this continent; contributions – of which Rutgers students have been deprived Mosston (1965, 1966 and 1967).

Now- before we proceed with the history and analysis of this deprivation let us clarify the meaning of some of the terms used by the various reports; terms used to reflect the content and direction of the program under discussion.

Terms like Athletics, Sports, Recreation, and physical education have been used as if they were synonyms. Indeed, they ARE NOT! Whether one examines these in light of Webster's definitions or analyzes the PREMISES, PROCESSES, and CONSEQUENCES of the diverse programs one must not fail to see that we are dealing here with distinctly different elements of human behavior.

Broadly described – Athletics refers to programs conducted for the few selected performers who are genetically endowed with superior physical attributes. These programs are based on the assumption that man is innately an aggressive animal (we shall discuss Ardrey's, Lorenz's points of view vs. Montagu's some other time), and therefore the content, mode of conduct, emphases and system of rewards and punishments are all based on the social and psychological variables of the competitive behavior.

The conductors of such programs postulate that this is a desirable behavior for all students in all parts of the programs.

Weston (1964) in describing the shaping of physical education as a profession in the 1920's discusses the clash of content, processes, and purposes between Athletics and physical education: "Leaders in each group possessed definite ideas about the proper organization of sports and games program in an academic institution. Frequently their views clashed on the issue of the proper emphasis to be placed on competitive sports..... When interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics are developed to satisfy a sport-conscious community, questions inevitably arise as to whether the resulting programs are consistent with educational objectives."

These, we are told, were some of the problems of the early 20's. In the late 60's these problems are even more enhanced by the developments which have occurred in physical education during recent years. Perhaps the most impressive ones are:

- The surge of papers and dialogues on the nature of an emerging discipline: The discipline of human movement.
- New uses of this discipline and new pedagogical models which bring it into the bosom of the social sciences, the biological sciences, and education.

1. The discipline of human movement:

As diverse a group as Abernately and Waltz (1964), Brown (1967), Fraleigh (1967), Henry (1964), Hunt (1964), Locke (1966), Matheny (1966 and 1967), Mosston (1965 and 1966), Rarick (1967), Smith (1964) and others have focused their inquiry on the phenomenon of human movement. Attempts have been made in developing models which explain the structure of movement, identify its components, and describe their relationships.

Henry (1964) has suggested that there is ample precedent in the modern interdisciplinary sciences for the formation of a systemic body of knowledge around the

focus of human movement. This focus attracts contributions from physiologists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians who direct their studies to the understanding of this phenomenon.

Locke (1966) foresees “the development of human movement as an academic discipline and the development of human movement as an educational process.”

Abernately and Waltz (1964) writes that: “If the body of knowledge in human movement grows into an inherently coherent conceptual system, it will reflect the results of inquiry in its own as well as in related fields. The separate identity of the field in the family of intellectual specializations dealing with man will be established only if it plays a critical role through its primary or even unique concern with the phenomenon of man moving in his environment.”

Morgan (1968) summarizes research done in areas connected with human movement. These areas include: Psychological assessment, Rehabilitation, Activity Performance, Fatigue, Tension, and so on.

- a. Exercise and mental abilities
- b. Exercise and the mentally retarded
- c. Exercise and cognitive skills
- d. Adaptation to visually distorted environments

Cratty (1964, 1967 and 1968) has presented a comprehensive analysis of research in psychology of physical activity and research in physical activity in relation to the various perceptual modalities.

Kenyon (1968) discusses socialization as a social process in play behavior and reviews studies concerning specific and diffuse roles.

The list of works in the physiology of motor performance, psychology of motor learning and sociology of physical activity is mounting daily in all major universities across the country. These universities have come to grips with the dilemma and have established clear lines of demarcation between Athletics as an extra curricular program and Physical Education as a discipline. In these universities all students enjoy the benefits of current knowledge of this field.

Rutgers problem is not unique. It is rooted in a long history of the field itself: A field struggling for identity within the academic community.

Throughout the 19th century, influenced by foreign systems – physical education knocked at the doors of academic institutions. The doors were open and a variety of programs evolved.

These programs were characterized by two aspects: Competitive Athletics and Health. (it is interesting to note that among the earlier leaders of this field many were physicians).

Toward the end of last century a turning point occurred at the Boston Conference in 1889, Weston (1964) where the variety of “systems” and approaches were under discussion and comparison. In fact, the term physical education appeared only toward the close of the nineteenth century – perhaps to denote a closer connection between the various systems dealing with bodily exercises and education.

The content of programs at the beginning of the 20th century shifted from European imported programs to a system of sports and games. This movement was led by Wood, Hotherington, and Gulick, Mosston (1966), Fraleigh (1967), Henry (1964), Hunt (1964). This, of course, developed under the influence of then current educational philosophy promulgated by John Dewey and William Kilpatrick. The assumption was

that sports and games (as contrasted with European gymnastic systems and other body development programs) are freer and more democratic and therefore more compatible with the spirit of the American school.

The assumption and the intent perhaps were valid, the practice and the reality, as observed half a century later has resulted in deprivation to the individual student. The emphasis on group-competitive behavior has taken preference over any other behavioral variable. Programs, intercollegiate systems, and associations have developed whose sole purpose has been to promote specific physical activities for the selected few. The very nature of group-competitive behavior is EXCLUSIVE. The content and the design of these activities is for exclusion, the highly competitive demands are for exclusion and the decision making behavior of those who lead these activities and programs is designed for exclusion. (for detailed analysis of this problem see Mosston's paper (1967) "Inclusion and Exclusion in Physical Education".)

The exclusion in these programs is manifested through physical exclusion of those who cannot. When success in an activity is designed to reflect highly competitive behavior, those who are physically inferior or handicapped are a-priori excluded.

When social values adhere to specific group standards and only to those group standards – those who question them are excluded as being stigmatized people. Goffman (1963) proposes different types of stigma: "The various physical deformities, blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs.....and finally, there are tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion."

When all decisions are made by a central figure (coach, Athletic Director, etc.), as is intrinsically needed in such group-competitive behavior, alternative cognitive behavior by various participating individuals is virtually non-existent, they are indeed excluded.

This - the athletic institution - has been superimposed on the American school. Millions of American students have been excluded from full benefits - physical, social, emotional, and cognitive-during their participation in that vague part of the school curriculum: Athletic Physical Education; except where the dichotomy has been clearly defined by design and execution: athletic programs for those privileged few who can and choose to submit themselves to the rule and conduct of athletics and variable physical education program for those who are interested in learning about themselves through medium of movement and wish to have knowledge of movement itself.

The increase of research in the area of human movement, the increase of insights into movement behavior, perception and motor responses, physiology of activity, learning theories, and motor performance, teaching theories, and motor learning Rutgers Majors' program is in the vanguard in this aspect of the discipline Layman (1960), Locke (1966) has created a new place for physical education in American Universities across the Nation.

Courses have been developed in all these areas. Courses which focus on learning, understanding, analyzing, and performing. Laboratories have evolved where students can study man and his relationship to nature and society from a new perspective. Rutgers' students have been deprived of all this. This time of self scrutiny resulting from Susman Report, has provided a rare opportunity for a full scale reevaluation and redesign of programs in physical education.

This is the time to establish this discipline, fully anchored, in Rutgers College.

This is the time for physical education to be led and taught by professors whose primary interest and concern is the discipline and its relationship to man.

References

- Abernathy, Ruth and Waltz, Maryann (1964). *Toward A Discipline: First Step First.* Quest Monograph II, Spring Issue, April.
- Brown, Camille (1967). *The Structure of Knowledge of Physical Education.* Quest Monograph IX, Winter Issue, December.
- Bruner, Jerome S. (1963). *The Process of Education.* Vintage Books, a division of Random House, New York.
- Bruner, Jerome S. (1966). *Toward a Theory of Instruction.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts.
- Cratty, Bryant J. (1964). *Movement Behavior and Motor Learning.* Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia.
- Cratty, Bryant J. (1966). *The Perceptual Attributes of Mebtally Retarded Children And Youth.* Mental Retardation Services Board of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, CA.
- Cratty, Bryant J. (1968). *Psychology and Physical Activity.* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
- Fraleigh, Warren P. (1967). *Toward a Conceptual Model of the Academic Subject Matter of Physical Education as a Discipline.* N.C.P.E.A.M. 70th Annual Proceedings.
- Goffman, Erving (1963). *Stigma.* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Henry, Franklin M. (1964). *Physical Education as an Academic Discipline.* JOHPER Vol.35, No.7, September.
- Hunt, Valerie (1964). *Movement Behavior – A Model for Action.* Quest Monograph II, Spring Issue.
- Kenyon, Gerald S. (1968). *Sociological Consideration.* JOHPER, Vol.39, No.9, November/December.
- Layman, Emma M. (1960). *Physical Activity as a Psychiatric Adjunct.* In Warren R. Johnson (ed.) Science and Medicine of Exercise and Sports, Harper & Row, New York.
- Locke, Lawrence F. (1966). *The Movement Movement.* JOHPER, Vol.37, No.1, January.
- Matheney, Eleanor (1966). *The Design Conference.* JOHPER, Vol.37, No.5, May.
- Matheney, Eleanor (1967). *Physical Education as an area of Study and Research.* Quest Monograph IX, Winter Issue, December.

- Morgan, William P. (1968). *Psychological Considerations*. JOHPER, Vol.39, No.9, November/December.
- Mosston, Muska (1965). *Developmental Movement*. Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio
- Mosston, Muska (1965). *Teaching Styles – A Spectrum*. N.C.P.E.A.M. 69th Proceedings, December.
- Mosston, Muska (1966). *Teaching Physical Education: From Command to Discovery*. Charles E. Merrill Books, Columbus, Ohio
- Mosston, Muska (1966). *The Integration of a Style of Teaching with the Structure of the Subject Matter*. N.C.P.E.A.M. 70th Proceedings, San Diego.
- Mosston, Muska (1967). *Inclusion and Exclusion in Physical Education*. A paper presented to the Tri-State Conference, University of Delaware.
- Rarick, Lawrence G. (1967). *The Domain of Physical Education as an Academic Discipline*. Quest Monograph IX, Winter Issue, December.
- Smith, Nancy W. (1964). *Movement as an Academic Discipline*. JOHPER, Vol.35, No.9, November/December.
- Stish, Eugene E. (1964). *Anthrop kinetics*. JOHPER, Vol.35, No.9, November/December.
- Weston, Arthur (1964). *The Making of American Physical Education*. A.C.C. Publishing.