



History and Status of American Physical Education And Educational Sport

Earle F. Zeigler

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In *History and Status of American Physical Education and Educational Sport*, Dr. Zeigler makes a unique effort to provide an up-to-date, insightful textbook on the subject for aspiring teachers of physical activity education and coaches of educational and/or recreational sport. By looking at the field's history analytically, the author clarifies for the prospective teacher/coach how and why the present unsatisfactory situation came about. Offering the reader a sequence of narratives, studies, essays, and analyses, both chronological and critical, the hope is that he/she will come to understand what has happened in this important aspect of people's lives from America's early days to the present. The author's hope is that the reader, possibly as an embryonic professional, will comprehend the historical thread or timeline depicting people's greater or lesser involvement in purposeful or purposeless physical activity since America was first settled.

On March 25, 2004 in Reston, VA, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) released a revised, second edition of *Moving into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education*. These national standards were proclaimed to be an essential tool for developing, implementing, and evaluating K-12 school physical education programs. They seek to identify what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality physical education program. This outstanding set of standards that NASPE has been released for the guidance of professionals in American physical education and educational sport.

Nevertheless, after 65 productive years in the profession, and also after reading such an excellent, updated statement of standards for physical education, Dr. Zeigler still finds himself very concerned about the future of the field. How can this be so? Why aren't American schoolchildren and youth receiving excellent daily physical and health education? To help America find the answer to this question, he decided to offer his assessment of the present situation.

There is a definite need at this time for this unique textbook. This can be said because it takes an analytic look at the history of American physical education and educational sport, a field facing one more crossroad in its torturous development. Having stated that there is a definite need for this analytic approach to the field's history, I understand, of course, that some people really enjoy reading history, while others can take it or leave it. A very few can't stand it in any form--not even in a highly adventurous novel. But this latter

group is decidedly in the minority. Most people seem to respect history, and more so if they were personally involved in the making of it. Perhaps it's a case of revering, and not speaking evil, of the dead. Whatever the reason, just about everybody pays lip service to history and believes that it belongs in the educational curriculum at various points along the way. This is true all the way up the line, in fact, to the required historical review of related literature in a Ph.D. thesis!

Each section of the book is described below:

Now it is time to explain how--and why, also!-- I organized what I have called an analytic history of American physical education and educational sport. First, in the Preamble, I have included a brief "excursion" into philosophy of history. This is in an effort to place the profession in broad historical perspective. Then, in Chapter I, because the reader needs a review of the historical milieu in which our subject took place, I decided to trace the social and education foundations of the United States from the Colonial Period to the present day. Next, in Chapter II, I prepared an historical precis of the history of physical education and sport in America. This chronological (so-called horizontal or longitudinal) treatment of physical education's history was followed in Chapter III by what I have termed "An Analytic Approach to the History of Physical Education and (Educational) Sport." In this unique approach to history, the history of a subject (in this case physical education and educational sport) is viewed horizontally as a series of persistent problems that humans have face since their original involvement with the "problem." These may be categorized as (1) social forces and (2) as what I have termed as) professional concerns. Values (and accompanying norms), for example, is one of the social forces discussed. Similarly, the curriculum in physical education is one of the professional concerns considered.

In Chapter IV, a brief history of undergraduate professional preparation for physical education is presented. Here I trace this important topic (another professional concern!) for a period of 100 years, from its inception in 1861 to 1961 when a national conference on the subject was held. After this I offer in Chapter V a similar historical treatment, this time a history of graduate study in physical education from its beginning in 1891 to approximately 1975.

Following this, in Chapter VI, the reader will find a comprehensive analysis of the entire 20th century in what I have titled "American Physical Education in the 20th Century: An Analytic Review." In this analysis I looked at the developing professional curriculum in great detail. I concluded with what I believe to be the best curriculum model for professional development of a physical activity educator at the present.

In an effort to become more specific about the field's history during the fourth quarter of the 20th century, I decided to present in Chapter VII the results of a comparative study between the United States and Canada as to their respective approaches to professional preparation in the field.

Teachers and coaches in physical education and educational sport are all managers or administrators, but to varying degrees. Accordingly, I felt it important in Chapter VIII to include a brief history of the field's inadequate involvement with management theory and practice as an aspect of its professional curriculum.

In Chapter IX the history of what may be called "sport and physical education philosophy" is traced from its informal origin in the late 1800s to the end of the 20th century. After analyzing the history of this subject, the author concluded that professional preparation in this aspect of the field's body of knowledge became inadequate from the standpoint of the professional practitioner beginning in the late 1960s. Recommendations for the 21st century are made

In Chapter X, I introduced the subject of ecology as a unique social force, a persistent problem that was called to my attention in 1970 by a graduate student. (Back then it was typically called "conservation of natural resources.") I now understand that the impact of this subject, or social force, is absolutely crucial to the future of all humankind.

In addition to the comparative study between the United States and Canada explained in Chapter VII, I decided to broaden the reader's perspective "geographically" also in Chapter XI. I did this by describing the results of a study I carried out in the mid-1990s as to the status of physical education worldwide. To this I appended a listing of some 13 "principal principles" that I have "unearthed" by steady informal analysis over the past 50+ years. These are principles that physical education can lay claim to as a result of the scientific efforts of scholars and scientists in our field and related disciplines over the last half of the 20th century.

Finally, in Chapter XII, I closed out this analytical history of physical education and educational sport by daring to take a look at the future and what it might hold for the profession. The eminent historian, Allan Nevins, argued that history's rays should shine in three directions: "backward," at "our feet," and in the

direction of “the future.” So, after having looked at the past in a variety of ways, I made a brief review of some of the “future forecasting” carried out by scholars in other fields. Then I made some recommendations as to what our profession “should avoid.” in the years immediately ahead. The chapter, and the book, is concluded by a listing of 20 recommendations regarding what we need to do if the profession is to reach its potential in society.

Our profession and (now) discipline most assuredly needs to know “where it has been, how it got there, and where it should be going from here.” By such continuous, careful assessment, the guideposts for the future should be somewhat more readily apparent. We need all of the help we can get--and then some!--in the years immediately ahead. Writing from both an American and Canadian perspective (as a dual citizen), it is not difficult to see that the future of the United States is being challenged as perhaps never before in its relatively short history. A careful study and understanding of the history of American physical education and educational sport is a prerequisite to a full understanding of the overall situation.

Earle Zeigler is semi-retired from professional and scholarly endeavor. A dual citizen of Canada and the United States, he has taught, researched, and/or administered programs at Yale University (1943-49), The University of Michigan (1956-63), University of Illinois, C-U (1963-71), and The Univ. of Western Ontario (the latter from 1949-56 and 1971-89). His primary areas of scholarly interest have been in the history and philosophy, management, international & comparative, and professional preparation aspects of his field in education. All together Zeigler has published 39 books and monographs and 405 articles. In addition to receiving the top three awards in his field (Hetherington Award, AAKPE; Gulick Medal, AAHPERD; Alliance Scholar-of-the-Year, 1977), Zeigler has been recognized by election to Who's Who in Canada, Who's Who in America, and Who's Who in the World. He has received two honorary doctorates (LL.D., 1975, Univ...

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