

Howell, Reet, Howell, Maxwell L., Toohey, Dale, and Toohey, Margaret D. *Methodology in Comparative Physical Education and Sport*. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Co., 1981. Pp. x, 263. Appendices, references, tables, bibliographies. Paperback. \$8.60.

*Methodology in Comparative Physical Education and Sport* was apparently conceived and compiled by the named authors, Reet Howell, Maxwell Howell, Dale Toohey and Margaret Toohey, for the four of them contributed only four of the thirteen chapters, one appendix, and a page and a half introduction, the latter by Reet and Maxwell Howell. The remaining nine chapters and two appendices are by nine other writers. Most of the contributors are well known for writing, teaching and/or research in comparative physical education and sport. Maxwell Howell is by far the best known, having co-authored two prior volumes on the subject.

Other than the aforementioned brief introduction, the book has no synthesizing materials, background on authors, summaries, indexes, or sub-headings. Each chapter stands alone. The only purpose stated for the book is the hope that it “. . . will, in historical perspective be viewed . . . as a landmark, as it presents material for the advanced student and teacher, and takes the sub-discipline just one small step forward.” (ix) Many of the writers point to lack of direction, lack of central purpose, and lack of agreement on essential issues as the major problems facing the area of comparative physical education and sport today. This book is proof of the problems.

The chapters appear to fall into three general categories:

- (1) definition, history, academic status of comparative physical education and sport and its relationship to other disciplines.
- (2) Teaching comparative physical education and sport in colleges and universities.
- (3) Research in comparative physical education and sport.

Mercifully, the writers are agreed that comparative physical education and sport is not an adequate discipline, but at best a subdiscipline, (of what is not certain), and a direct outgrowth of comparative education with which it shares common history and problems. There is less agreement regarding the present and future relationships between comparative physical education and sport, and comparative education, anthropology, sociology, and economics, or its relationship to the history of physical education and sport.

Only two chapters and one appendix deal directly with comparative physical education and sport as a university course. Vendien reports on twenty-five courses taught in Canada and the United States in 1975. Statistical data are presented on several topics including prerequisites, number of countries to be

studied, kinds of comparative techniques used, and qualifications of instructors.

In addition, teaching methods are discussed, and fairly detailed models of six courses are presented. This chapter would be of particular benefit to prospective teachers of comparative physical education and sport. In Appendix A, Pooley reports the results of a survey on comparative physical education and sport courses in twenty-five Canadian universities, while in Appendix B, Reet Howell reports on such courses in fifty-four universities in the United States. Howell and Pooley used different models, so their results may not be effectively used to compare course offerings in the United States with those in Canada.

Not surprisingly, a major problem concerning research in comparative physical education and sport is the lack of consistent models and theoretical frameworks which would facilitate comparison of findings by numerous researchers. *Methodologies in Comparative Physical Education and Sport* contains examples of an infinite variety of possible models: some interesting, some obsolete, some so complex they are self-defeating. What is lacking is data which would enable the reader to fully comprehend the models and their potential for generating new knowledge and understanding.

Two writers present actual data or research results. Shaw, in the chapter, "The Scientific Approach to Comparative Sport and Physical Education" presents two studies. One, by Shaw and Pooley, attempted to determine the relationship between Olympic success and various socioeconomic, political, and other factors in Western developed countries, Socialist countries, and Third World countries. The other study, by Kenyon, compared value held for physical activities by adolescents in four different countries. While the results of the studies are mixed at best, Shaw concludes that comparative physical education and sport will not become a discipline in its own right until physical principles of data collection and quantitative methods are employed.

The most interesting, informative, and significant chapter in an otherwise incredibly dull book is Anthony's "The Analysis of Sport and Physical Education in Developing Countries," which is neither scientific nor quantitative. Using models only to describe "developing nations," Anthony presents significant facts about sport in the Third World, as well as comparisons of sport problems in two very different Third World countries: Sudan, one of the twenty-five least developed nations of the earth, and oil-rich Kuwait. Anthony uses socio-economic, political, cultural, and military factors, as well as an enthusiastic style and scholarly background to make comparative physical education and sport meaningful and interesting. Much greater understanding of sport and the relationship between sport and society is presented in his chapter than in all of the remainder of the book.

Clearly, *Methodology in Comparative Physical Education and Sport* had great potential. It is most unfortunate that Maxwell Howell did not assume a leadership role as senior author and/or editor, and utilize his considerable expertise to bring greater clarity and organization to the book, summarizing major problems and issues, and offering some concrete direction and recommendations for their solution. Until these major issues are resolved, comparative physical education and sport will probably remain a sub-discipline among sub-disciplines. Meanwhile, unfortunately, *Methodologies in Comparative Physical Education and Sport* seems destined to take its place along with other Stipes' anthologies, filled with information but lacking the organization needed for understanding it and the index with which to find it.

University of Texas at Austin

Mary Lou LeCompte