

Introduction

Over the past 30 years the number of courses in sport, exercise and related topics has grown enormously, making sport currently one of the most popular fields of study in schools, colleges and universities. Many of these courses involve multidisciplinary study of sport and exercise, crossing the biophysical sciences, social and psychological sciences and the humanities. Part of the popularity of courses in sport and exercise is due to the variety that multidisciplinary study provides. But the sheer range and diversity of disciplines involved is also very challenging for students.

Alongside this growth in popularity of school and university courses, research activity has also increased, creating a mini 'knowledge explosion' in sport and exercise. Where once only a few general journals served the sport and exercise research community, now there are usually several journals in each of the specialist areas of study. For students beginning their course of study in sport and exercise, mastering this large and growing body of diverse specialist knowledge can be a bewildering and daunting prospect.

This book seeks to serve as a reader-friendly source of Key Concepts in five of the main areas of study in sport and exercise courses: biomechanics, exercise physiology, pedagogy, psychology and sociology. Each section of the book contains entries on the concepts that organise each of these areas of study. Understanding these concepts is the starting point for understanding sport and exercise more broadly and will allow students beginning their courses to move on to acquire more specialised knowledge. It will also serve as a useful means of preparing for examinations and other forms of assessment for those undertaking more advanced studies who need to refresh their memories.

Each of the entries is concise, explaining in easily accessible language the essential ideas of each of the areas of study in sport and exercise. Serving as a starting point for more advanced study, each entry also offers one or two references for further reading, where each Key Concept is explained in more depth.

So the book is intended primarily for students beginning their college and university courses in sport and exercise sciences, physical education and related topics such as leisure and sport development. It will also

provide a valuable and challenging introduction to key ideas for students of A Level physical education and sports studies.

The editors and most of the entry writers are members of academic staff at Leeds Metropolitan University's Carnegie Faculty of Sport and Education. The faculty traces its origins to the Carnegie Physical Training College. Carnegie has been a byword for excellence in sport and physical education since it opened its doors in October 1933. In its 75th year (2008–9), Carnegie is the provider of the most comprehensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in sport and related topics in Britain, including many foundation degrees offered by partner further education colleges in its unique Regional University Network. Supported by colleagues in other well-known institutions for the study of sport, the editors and writers bring all of their research expertise and experience of teaching on these courses to the preparation of this book.