DEVELOPING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS: A VIRTUE ETHICAL ACCOUNT

Rona Brodie

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Abstract

Traditionally Physical Education (PE) and sports in secondary schools in the United Kingdom have aimed towards moral goals. Not all of these goals have been well thought through. Where these goals have been systematically developed, they have followed a narrow and prescriptive conception of moral education that mainly focuses on adherence to predetermined rules and principles. From Aristotle we have a less reductive view of moral education – virtue ethics – which revolves around the development of good character as constituted by the "morally" good person.

Drawing on group interviews with exceptional teachers and the writings of virtue ethicists, I develop a sketch of a character education programme that is based on talk and reflection (Pincoffs, 1986), and that cultivates the joyful disposition through direct engagement in sporting activities. Outlining what such a character education in PE and sports might look like, I start by examining what already exists in terms of "moral practices" within sports themselves (MacIntyre, 1985). Sports traditions aim at developing certain sorts of persons. By talking about and reflecting upon what might constitute a good sportsperson with colleagues, teachers can begin to identify for themselves the sorts of persons they want to see playing sports. Part of playing and teaching sports well is learning to discern between the value of different activities and the company of different sorts of persons. By nurturing and developing certain sorts of dispositions over others, teachers can help pupils shape their own involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports. Through the cultivation of a joyful disposition teachers can help pupils to develop good character and live flourishing lives. This emphasis on joyfulness also brings into sharper focus what has been previously missing in PE and sports policy documents, namely the significance of an emotional engagement in PE and sports when it comes to educating for good character.

Argument

(i) Most teachers want their pupils to gain an appreciation of how to play sports well. Current documentation in PE and sports, however, provides them with little or no guidance as to how to go about educating pupils' character in and through PE and sports.

(ii) It follows then that teachers need guidance both in the initial stages of their training and as part of their ongoing professional development to help them design and implement their own character education-based PE and sports programmes.

(iii) I propose the idea that *exceptional* teachers are already doing this ethical work, though it is not well documented, and where it is, it is often misrepresented. Among other things, these teachers recognise that part of playing sports well is to cultivate certain dispositions rather than others in their pupils. This recognition, as well as their *phronesis* in general, needs to be incorporated not only into teacher education opportunities, but equally into the programmes that emerge from them.

(iv) A central aim of these programmes must be to help pupils nurture and develop personal connections and self knowledge whilst participating in a range of physically active and unpredictable sporting contexts.

(v) By educating for good character through an emphasis on the joyful disposition, pupils and teachers alike can cultivate a life-long *and* life-enhancing emotional engagement with sports.

Declaration

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed ....

Date .....8/6/06.....

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Chapter One: Introduction

1:0 Overview of Thesis

Educating for good character in and through sports has been around since the time of Aristotle. In the United Kingdom (UK) it entered the English boys' public school system in the mid-nineteenth century under the guise of "Muscular Christianity" – an approach to inculcating the virtues in boys and young men that was based around the moral educational potential of sports. The virtues that were emphasised in those traditional games that stood in for moral training grounds in this context, such as cricket and football, were those virtues that were seen by educators at the time to have a civilising and socialising effect on the future leaders of the nation. In privileging the so-called "manly" virtues such as courage, loyalty and good leadership over the so-called "temperamental" virtues such as cheerfulness, warmth and gracefulness, there emerged a conception of "the good sportsperson" that was narrowly defined, not to mention elitist and gendered. This conception carried over into the Physical Education (PE) and sports programmes that became part of UK state school curricula in the mid-twentieth century, and its legacy continues to inform the way moral development is presented in current PE and sports policy documentation, as well as in Continuing Professional Development in Physical Education (CPD-PE) provision. This thesis proposes another way of conceiving of "the good sportsperson" and by extension, the role of the PE teacher as a moral educator.

One of the reasons that a fuller conception of "the good sportsperson" has not emerged is that pupils' character development has been restricted by and hence restrained within a dominant view of morality that emphasises strict adherence to the "rules of the game." The moral educational approaches that emerged out of

this view reinforced the notion that good character is shaped in accordance with predetermined rules and principles. Known as deontological approaches, the claim here is that pupils' moral progress can be identified, described and measured against these standards of good conduct and that if they are absent, pupils risk falling into a state of moral decline. As a result, codes of conduct have become the predominant measure governing how pupils ought to behave whilst playing sports. Though these codes claim to provide clear guidance as to what ought to be expected from young people in terms of playing sports well, in reality they provide only a baseline standard to which persons are expected to adhere. These codes tell us little about the kinds of persons we want to see playing and teaching sports well.

This reduction of character development to mere rule-following has not only limited the moral role of the teacher; it has also misrepresented it. With regard to the former, we can see in current PE and sports policy documentation the extent to which the moral role of the teacher is alternatively neglected or viewed as a mere "add-on" to the more "serious business" of improving pupils' performance. With regard to the latter, I maintain that though the ethical work of PE teachers has been largely overlooked by PE and sports policy makers as well as by sports philosophers, a significant number of PE teachers are actually doing *exceptional* work in this area. This work, I argue, in part grows out of these teachers' realisation that the enforcement of codes of conduct is not enough when it comes to dealing with the complexities of everyday encounters with pupils. It also grows out of their desire to significantly expand existing conceptions of what constitutes a good sportsperson. It is initially to this ethical work that I turn in this thesis, arguing that PE and sports policy makers and sports philosophers have much to learn from these *exceptional* PE teachers.

Through a detailed examination of how *exceptional* teachers are already going about morally educating young people in PE and sports, I bring into sharper focus what is implicit in their ethical work. Data to emerge from a series of informal group interviews conducted with such teachers in Scotland and England reveals the sorts of persons these *exceptional* PE teachers are, and the sorts of persons they want to see playing sports well. This in turn helps to illuminate what is explicitly ethical about an engagement in PE and sports, and what the benefits are for the pupil *and* the PE teacher from such an engagement. In highlighting what *exceptional* PE teachers *say* they are doing when they are morally educating young people, we can help to make this work more accessible to *all* PE teachers who are interested in effectively nurturing and developing their pupils' characters in and through PE and sports.

It is my contention that most PE teachers do take seriously their role in morally educating pupils, even if some are confused as to what that role ought to be. It is equally my contention that if we want PE teachers to be effective moral educators, we need to provide them with guidance as to how to go about acquiring the necessary *phronesis* that will enable them to achieve this goal. In light of the paucity of such guidance in PE and sports policy documentation and CPD-PE provision, a place we can turn to in order to locate this guidance is a form of moral philosophy known as virtue ethics.

Virtue-ethical approaches, unlike deontological approaches, frame moral development in accordance with the development of good character as constituted in the virtues. These approaches move us away from thinking about a character education as mere rule-following towards thinking about it in terms of the kinds of persons we are and want to become. In acknowledging the complexities of both pupils' and teachers' lives, virtue-ethical approaches provide teachers with an

analytical framework that is flexible enough to account for personal, contextual and situational differences that are part and parcel of the teaching environment, and yet educationally rigorous enough to form the basis of a character education programme in PE and sports. In this thesis I focus in particular on two virtue-ethical approaches: that of Alasdair MacIntyre (1985), and that of Edmund Pincoffs (1986). I suggest that a MacIntyrean framework – based as it is on pupils learning the virtues from inside a practice such as sports – can help teachers to bring into sharper focus the ethical value of working towards the acquisition of "the internal goods of a practice." Recognising, however, that MacIntyre fails to take sufficient account of the personal and relational dimensions inherent in the process of moral development, and in so doing fails to adequately account for the moral role of the teacher, I turn to the work of Pincoffs (1986). Pincoffs' approach to moral education, with its focus on teacher talk and reflection, not only acknowledges the important moral role of the teacher; it also provides some practical guidance as to how teachers can help themselves and their pupils to become "the right sorts of persons." His suggestion that teachers must work towards developing a common virtue-based language becomes a key aspect of my own sketch of a character education programme in PE and sports. My observation, however, that Pincoffs' virtue-ethical account, though philosophically useful, does not locate virtue talk and reflection in a "doing environment" such as the PE and sports context, prompts me to sketch out a character education programme that takes into account the innate physicality and unpredictability of sports. This sketch deliberately focuses on an emotional engagement with PE and sports, and thus recuperates some of the so-called "temperamental" virtues which, for reasons outlined above, have traditionally been undervalued in sports-based moral educational processes. Though the status of "joy" as a virtue that we can directly "aim at" when teaching PE and sports is contestable, I argue that a character education programme that is based around "the joyful disposition" brings into

sharper focus what constitutes a good sportsperson, and what is morally good about playing sports well.

In short, by bringing together the voices of *exceptional* PE teachers on the subject of the good sportsperson and the insights of moral philosophers as to what it means to be a "morally" good person, I develop a character education in PE and sports that aims at enhancing the lives of young people and their teachers whilst continuing to aim towards sporting excellence and which remains possible to implement. In putting PE teachers and virtue ethicists into a dialogue that happens all too rarely, I also show how what *exceptional* teachers are already *doing* in terms of morally educating for good character can shed important light on new directions that moral philosophical enquiries into educational processes ought to take. In each case, I bridge a perceived gap between practitioner and philosopher in the area of moral development. Though I argue that the *exceptional* teacher, by virtue of who she is – her character and how she teaches – already embodies some of the central tenets of most virtue-ethical approaches to moral education, I maintain that she, along with her colleagues, can benefit from learning more about these approaches. Awakening PE teachers to key concepts in moral philosophy can help them to design and implement their own character education programmes in PE and sports. Likewise, offering teachers more imaginative opportunities within CPD-PE that would allow them to talk about and reflect upon what might constitute "good character" in the context of PE and sports would provide them at the very least with a language to start engaging with this design process. I hence end this thesis by making a plea to PE and sports programme designers and policy makers to turn an attentive ear to their richest and closest resource: those *exceptional* PE teachers who are already working with young people in our secondary schools.

1:1 Chapter Outline

In chapter two of this thesis I provide a brief historical overview of the origins of morally educating young people in and through sports. I show how an emphasis on "character-building" in and through the teaching of traditional games in the English public school system has led to confusion over what might constitute a PE- and sports-based character education programme in the United Kingdom today, and consider whether the current character education movement in the United States can offer something useful to those PE teachers who are confused as to their role as moral educators. I then make a case for the *exceptional* PE teacher, arguing that though their ethical work goes largely unnoticed by PE and sports programme designers and policy makers, they are still doing an excellent job of morally educating young people in and through PE and sports.

In chapter three I address methodological issues that are central to this thesis, explaining my inclusion of an empirical component in this philosophical enquiry and outlining how I selected *exceptional* teachers (n=18) to be part of informal small group interviews conducted in Scotland and England. I discuss my use of what these *exceptional* PE teachers said about their conceptions of the good sportsperson and their perception of their moral role in this thesis, and consider how their talk and reflection might be incorporated into a virtue-ethical approach to character education in and through PE and sports. I also reflect upon the research process itself, revisiting my role as a facilitator of the group interviews and discussing some of the ethical issues involved in conducting qualitative studies of this kind.

In chapter four I elaborate upon what the teachers in my study said. I highlight in particular how they conceive of the good sportsperson and how they see their own

role and the role of the PE teacher in general when it comes to morally educating young people. I also emphasise what they said about the kind of practical wisdom they draw upon, and the kinds of practices they employ, to do this important ethical work. I use what I find to support the adoption of a virtue-ethical approach that would make these moral practices more *explicit*, and in so doing contribute to the flourishing of both teachers and their pupils. Critiquing the lack of structural support for teachers wishing to engage with a more formalised model of moral development, I make a case for CPD-PE provision which would be based on teacher talk and reflection, and would involve teachers participating in the overall design of a framework for character education in PE and sports.

In chapter five, whilst acknowledging that moral education ought to be left *more-in-the-hands* than *out-of-the-hands* of teachers (Carr, 1996, p. 12), I also suggest that an engagement with virtue ethics can help teachers to become more effective moral educators. Drawing on key terms that underlie this moral philosophical domain, I examine what constitutes "moral education," "virtue" and "the virtues." I examine the extent to which adopting and adapting a virtue-ethical approach might benefit the teacher and the pupil. Following Hursthouse (1999), I also outline the main criticisms that have been levelled at virtue-ethical approaches.

In chapter six I examine the work of Alasdair MacIntyre (1985). I explore the extent to which a MacIntyrean virtue-ethical approach to moral education is useful to the PE teacher, and outline MacIntyre's challenges to "emotivism" and "individualism" in ethics. I also question what he sees as our current state of moral decline. I then critically examine three main tenets of a MacIntyrean framework – his notions of "a practice," "the narrative unity of a life" and "the traditions" – and identify those aspects of his work that are relevant to my sketch of a character education in PE and sports. I also show how he fails to illuminate

the kinds of persons we would like to see teaching and playing sports well – a central feature of my own study.

In chapter seven I provide an overview of Edmund Pincoffs' (1986) ethical work and compare his virtue-ethical approach to that of MacIntyre. I posit that Pincoffs' non-reductive view of ethics, though ambitious, helps teachers to see the wider range of human qualities that can be considered as virtues. Picking up on Pincoffs' central question, "What kind of person is Wiggins?" I critically examine his proposition that a dispositional analysis can be built around the whole person as opposed to selected aspects of that person, and applied when discerning between the companies of those persons we tend to prefer or avoid. I also examine the extent to which Pincoffs' talk- and reflection-based virtue framework "fits" into the action-based environment of PE and sports.

In chapter eight I highlight the importance of "the emotions" when educating for good character. Drawing on Aristotle's notion of "habituation," I discuss how the emotions inform how young people come to recognise the difference between "good" and "bad" character. Drawing on Ben-Ze'ev (2000), I examine the four components of a "typical" emotion – brevity, partiality, instability and intensity. I show how each of these components helps us to better understand our emotional engagement with the physical realm of PE and sports. I conclude this chapter by arguing that in applying this understanding of the emotions to Pincoffs' virtue-talk framework, it becomes more accessible to PE teachers and easier to implement with their pupils.

In chapter nine I sketch out a character education programme in PE and sports that is volleyball-specific, but which could be adapted to the teaching and playing of other sporting activities. This sketch is grounded in the nurturing and development

of "the joyful disposition," and draws on Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia*, MacIntyre's emphasis on "the internal goods of a practice," and Pincoffs' focus on teacher talk and reflection. It also builds on Noddings' (2002) view that we need to cultivate personal connections between pupils and teachers, and that through these relationships we can develop self-knowledge. The end result is an accessible and workable approach to character education in PE and sports which, in taking as its ultimate aim the happiness of pupils and teachers, ends up developing "morally" good sportspersons who play sports well in all senses.

In chapter ten, I offer some concluding comments that encapsulate the work done in this thesis, and speculate on where it could lead to in terms of wider application in PE and sports programmes in secondary schools throughout the United Kingdom, and its incorporation into PE and sports policy documents and Continuing Professional Development in PE provision.

Chapter Two: Historical conceptions of character education in PE and sports

2:0 Introduction

Educating for good character in and through Physical Education (PE) and sports is not a new phenomenon. It dates back to ancient times. In the first part of this chapter I trace the origins of a character education in PE and sports in the United Kingdom back to the rise of Muscular Christianity in the English public school system in the mid-nineteenth century (Cashmore, 2000). After identifying what eventually came to be seen by educationalists as the major shortcoming of this approach – namely, its reliance on gendered notions of "character-building" – I engage with three arguments, as outlined by Bredemeier and Shields (1995), that grow out of this criticism, and that have been made against using sports as a vehicle for moral development. I show how this legacy has led to the overall neglect and discrediting of educating for good character in and through PE and sports in the United Kingdom, and consider whether the current character education movement in the United States (Lickona, 1991) can offer something useful to those teachers wishing to educate for good character in and through PE and sports. Concluding that this American movement falls short because of its emphasis on adherence to predetermined principles and its lack of attention to the specificity of PE and sports, I make a plea for a reconsideration and revival of character education programmes in the United Kingdom that both emerge out of sporting practices, and that focus on learning how to make informed moral decisions. With little or no guidance available as to how to go about doing this, however, teachers are for the large part confused as to what might constitute their role in morally educating young people.

In the second part of this chapter I suggest that, though their contribution and *phronesis* has yet to be fully recognised in existing PE and sports policy documentation, certain sorts of persons (Pincoffs, 1986) are currently doing an excellent job of morally educating young people in and through PE and sports. As such, their views ought to be central to such a reconsideration and revival. I suggest that whilst government initiatives in PE and sports seem helpful in providing much sought after resources, their over-emphasis on performative (not to mention social and political) goals means that teachers are in danger of losing sight of what is "good" about playing, teaching and coaching sports well. To this end, I address the issue of the sorts of persons we want to see doing this important ethical work, and describe how various sporting contexts can serve as moral training grounds in which to educate for good character. In the final part of this chapter I justify merging two practices – PE and sports – throughout this thesis. I argue that although PE and sports are distinct practices, the work of *exceptional* teachers in both contexts brings these two practices closer together, and even more importantly, enriches both.

2:1 Origins of a character education in PE and sports in the United Kingdom

The idea that young people can be morally educated to become good citizens in and through sports, and the notion that sports help build good character, are not novel concepts. Ancient Athenian education was concerned with physical development as an integral part of a boy's character education. Athenians sought to use physical activities which included sports such as "boxing, running, wrestling, javelin, discus and ball games" (Laker, 2000, p.7) to inculcate and encourage acceptable cultural values and social attitudes in young people. An involvement in games and sports was also viewed as being instrumental in helping the mind to work more effectively.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Muscular Christianity was cultivated in English public schools as a means of developing good character in and through games such as football (Cashmore, 2000, p.299). Games were viewed as providing an ideal context for the cultivation of desirable "manly" qualities such as loyalty, bravery and determination – those qualities deemed necessary to take on responsible leadership roles in government, commerce and the military. Many aspects of Muscular Christianity were successfully exported from Britain to other countries, where organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in the United States sought to teach young men a sense of morality through participation in sports (Cashmore, 2000, p.300).

This linking of men to sport within Muscular Christianity meant that women were historically excluded from a number of sporting practices and contexts; those who did seek to participate in sports found themselves entering a world which was almost exclusively the domain of men. Although the barriers to girls' and women's participation in sports are now being challenged and slowly broken down, there still remains a "male bias" in the way we think about sports (English, 2003). According to English (2003), the myth that women are "naturally" inferior at sports compared to men has been perpetrated by this male stranglehold on the domain. This stranglehold also means that the "human" qualities required to do sports well are seen as "manly" qualities, and this conflation has serious implications for both boys' and girls' involvement in PE and sports. A number of studies have suggested that one of the effects that the hyper-masculinisation of sports has had on boys is to encourage the development of certain undesirable dispositions, such as aggressiveness (Kidd, 1987; White and Young, 1999). As for how this same phenomenon has effected girls' involvement and participation in PE and sports, studies have shown that a common reason given for avoiding

traditional sports – football, rugby, cricket, and boxing – is that these sports require the development of such qualities as determination, competitiveness, courage and aggression, all of which are associated with being "masculine" (Halberstam, 1998). In other words, the masculinisation of these "human" qualities means that some girls feel that to possess them – not to mention to strive to develop them through their participation in sporting activities – makes them somehow less "feminine." Though it is not my intention to repeat the findings of this important body of gender work here, I do want to stress the detrimental impact that the masculinisation of certain sports has had on girls who are attracted to, or involved in, those sports (and conversely, the impact that the feminisation of others such as figure skating and netball has had on boys who are interested in them). When morally educating for good character, it is imperative that teachers are aware of the effects that this historical gendering of sports has had on young people, and that they consider the benefits that might lie in taking a different approach to girls and boys when teaching and coaching them. As Noddings (2002) argues, for a character education programme in any subject in school to be considered as such, it has to benefit both boys *and* girls. In the context of PE and sports, this means taking into account and acting upon the gender-based prejudices that are associated with playing certain sports, as well as addressing how these prejudices exclude some pupils and privilege others. In chapter four I pick up again on the problems associated with this gendering of sports and sporting performances, and the impact that it has on teachers and pupils.

By the early 1880s Muscular Christianity fell out of favour in the United Kingdom and was replaced in schools and universities by a more secular notion of "character-building" linked to Athleticism (Cashmore, 2000). If the emphasis in the former was on the individual – and a highly gendered individual at that – the

stress in Athleticism, whilst continuing to perpetuate the "manly" virtues, was on team or group affiliation. "Affiliation," according to Nussbaum (2000), means:

> To recognise and show concern for other human beings; to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capacity for both justice and friendship. (p.79)

This shift from the individual to the group is important to the understanding of the notion commonly held today that sports develop good character through qualities such as teamwork and cooperation (Theodoulides, 2001). This is an emphasis that surfaced repeatedly in both my empirical study of *exceptional* teachers, to be discussed fully in chapter four, and in physical educational documents (DfEE/QCA, 1999).

As for the link made in both of these historical trajectories between the playing of sports and the development of good character, it ought to be emphasised that though participation in sports may bring to the fore the development of certain kinds of dispositions, there is no conclusive proof that these dispositions are necessarily constitutive of a "morally" good person (Bredemeier and Shields, 1995). In other words, there is no guarantee that by merely playing a sport, a person will become a good person. On the contrary, Brediemer and Shields' (1995) findings suggest that an involvement in sports can make a person less "morally" good: for example, that through sports a person learns to achieve certain goals – such as winning – with little concern for the welfare of others. In the section that follows, I challenge three arguments that have been used to discredit the whole notion of educating for good character in and through sports.

2:2 Challenging three arguments made against using PE and sports as a means of character development

For any activity to be recognised as a moral practice there has to be within it some focus on the ethical aspects of being and becoming a certain sort of person in and through the activity (Noddings, 2002). The extent to which sports can be considered worthwhile educational activities that contribute significantly to character development has often been contested. Bredemeier and Shields (1995) outline three arguments commonly made against sports being used as a means to educate for good character. These are that:

> Sport is neither a vehicle for moral education nor a facilitator of antisocial behaviour, but rather morally neutral;
>
> Sport may encourage the development of desirable attributes but…[it is questionable] whether these attributes transcend the sport context and;
>
> Sport…builds characters, not character. (p.175)

The first argument suggests that sports are not imbued with any moral status, and therefore not reliable vehicles for effectively educating for good character. The implication here for PE teachers is that though they themselves might have a moral stance, the sports they teach have no intrinsic moral worth. This, as I will discuss at length in chapter six, is a position adamantly rejected by Alasdair MacIntyre (1985). For the moment, and as Simon (1991) argues, the point that needs to be made is that sports, far from being morally neutral, embody certain cultural values and attitudes that influence our involvement and ethical outlook in and beyond sports.

Traditionally, activities that directly lend themselves to the development of a child's ability to reason well and make informed choices have been given higher educational status than those that do not. Peters (1973), for example, does *not*

consider PE, and by extension sports, to be an "intrinsically worthwhile activity."

As McNamee (1992) notes:

> R.S. Peters' influential account of education in the 1970s saw it as the development of the rational mind. Focus on the mind was seen to encapsulate all there was to the idea of the educated person. (p.119)

According to Peters (1973) PE is not educationally worthwhile in its own right but only in how it contributes to the learning and teaching of other subjects, such as Maths and English. The problem here – and the problem with *any* approach to moral education that dictates that one human attribute (for example, an ability to reason well through maths) is more worthwhile than another (for example, playing sports well) – is that it creates a hierarchy of human qualities which puts tremendous pressure on a pupil to "measure up" in a particular way (Noddings, 2003, p.12). This not only skews moral education towards the successful acquisition of some human qualities at the expense of others, but it can also create unhappiness in a pupil who, according to Noddings (2003), "would not otherwise be greatly troubled by their deficiency in a given attribute" (p.12). This privileging of so-called intellectual pursuits (as epitomised in subjects such as Maths and English) over more physically-oriented activities (such as PE and Woodworking) also reinforces the mind/body split that has characterised so much of western philosophy, and which has consistently found the body and its capacities to be lacking. Today, though dualistic notions of mind and body are being contested, physical education and sports programmes still suffer from the legacy of this crude mind/body distinction where the education of the body is equated to mindless drill. This has resulted in PE and sports being attributed lower educational status than other subject disciplines – a view that has had serious implications for the PE profession even though that view has now been widely discredited (McNamee, 1992; Reid, 1998).

The second argument against sports as a vehicle for moral development hinges on the claim that good character cannot transcend from one context to another. The suggestion is that even if PE teachers manage to morally educate young people in and through PE and sports, there is no guarantee that what young people learn as a consequence of this teaching transfers to any other aspects of their lives. This line of argument provokes two responses. The first response is that it does not matter if what is learned in and through sports is transferable, as long as young people know how to conduct themselves appropriately inside a sporting context. Perhaps this is all that can be reasonably expected from the teacher in terms of developing good character. The second response is that it *does* matter that young people see the connections between playing sports well *and* living a good life. Though explained in more detail in chapter six, MacIntyre's (1985) linking of virtue to a practice is important here in that it recognises the close relationship between being a good practitioner and being a good person.

With regard to this second argument against educating for good character through sports, I would venture that learning to be or become a good volleyball player is enough in itself, if a person derives joy from doing so. Learning to be and become a good volleyball player can also result in a moral educational "outcome" that is in itself worthwhile (Siedentop *et al*, 1986, p.20-21), even if it does not carry over into the rest of a young person's life. I would argue, however, that in learning to be or become a good volleyball player, a young person stands a good chance of learning how to feel and act in "the right ways" in a range of personal and contextual circumstances (MacIntyre, 1985). In short, I see in the practice of volleyball the potential for experiencing joy, which is a fine end in itself; the potential for acquiring good character, which would be sufficient if it extended no further than the volleyball context; and the potential for learning to live a flourishing life through the joys and moral educational opportunities offered in

and through learning to play volleyball. I develop this idea further in chapter nine when outlining a character education programme that focuses on the development of a joyful disposition in and through volleyball.

The third argument against using sports as a means of moral development is that it does not develop good character *per se*, but only develops certain sorts of characters. In view of the unfortunate historical linking of character-based educational processes with dubious forms of indoctrination, such an argument is understandable. A prime example of this kind of indoctrination through sports can be seen in the Hitler Youth Movement of the 1930s, where the supremacy of one sort of person over another was advocated, with fatal and tragic consequences. Edmund Pincoffs (1986), however, cautions against reducing all forms of moral training to indoctrination. He suggests that in their attempt to avoid being accused of "brainwashing" (p. 137) – an accusation that teachers understandably want to avoid – teachers have reneged on their moral responsibilities to young people. To rectify this situation, Pincoffs urges teachers to recognise the ways in which some forms of moral training (Aristotle's concept of "habituation," for example) are "in the interest of helping the child to become the right sort of person" (p. 158). He also suggests that teachers have to learn how to distinguish between "good" and "bad" forms of moral training (p.157), and how to acquire the necessary sensitivities and sensibilities which are central to Aristotle's notion of teacher *phronesis,* or practical wisdom, and which enable them to become good judges of their pupils' characters. I explore Pincoffs' (1986) approach to moral education more fully in chapter seven.

The way that certain sporting personalities are created and nurtured by the media to sell newspapers or to increase television viewing figures might also explain why some argue that sports do not shape *good* character but only develop certain

sorts of characters. Though the extent to which young people actually identify with these media personalities when it comes to shaping their own involvement in sports is unknown (Carr, 1999), the fear is that impressionable young people will imitate and emulate the less savoury (and perhaps more newsworthy) qualities of these sporting characters rather than the not-so-newsworthy qualities of their "morally" good counterparts. This fear not only feeds into the misplaced notion that young people automatically ape that which might not be good for them; it also underestimates the degree to which PE teachers, unlike the media, draw on the commendable aspects of famous sportspersons' characters to motivate their pupils to become good sportspersons themselves. Furthermore, in encouraging pupils to look behind and beyond these often stereotypical and overly sensationalised negative images of sportspersons, teachers can help their pupils to shape their own involvement and find their own joys in sports.

Having outlined the historical development of approaches to educating for good character in and through sports in the United Kingdom, and challenged some of the arguments that have been levelled against *any* attempt to morally educate through sports, I now turn to the current character education movement in the United States to examine the extent to which this movement's attendant character education programmes might be useful to PE teachers wishing to design and implement their own programmes in the United Kingdom.

2:3 What can be learnt from the character education movement in the United States

As indicated in the first section of this chapter, and in spite of arguments to the contrary, the historical connections between sports and the development of character have led to claims by educationalists and ethicists that sports are ideal

practices and contexts in which to form and build good character (Arnold, 1997; Bredemeier and Shields, 1995; and MacIntyre, 1985). The introduction of Citizen Education in 2002 as a compulsory aspect of all subjects on the National Curriculum in England revolves around the idea that a certain kind of involvement in certain activities, like team sports, can help to redress a perceived fall in the moral standards of young people. In terms of becoming good citizens, PE teachers are expected to develop their pupils' "critical appreciation of issues of right and wrong, justice and fairness, rights and obligations in society" (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.7). It is the responsibility of PE teachers to teach pupils to think about and research moral issues, and to reflect upon and contribute to the process of participating (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.14). Though these moral processes are presented as simple to understand and straightforward to implement, the reality is that there is insufficient guidance for those PE teachers who want to go about their moral task with pupils more effectively. In light of this discrepancy between what is expected of teachers and what provisions have been made available to teachers to fulfil these expectations, a ready-made character education programme would seem, on the surface, to be just what PE teachers in the United Kingdom require.

The character education movement in the United States focuses on teaching young people about ethics and citizenship in a school setting (Lickona, 1991 & 1996). Lickona (1996) bases his character education model around eleven key principles which incorporate a list of "core ethical values" such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness and caring (p.94). He claims that his list of "core ethical values" not only provides the basis for an education *in* good character, but also defines what is constitutive *of* good character (Lickona, 1996, p.94). The underlying assumption of his model is that a list of core ethical values can be identified, and once identified can be taught. To successfully implement Lickona's model, teachers are expected to promote these selected core values in

all aspects of school life. Within this movement, character is defined as the possession and "active manifestation of virtues" (Noddings, 2002, p.3) – an observation that on first glance renders this character education movement akin to virtue ethics.

Lickona's character education model is not, however, a virtue-ethical approach – a point that will become clearer in chapter five when I expand upon the nature of such approaches but which, for the moment, can be explained by the fact that no virtue-ethical approach would reduce character education to a set of predetermined "core ethical values" that claim to cover every eventuality that might happen in a classroom (Noddings, 2002). A teacher's work with her pupils is just not as simple and straightforward as that. Learning and teaching are, by their very nature, highly nuanced and individualised activities which involve taking into account the different needs of *individuals* operating under different circumstances. A character education has to be about developing the character of the pupil *and* the teacher, and perhaps even more importantly, about the kind of relationship that is established between them in the course of this process. To offer any set of ethical values, even one which on the surface looks helpful, is of limited value and usefulness when it comes to dealing with the complexities of everyday situations with young people. In order to deal sensitively with different pupils in different situations, it is important that teachers develop and exercise their own judgement.

Another reason that Lickona's (1996) character education model falls short is that it is not specifically designed for PE and sports – Lickona and his followers having developed their set of "core ethical values" with *all* school subjects in mind. I contend that the specificity and special uniqueness of any school subject, rather than being ignored, ought to be usefully mobilised when designing a

character education specifically aimed at it. More importantly, though, Lickona's (1996) ready-made character education model is unnecessarily reductionist, full of presumptions about what character is and ought to be, and limited when it comes to encompassing teacher and pupil input that falls outside the model. As such, it offers an all-too-easy panacea for what is a highly complex area.

Focusing attention on only one set of "core ethical values" not only over-simplifies and misrepresents the moral role of teachers, but also diminishes the teacher's moral authority when it comes to making informed judgements in accordance with diverse and ever-changing circumstances. In Lickona's (1996) model of character education, the teacher's moral role amounts to little more than playing caretaker to, and benevolent conveyer of, a set of pre-determined principles that must be upheld at all costs. Reducing the teacher's moral role to one of serving those principles as opposed to serving the needs of young people means that she cannot develop the *phronesis* that enables her to become an effective character educator. In the next section, I discuss other ways that we can conceive of the moral role of the PE teacher.

2:4 The moral role of the PE teacher

Although most teachers are aware that they have a moral role to play with their pupils and see it as important, they are less clear as to what ought to constitute that role. Carr (1996) attributes some of the confusion to the competing views that exist with regard to how we ought to go about teaching moral education in our schools – a point discussed at length in chapter five. This confusion might also be explained by how little time and space in teachers' Continuing Professional Development for Physical Education (CPD-PE) is devoted to the moral development of young people. What is offered to teachers interested in developing

this aspect of their teaching are standardised written codes of conduct[1] for players, teachers and coaches. This approach is hardly surprising given the link that is all-too-often made between moral rules and the rules of sports. What this linking has meant, however, is that PE documentation tends to promote a rule-following approach to ethics:

> Physical education provides opportunities to promote: moral development, through helping pupils gain a sense of fair play based on the rules and conventions of activities, develop positive sporting behaviour, know how to conduct themselves in sporting competitions and accept authority and support referees, umpires and judges. (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.8)

Passages such as this shed little light on the role of the teacher as a moral educator, and also underplay the importance of the pupil-teacher relationship in contributing to the character education of pupils. Instead, moral development is presented to teachers as unproblematic: a matter of teaching pupils to play fairly through an adherence to rules. For the reasons suggested above, the teacher's role in moral development requires "urgent" attention within new and existing CPD-PE opportunities (Theodoulides and Armour, 2001, p.18).

Physical education was a non-certificated subject in schools until the 1970s: it had no documented common rationale or set of aims. This is not to say that a shared conception of what might constitute PE did not exist among teachers at this time; personal experience and discussions with others in the profession suggest that although the designing of PE syllabuses was left up to individual schools and the discretion of PE teachers and head teachers, a number of PE departments were delivering effective sports programmes that incorporated a strong ethical dimension. These programmes may have had different emphases, but they were nonetheless well thought through and popular with pupils. The variously named departments of education, however, seem not to have had faith in this arrangement. The assumption of politicians who were intent on standardising

educational provision in order to measure the attainments of children was that without commonly communicated aims and purposes, PE and sports programmes could not be educationally rigorous (SOEID, 1995, p.8). There is little conclusive evidence to show that this was the case, and I would argue that for some PE departments – particularly those that had already developed strong in-house rationales and aims – the implementation of a standard set of guidelines may have had a detrimental effect on their pupils' enjoyment of PE and sports, as well as on the other benefits they derived from their involvement in them.

During the 1980s and 1990s restrictions were increasingly placed on teachers' freedom in course design. The introduction of a National Curriculum in PE in England and Wales (1992) and Arrangements Documents in PE in Scotland (1988-92) was in part the government's response to public concerns regarding the decline in participation in traditional team sports and the rise of youth crime, as discussed in greater length in the section that follows. Each country set out rationales and aims for PE that, in England and Wales, primarily emphasised improving performance through participation in a range of physical activities that were designed to promote pupils' "spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.8) and, in Scotland, aimed to bring together the social, moral and emotional dimensions of physical education:

> During engagement in PE, pupils are physically and personally challenged to cooperate and compete, win and lose, accept rules and decisions, take responsibility, be tolerant of others, show courage and forbearance… By teaching pupils through participation about fair play and respect for others, dependence and independence, physical education aims to have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviours and to help to prepare them for life. (SOEID, 1995, p.11)

While an attempt was made to acknowledge the moral educational potential in PE, little guidance was available to teachers as to how they ought to go about nurturing a pupil's moral development in and through physical education.

Furthermore, though moral development was identified as a separate feature of human development in the National Curriculum for Physical Education (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.8), just how it is different was never adequately explained. To separate "the moral" from other dimensions of human development is problematic for it suggests that one can distinguish between these dimensions when maybe one cannot. It also encourages teachers to treat "the moral" as an "add-on" aspect of their work. On the other hand, in ignoring the distinction we risk failing to highlight important moral aspects of our lives. When it comes to the teacher's moral role, what is important is that the pupil's moral development must not be treated as a "special" educational process that stands outside of PE and sports but on the contrary, must be integral to the playing and teaching of these practices (Ryle, 1963).

Though it is clearly stated that moral development is the responsibility of *all* teachers, a PE teacher's primary aim is identified in the same National Curriculum documentation (DfEE/QCA, 1999) as being about improving individual and team performance. This sets up a false distinction between on the one hand, what might constitute a performance and on the other, what might constitute moral development. This distinction only serves to reinforce the notion that the moral dimension of human development is a mere "add on" to the learning and teaching of performance, rather than an integral part of describing and evaluating what might constitute good performance. Though no teacher of any subject can completely opt out of her moral responsibility, PE teachers have traditionally had less reason to pay attention to this realm given that it has been seen as merely a secondary or tertiary aim of PE. However, by extending our views of what constitutes "good performance" and expanding our conceptions of what might constitute a good sportsperson, we can properly integrate moral development into new and existing PE and sports programmes.

Since PE is essentially a practical subject, teachers worry that by placing too heavy an emphasis on developing the moral dimension of human development they might detract from the "essence" of PE and sports, namely "a concern with action" and "learning by doing" (SOEID/LTS, 1995, p.1). To counter this concern Bredemeier and Shields (1995) suggest that:

> A well-designed physical education programme will simultaneously foster moral growth. We firmly believe that physical education has the potential to foster moral character without in the process abandoning an emphasis on physical activity (p.200).

How PE teachers actively go about "simultaneously fostering" good character and physical prowess is the primary focus of the empirical component of this thesis. The results, as discussed in chapter four, provide an important starting point for designing a sketch of a character education programme that might fill the current lacuna in this area. In the meantime, the teacher's role continues to be seen as that of a technicist whose primary purpose is to help young people improve their "performance," as narrowly defined by the new guidelines and curriculum demands (Armour and Yelling, 2004). A plethora of courses that emphasise curriculum design and the teaching of specific sports do little to heighten awareness of the PE teacher's role as ethicist, the implication being that PE teachers can leave the moral education of young people up to someone else so as to be free to get on with the "real business" of teaching sports-related technical skills.

One of the troubling assumptions underlying this marked separation between moral and physical development is that the PE teacher is a "morally neutral being" who takes no aspect of her personal ethical outlook into the PE and sports lesson. In part, this negation of a moral stance on the part of the PE teacher comes of a view of moral education that does not consider the whole person but rather,

sees individuals as neatly divided into mind and body, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Carr (1996), however, is critical of such a view, insisting that the suggestion that PE teachers can ever be "neutral" in their dealings with young people is "highly suspect" (p.10). He argues that the PE teacher "has to be good at what she teaches *and* be a certain kind of person" (p.8, my emphasis). In Carr's view, the PE teacher must assert her moral authority: to hand it over to others is to opt out of her moral educational role. However, to become that "certain kind of person" who can come off the fence and state upfront what for her constitutes good character in PE and sports, she first has to be given the opportunity to develop her own *phronesis.* Without such an opportunity, she cannot be expected to engage confidently and competently in making informed decisions as to what the morally acceptable parameters of good character in PE and sports might be. To teach PE and sports well requires that teachers make informed judgements regarding their pupils' moral progress towards developing good character. Carr also insists that on the whole, it is not so much a case of teachers *choosing* to opt out of their moral role, but rather, a case of them not knowing how to deal with the confusing array of competing views as to what their moral role ought to be. In the section that follows, I suggest how some of this confusion arises.

2:5 Government initiatives in PE and sports

Traditionally, sports associations – for example, National Governing Bodies of sports (NGBS) and sports clubs – have worked closely with teachers in schools by providing some assistance with funding, equipment and expertise (Allison, 2001). In the 1980s increased political attention and resources were given to sports associations and schools to address the perceived decline in young people's participation in sports whilst at school (CLR, 1994; NCF, 1993). Though it was later found that this so-called decline only applied to the number of young people

participating in traditional team sports such as cricket and rugby in public schools in England (Sports Council, 1991, p.14), it was portrayed at the time as being far more widespread, with the blame coming to rest on teachers for withdrawing their voluntary time in response to ongoing disputes over teacher pay and working conditions. One of the outcomes of this perceived gap in sporting opportunities for young people was that sports organisations began to look elsewhere for new "substitute workforces" to work alongside or in place of teachers (Sports Council, 1991, p.15).

Although careful to acknowledge the good work of teachers in providing a foundation for sports participation in and through PE, the then Conservative government funded new initiatives for sports in schools which strongly encouraged partnership arrangements between PE and sports organisations (CLR, 1994; DfEE, 2004; DfES/DCMS, 2000; NCF, 1993). In fact, in some cases sports organisations found that they could no longer access any funding for new and existing opportunities for young people *without* working within such a partnership. To take advantage of the funding arrangements attached to these initiatives, sports organisations and schools had to demonstrate how they contributed to wider social agendas – agendas that in many ways resembled those underlying the rise of Muscular Christianity in the mid-nineteenth century (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Though sports were sometimes acknowledged as worthwhile in their own right, these initiatives were mainly politically and socially driven – designed to "achieve and sustain world class performances in sport" and tackle wider social problems such as "youth crime and obesity" in young people (Scottish Sports Council, 1998, p.7).

Increasingly, any sports and educational organisation that was in receipt of government grant aid had to demonstrate a commitment to these broader social

and political concerns as a condition of their funding, regardless of whether they were in a position to fulfil these requirements or indeed, were designed in the first place to even address such concerns. For instance, there is no conclusive evidence that participating in basketball will lead to a child losing weight, or deter that child from committing a crime. Granted, being part of a basketball team *may well* have a positive impact on a child's health or ethical outlook but basketball itself is not specifically designed to address these problems; to posit it as such is to fall into a dangerous form of reductionism. Not only does this linking of sports to desired social, moral and physical standards distract from the intrinsic value of sports; it also minimises the complexities involved in combating serious societal problems like child obesity and youth crime. In other words, this linking of PE and sports to the social and moral welfare of the nation – whilst appearing attractive and seemingly obvious on the surface – makes unfair and unrealistic demands on PE and sports programmes and by extension, PE teachers. It also places unreasonable expectations on those pupils participating in activities which are overly-laden with politically-motivated external aims and goals.

We can see in documentation surrounding The International Year of Sports and PE and the Sports Millennium Goals (UNGA, 2005) a similar desire to work towards these external aims and goals. What is also taken for granted in all of these initiatives is that PE will provide the foundations for sports performance. This positioning of PE as a means to an end – the end being the production of good performers – is not new and seems, on the surface, fairly obvious. The PE teachers in my study, however, seemed to suggest that the primary aim and purpose of PE ought to be the education of the whole person in and through activities such as sports.

We can see from the nature of the initiatives presented in this section that the teacher's role in bringing about moral development in and through PE and sports is contested and conflicted. By taking a closer look at the kinds of persons we would like to see morally educating young people in and through PE and sports, we can bring to the fore those persons' sporting knowledges, sensitivities and sensibilities, and take account of their views when it comes to providing PE teachers with both practical and conceptual guidance as to how to go about educating for good character.

2:6 The kinds of persons we want to see teaching young people

The nature and extent of teachers' care of pupils in PE and sport settings has not been well documented (Sparkes and Templin, 1992). The profile of those teachers who consistently give of their time and their energy is patchy. Rather than assessing a given sports programme through critically examining the quality of care young people receive within it, the numbers of children participating seems to be the main measure by which sports programmes are deemed to be successful. Today, with the increasing demands placed on teachers (and pupils) in and out of school time, those who volunteer their time to work with young people in sports are very special people indeed. Finding out more about the sorts of persons who teach sports well is crucial if we are to nurture and develop the kinds of persons we want to see playing sports well. Though this thesis does not explore how young people themselves describe and evaluate those teachers who stand out for them, this could be an important site for further research in that the findings would provide teachers with added insight into what works and does not work for pupils in the context of PE and sports.

It matters a great deal the sorts of persons to whom we entrust our young people, for these persons are likely to have a major impact on how young people come to see their own involvement both in PE and sports, and in the community at large. The question that begs to be asked here, but surprisingly is not asked often enough, is that beyond the obvious requirement that teachers are not abusive, just what sorts of persons do we *want* teaching sports to our young people? Some PE teachers in this empirical study suggested that we are right to have serious reservations about certain sorts of persons who are teaching and coaching young people – for example, those who talk aggressively or tauntingly to young people or to referees. We also have to have some assurance that the quality of teaching and coaching provided by those persons typically involved in taking sports clubs for young people – parents, players, students, teachers and coaches – reflects a concern for the happiness of young people, a point I develop more fully in chapter nine.

One of the results of government initiatives in PE and sports, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is that the face of sports in school is changing. It is no longer the sole domain of the PE teacher. These new initiatives encourage schools to recruit other people – chiefly university students and parents because they are available to work at times immediately following the school day – to help with running sports in schools. These people are often under-trained when it comes to working with young people in sports. Extra funding available from these new initiatives means that head teachers can make available to these potential new recruits one or two educational opportunities – for example, a coaching course – provided by national governing bodies of sports. However, as we have seen, the moral development of young people does not seem to be a central feature of this provision. Those responsible for offering new initiatives need to be aware of how new workforces (parents, senior pupils and students) might differ from previous

workforces (PE teachers and non-PE teachers) in terms of their experience of working with young people in an educational sporting context. Those behind these new initiatives also have to ensure that the development of the whole person is integral to the teaching and learning approaches that these new workforces employ. Just as teachers cannot rely on prescribed codes of conduct alone as a way of morally educating young people in and through sports, these codes cannot be the *only* form of guidance given to these new workforces.

In terms of what kinds of persons we want to see teaching young people in general, the process of talking about and reflecting upon different sorts of dispositions is a vital aspect of working out those we prefer and those we chose to avoid (Pincoffs, 1986). This process, as I will elaborate in chapter seven, is also a key tenet of the kind of character education programme in PE and sports that such persons can successfully morally educate their pupils within and through. Traditionally, though not necessarily in educational circles, moral development has been associated with character-talk (Kupperman, 1991). We talk of a good person in terms of the qualities that sets him or her apart from others, and by referring to what he or she is like as a whole person. Most of us have a general understanding of what is meant when someone is described as being kind or generous (Pincoffs, 1986). We build pictures of others (and ourselves) by discussing what makes them stand out in terms of the kinds of character traits or dispositions they possess. Although Bredemeier and Shields (1995) bemoan the lack of a consensus as to what is meant by "good character," we do not need a prescriptive definition of what constitutes good character in order to be able to talk about different sorts of persons. That said, however, if we are to base our moral educational processes on notions of good character, then we need to explore more fully the commonalities that exist in our understandings of what might constitute such an assemblage of dispositions in contexts like PE and sports.

It is through different human associations that we come to understand what an honest or dishonest person ought to "look like." The labels we use to identify a certain sort of person – for example, joyful, considerate, kind or cruel – help us make informed judgements about different sorts of persons (Pincoffs, 1986). Though examined in more detail in chapter seven, it is important that the sorts of persons teaching our young people are able to help them to judge correctly between the company of different sorts of persons to help them to lead happy and flourishing lives (Pincoffs, 1986). It is also imperative that teachers understand the central importance of the teacher/pupil relationship when it comes to nurturing and developing pupils' characters in and through PE and sports. In the section that follows, I suggest a number of sporting contexts into which this work of becoming the "right sorts of persons" (Pincoffs, 1986) can be integrated, and through which it can be achieved.

2:7 The sporting context as a moral training ground

Traditionally, PE teachers have initiated young people into a range of sports deemed to be culturally valuable. Part of this initiation involves introducing young people to the norms, rituals and mores – what MacIntyre (1985) refers to as "the traditions" – of different sporting practices, and helping them to shape their own involvement and ethical outlook in them. In talking generally about sports in the context of secondary schools, we are talking about a collection of different types of sporting activities – for example, basketball, hockey, swimming, archery, and squash – each with their own traditions. Sports in a school context – both taught inside and outside of the PE curriculum – can provide an excellent moral training ground. Though I develop this point in more detail in chapter six, it is worth noting at this stage that PE teachers have traditionally volunteered to run sports

clubs, as well as many other kinds of activities, outside of the confines of the PE curriculum (OFSTED, 1995; SOEID, 1995). What is less noted is why they choose to do this. Among the reasons given by the teachers in my study were that they saw these extracurricular activities as an important site for getting to know their pupils better, and that they derived enjoyment and satisfaction from this additional involvement in their pupils' lives.

PE teachers' voluntary work with sports clubs is acknowledged in coaching documentation as being important in initiating young people into sports, as being helpful when it comes to developing young sportspersons, and as "representing a large proportion of the coaching population" (Sports Council, 1991, p.15). Despite this acknowledgement there seems to be an uneasy alliance between the PE teacher and the sports coach, both of whom are intent on promoting and protecting their respective ways of working with young people. The PE teachers in my study, for instance, characterised the PE teacher as primarily concerned with the development of the *whole person* and the sports coach as primarily concerned with the development of indidivual and team *performance*. By implication, the suggestion is that the ethical work of teachers and coaches is different.

Rather than highlighting how the ethical work of teachers and coaches differs – a process that is divisive and often misguided – I argue that when it comes to good teaching and good coaching, the one can only be beneficial to the other. This is especially the case when the person involved in teaching or coaching sports outside of the PE curriculum *is* the PE teacher – her character, her approach to moral development, and her relationships with her pupils thus being extended beyond that of the confines of the school day. Unfortunately, the persistent notion in the United Kingdom that any person can coach has done little to raise the profile and status of coaching in schools (Sports Council, 1991, p.309). This

might explain why PE teachers sometimes regard themselves as distinct from, and somewhat superior to, coaches. This idea that PE is more educationally justifiable because PE teachers have more professional status than do coaches, however, fails to account for the person involved in both. The qualities of this latter person, I argue, often make her an exceptional teacher *and* coach who, regardless of professional status, does all aspects of her job in an exemplary fashion.

In the biggest survey of coaching ever undertaken in the United Kingdom, the researchers unhelpfully define the term "coaching" as "any individual that is involved in coaching" (NCF, 2004, p.3). No doubt, this evasiveness comes of their recognition that there exists a wide range of interpretations of the term "coach." It is a pity that rather than philosophically engaging with what coaching is and ought to be – a task that would have required a good deal of reflection – those conducting the survey opted to simply go with respondents' (schools, universities and sports organisations) own interpretation of what defines a coach in any given context (NCF, 2004, p.12). Not only does this vagueness around what constitutes "the coach" make it difficult to differentiate in their findings between teachers as *teachers of sports* and teachers as *coaches of sports;* it also means that the same term is used for those fully committed to working with young people and those who only do it in an ad hoc way. On the one hand, this blurring at both levels makes it impossible to assess just where the moral educational potential of sports lies. On the other hand – and somewhat ironically, for this was probably not these researchers' intention – it also ends up highlighting the inevitable and all-too-often overlooked overlaps between these two roles.

Many PE teachers offer activities outside of the PE curriculum that interest both them and their pupils. Though PE teachers in my study continued to promote the *ethos* – what McLaughlin (2003) calls "dynamic forms of interactive co-

ordination and negotiation" (p.342) – of their PE department or school whilst taking their own sports clubs, they enjoyed the freedom that these clubs provided for them in terms of getting to know their pupils better and exploring new ways of presenting and teaching new material to young people. McLaughlin (2003) contends that the relationships between participants in different practices – in this case PE and sports – and the interplay between these practices and various other "educational practices" and the larger "communities of practice" which operate inside and outside of a school, help to form and shape the ethos of any given practice (pp. 342-343), and by extension the ethos of a school. In fact, there is a long-held assumption that running sports activities outside of the PE curriculum is beneficial to pupils and ought to be part of a PE teacher's role:

> Teachers should recognise the potential of school sport as a context for pupils to experience both competition and cooperation, the personal and social benefits which these bring, and the key role physical education staff can play to lead sports activities. (SOEID, 1995, p.73)

In the past, where teachers have run successful sports teams and clubs, this has often contributed to them gaining promotions. With the introduction of certification in PE, head teachers have come to expect PE teachers to be successful on two fronts. Suddenly, how well pupils perform in inter-school competitions is not the sole indicator of a PE teacher's success; they are also judged on how well their pupils perform in the examinations linked to PE courses introduced through the implementation of new curriculum guidelines. In light of the introduction of examinations in PE, much debate has revolved around whether or not PE teachers *ought to* be expected to run sports clubs on a voluntary basis, with the result that some are now asking for, or being offered, some form of payment for this service. In return for payment, teachers are asked to provide evidence in the form of standardised written reports detailing how their extracurricular work is contributing to the wider social agenda. Ironically, teachers in my study felt that all this time spent filling in forms and writing

reports was taking precious time away from tackling those very issues that government initiatives want PE and sports to be addressing with regard to young people.

Whether or not PE teachers' voluntary work in schools receives financial recompense, it is essential that this work be accorded the respect it deserves, contributing as it does to the flourishing of teachers and pupils, as well as providing important benefits for the school. As to whether or not teachers ought to be obliged to run extracurricular activities, it remains that many – "over 70,000 specialist PE teachers and 25,000 non specialist PE teachers (i.e. teachers of other subjects who help to coach sport in schools) (NCF, 2004, p.34) – do, and in doing so, derive great satisfaction. Their involvement in both practices – teaching and coaching – allows them to draw upon their experience of working with pupils and other teachers and coaches in a range of contexts, which can inform their own and their pupil's ethical outlook in PE and sports. This is why I talk throughout this thesis about PE and sports as one, even though they are distinct practices, and argue that for PE to be successful in developing good character in young people, it needs to extend beyond the school environment and the school day (Siedentop et al, 1986). When the same person (the PE teacher) is involved in both PE and sports, there is an increased possibility that teaching processes and coaching processes become expanded or merged together in a favourable way to the advantage of young people. The chances for relationships to develop between PE teachers and their colleagues, and PE teachers and pupils, are increased, as is the likelihood of richly diverse conversations arising out of the experience of sports in these various encounters and contexts. This in turn can help PE teachers to build a more informed picture of who their colleagues and pupils are and how they operate in different contexts with different people. In chapters three and four I make a case for the *exceptional* teacher, showing how her involvement in both

teaching and coaching contexts allows her to draw upon her practical knowledge and experience in each to the advantage of the other, and how – by virtue of being involved with young people in more than one sporting educational context – she has the occasion and added opportunity to shape those pupils' involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports.

2:8 Summary

Though sports have traditionally been linked with developing good character in schools, an emphasis on how to go about educating for good character is currently missing in PE and sports programmes. Attempts to provide PE teachers with guidance as to how to go about morally educating young people have favoured approaches that rely on adherence to a predetermined set of principles or rules. In the absence of appropriate guidelines that could help PE teachers take on their role as moral educators, and given the confusion that has arisen with regard to the nature of this role as a result, we must turn our attention to the sorts of persons that we want to see morally educating our young people in PE and sports. In order to do their moral task well, these persons must develop their *phronesis* through teacher talk and reflection, and through a wide range of personal and contextual engagements with their colleagues and pupils. In turn, they can become the sorts of persons best situated and best equipped to design effective character education programmes in PE and sports. In the next two chapters, I explore what might constitute the basis of such a *phronesis* and sketch an outline of the sorts of persons who value this way of thinking about their moral role through engaging in conversations with *exceptional* PE teachers who work with young people in secondary schools in the United Kingdom.

Chapter Three: Methodology: Incorporating an empirical component into a philosophical enquiry

3:0 Introduction

In the first part of this chapter I provide some necessary background to my research. I explain my inclusion of an empirical component within a philosophical enquiry into the moral development of young people in and through PE and sports, and make a case for rooting such a philosophical enquiry in the experience of the teacher who, at the end of the day, is the one charged with the moral development of young people whilst at school. I also discuss the three driving questions that formed the basis of my small group interviews with teachers.

In the second part of this chapter I explain how I went about selecting the teachers for my study, and justify my targeting of experienced PE teachers (n=18) who were generally known to me, and discuss the three criteria that made them qualify as *exceptional.* In this section I also elaborate upon the "dead ends" and "U-turns" (Stacey, 1989) that I encountered during this selection process, and speculate upon the possible effects that the final choices I did make – and was sometimes *forced* to make – had on my research findings.

In the third part of this chapter I address the advantages and disadvantages of using a small group interview format when conducting empirical research, and provide a brief profile of each of the four groups that ended up constituting my sample. I then outline how the interviews were set up and conducted, and examine various group dynamics that emerged. I also highlight issues that I thought would be pertinent and turned out not to be so – for example, the seeming lack of difference in attitude and approach between Scottish and English PE teachers.

In the fourth section I reflect on the interview process itself, and discuss my role as researcher. I consider how my insider status might have affected the final findings of the empirical component of this thesis. I briefly explain the process of transcribing the recorded interviews and organising teachers' reflections into thematic areas, and address the ethical issues which influenced the design of this study.

3:1 Background to research

This research emanates from my own experience of teaching PE and coaching sports at the secondary level in Scotland from 1983-1991, and from working as the Scottish National Volleyball Development Officer from 1991-2003. Over the course of this twenty year period I worked with more than three hundred PE teachers and coaches in their PE classes and sports clubs, and gained firsthand knowledge of how they interacted with their pupils and players. I saw how the characters of these teachers and coaches had a "modelling effect" (Carr, 2000, p.219) on those they taught, irrespective of their own intentions and motivations. I saw how some teachers and coaches, though experienced practitioners, seemed to lose the interest of even the most motivated of young people. I also saw how some teachers worked a kind of magic with their pupils, making even the most hesitant of participants derive joy and satisfaction from their involvement in PE and sports. My own experience of teaching PE in secondary schools had alerted me to how difficult it is to teach young people effectively, and how ill-prepared most of us were to take on this onerous and extremely important task. What was it, I wondered, that made certain sorts of persons so *exceptional* at what they did with young people? My sense that this "something" had to do with a concern for their pupils' happiness and moral development convinced me that research into teacher

praxis was needed to make existing philosophical work in the area of character education more relevant, hence useful to teachers wishing to develop their own *phronesis.* This realisation prompted me to incorporate into this thesis an empirical component that revolved around the practices and processes of what I term "the *exceptional* teacher."

By privileging *exceptional* teachers' practical knowledge and experience, I counter the lack of recognition that their ethical work has received in existing PE and sports policy documentation and CPD-PE provision. I also challenge existing philosophical research on teachers that involves an empirical component and that, in an attempt to make findings appear representative of *all* teachers, focuses on the *average* teacher, thereby overlooking the work of those *exceptional* teachers who could actually teach us something about teaching. This kind of representative research often makes the additional claim that it is "objective," emerging as it does out of a sampling that has been "randomly" selected. As Coolican (1999) argues, however, "the simple truth is that a truly representative sample is an abstract ideal, unachievable in practice" (p. 33). In handpicking the PE teachers I wanted to participate in my study, and in acknowledging that I had targeted them precisely *because* they met with my criteria for being *exceptional,* I engaged in a selection process known as "purposive sampling" (Saratankos, 2005). In this technique:

> The researchers purposively choose subjects who, in their opinion, are relevant to the project. The choice of respondents is guided by the judgement of the investigator. For this reason it is also known as judgemental sampling… In such samples, the important criterion of choice is the knowledge and expertise of the respondents, and hence their suitability for the study. (p. 164)

This process enabled me to achieve one of the primary goals of this research, which was to render audible the voices of *exceptional* teachers and to bring their talk and reflection on the subject of the PE teacher's role as moral educator to the

fore. It also meant that unlike those who seek above all else to be "objective" and "representative," I could openly and unapologetically make the best use of my privileged position as an informed insider. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest, one of the advantages of being so positioned is that the researcher "has more insight as to the sorts of persons in the group and how their views are valuable to the research" (p.54).

Typical of the kind of analysis that opts to go the representative route as opposed to the selective route is Theodoulides' (2005) recent doctoral research, which questions the ability of PE teachers to fulfil the role of moral educators. One of the problems with Theodoulides' research is that he measures the effectiveness of the PE teacher as a moral educator primarily by his or her ability to develop good teamwork in pupils – incidentally, the one aspect of the PE teacher's "moral task" that is constantly pushed and promoted within existing PE and sports policy documentation. This unnecessarily reductive understanding of the teacher's moral role not only reproduces, hence reinforces, an extremely narrow conception of the PE teacher; it also makes the many teachers who are doing their job well *and* fulfilling their role as moral educators feel inadequate and unsupported.

Needless to say, the empirical component of my research is not a comparative study between the *exceptional* and the *average* teacher. My specific interest is in examining the sorts of persons who are doing an excellent job in their capacity as moral educators, and in exploring the extent to which they have a significant influence on how their pupils view their own involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports. As suggested above, the manner in which I selected PE teachers to be involved in this research deliberately reflects this interest. What also needs to be emphasised is that this thesis is a study of morality that is situated *inside* PE teachers' experiences of PE and sports, thereby avoiding the imposition of a view

of morality that comes from *outside* that experience. Locating moral philosophy within PE teaching praxis brings to life Aristotle's (1976) notion of *phronesis* or practical wisdom – showing how it is enacted in the daily lives of those who are working towards its possession. Theory, in this thesis, is thus not positioned before praxis in order "to inform it"; rather, theory evolves from praxis and helps teachers better understand the nuanced complexities of what they do (Van Manen, 1990, p.15). As I discuss in more detail below, some of the PE teachers who were involved in this study expressed how they were already benefiting from their engagement in a process of philosophical reflection by virtue of being given the chance to discuss amongst themselves what might constitute "good character" in PE and sports in the context of these interviews.

A major criticism levelled at philosophical enquiry is that it is detached or removed from how most people live their lives (in Scheffler, 1992, p.50). What I therefore bore in mind when approaching this thesis was that what it produced in terms of a sketch of a character education programme had to be *accessible* to teachers, and *possible* to implement (Flanagan, 1991). This thinking also informed the way I designed the empirical element of this thesis and framed my interview questions. Thus, though the driving questions of my thesis are posed in the language of virtue-ethics – namely, (i) how do teachers conceive of morally good sportspersons?; (ii) how do teachers perceive their own role and the role of the PE teacher in general when it comes to morally educating young people?; and (iii) which kinds of practices and processes do teachers use to morally educate young people? – the method that I used to open up these areas to teachers during the group interviews was through questions such as, "What's the difference between a good sport and a bad sport?" and "What kinds of sportspersons do you admire?" What I learned through the course of the interviews was that this attempt on my part to render accessible to the teachers those concepts that are central to the realm

of virtue-ethics was not required: the *exceptional* teachers in my study were not only happy to engage in these more complex framings of the issues, but responded much better to them. For instance, the notion of "the good sport" did not particularly inspire teachers initially to engage in moral talk, nor overly pique their interest. They came to the interview, rather, prepared and willing to engage in the moral aspects of their work in a manner that would not be out of place in a discussion among virtue-ethicists. The questions and my own personal prompters that formed the basis of these interviews appear in appendix four.

3:2 Criteria for selection of teachers

Though my original intention was to seek out *exceptional* teachers in the Gloucestershire area where I was based, a lack of response to an open invitation issued early on in the research process prompted me to re-design the empirical component of this study, and recruit participants from Scotland on the basis of personal connections, and in England on the basis of recommendations from a trusted colleague. If the recruitment process changed, what I was looking for in terms of the sorts of persons who fit my profile of an *exceptional* teacher did not. I based my selection of teachers on three criteria. The first was that the teacher had been teaching in secondary schools for a minimum of eight years, and that during that time she or he had been involved in teaching both PE and sports. The second was that she or he seemed to care about the happiness of pupils. The third was that she or he appeared to derive personal satisfaction and enjoyment from helping pupils to become good sportspersons. Whilst it was my intention to interview an equal number of male and female PE teachers, I ended up interviewing more women (n=14) than men (n=4) – a point I will return to later in this chapter.

The first criterion reflects my interest in "experienced" teachers – a value term that, as Sparkes and Templin (1992) suggest, is somewhat problematic but which can be better understood when seen in terms of "career life stages"[2] (p. 123). For my part, I targeted PE teachers who fell into what Sparkes and Templin identify as the "mid-career" life stage category – that is, those who had given between eight and nineteen years of service (p.123). I was interested in this particular life stage category because the minimum career length (eight years) seemed to be long enough for teachers to have worked with at least two cycles of pupils – a cycle being a minimum of four years, which is concurrent with the average pupil's passage through secondary school. I accept that there is no direct link between the length of time teachers have worked in a certain environment and their effectiveness as moral educators. My sense, however, was that there was a greater likelihood that those PE teachers who had "done their time" and *were still doing it* would be best equipped to actively reflect upon their role as moral educators. Furthermore, and as Hansen (1998) suggests:

> Experienced teachers know that there is no blueprint or by-the-numbers moral code that can tell them what to do in a particular context. (p.649)

In the end, three teachers involved in the interviews fell outside this category: one was retired and two had seven years of experience. As for how the teachers selected had spent their time, it was equally important that in addition to teaching PE, they had been actively involved in taking extracurricular sports clubs. I considered that this latter criterion made them "experienced" in that these teachers had been exposed to a wide range of sporting contexts, and had had more opportunity than those teachers who do not take extracurricular activities to engage in a number of ways with their pupils.

The second and third criteria that informed my selection process – that these PE teachers appeared to care about their pupils' happiness, and seemed to derive

personal happiness from doing a good job of helping their pupils to develop as good sportspersons – were qualitative factors that indicated to me that these were the sorts of persons I wanted to interview. No formal measure was used to assess the nature of their caring or the degree of satisfaction that these targeted teachers seemed to derive from doing their job well. Rather, my selection of teachers in accordance with these two criteria was based entirely on observations that I, in Scotland, and my trusted colleague in England, had made whilst working alongside of them. In the last part of this chapter I elaborate upon the advantages and disadvantages of using participants who were handpicked, and who were for the most part personally and professionally known to me.

3:2:1 Recruiting PE teachers in Gloucestershire

As mentioned above, the process of putting together small interview groups consisting of *exceptional* PE teachers began in Gloucestershire, England, where I was based whilst doing my doctoral research at the University of Gloucestershire. A "catch-all" circular inviting PE teachers who fit my criteria to attend one of two focus group interviews on categorising the morally good sportsperson and conceptualising the moral role of the PE teacher was distributed by two area staff tutors and the area school sport coordinator manager (see appendix one). The latter also made the circular available to teachers attending a local schools athletics meeting. Aware that the number of demands made of those teachers I most wanted to interview meant that they were also the teachers who were the least available – teachers working within the PE curriculum (lesson preparation, lesson delivery and marking) *and* in extracurricular sports clubs (preparing and running sessions and organising inter school fixtures) – I offered, by way of an incentive, a volleyball workshop to potential participants. I made it clear that, having been arranged with a local area staff tutor, this workshop could be offered as part of PE teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD-PE) provision.

This meant that PE teachers could ask their head teachers for time out of school to attend the workshop and that it would count as part of their CPD-PE time. I offered to run this workshop either centrally at the University of Gloucestershire or at their schools with their own department and pupils. My intention was to return in kind the time they were giving me – exchanging my expertise in volleyball for their input into the interview process.

The notion of reciprocity in research is a philosophically contested one (Marvasti, 2004). The fear is that in offering an incentive to potential recruits, you are "violating" the "principle of voluntary participation" (Marvasti, 2004, pp.135-136). Furthermore, the motives of participants who give of their time in return for some other good can be seen to be questionable, and hence may have a corrupting effect on the final research results. In terms of my own "lure" to the "indigent" (Marvasti, 2004, pp.135-136), it soon became evident that the volleyball workshop I was offering, though well intentioned, was not enticement enough to bring in *exceptional* (and possibly overworked) Gloucestershire teachers. Those that eventually became involved did so because they were interested in the research itself.

Whilst waiting for a response, and as part of my ongoing effort to recruit teachers, I also gave three short presentations: first, to fifteen PE teachers at a local PE association meeting; second, to eight PE teachers who were involved in a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) training day held at the University of Gloucestershire; and third, to five PE teachers who attended a school sport managers group meeting. At each I explained the purpose of my research and left information as to where those interested in participating in the study could contact me. Once again, there was no response.

3:2:2 Re-assessment of recruitment process in Gloucestershire

Frustrated by the lack of response from PE teachers in the Gloucestershire area, I took stock of the situation. Whatever I tried in the way of recruitment strategies seemed to be resulting in an impasse. Though heartened by Stacey's (1989) insistence that the "dead-ends" and "U-turns" encountered whilst setting up a research project are an integral, if often unacknowledged, part of the research process (p. 50), it remained that I still had not found any teachers to participate in my empirical study. I realised that one of the biggest barriers to recruiting teachers was that I did not know any of the PE teachers in the area. I also knew from previous experience that PE departments receive a large number of invitations in the form of circulars from a wide variety of organisations, and yet as a means of initial contact do not tend to elicit a large response. With both of these considerations in mind, I commandeered the help of a trusted colleague within the Sport Education Department of the University of Gloucestershire who came from the area, and knew a number of PE teachers. With her help, I located sixteen PE teachers who met with my three main criteria. I telephoned each of them to ask if they would be willing to be involved in the interviews (see appendix two). I used my colleague's name, with her permission, as a way of introducing myself and my research to these teachers. Fourteen of the sixteen teachers that I had contacted agreed to participate in my study. None of them were previously known to me.

From this recruitment experience an important research observation emerged: a personal connection and one-to-one contact are both vital when seeking out participants for academic studies of this kind. Following this show of interest in Gloucestershire, a number of additional telephone exchanges ensued to set up suitable dates, times and venues for the interviews. One by one, participants dropped out: some because of family commitments, most because they were

already over-committed with their school sports clubs obligations, and a few because of their own sporting commitments. If this only confirmed my initial fears that those whom I most needed to reach would be those who had the least time to give, five of the original fourteen teachers did eventually agree to attend an interview held at the University of Gloucestershire, and four of these actually turned up on the day.

3:2:3 Snowball Sampling in Scotland

During this period, I also made another decision: for lack of an adequate sample in England, I would have to return to Scotland to seek out those *exceptional* teachers with whom I had previously worked. Setting up the three interview groups that resulted of this decision proved to be fairly easy. Using a technique that Coolican (1999) refers to as "snowball sampling," whereby the researcher selects several key people or contacts who in turn help the researcher recruit "further important contacts to be interviewed" (p. 38), I telephoned three PE teachers who were working in secondary schools in different parts of Scotland, and who I had known for over ten years. I asked each if they would be willing to host an interview session with PE teachers in their area. All agreed to act as hosts, which meant that they would provide the venue, contact local *exceptional* teachers and explain to them the purpose of my research. Given the problems experienced with recruiting teachers in the Gloucestershire area, each host teacher agreed with me that it was not worthwhile to send an open invitation to PE teachers in their area but rather, to make a personal contact over the telephone.[3] Together, we selected those teachers who fitted my three criteria, and I sent each host a brief synopsis of my research and an outline of the main questions that would be asked at the interview to help them with the recruitment of targeted teachers (see appendix three). Each host teacher agreed to ask between six and eight teachers to attend his or her respective interview session. In this way, the host teachers

became collaborators in the research process. As friends as well as colleagues, the hosts were very interested in my research and keen to help me in any way they could. In essence, they volunteered to serve as my assistants as well as to take part in the group interviews. After the sessions they helped me to gauge how the interview had gone and we "bounced" ideas off each other – something which was missing from my interview session with the Gloucestershire group. Of the eighteen teachers who initially agreed to be part of the three interview sessions in Scotland, fourteen attended. Twelve of these teachers were well known to me, one was somewhat known to me, and one was unknown but came highly recommended by one of the hosts.

3:3 The interview process

Though group interviewing, as Fontana and Frey (1998) suggest, is frequently associated with market research where a "focus group" is created to gage consumer choices and spending patterns (p.54), it is also used in a number of scholarly domains where the intention of the researcher is to bring together "a group with a common interest who meet to discuss an issue in a collective interview" (Coolican, 1999, p.150). According to Krueger and Casey (2000), the informal group interview is a qualitative data gathering technique that is flexible, in that questions act as prompts to discussion rather than fixed categories that must be strictly adhered to, and that suits both "purposive sampling" and "snowball sampling" selection processes, in that the researcher can structure the overall interview in a way that best ensures that the known knowledges and experiences of participants will emerge. Unlike individual interviewing, the group interview structure allows for intra-group discussion during which similar and competing views on issues are uncovered. Considering that one of the main focuses of my research is the value of teacher talk and reflection (Pincoffs, 1986),

group interviewing seemed the most obvious way to explore this dynamic in action, and to shift the emphasis away from a one-on-one researcher/interviewee interaction.

My aim was to create interview groups of six to eight PE teachers. This, claim Krueger and Casey (2000), is the optimum size for intra-group discussion because it demands less involvement from the interviewer, and has been found to foster participants' questioning of each others' views. In the end, my actual group sizes ranged from four to six participants: three groups of four and one group of six. In terms of group dynamics, and in line with Krueger and Casey's (2000) suggestion, more was demanded of me in terms of directing the interview in the smaller groups than in the group of six. Rather than group size, however, what seemed to have the greatest impact on how the interview unfolded in terms of ease and openness was the degree to which participants knew me and knew each other. It is worth noting that in terms of the interviewer/participant distinction, however, the fact that I was known to most of my participants as a colleague and friend meant that the usual distance that exists between researchers and the researched was not there – a point I shall return to later on in this chapter.

3:3:1 Piloting the questions

I piloted my interview questions under interview conditions with two groups of Sports Studies students at the University of Gloucestershire: one undergraduate group (n=4) and one master's level group (n=3). In both groups, the creative thinking session in which they discussed and developed their own conceptions of a good and bad sportsperson seemed to elicit the most enthusiastic response. I took note of the type of questions students found difficult to answer – in general, these were questions that contained virtue theoretical terminology – and after discussing this observation with supervisors, adjusted the interview questions

accordingly. This simplifying of questions to reflect common usage terminology rather than virtue theoretical language – for example, I substituted the term "good sport" for the "morally good sportsperson" – was not, as it turned out, necessary. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the teachers I ended up interviewing were quite at ease with terms such as "moral," "ethos" and "character traits" – an indication that I probably picked the wrong demographic to test out my interview questions. What these pilot interviews did prove useful in determining, however, was where the creative thinking session should come in the interview. Moving it nearer to the beginning was a useful way of breaking the ice early on, and creating a vocabulary that we could use when engaging with the rest of the questions.

3:3:2 Small Group Interviews

Four small group interviews took place between June and December 2003. Three were held in Scotland (G1, G2 and G4) and one was held in Gloucester, England (G3). The composition of the groups was as follows:

G1: Argyle and Bute, Scotland (June 2003)

Three female PE teachers and one male PE teacher volunteered to be involved in this small group interview. The host teacher was well known to me as a friend and through having worked with her for over ten years. All participants responded to personal invitations from the host teacher to attend this interview. All four PE teachers are currently involved in taking after school sports clubs. One participant was a Principal Teacher of PE. Three of the four PE teachers were well known to me, having taught alongside them for more than five years.

G2: Glasgow, Scotland (June 2003)

Six female PE teachers volunteered to be involved in this small group interview. The host teacher was well known to me as a friend and through having worked

with her for over ten years. All participants responded to personal invitations from the host teacher to attend this interview. One participant was a Principal Teacher of PE; two participants were Assistant Principals of PE; and one participant was a Principal Teacher of Guidance and a PE teacher. All six PE teachers were previously known to me, and I had taught alongside three of them for over five years.

G3: Gloucestershire, England (July 2003)

Four female PE teachers volunteered to be involved in this small group interview. As discussed earlier, all four participants were recommended to me by a trusted colleague within the University of Gloucestershire. Three teachers responded to telephone invitations and one was contacted face-to-face. One participant was a retired PE teacher. One participant was a Principal Teacher of PE. None of these teachers were previously known to me.

G4: Lanarkshire, Scotland (December 2003)

One female PE teacher and three male PE teachers volunteered to be involved in this small group interview. The host teacher was well known to me as a friend and through having worked with him for over ten years. All participants responded to personal invitations from the host teacher to attend this interview. One participant was a Principal Teacher of PE. All four PE teachers were well known to me, having taught alongside them for more than five years.

All of the interview sessions were organised around participants' schedules and at each, food and drinks were provided. The provision of food and drink helped to create an atmosphere conducive to open discussion, as did the fact that almost all of the participants knew each other well. My intention was to create a social environment more akin to meeting friends after work for a drink and a chat, than

one that replicated a formal interview setting. In this way I hoped to create an environment that would help teachers feel comfortable about sharing their views with me and their colleagues.

In terms of location, one interview (G2) was held in the living room of the host teacher's house. Another (G3) was held in a seminar room at the University of Gloucestershire. One (G4) was held in the staff common room at the host teacher's school and another (G1) was held in an empty lounge bar close to the host teacher's school. All the settings were quiet, hence conducive to discussion and audio recording. The interview which took place in the living room (G2) was the most conducive to open discussion, this being an environment in which these friends and colleagues were used to meeting socially. The interview which took place in the staffroom (G4) was also very conducive to open discussion. This was due in part to the participants knowing each other very well, most having gone through Initial Teacher Training College together and have attended the same sports events. The group interview that took place in the lounge bar (G1) was, somewhat ironically, the most "formal" of the four. A possible reason for this was that three of the teachers were from the same school. One of those teachers later admitted that she had felt compromised in sharing her view with the group as a result of being in the presence of her Principal Teacher. She felt that, regardless of what she herself had to say about the issues discussed in the interview, she had to be *seen* to be "towing the departmental party line." This suggests that, in addition to putting some interviewees at ease, inviting only one teacher from a school encourages a more open and perhaps honest discussion.

Each interview was scheduled to last for a maximum of two hours. All four interviews went over the allotted time limit. Three groups (G2, G3 and G4) continued their conversation after the interview had officially finished. In two

instances (G2 and G4) the group took ownership of the discussion before the interview had come to an end. At the end of each interview teachers were asked to give feedback on the usefulness and relevance of the interview process specifically, and the research project in general. Of the eighteen participants, three were more at ease after the tape recorder had been turned off, and in a one-on-one context. This suggests that the informal group interview does not work for everyone, and that in some instances – especially when interviewing people about delicate or controversial topics – conducting interviews without a tape recorder, though not as "faithful" in terms of recording *exactly* what has been said, might lead to richer and more revealing data.

Each interview consisted of ten questions (see appendix four). I started by asking teachers to introduce themselves to the group, and to talk briefly about their interests in PE and sports (see appendix five). I then asked teachers to talk about what constituted a good sportsperson. Question three consisted of a creative thinking session to encourage teachers to reflect upon the sorts of qualities they approved and disapproved of in the good sportsperson. Following these opening three questions, the interview took a less formal route that evolved out of what teachers said. Though I was careful to ensure that each interview incorporated all ten questions, I did not necessarily present the last seven questions in strict chronological order.

In terms of the actual mechanics of data collection, the interviews were audio recorded using two sets of audio equipment in the event that one set might be faulty, and I took notes throughout the interviews as well as directly afterwards. The notes taken throughout the interviews basically summarised the main points that had been raised. At the end of the interview, I reviewed these notes with participants, and asked them if they were an accurate overview of what had been

discussed. After the three Scottish interviews, I discussed my summary notes in more depth with host teachers.

3:3:3 After the interviews

After each interview was over, I compiled a brief summary of how I felt it had gone and what I thought the teachers had gained from it. I also sent out thank you letters to each participant and host teacher within two weeks of the date of interview. All four interviews were then transcribed – a long and painstaking process – and once transcribed, read through three times in order to identify key points that I wanted to discuss with my supervisors. It was clear from the data that PE teachers had no single or unified conception of what constituted a good sportsperson, even if there were often commonalities between their conceptions. Though this will be taken up more fully in the next chapter, this initial observation informed the next stage of the research, which was to examine, in PE and sports policy documentation, the extent to which dominant conceptions of the good sportsperson affect how PE and sports are being taught to young people, and how these conceptions affect how PE teachers conceive of their role as moral educators. Out of this, and following a fourth reading of the data, I identified four themes that would inform the conceptual framework of this thesis, as discussed in chapter one. They are: (i) PE teachers' conception of the sorts of persons they want to see playing sports well; (ii) the influence of significant others in shaping a good person's involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports; (iii) existing moral practices employed by teachers; and (v) PE teachers' perception of their moral role.

In the final section of this chapter I reflect on my role as researcher and some of the findings to emerge from specific group dynamics. Before doing so, however, it should be emphasised that though there are significant differences in the

education systems in Scotland and England, these differences were not apparent in the way that teachers in both countries talked about moral development and the moral role of the teacher. What emerged from all four groups is that these areas had not been well thought through in either physical education system – an observation that reinforces the point, made in chapter two, that the realm of moral development in existing PE and sports policy documentation has not received adequate attention.

3:4 Reflecting on the research process

Prior to undertaking the group interviews I had sought the advice of a Senior Lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire who specialises in research methods and methodology. She encouraged me to attend one of her qualitative research methods workshops, which I did. During our discussion she also emphasised the benefits of recruiting an assistant to help with the interview process. As a result, I contacted two undergraduate students in the University's Sport Education Department who, though willing to serve as my assistants, were on vacation when the Gloucester group interview took place. I thus ran this interview without an assistant. This meant that, unlike in the Scottish interviews where my host teachers acted as assistants off of whom I could bounce ideas and check up on points I had missed or was unclear about after the interviews were over, I had to take far more detailed notes during the interview itself. This made me less attentive to what was going on in terms of group dynamics, and less attuned to the finer nuances in what people said. It also confirmed for me the benefits of having a research assistant – especially one who, for the sake of continuity and comparative purposes, could have been present for all four interviews.

Another methodological reflection to emerge from the interview process concerns my role as researcher: namely, the extent to which being an acknowledged *insider*

influenced the way I approached my participants, the way they responded to me, and the nature of the conversations that emerged out of the familiarity that we had both with each other, and with the PE context. First, as an experienced PE teacher, other PE teachers were able to talk to me as a colleague, thus enabling a dialogue "between equals." Second, PE teachers accepted that I had some knowledge and experience of the community I was talking *to*, *for* and *about* and this created a dynamic between us that was different from the standard researcher-participant relationship. Third, my knowledge of the terrain meant that I knew when and where to probe deeper; because my participants trusted me, they were not threatened by these probes. Fourth, I was able to understand and where necessary *translate* their PE and sports-specific discourses into the discourses of moral philosophy with the subtlety of one who "speaks" both languages. Fifth, this "translation" allowed for a grounding of moral philosophy in the praxis of PE and sports teaching, and in my own and other PE teachers' *phronesis.* In short, my own positioning in this study became integral to both the research process and to the integrity of its design, and had a major impact on my overall findings.

There has been a recognisable shift away from formal interviewing methods which set up a hierarchy between researcher and interviewer (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.65). The merits of more intimate relationships which break down differences in status between researcher and interviewee are now being recognised. With this breakdown comes the opportunity for the interviewer to be seen as human, and as part of the ebb and flow of discussion rather than as central to it (Oakley, 1981). Through taking a fairly informal approach to the interview context – chatting over food and drinks and reminiscing about old times – I was able to help to ease participants into the interview process. In the three Scottish groups, more stories and more laughter were in evidence than in the group of teachers that was not known to me. This suggests that a certain reciprocity

happens in the interview session when some of the formal barriers to engagement have already been broken down. This in turn can lead to a more nuanced and open discussion, which in turn can elicit more information from participants. In a sense, the kind of responses I was hoping to elicit from participants depended to a certain extent on them feeling comfortable with me, the other participants, and the questions they were being asked to talk and reflect upon. That said, the Gloucestershire group, by virtue of being familiar with each other if not with me, still managed to create a space of comfort in which to discuss these issues at length and in depth. This latter group showed that through sharing a degree of collegiality akin to friendship as manifested in how they listened respectfully to each other's views and concerns, they embodied Noddings (2002) notion that those teachers who work from an ethic of care view the moral life as relational.

This leads to another methodological observation that emerged from the interview process, which was the impact that friendship ties had on the exchanges that transpired between participants. In each of the interview groups, friends came together – sometimes, as in the Gloucestershire group, to their mutual surprise and delight – and this set a certain tone that would perhaps not have been present in groups where participants were unknown to each other. In general, I observed female participants engaging in what Coates (1996) describes as "friendship talk" (p. 263) – a phenomenon that is reflected as much in *how* female friends talk amongst themselves as in what they say. When transcribing the tapes of all four interviews, one interview (G2) stood out in terms of this "friendship talk" – not surprisingly, perhaps, given that this particular group was comprised of six women who were all friends. During this interview, "time to talk" was equally shared by the group; support and encouragement was given to each member to have their say and develop their concerns and ideas. This way of interacting

between women is referred to by Coates (1996) as a distinctly "female linguistic strategy" that is anything but arbitrary:

> The primary goal of talk between women friends is the construction and maintenance of close and equal social relationships. Friendship depends on an ethic of reciprocity and on the maintenance of equality. And while we may have other relationships which are relationships of equals (e.g. with colleagues, workmates), such characteristics are not characterised by intimacy: friendship depends on minimising social distances. (p. 264)

Research studies across a range of disciplines show that women talk in a manner that reinforces the relational aspect of the encounter, whereas when men talk the primary purpose is often to convey information (Gilligan, 1982). Certainly, the group dynamics in my study revealed that the women were building connections through talk – an observation that sheds an important light on my overall aim of sketching a character education in and through PE and sports which is based, in part, on enhancing teacher/pupil relationships through talk and reflection. Though the small number of men (n=4) participating in the interviews does not permit me to compare male PE teacher talk to female PE teacher talk, it is worth noting that one of the participants in the Gloucestershire interview – incidentally another all-woman group – did suggest in her feedback session that what had emerged in the interview was not necessarily representative of all PE teachers:

> I think you will find that the attitudes of male PE teachers are quite different from those of female PE teachers. It would be useful to compare their views with ours. (Jane: PE teacher, G3)

As for the disadvantages inherent in being so close to one's research participants, Flanagan (1991) rightly points out that targeting friends and colleagues to speak to one's research topic – in other words, those people most likely to share your own values and concerns – does not necessarily lead to research results that offer, in themselves, any novel insights (p.147). Nor, for my participants, does coming together with "like-minded" people to talk and reflect on their moral role as PE teachers mean that during the course of their conversation, they will necessarily

open new doors and move ideas along. The danger of these kinds of encounters between "like-minded" researchers and participants is that they can end up reproducing the "known," as opposed to shedding new light on old ideas. Though this observation is certainly a valid one, the purpose of my interviews was in many ways to "capture" this "known" – and through it, to gain a better understanding of *exceptional* teachers' existing *phronesis* and practices in order to identify both what was being done in the realm of moral development and where there were gaps. Furthermore, my intention was not to "prove" that these were in fact "exceptional" teachers – they were never recruited through the term "exceptional," and my sense is that very few of them actually saw themselves *as* "exceptional," seeing themselves instead as just trying to do their jobs well. My interest, rather, lay in beginning to sketch a character education programme in PE and sports through what these *exceptional* teachers said and equally, through what they *did not say.* To do this, it was important that in my role as facilitator of the interview sessions, I picked up on the unspoken passions and tensions that accompanied my participants' words, seeking out what deeply moved and concerned these teachers as they articulated the "known" in order to gain a finely nuanced appreciation of the significance of their ethical work to them and their pupils.

Finally, in terms of formal ethical considerations to emerge out of the methodological choices I made, all the names of PE teachers used in this research were anonymised. All participants were briefed as to the purpose, nature and format of the group interview. All participants filled in a voluntary consent form that gave permission for their views to be tape recorded and the data, once anonymised, to be used for the purposes of my doctoral research. In the chapter that follows, I explore these views.

Chapter Four: What *exceptional* PE teachers said

4:0 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine what *exceptional* teachers said about (i) their conception of the good sportsperson; (ii) how they see their own role and the role of the PE teacher in general when it comes to morally educating young people and; (iii) the kind of practical wisdom they draw upon and the kinds of practices they use to morally educate young people.

I begin this chapter by situating a conception of the good sportsperson within the context of a virtue-ethical approach to moral education. I weave into this what PE teachers said about their conceptions of a good sportsperson to problematise the area of educating for good character in and through PE and sports. I argue that teachers' talk about and reflections upon the qualities of the good sportsperson helps them become more critically aware of the kinds of persons they are aiming to nurture in and through PE and sports. I examine some of the qualities that PE teachers said that they both approved and disapproved of in order to show that teachers already focus on certain dispositions of the good sportsperson rather than others. I suggest that this kind of teacher talk and reflection is a legitimate way to start to design a character education in PE and sports.

With regard to my second point – how the *exceptional* teacher perceives her role as a moral educator – I draw on three assumptions about what constitutes an *exceptional* teacher to explore the extent to which the PE teacher's own character is important in promoting and nurturing certain kinds of sportspersons rather than others. I maintain that a teacher's character does influence how young people see their own involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports, regardless of whether

the teacher's motivations and intentions are to *explicitly* morally educate young people. The discussions with teachers highlight the degree to which they *are* concerned with the kinds of persons they are themselves, and with the kinds of persons they would like young people to be and become – even if they do not necessarily identify these concerns as constituting the moral role of the teacher. What emerges is that almost all teachers adopt the term "role model" to encapsulate how they approach morally educating their pupils. However, they tend to take this term as a given, rather than reflecting upon what the term actually means and what it implies to *be* a "role model".

With regard to the third point – the kind of practical wisdom or *phronesis* that teachers draw upon to morally educate young people and how they incorporate this wisdom into their practices – I first examine the interplay between teachers' teaching of PE and their involvement in sports. I explore what teachers said they *are* (and *are not*, for various reasons) already doing to promote the moral development of young people and what they see as important as regards their role as moral educators in these contexts. I use what I find to support the adoption of a virtue-ethical approach which can make these moral practices more *explicit*, and can contribute to the flourishing of both teachers and their pupils. I examine the lack of structural support for teachers wishing to engage with a more formalised programme of moral development, I make a case for CPD-PE provision which would be based on teacher talk and reflection, and would involve teachers participating in the overall design of character education programmes in PE and sports.

4:1 *Exceptional* teachers' conceptions of the good sportsperson

4:1:1 Situating a conception of the "morally" good sportsperson inside a virtue-ethical approach

Our characters are all different and they help us distinguish one person from another. We talk about people's characters in everyday conversation with friends, family and colleagues (Goldie, 2000). We describe what a person is like by making reference to his or her character. Similarly, we attribute character traits or dispositions to sportspersons as a way of describing them to others. We come to know the character of those we live with through how we see them act in different situations, under different circumstances. For example, a child comes to learn what kinds of persons her parents and teachers are when they are under stress, for example, or in a joyful moment. In general, character traits or dispositions are used as a way of describing and evaluating what persons commonly *do* given certain circumstances. When we say someone has "acted out of character," we are alluding to some prior knowledge of what we judge a person to be like under normal circumstances. When teachers in this study described a good sportsperson as being *fair,* they were attributing him or her with a certain disposition for *fairness* that, under normal circumstances, he or she could be relied upon to exemplify.

Unsurprisingly, teachers wanted to see and encourage in their pupils those desirable human qualities associated with being or becoming a good person. In general, teachers saw their role in moral development as being about *linking* the qualities associated with the good person to those associated with being and becoming a good sportsperson. It thus makes sense to draw upon what moral philosophers say about what constitutes the good *person* to help build a fuller picture of what might constitute a good *sportsperson*.

Aristotle outlines the good person by examining both good and bad character as constituted in the virtues and vices. For Aristotle, to be a good person is to be a virtuous person. Such a person has to possess all of the virtues (as outlined in his ethical text: *Nicomachean Ethics*) and be able to exercise them in the right way under the right circumstances with the right people (Hursthouse, 1999). To be a virtuous person requires effort and wisdom to acquire and properly exercise the virtues (Rorty, 1988). I flesh out more fully what is meant by the term "virtue" in chapter five, but for now a virtue refers to a "desirable" (Pincoffs, 1986) human quality. By talking about and reflecting upon the "morally" good sportsperson, teachers identified a number of "desirable qualities" that they approved of in the good sportsperson. This serves to further illustrate how teachers' talk about their roles as moral educators tended to be based in an implicit understanding of these terms, as opposed to a more formal and explicit recognition of them.

4:1:2 Desirable qualities of a good sportsperson

In examining what constitutes a good sportsperson, then, teachers were asked to talk about and reflect upon their character and that of their pupils, famous sportspeople, and the *ideal* sportsperson. As PE teachers talked about and reflected upon the kinds of sportspersons they admired, they revealed the kinds of character traits or *dispositions* (for example, fairness, effort, kindness, cooperativeness and enthusiasm) they both approved and disapproved of in a good sportsperson. They attributed to the *good* sportsperson certain desirable human qualities or dispositions that set him or her apart from what they conceived to be the *average* sportsperson. Despite teachers' wish to see certain dispositions of the good person reflected in how young people played sports, they made a clear distinction between a good and a "morally" good sportsperson. The good sportsperson, according to teachers, did not necessarily encompass the qualities of

a "morally" good person. As a result they felt that it was very important to emphasise to young people the kinds of moral qualities which ought to constitute a good sportsperson. Given this reflection on the part of teachers, the incorporation of "virtue-talk" (Pincoffs, 1986) into a framework for character education in PE and sports helps to make explicit the sorts of persons teachers would like to see playing sports well.

As for those qualities that teachers most valued, being fair and gracious in victory and defeat, being cooperative and considerate towards others, trying hard and being committed were the qualities that teachers saw as important in nurturing a "morally" good sportsperson. They felt that some of these qualities, though desirable, were often overlooked in an education in PE and sports, even though they were assumed to be part of it. This oversight, they felt, left young people without a shared sense of morality with which to judge what might constitute a good sportsperson.

Teachers worried about the type of attention given to some well known sportspersons in the media who, despite the inappropriateness of their actions – for example, swearing at referees or fighting with opponents – were still regarded by young people as *good* sportspersons or worse, hero worshiped precisely *because of* these inappropriate actions. Teachers did not think it was enough that a *good* sportsperson be given "good" status *only* as a result of being skilful. They also wanted to see a good sportsperson being applauded for how well they played their sport *and* for how they lived their life. Moreover, they wanted young people to be able to tell the difference between the two. A good example of this merging of a person's involvement in a sport and his or her life (MacIntyre, 1985) is evident in this teacher's description of the sportsperson she most admires:

> I admire Muhammad Ali's natural athletic ability. He is just fantastic to watch. But what I admire about him most is that he is a black man who stood up against the US government. He said, "I ain't going to fight in Vietnam. No Vietcong ever called me nigger." Of all my sporting heroes – I mean, the ones that stand out there in the stratosphere – he is right up there. When I talk to kids I try to talk about the selflessness of the player and the values that they seem to show. (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

According to Jessie, Muhammad Ali is a good person because what he does extends beyond what happens inside the practice of boxing, to the way he chooses to live his life. Like Jessie, most teachers cited well known sportspersons to bring into sharper focus what they felt was and was not admirable about a person's conduct and affect. Sometimes, they mentioned a particular gesture on the part of an individual sportsperson that had helped to clarify what for them constituted the good sportsperson. For one teacher, the way the footballer Henrik Larsson had responded to criticisms of his behaviour on the field had made an impression on her:

> Henrik Larsson used to be known for sticking his tongue out after he scored a goal. When parents complained that he was setting a bad example to their children he stopped doing it. What I like about him is that he listens to parents and showed respect for their feelings by not doing it again. (Sharon: PE teacher, G2)

Most of the teachers felt it was useful to use well-known sportspersons as "role models" to highlight to young people what constitutes both appropriate and inappropriate ways of playing sports. In the next section I examine in more detail the ambiguity surrounding the term "role model," but for the moment what is clear is that teachers selected certain sorts of persons to influence a pupil's involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports. This excerpt demonstrates how one teacher used famous sportspersons to stand in as "moral exemplars" (Blum, 1994) in PE lessons as a means of highlighting those qualities of which she approves:

> Teamwork is important in being a good sportsperson: if pupils can really work well and communicate with other people. They must always be fair and understanding and *never judge others*. I hate it when students are very elitist

when they judge each other. I prefer those students who know how to work with each other. Johnny Wilkinson is a good example. He is calm on the rugby pitch. He is always working with other people. He is not like some footballers I know who get a bad pass and get really frustrated. He doesn't seem to get angry. He doesn't have a go. It is difficult to say what would be the same for women's sports as you don't see so much of that on TV. There are fewer role models for girls, particular in team games. There is tennis – Maria Sharapova is one I use. I liked the way she won Wimbledon. I was able to use her to show some of the girls that she was not too unlike them. You saw Maria being *quite giggly* and thanking her parents, and they can relate to that. (Sam: PE teacher, G3, *my emphasis*)

There are at least two contestable aspects of what Sam says here. The first pertains to calling a good sportsperson someone who "never judges others," and the second to describing Maria Sharapova as "quite giggly." With respect to Sam's first comment, part of being or becoming a good sportsperson is that a person learns to make informed choices and judgements. Our everyday interactions with people involve us in making judgements as to the kinds of persons whose company we would chose or prefer to avoid (Pincoffs, 1986). Though developed in more detail in chapter seven, this is a crucial feature of designing a character education programme in PE and sports: the issue being the importance of learning *how* to judge others, as opposed to not judging people at all. To begin to morally educate we must first teach young people *how* to go about making informed moral decisions and choices.

As for Sam's second comment regarding Sharapova giggling after winning Wimbledon, a character education programme must include feminine as well as masculine perspectives on what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in sports (Noddings, 2002). To that end, both girls and boys need to know about the traditional associations of women with sports and how an involvement in sports has been viewed differently for women than for men. The use of moral models can help to reinforce or dispel male and female stereotypes in relation to men's and women's involvement in sports. What is, for example, seen as

desirable about a good sportsperson being "quite giggly?" How does this contribute to the picture of what constitutes a good young sportswoman? Talk about and reflection upon inspirational girls and women must refrain from reinforcing old stereotypes – in this case, Sharapova's huge achievement of winning Wimbledon was reduced to her giggly-ness – unless, of course, it is being used to help us pinpoint the inconsistencies in the way that women's and men's sports have traditionally been covered in the media. There may be good reasons why Sam chose to use Sharapova as a moral model – not least because there are fewer famous female sportswomen than sportsmen in the media spotlight from which to choose. In pointing out an aspect of Sharapova's behaviour that her female pupils might identify with – giggling in a moment of excitement – her intentions were probably to make the achievements of this famous sportswoman more accessible to them. However, in using this example she may well serve to undermine the aspirations of her female pupils and equally worryingly, to undervalue the achievements of a top sportswoman in the eyes of both girls and boys. It remains that giggly-ness is not one of the dispositions that most people tend to see as constitutive of the good sportsperson, even if it is a very human reaction to a given situation.

As the above example illustrates, there are a number of problems associated with using famous sportspersons as moral exemplars. First, not every famous sportsperson tries to, or sees it as their responsibility to set a good example to young people. Second, and given that media representations of many well known sportspersons tend to focus on isolated and overly-sensationalised incidents of poor conduct, our conceptions of these sportspersons are reductive and under-developed. Third, examples of good sportswomen in the media are few and far between, especially when it comes to those involved in team games – the type of sports that pupils in PE are generally involved in. This, the teachers felt, was a

disadvantage when it came to using moral models as an effective means of educating girls and boys in and through PE and sports. Finally, despite the fact that teachers used famous sportspersons as moral exemplars, there is little conclusive evidence to suggest that the conduct and attitudes of famous sportspersons actually have any influence on the ways in which young people come to view their own involvement and ethical outlook in sports (Carr 1999, p.253). Obviously, and as Carr (1999) suggests, this is an area that requires further investigation.

Pincoffs (1986) asserts that most people have some conception of what constitutes the good person. The same applies to teachers when it comes to determining what constitutes the good sportsperson. Significantly, teachers claimed that they did not consciously "aim" towards any *fixed* conception of a good sportsperson. Instead they said that they took into account each pupil's level of ability and the extent to which they judged a pupil could be realistically expected to make progress in terms of developing his or her own character. That said, there was some common agreement among teachers as to what might constitute good character in sports. For them, a good sportsperson had to be skilful, honest, fair, enthusiastic, respectful and cooperative, and demonstrate effort and teamwork. He or she did not cheat, and won and lost graciously. Teachers felt that they nurtured these kinds of desirable qualities in their pupils without necessarily aiming towards any fixed conception of a good sportsperson.

Teachers appeared to prefer some conceptions of a good sportsperson over others. For instance, some teachers gave more *weighting* to players' skilfulness as opposed to their ethical outlook. This is perhaps not surprising considering growing government pressure for PE teachers to achieve performative as well as socio-economic and political goals.

From an Aristotelian viewpoint, we "aim" towards an end point or *telos* in the process of being or becoming a good person. For Aristotle, the ultimate *telos* for human beings is *eudaimonia,* which has been loosely translated as happiness. I refer to *eudaimonia* or happiness as a central objective of a character education programme in PE and sports throughout this thesis. By "aiming" at the happiness of pupils in PE and sports, teachers can begin to identify and describe the desirable qualities of the good sportsperson they seek to nurture in their pupils and assess the extent to which pupils are making progress towards being or becoming a good sportsperson in relation to acquiring these desirable qualities. It is the concept of "aiming" itself which is problematic, because it suggests that teachers already know how to achieve these goals. While setting these goals is a useful starting point for teachers, there needs to be sufficient opportunity for teachers to talk about and reflect upon their conceptions (and misconceptions) of a good sportsperson. That said, it is not sufficient that pupils be considered good persons only when they "aim" at or acquire or ape those desirable qualities identified by the teacher. Pupils must also be encouraged by their teachers to make their own informed moral choices, and find within themselves their own sense of happiness which, as I will go on to argue in the last chapter of this thesis, will include finding their own joys in and through learning to play sports well.

In judging pupils' characters, teachers have to take into account both their pupils' level of skilfulness *and* the kinds of dispositions these pupils usually demonstrate under normal circumstances. One teacher, Sam, commented on the difficulties she faced in wanting to praise one of her pupils for being skilful, but at the same time trying to deal with her intolerance of players with less ability:

> I have this one girl who is a good performer and a good leader. She is great but as soon as things don't go her way – for example, when she ends up with one of the disabled students on her team – she'll say something like, "Oh no, not *him*!" But what was good about that comment was that a lot of other students did turn round and say to her, "Shut up, that isn't nice." There was a reaction to what she said but still, she keeps on doing it. I had to speak to her at the end

of the lesson about treating people fairly – I said, "Stop judging people so hastily. You have high standards but not everyone can meet these standards." She has high expectations of teachers and of herself but as soon as these expectations are not met, in any way, she can't help show her anger and frustration to teachers and other students. I am trying to work with her to get her to understand different people and different personalities. She is really struggling with that. I am hoping she will come through. She is a very good player. She is a very good leader. She is not going to be the best leader until she can consider other people and that is really difficult. (Sam: PE teacher, G3)

At one level Sam feels that she cannot take away from this pupil the fact that she is talented in playing sports, but at another level she cannot condone how this pupil interacts with others. Understandably, Sam wants to give praise where it is merited. The problem, however, is that telling this pupil that she is a "good player" and a "good leader" can result in her coming to view her actions and feelings towards those of a lesser ability as less important than being a talented sportsperson. Sam's personal perception of the "good player" will have important ramifications for how her pupils come to view their own involvement and ethical outlook in sports. When and how to praise where praise is due, and yet not undervalue the ethical aspects that they want to develop in their pupils, is well illustrated in the following two pieces of conversation between teachers in different interview groups:

Conversation 1(G4):
George: When it comes to selecting the Sports Personality of the Year, it is based on who is the most talented. This is different from who is the most morally good sportsperson.

Lorna: Yes, but morally good sportspeople should not just be seen as being goody-two-shoes devoid of any spirit. Whilst I think stepping over the mark and challenging situations on court or challenging referee decisions are not indicative of a good sportsperson, I feel that showing passion in the right ways is.

George: I see it as being two different things: what makes a winner is not necessarily someone who is a morally good sportsperson. The qualities that make a winner and the qualities that make a morally good sportsperson are, I think, slightly different – well actually they are very different – but they still share similar qualities. I am sure Sampras has the self-motivation equal to Rodman but the difference between them is the greater respect Sampras gives his opponent.

Lorna: Let's face it though, if you were going to give an award for the morally good sportsperson then you would still look for whether the person is talented and then, look to see one, whether they are able to use their talents to bring on others and two, whether they are gracious and can they lose graciously. In other words, it wouldn't just be decided on moral grounds.

George: I tend to disagree with that. It is based on all that and attitude but if I am putting someone forward for an award I would chose the most talented on performance grounds even if they were a pain in the neck.

Conversation 2 (G2):

Sharon: We have just chosen our first year sports champion based on their year's work. There was one factor that separated two of the boys: the boy that gained the award was the one who showed most tolerance towards his classmates and that was the factor that made the difference. They were both talented boys but the boy that took the time to say to others, "This is the way to hold your stick," got the award. We saw that as such a big factor; it was *such* a big difference.

Chris: If he wasn't skilful, though, he wouldn't have got the prize though, would he have?

Sharon: Yes, there was a skill factor.

Chris: But say there was one who was more skilful and less tolerant, and one who was more tolerant and less skilful, you would have still gone for the most skilful?

Sharon: Yes, but we debate that kind of thing in our department all the time – it is not just a foregone conclusion.

What emerges from both of these conversations is the complex interplay between skill development and moral development in describing the good sportsperson. It would seem from what these PE teachers say that the chief "good" in describing the good sportsperson is linked to skill level or competency. In other words, a good sportsperson is primarily attributed "good" status for how competently he plays his sport, whereas his moral status is treated more as the bonus that tips the scales in his favour. This hierarchy is replicated in the way that most teachers approach their role as moral educators, seeing it as secondary – as almost a by-product – to the chief task of developing and improving indidivual and team performances.

Framing the PE teacher's role in this way not only serves to undermine the ethical work of teachers, but also unnecessarily characterises the PE teacher as more of a *technicist* than an *ethicist* (see Carr, 2000). The following excerpt demonstrates one teacher's awareness of, and frustration with, those characterisations of the PE teacher that limit her role to being *only* about improving pupil competency:

> Running teams is not just about seeking out ego rewards for PE teachers. Teachers do value values too. The old stereotype of PE teachers valuing purely performance, whilst it may very well be alive and kicking, does not do justice to the folk I know who are more aware of valuing values. More than fifty percent of what teachers do is about valuing values. (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

This is not to say that improving pupil performance does not have a moral educational component to it. It most definitely does – as exemplified in the negotiations that take place on a regular basis between players, teachers and coaches. However, to contain the moral role of PE teachers within an overly technicist-based model of teaching PE and sports renders the process of moral education at best *implicit* to these other practices, and at worst an *add-on* to them. To counter this, and as the teachers themselves frequently suggested, moral educational processes taking place within the context of PE lessons and sports clubs must be made *explicit* to pupils.

An effective character education programme in PE and sports first and foremost requires teachers to identify and describe the desirable qualities of the "morally" good sportsperson. Rather than separating these qualities out from the realm of skill-based performances and so-called "natural talent," teachers need to be able to show their pupils how these desirable qualities are integral to being or becoming a good sportsperson. In order to discern what such a programme might look like, it is necessary to first find out what teachers seek to nurture and develop in their pupils. In so doing, we also gain some insight into what kind of moral educational approaches are presently being favoured over others.

Loland (2004) discusses three types of educational approaches which influence how teachers present and teach sports: "instrumental, performance and performer" (p.119). The first two processes focus on performative, economic and social goals and the third, emphasises the development of "the performer as a moral subject" (p.119). This latter approach – the one Loland prefers – reflects on the desirable qualities of the good performer, rather than focussing on performative, economic and social outcomes. By adopting educational approaches which frame "good performers as moral subjects," Loland (2004) suggests that the role of the teacher in moral development becomes clearer (p.116). Returning to the case of Sam and her talented but intolerant pupil, Loland's (2004) notion of the good performer as a moral subject might have provided Sam with the conceptual and linguistic tools that she needed to speak to her pupil, and deal with the inappropriateness of her actions. Acting from that premise, Sam can *only* give her pupil praise for being a good performer if she acts in appropriately moral ways.

Though our conceptions of a good person can be flawed and misconceived in that we can sometimes ascribe characteristics to people that are quite unmerited, Goldie (2000) argues, that the more we understand the nature of the dispositions we attribute to certain persons the more skilled we can become at ascribing them correctly. Sam's pupil conforms to Sam's current conception of a good performer in that she plays the sport competently. However, if Sam changes her own conception of the "good player" so that it takes account of the good performer as a moral subject, then she is less likely to consider that those pupils who fit with her former conception of the "good player" *are* good players. In addition, her pupils will also begin to perceive the good performer as something more than being merely a good technicist. It also encourages pupils and teachers to reconsider stereotypical characterisations of the "morally" good sportsperson, a point which

is well illustrated in the comment made by Lorna in the conversation earlier. To reiterate, she states:

> Morally good sportspeople should not just be seen as being a goody-two-shoes devoid of any spirit. Whilst I think stepping over the mark and challenging situations on court or challenging referee decisions are not indicative of a good sportsperson, I feel that showing passion in the right ways is. (Lorna: PE teacher, G4)

What Lorna feels about a good sportsperson as a moral subject is, in part, wrapped up in her use of the term "passion," which for her is related to being spirited. In chapters eight and nine, I explore in more depth why our "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995) ought to be a feature of any effective character education programme in PE and sports. By sharing with others what her conception of a "morally" good sportsperson endorses (spirit and passion) and rejects ("goody-two-shoes"), Lorna starts to build the foundations of a character education programme in PE and sports. In the next section I explore three assumptions relating to the moral role of teachers and show how these are significant in shaping character education programmes in PE and sports.

4:2 Three assumptions regarding the moral role of the teacher

Three assumptions that relate to the moral role of the teacher are that: (i) teachers enjoy teaching and coaching sports to young people; (ii) teachers take seriously setting a good example to their pupils; and (iii) teachers care for their pupils in appropriate ways. In relation to the first assumption, research in the field of PE teacher's lives (Sparkes, 1994) shows that for the most part, teachers are drawn to PE and sports because of their love of sports. A criticism often levelled at PE teachers is that their love of sports comes before the needs of those they teach and coach. There need not be such a marked division between why persons teach and coach, and their wish to share their joys of sports with young people. After all we want teachers and coaches to enjoy what they do and gain satisfaction from seeing

others derive joy and satisfaction from what they do. In chapter nine I examine in more detail how a focus on joy is significant in designing character educational programmes in PE and sports. Teachers' emotional engagement with sports significantly contributes to the design and implementation of such programmes.

It is assumed that *exceptional* teachers intend to set a good example to their pupils, in terms of how their pupils ought to play sports. Teachers are ideally situated and have the occasion to play a significant *role* in influencing how young people play sports. Teachers aim to teach good character through acting in certain ways that exemplify to their pupils how they should act in certain circumstances with certain people (Blum, 1994). The terms "role model" or "moral model" are loaded with ambiguity. Blum (1994) unpacks the notion of a moral model – or what he terms a "moral exemplar" – through talk about and reflection upon how we come to "admire" certain sorts of persons rather than others. Though Blum (1994) finds the notion of the moral exemplar lacking, he is sympathetic to what it tries to achieve. His first observation is that the "object of admiration is not up to us" (p.94). This means that teachers cannot determine the sorts of persons pupils will choose to admire. Secondly, he observes that because we often attach "admiration" to others in specific situations, this does not mean that we will admire these persons in every situation. Pupils may not see the relevance of teachers' moral exemplars for dealing with their own personal and contextual circumstances. Lastly, Blum (1994) suggests that we cannot be good persons merely by trying to *be* honest, or courageous. He argues that although we may identify certain qualities that we admire in others, we may not be successful in adopting these qualities ourselves. In Blum's (1994) words, "there is a distance between admiring and being able to take it as a direct model of one's own action or life" (p.94).

Blum's (1994) way of resolving this gap is to proffer a more "realistic picture" of what can and cannot be expected from moral exemplars (p.95). He advocates their usefulness in promoting a person's character development, but also points out their limitations. He argues that only a very few people can be moral exemplars and often we find it difficult to identify just who those potential moral exemplars are. He does, however, cite the work of Iris Murdoch in order to illustrate how moral exemplars *can* effect change in our lives:

> We can be better than we are. There are surely some virtues we could come to possess in a greater degree than we do now, no matter what circumstances we are in. Moral exemplars can keep this possibility alive for us and perhaps suggest particular directions we might take in our own moral development. (Murdoch in Blum, 1994, p.95)

Picking up on Murdoch's discussion, and to return to Blum's (1994) third point, the process of trying to be a good person is not only helped by emulating those we admire but the process of becoming a good person in itself is surely worthwhile in its own right. Whilst I agree with Blum's second point – though we admire certain characteristics of a person they are often context-dependant and do not necessarily transfer into other situations – talk about and reflection upon moral models can help pupils and teachers identify and describe the sorts of persons they admire. Just how teachers talk and reflect upon these sorts of persons with their pupils (and colleagues) is central to designing a character education programme in PE and sports (Pincoffs, 1986). Straughan (1988) suggests that "real" moral exemplars have to do more than merely express their feelings and their preferences (p.123). They also have to state explicitly their moral positioning, how they make informed judgements, and the feelings and processes of deduction that lie behind their reasoning. In short, they have to demystify the whole process by rendering explicit their own moral decision-making practices. All of this is crucial if we want to actively engage pupils in conversations about morality and

prepare them to both emulate and challenge existing moral standards, and ultimately shape their own moral parameters.

The term "role model" is somewhat problematic, rooted as it is in dominant functionalist sociological approaches that understand socialisation as the "common sense" process of learning appropriate social roles and acting in appropriate ways (Giddens, 1989). In spite of these associations – or perhaps *because* of them – most teachers in my study seemed happy with the term and, with the exception of one teacher, did not question it. Most teachers, in fact, thought that they were the most accessible and obvious "role models" to young people:

> We're the most obvious because we get children to do their best and take on responsibility. And for many, we are their first role model in sport in terms of how to behave. How we behave to pupils reflects how they behave to us and how they behave to other people. (Carol: PE teacher, G3)

Carol stresses the importance of consistently aiming for high standards of behaviour from her pupils. She felt that leading by her own example was the best way of teaching pupils what was expected from them in terms of good behaviour. One problem with aiming for good behaviour, as opposed to good character, is that it limits pupils' understanding of what it is to be and become a good person to understanding only how one ought to behave. Developing good character is about developing both good conduct *and* good affect (Sherman, 1989) – a point I return to in more detail in chapter five.

Another teacher suggested that role models are more effective if they are known to pupils and pupils have some respect for them:

> The role model has to be someone who pupils know. Pupils like to know about their teachers. We use other members of the PE department to show pupils what teachers have personally achieved in their sport. Pupils might remember the values more if they know the person. One teacher in our department is a

> consistent role model because he practices day in day out and pupils can see the effort he puts into his sport. (Chrissie: PE teacher, G2)

I agree with Chrissie that the more we come into contact with a person we admire, the likelihood is that this person will help to shape our involvement and ethical outlook. There is, however, no guarantee that simply coming into contact with such a person will, on its own, shape a pupil's character or that his character will be shaped in positive ways. Whereas some pupils will strongly identify with certain sorts of persons, some will not, and this will have a strong bearing on the extent to which pupils will or will not try to emulate these sorts of persons. Teachers were all-too-quick to embrace the term "role model" as a stand-in for what they and others in their profession did, without necessarily seeing the need to unpack what the term actually meant and implied. In a sense, this all-too-easy equation of a term to a practice reveals our tendency to naturalise that which falls into a "common sense" understanding of the world. It is almost as if most teachers in this study saw the term *in itself* as encapsulating the moral dimension of their work with pupils.

Equally important insights are offered into how teachers conceive of the place of moral models in PE and sports by examining what they had to say about those teachers who had been inspirational influences in *their* youth. Crediting these former teachers with qualities like patience, perseverance, energy, kindness and enthusiasm, teachers implied that how these persons went about what they did, helped them to shape their own concept of what constitutes the good teacher. Furthermore teachers suggested that the sorts of persons these teachers were influenced the kind of teacher that they themselves wanted to be and become. One teacher, Sam, spoke passionately about her mentor at Initial Teacher Training College and credited her with having the kind of desirable qualities she felt all good teachers ought to possess. How Sam spoke about her mentor was very

moving, and had a powerful impact on all those participating in this group interview. Sam concluded about her ITT mentor that:

> It was the way she approached her teaching that just gave me such great respect for her. I really wanted to be like her. I wanted to be as good a teacher as her. I wanted to really make a difference. Even though I always wanted to be a PE teacher, she really influenced me on how I would teach. Now I see her as a colleague. If I wanted to be like anyone I would want to be like her – the kind of teacher she is. Her subject knowledge was sound – she seemed to know everything about every single sport you could ever imagine. She always wanted to give her pupils – every one of them – lots of opportunities. She was always trying to give PE a higher profile in schools so that people would respect PE as a worthwhile subject for young people. She always had well planned lessons, trying each time to better herself and learn more. She was always constantly challenging herself and looking for something different to teach her pupils. She wasn't thinking, "Well, I have taught this sport in the same way for twenty years so I am going to continue to teach it like that." Instead, she always looked for different teaching methods and different challenges. She also looked to learn from me the things she didn't know already, although she knew about everything [Sam laughs]. The things she didn't know so much about she read up on or went on courses. She was just unbelievable really; even now the school that she works at has had an astro-turf well before other schools got one. When the school got a new swimming pool even though she wasn't a swimming teacher she straight away did her swimming teacher's and pool lifeguard awards. There was no other expectation than she would do that, that she would learn how to teach swimming. She is just brilliant… really inspiring. She probably would be quite shocked if she heard all that. (Sam: PE teacher, G3)

It is just this kind of impassioned speech that reminds you of the powerful effect that one person's approach to her job and life can have on shaping another person's life choices and ethical outlook. It is also clear from *how* Sam talked about her mentor that her mentor meant a great deal to her. She saw her mentor as a source of inspiration for the kind of teacher she wanted to become. The fact that Sam mentions that her mentor would probably be "shocked" to hear what she had said about her is an important point, for many exceptional teachers are quite unaware of the extent of their influence on persons' lives and career choices. The following conversation (G4) between two teachers reinforces this point:

> Kevin: My old PE teacher is an inspirational guy. His determination to do well not just for himself but for others is a driving force to help you fulfil your potential and then go on to do that bit extra, to do that bit better. He has unbelievable enthusiasm. It is phenomenal.

> Lorna: Likewise, my PE teacher always went that extra mile to make a person a good person – a good person in life. He gave you everything in his power in terms of opportunities in sport. I remember saying to myself, "He is the kind of teacher I want to be." He gave up all his time to make me a good sportsperson and at the same time a really good person – someone who in the future will drive other kids and bring them on. I went to PE College because of him.
>
> Kevin: I wonder if in thirty years time there are going to be some people sitting here saying the same things about us.

Whilst Kevin highlights the "unbelievable enthusiasm" of his PE teacher, Lorna sees as significant "the extra mile" her teacher was prepared to go to inspire pupils to be good persons in life. Both comments show the extent to which Kevin and Lorna base their conceptions of a good PE teacher on being or becoming certain sorts of persons. Kevin's final comment indicates that he hopes that his pupils will be similarly inspired by how he and Lorna teach PE. It is clear from what Sam, Kevin and Lorna all say about their own experience that they have a strong emotional attachment to their former PE teachers, and that this connection in turn has shaped their involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports. This connection also appears to have inspired them to become better teachers themselves. Descriptions of the sorts of persons that inspire teachers can help to inspire some pupils to achieve their personal goals but in using these examples teachers have to allow time for pupils to explore the richness of these examples – in terms of their personal connections and relationships – and at the same time encourage pupils to talk about and reflect on the sorts of persons that they admire.

Though all but one teacher felt it was important for teachers to act as moral models, the voice of that one is useful here:

> I am not a role model. I don't think of myself that way. I may have some influence but I don't expect boys to be like me (Andrew: Principal Teeacher of PE, G1).

In pointing out the difference between having an influence *on* pupils, as opposed to serving as a role model *for* pupils, Andrew raises a crucial distinction. The idea

of the teacher-as-role-model can deflect consideration away from the teacher-as-person who takes a distinct character into everything she does, from co-ordinating a warm-up exercise to organising a team's offence (Noddings, 1984). Though *exceptional* teachers may "role-play" at certain times during a lesson in order to emphasise certain pedagogical points they are also concerned with being themselves with their pupils, as one teacher points out:

> I try to be genuine and authentic with pupils. They see me as the same person you see me as. I don't switch my values on or off simply because I've gone into the classroom. Teaching is not a mask. Pupils know about my humour and when I am genuine. Unfortunately some abuse it at times but in general most know what I stand for. (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

Given that this is the case, then, what we have to take seriously when it comes to educating new teachers is to develop the kinds of persons they are, rather than developing the roles we think a teacher ought to play.

In relation to the third assumption, the *exceptional* teacher properly cares for their pupils and also cares about what happens in the world (Noddings, 1984; Pincoffs, 1986). This has the dual advantage of locating the ethic of care both in the wider world, and in the practical experience of pupils and teachers. As Noddings (1984) suggests, caring for pupils involves more than teachers simply relating what goes on in the world to them, and tapping into their personal experiences:

> A teacher cannot talk this [caring] ethic. She must live it, and that implies establishing a relationship with the student. Everything we do, as teachers, has moral overtones. Through dialogue, modelling, the provision of practice, and the attribution of best motive, the one-caring as teacher nurtures the ethical ideal. (p.179)

In talking about the teacher as the "one-caring" and the child as the "one-cared-for," Noddings (1984) focuses attention on a notion of caring when it comes to designing character education programmes in PE and sports. Though teachers have a responsibility to portray the world in its various guises to pupils, the most important aspect of teaching revolves around how the teacher relates to and cares

for her pupils (Noddings, 1984). For some pupils the relationship they have with their teachers can, and often does, provide a model of caring that, in Noddings' (1984) view, extends to their relationships with other people. The kind of person the teacher *is,* therefore, is central. This means that the teacher must assign importance to her own moral development as well as to the moral development of those in her care. From this point of view, moral development starts with the ethic of caring and centres on the relational and caring capacities of the teacher. Pupils begin to see and feel for themselves how the ethic of care – as epitomised by their teachers – affects their own lives and the lives of others. Extending this beyond the immediate teacher/pupil relationship, the *exceptional* teacher provides situations outside the confines of the school where pupils come into contact with different sorts of persons. This allows them to see firsthand how other people live, and then to try out their developing sensitivities and sensibilities in concrete situations. *Exceptional* teachers felt that providing a range of opportunities – for example, asking pupils to help with running a junior team or organising an exchange trip with another school – that encouraged their pupils to develop different capacities was an important aspect of their work. By providing pupils with these kinds of opportunities, Noddings (2003) suggests that teachers can extend a pupil's life beyond that of the school. This in turn helps to enrich a pupil's "community life" and contributes to the overall happiness of that pupil (Noddings, 2003, p.236).

One important point to note here, however, is raised by Penney and Harris (1997) when they suggest that extra curricular sports opportunities tend to attract the more able pupils. Even when sporting opportunities for pupils are extended, Penney and Harris (1997) insist that all they achieve is "more of the same for the more able" (p.41). If this is the case – and some of the teachers in my study suggested that it is – then PE teachers are accommodating only a very small

percentage of pupils outside of the school context. On the surface this seems problematic for teachers as moral educators, not because these "more able" pupils should not be getting this extra attention, but because this extra attention is not reaching the majority of pupils. Penney and Harris (1997) lead us to believe that this un-reached majority is clamouring to play sports and is being denied the opportunity to do so, whereas other groups might well be meeting these pupils needs elsewhere – for example, in film clubs, youth groups or through friendship groups. The inference, here, is that sports clubs in schools are elitist – an assumption that only serves to perpetuate the idea that teachers are only interested in the highly skilled and motivated pupils, and teachers are not interested in attracting a whole range of the pupils into sports. Though Penney and Harris' (1997) line of argument does remind teachers of the need to keep reviewing and reassessing what they are offering pupils in the way of sports, it also diminishes the importance of existing relationships between teachers and those pupils who do take part in sports, as well as conveniently ignoring the efforts of *exceptional* teachers who try on a daily basis to make sports more attractive and accessible to as many pupils as possible.

Though it is important to continue to provide resources aimed at increasing the number of opportunities for young people wishing to take part in sports at school, some of these resources could be directed towards highlighting in more detail the quality of care *exceptional* teachers provide to *all* of their pupils, both inside and outside of the confines of the school. Such a reallocation of resources (in terms of money, time and expertise) would help to paint a much richer picture of the kind of care *exceptional* teachers are currently giving to a wide range of pupils of different ages, abilities and interests in and through PE and sports. As the following two comments from teachers suggests, being the "one-caring" is not always an easy task:

> I have battled against peer pressure – pupils pulling away from my expectations and towards those of their peers. The girls that can be easily turned away from your expectations and are influenced by those that have not been in the group regularly – they pull away from working hard for you because they are being watched and judged by the others. It is very disruptive. (Jane: PE teacher, G3)

> These girls are difficult all round the school. They want your attention. They haven't learned how to get good attention. They know your expectations so they know how not to live up to them and get that kind of negative attention. (Hilda: PE teacher, G3)

Both of these comments suggest that educating pupils' characters requires the willingness on the part of the pupil to want to be or become a certain kind of person rather than another (Pincoffs, 1986). They also highlight the need for a willingness on the part of the teacher to constantly strive to create opportunities that remain open and welcoming to young people, even when those pupils do not appear to be responding positively to them. Teachers and pupils must also be willing to engage in an open dialogue with each other. It is the existence of this kind of dialogue which, for Noddings (2002), helps to avoid the problem of indoctrination so often associated with morally educating young people. This dialogue is a key aspect of relational ethics (Noddings 2002), which makes central the need to develop the kind of caring relationship between teacher and pupil that allows desirable qualities or the virtues to flourish, as opposed to expecting these qualities or virtues to emerge solely out of the teacher's inculcation of them. Van Manen's (1991) description of what constitutes "good pedagogy" is helpful here in outlining the richness of these pupil/teacher encounters when it comes to educating for good character:

> Good pedagogy: a sense of vocation, love and caring for children, a deep sense of responsibility, moral intuitiveness, self-critical openness, thoughtful maturity, tactful sensitivity toward the child's subjectivity, an interpretive intelligence, a pedagogical understanding of the child's needs, improvisational resoluteness in dealing with young people, a passion for knowing and learning the mysteries of the world, the moral fibre to stand up for something, a certain understanding of the world, active hope in the face of prevailing crises, and not the least humour and vitality. (p.8)

From this description we can see that good teaching is difficult. It requires teachers to develop certain sensibilities and sensitivities to be able to teach effectively. *Exceptional* teachers do not presume that pupil contact with certain sorts of caring persons is, in itself, morally educative they supplement these encounters with "verbal teaching or discussion" (Straughan, 1982, p.196). They engage with pupils in conversations that aim towards morally educating them. To that end, I examine, in the next section, the ways that *exceptional* teachers facilitate conversations with their pupils in various sporting contexts in order to highlight and promote existing moral practices in PE and sports.

4:3 Existing moral practices in PE and sports

What is clear is that the teachers in this study see advantages in being involved in teaching PE *and* coaching sports, as opposed to only teaching PE within the confines of the curriculum. This not only allows them more occasion and opportunity to get to know their pupils but because of their extra involvement, teachers derived more enjoyment and satisfaction from their job. These feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction are important, if often overlooked, aspects in designing character programmes, as they help teachers to assess the effectiveness of such programmes with pupils in a variety of contexts. Teachers mentioned that they enjoyed talking with pupils and seeing them in action outside the usual school contexts. They found that those pupils who engaged in sport outside of the school acted more responsibly in PE lessons, were less likely to sabotage the aims of the lesson, and were more responsive to what the teachers asked of them. This in turn enhanced teachers "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995) with teaching.

By adopting pedagogical models which aim to give pupils a more "authentic" experience of sports inside the PE curriculum (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; Hellison, 1973; Siedentop, 1994) teachers hoped to encourage pupils to continue with an

involvement in sports outwith the confines of the school. Many teachers hoped that in presenting and teaching a variety of different sports in an attractive way, pupils would begin to *feel* an emotional attachment to certain sports. One teacher pointed out how her adoption of Siedentop's (1994) sport education model has helped her to make more explicit to her pupils what it is like to feel an emotional engagement with sports:

> The values in the classroom are probably more implicit than explicit. We are rewarding those values we think are important without actually making them explicit. If I set up a class using a sport education model I think we make our values more explicit. I set the kids up into a mini season and a mini league. They have a captain and they have to pick the most valuable player. They know that they will not be changing their team every week and that they will have to learn how to work with those on their team. They learn what it means for their team when people don't turn up or their team-mates don't bring their kit. They know that they will have to play short. I think this is one way pupils can see more explicitly what it means to be a good team player. It also teaches respect – it may be that one kid isn't as good as the others but they give him credit for always being there. You begin to hear kids say "we need that person to do that job for us." (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

Though Jessie sees the value of teaching PE based on this sport education model, the fact that it is still seen as an experimental approach limits the amount of time that she feels she can teach in this way. However, this is not to say that the benefits of such an approach disappear altogether. As Jessie goes on to explain:

> When I don't teach this way, which is most of the time, I make an assumption that I am still passing on the same values in my lessons. (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

For another teacher, Jo, taking pupils out of school offered something entirely different, allowing her to build relationships with pupils that could not as easily be built within the confines of the school. This was especially the case with certain "difficult" pupils, whose standard of behaviour and attitude changed when they were on outdoor education trips. Jo commented that because residential trips required pupils to get involved in different activities – for example, tent building, washing dishes, making meals and abseiling – pupils learnt first-hand what it meant to be a responsible member of a group. Jo felt that in undertaking a variety

of simple tasks, pupils gradually began to understand the value of working together:

> Simple things became obvious to them [her pupils] like washing up your dishes or they remain dirty. Over the seven days it did begin to dawn on them that if someone was a pain at night they were all tired in the morning. These simple, obvious things had the most extraordinary effect on pupils. There was no one to run home to. Pupils had to depend on each other to get things done. They learned who to trust and how to be trustworthy. They were easier to deal with in class after this experience because you had seen this side of them and they knew you had seen it. (Jo: PE teacher, G3)

Seeing her pupils act in different situations gave Jo more insight into the characters of her pupils. She explained that the more she got to know each person the more previously unknown dimensions of his or her character were revealed to her which, in turn, helped her better understand that pupil's actions and feelings in certain circumstances. What is important here is that the relationship built up between Jo and her pupils was the result of being involved in doing things together. The residential trip provided a shared experience, or starting point, from which discussion could ensue between Jo and her pupils when back in the school environment.

In the main, teachers offered pupils sporting opportunities which they themselves enjoyed or thought that their pupils would enjoy. Though most teachers had some experience of and expertise in the sports they offered pupils, this was not always the case. Linda, for instance, wanted to switch more girls onto playing sports by getting them involved in what they showed an initial interest in:

> I have started a cricket club for girls because they want to try it. I know very little about cricket, they are the ones guiding me. They see helping me run the club as a positive thing. That is more important to me than whether I am any good at cricket. It doesn't matter so much to me how they see me ability wise. (Linda: PE teacher, G3)

What matters to Linda here is not whether or not she can play cricket, but that a new group of girls want to participate in sports. Part of Linda's pleasure in

offering cricket to these girls is seeing them take an active involvement in running their own practice sessions. Linda felt that this kind of experience was valuable to pupils and not one that was easy to replicate in PE lessons.

Conversely, two teachers mentioned that they purposely did not offer a sport – in this case football – to pupils outside of the school even though they knew their pupils enjoyed playing it and even though they had expertise in coaching it. The reason given by them was that the values permeating this sport were not the ones they wanted to pass on to their pupils. As the conversation that follows between four PE teachers (G4) suggests, to involve pupils in playing football was seen to be counterproductive to developing pupils' characters:

> Lorna: In football kids think that they can swear simply because it is football. I don't allow that to happen. I can hear it and everyone else can hear it too but just because it is football it is allowed. I don't accept that. They didn't swear in my basketball class or in my badminton class but just because in football it is allowed – suddenly it is O.K. to act in this manner. It's the same thing with professional fouls – they're seen as part of the whole aggressive culture that kids think is just football.
>
> Dougie: What goes with that is that when someone calls a foul [in football], a pupil instantly reacts and challenges the referee, whereas in a sport like rugby they get penalised for that kind of behaviour.
>
> George: It should be inherent in the rules that if you do something like that you are punished for it. This should start from a very early age.
>
> Kevin: But do some sports attract more gentlemanly people?
>
> Lorna: If you go to rugby clubs it is inbred in the culture that you are respectful of officials. If you go to football clubs it is a rougher culture and the coaches are a lot rougher and they are using language that they shouldn't be using with kids.
>
> George: I think that people choose sports that they think they will get success in. I don't think they say I chose rugby because they think "I have a good nature."
>
> Kevin: But there are a lot of footballers that play golf.
>
> Lorna: But their attitudes are very different when they go to play golf.
>
> Kevin: Exactly!

> Lorna: Their attitudes when they are supporting these events are very different too. They are very different people when they watch the two sports. I have a major passion for football but I can't bring myself to get involved with it because of the culture that is in-bred.

What is suggested by this discussion is that teachers see some sports "traditions" (MacIntyre, 1985) more than others as helping them to develop pupils' characters. In chapter six, I examine in more detail the significance of sporting traditions when it comes to educating for good character, but for the time being it is worth pointing out that some teachers avoided offering certain sports because these sports were felt to negate the development of a positive ethical outlook in sports.

As for what constitutes such an outlook, teachers initially found it easier to discuss this by outlining the kinds of sportspersons of which they disapproved rather than approved. For instance, most teachers felt it was important that young people were encouraged not to cheat or bend the rules to their own or their team's advantage. Cheating, along with selfishness and lack of effort and enthusiasm, characterised the kinds of persons teachers said they disliked seeing playing sports. In the extract below, one teacher clearly disapproves of cheating. It is also clear that her moral educative task is made that much more difficult as a result of the way certain types of inappropriate behaviour are sanctioned in certain sports (such as professional fouls):

> I hate seeing pupils cheat. All kids can say the mantra of why you shouldn't cheat – "it's just cheating yourself" – but that in itself is not enough. I hate dishonesty in any game. I hate some of the football values. These are not the ones I bring into the classroom. (Jessie: PE Teacher, G2)

For Jessie, it was not enough that pupils merely parroted the old adage that "cheating is wrong;" her pupils also had to *feel* it was wrong. This next conversation between three PE teachers (G4) demonstrates that teachers *feel* and *act* differently with regards to certain incidents of cheating involving different pupils:

Kevin: When you work with kids after school, do you condone or condemn behaviour that gains your team an advantage? In class time I condemn it but as soon as I am in a coaching situation or even in a playing situation that will change. I will happily take the advantage. If there is a disputed decision involving the referee and if it gains us an advantage to win then totally, I look for the advantage. In school obviously not because as a teacher you are trying to educate them to be a good person but outside of school in a sporting situation there is going to be a winner and a loser…you take any advantage going.

George: There are certain sports where the code of conduct or "the good sport" is much more encouraged in terms of saying "hands up, I did it and here is the ball." It is very difficult if you are very competitive - and let's face it, I think most PE teachers *are* very competitive - to do this on every occasion. The thing is, if I was coaching or teaching in the Cup Final and a poor decision went for us, I would be thinking well done wee man but don't do that in the future. Golf is a good example - in the spirit of the game they call a foul when they touch the ball – they see the game as bigger than their selfish competitive gain. Tiger Woods would, I think, call a foul on himself even on the biggest occasions so the level you're playing at is not important here.

Lorna: It drives me crazy, well football coaches do. The culture that says "do what you need to do to win" drives me crazy. In school sport you have a duty to make them a good sportsperson the same as in the curriculum. I don't see them as any different. I am trying to develop citizenship and a good sportsperson through my classes. I should also be trying to do that through my team. The notion that you are going to say you can cheat because it was a game that was worth cheating for is, well… [shrugs shoulders].

Lorna quite clearly does not feel that there should be any difference in how a PE teacher approaches incidents of cheating, regardless of who did it, the severity of the incident, and where it took place. While Kevin and George agree with Lorna that pupils should not cheat in PE classes, they look upon pupils' involvement in inter-school sports competitions differently. Kevin suggests that because there is a strong emphasis on winning in these competitions, incidents of cheating are to be expected. Male teachers in my study tended to be far more lenient than female teachers with regard to incidents of cheating that took place in sporting contexts outside PE classes. When George suggests that it is unrealistic to expect pupils not to cheat when the stakes are high, he implies that teachers would probably do the same thing under similar circumstances. In chapter eight I suggest that teachers have to take into account the unpredictable and physical nature of sports in assessing the appropriateness, or otherwise, of pupil's actions and feelings in

sporting contexts. Whilst it is perhaps realistic to expect that teachers and pupils will make allowances in highly charged personal and contextual circumstances, it is precisely in such situations that teachers and pupils must be able to reflect upon the appropriateness or inappropriateness of their actions and feelings in these situations.

It is not always clear whether or not a person *has* cheated, especially since for a person to be accused of cheating, she has to *intentionally* seek to gain an advantage unfairly. Furthermore, while one person might own up to cheating, another might try to get away with it and another might not think that she has cheated in the first place. Even in cases where a pupil is rightly judged to have cheated, how a teacher *ought to* respond to this pupil is not something that can easily be prescribed. Furthermore, teachers often have to deal with contradictions between how they feel and act and how they *ought to* respond in any given situation. For example, though George is conscious of his role as a moral educator, he admits to feeling pleased with the outcome when his pupil has cheated. Nor can we simply say that because Kevin and George approve of some incidents of cheating by their pupils and Lorna does not, that Lorna is a good moral educator and Kevin and George are not.

What *is* clear in all of this, however, is that pupils learn by observing their teachers' actions or inactions. In other words, how Kevin, George and Lorna normally act and feel in a variety of circumstances says a great deal to their pupils about the kinds of persons they are. Their responses to given situations give pupils a good indication of the morally acceptable parameters they are expected to abide within. How teachers deal with certain situations involving different pupils not only brings into sharper focus their ethical outlook in sports, but also tests it. Though *exceptional* teachers want to set a good example to their pupils, they

recognise that both they and their pupils will make errors of judgement and that each will act upon and deal with these errors in different ways. It is this very process of working through what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable conduct in a variety of contexts that is a key component of a dynamic and ultimately relevant character education programme in PE and sports.

PE teachers ought to be involved in making informed moral judgements with regard to their pupils' actions and feelings in certain circumstances (Jones, 2005). *How* teachers respond to each pupil – what Noddings (2003a) refers to as a teacher's "response-ability" (p.249) – will largely depend upon the accuracy of their reading of certain circumstances. It is often in highly pressurised situations that teachers' "response-ability" to pupils can be most apparent. One teacher – when reflecting upon her own experience as a former pupil – suggests that good teachers respond in certain ways to their pupils mistakes:

> They [good teachers] accept your mistakes but there is a definite standard expected from you. There is a mutual agreement as to where you are trying to go. It comes back to the partnership thing [relationship between the teacher and player] again. They don't let you off the hook. (Jessie: PE teacher, G2)

In other words, *exceptional* teachers do not only try to influence pupils' ethical outlook in sports by setting a good example; they also talk about and reflect upon the appropriateness of certain actions and feelings with their pupils; and expect that in trying to be certain sorts of persons both they and their pupils will make mistakes. In responding sensitively and effectively to different situations involving her pupils, an *exceptional* teacher needs to possess and exercise *phronesis* or practical wisdom. In the next section I show how teacher *phronesis* can not only inform but is nurtured and developed by a virtue-ethical approach to designing character education programmes in PE and sports.

4:4 Support for moral education in PE and sports

Teachers complained that there was little or no help provided by education authorities and sports' organisations in the area of moral development beyond the distribution of written codes of conduct for pupils and teachers, and players and coaches. They stressed that their pupils did not become good persons "over night" or simply by applying a set of predetermined rules or codes. Teachers felt that though these codes provided a useful starting point for discussion with pupils about the appropriateness of their behaviour in certain situations, they did not go far enough in helping them to deal effectively with the complexities of the many everyday situations they encountered with their pupils. One way of helping teachers read and deal with such encounters effectively is exploring what might constitute *exceptional* teacher *phronesis* – an idea I develop in more detail in the next chapter. By examining both what is meant by the term *phronesis* in moral philosophy, and how its possession can help teachers educate for good character in PE and sports, teachers can begin to develop the necessary sensitivities and sensibilities required to be or become effective character educators.

By also examining what *exceptional* teachers make explicit through conversation *and* example – for instance, what they identify as ethically salient about playing sports well – pupils and teachers can learn a number of things that are of relevance in all human encounters: "the facts, the rules of polite conversation, manner and style, trust and confidence, how to listen and respond without hurting" (Noddings, 2002, p.129). *Exceptional* teachers – or what Carr (2005) refers to as "effective teachers" – are good conversationalists, even if I add other qualities (to be discussed in chapter eight) to his list of those that constitute the good conversationalist-teacher:

> Like the good conversationalist, the effective teacher is someone who appreciates the importance of getting to know in more than casual or external

> way the thoughts, motives and feelings of those with whom they are engaged in conversation.... [T]he teacher will need other qualities beside those of the good conversationalist – not least when the conversation, as it not infrequently does, breaks down – ... [like] emotional self-control and balanced judgment ...in short, those qualities of resilience, endurance, nerve, determination and courage of just the sort commonly meant by the term 'character'...[and] not least the qualities also mentioned by teachers – a robust sense of humour. (Carr, 2005, p.265)

Carr is talking here about teachers in general, so it could be argued that the active nature of PE and sports mitigates the potential for meaningful conversation between pupils and pupils, and between pupils and teachers. On the contrary, and consistent with the implications of *phronesis* as including non-conversational or practical exchanges, the gym hall may offer many more opportunities for meaningful practical exchanges than does the classroom. For one thing, playing sports is not a silent affair. Opportunities exist before, during and after each sporting occasion for a rich line of verbal and non-verbal communication between pupils and teachers. Secondly, despite the requirement for players to hide their intentions during a game – so as not to give opponents an unnecessary advantage – this often involves pupils feeling and acting in new ways. Thirdly, *exceptional* teachers judge when and how to talk to their pupils about certain incidents that arise during practice sessions. That said, teachers mentioned that they often found it difficult to find the time to speak to indidivual pupils because they had to deal with large numbers of pupils at one time. This was one of the main reasons why teachers felt they had better conversations and by extension relationships with pupils who were involved in doing sports outside of the school than those they taught solely during PE lessons. In chapter seven I examine in more detail Pincoffs' (1986) notion of teacher talk and reflection as a form of philosophical analysis that can be formally integrated into teacher education programmes to help teachers design a character education in PE and sports. For teachers to claim conversation as a form of moral philosophical analysis they must, however, take

seriously the types of conversation[4] they engage in with their pupils and with their colleagues.

4:5 Summary

Many teachers in this study commented that they had a greater influence on a pupil's moral development if they got to know their pupils better. Teachers mentioned a range of opportunities outside of the school – for example, practice sessions, travelling to and from fixtures, social gatherings, exchange trips with other schools at home and abroad, residential and non-residential camps – which afforded them the chance to not only get to know their pupils better, but to build a more accurate picture of their pupils' characters. Teachers also mentioned that their own enjoyment of and satisfaction from teaching PE was enhanced through establishing good relationships with their pupils, and that this in turn made them more "human" to their pupils. As one teacher commented:

> I have a good relationship with a small group of girls and the lessons with them are brilliant. My relationships are stronger with those I teach after school. I see them regularly, maybe even five times a week. I have built up such a good relationship with them. They are so willing to do things for you because you are putting in all this time and effort for them. You are organising fixtures and they know that you are rooting for them to win. They are prepared to transfer all that happens in their club into their PE lessons. It helps you in the lesson that they see you as human. Suddenly they know where you're coming from, and who you are. (Linda: PE teacher, G3)

As Noddings (2002) correctly points out, pupils generally want to be liked by their teachers. By extension, those pupils who feel that they are liked by their teachers are more likely to consider the sorts of desirable qualities that a teacher approves of when it comes to shaping their own involvement and ethical outlook in sports. This reciprocity – what Linda describes as a kind of mutual willingness to help each other – is what the *exceptional* teacher not only nurtures, but also draws upon to help shape a pupil's outlook in sports.

Though engaging with different approaches to moral philosophy is helpful in developing our ethical outlook to life in general, teachers can benefit from an approach to moral philosophy called virtue ethics which focuses on notions of "character" as constituted by the morally good person. I argue in the next chapter, that an engagement with virtue ethics not only helps teachers to develop their own character education programmes in PE and sports, but can help teacher educators to design character education programmes which are perceived by teachers to be relevant to their work with young people. This in turn can provide the basis for an analytical framework which can be used to design character education programmes that benefit both teachers and pupils.

Chapter Five: Virtue ethics

5:0 Introduction

Philosophy is not the only mode of enquiry used to examine the ethical dimension of life, but it does embody a "distinctive way" of exploring the aspects of our lives that we feel are important to us (Blackburn, 2001, p.5). It is *distinctive* because, unlike other disciplines such as psychology and sociology, it takes as its starting point an examination of human good and the good life for human beings. What all moral philosophers have in common is that they aim to say something about *how* a person can live a good life and *why* that person ought to attempt to lead a *certain* kind of life rather than another. For example, Kekes (1989) suggests that living a good life comprises of: (i) doing what we reasonably want to do as long as that does not mean that we merely pursue pleasure; (ii) not looking to satisfy all our wants but only those which are important; and (iii) being guided by our abilities to reason well in deciding our priorities among our important wants (p.4). I argue, in chapter eight, that persons are not only guided by reason but also by how they *feel* about doing certain activities with certain people when it comes to prioritising what is important to their lives. In chapter nine I argue for a character education programme in PE and sports that encourages young people to seek – with support and guidance from their teacher – their own joys in doing what they reasonably want to do as long as this does not involve intentionally hurting others.

In this chapter I argue that an engagement with a form of moral philosophy known as "virtue ethics" can provide teachers with a means of exploring aspects of theirs and their pupils' everyday lives which may affect them deeply. Intrinsic to virtue ethics is the idea that it is necessary to talk about and reflect upon notions of character and virtue. In so doing, we come to better understand our own and others' feelings and actions in certain circumstances. This in turn enables us to

respond more effectively and sensitively to the actions and feelings of others. Whilst Carr (1996) is correct to argue that moral education ought to be left "more-in-the-hands than out-of-the-hands of teachers" (p.12), teachers cannot be expected to morally educate young people entirely on their own: they require some support. Arguing that a virtue-ethical framework offers, at least in part, this kind of support, I use the first part of this chapter to situate a virtue-ethical approach within the realm of moral philosophy.

I go on in the second part of this chapter to unpack the terms "virtue" and "virtues" in order to provide a basic virtue-language with which to design a character education in PE and sports. I examine the extent to which adopting and adapting a virtue-ethical approach might benefit teachers and pupils. I also outline the main criticisms levelled at virtue ethics in order to explore the extent to which this approach might or might not be useful to teachers.

5:1 Aristotelian ethics and virtue ethics

The philosophical perspective known as "virtue ethics" is commonly, but not exclusively, said to follow the ethical writings of Aristotle (Blackburn, 2001, p.112). Ethics in Aristotelian terms focused not only on the character of the person making moral decisions, but also on the status of the person – that is, where they were positioned in society. Human good was linked closely with the notion of virtue, which in turn was closely linked to "acting rationally" with others in your social group:

> For Aristotle, and for the Greeks in general, a person is primarily a member of a group, be it a family, a household, a village or city state. There is no such thing as purely free-thinking individual. Our individuality is already partly decided for us by the group or groups of which we are a part. Hence the overall well-being of a group is far more important than the well-being of any single member within it. (Vardy & Grosch, 1999, p.23)

In chapter six I discuss in more detail the relationship between the good life for human beings, and the social *nature* of human beings. For the moment, though, it is worth noting that in Aristotle's time, the common assumption was that all Athenians knew what was expected of them within their particular social structure as defined by the *polis* or city state (MacIntyre, 1985, p.24). To be a good person was closely linked to being a good citizen. MacIntyre (1985) makes the point that Aristotle uses the word "we" in *Nicomachean Ethics* to indicate that he is not creating an account of the virtues but rather, that he is "articulating an account that is implicit in the thought, utterance and action of an educated Athenian" (p.147). MacIntyre (1985) claims that Aristotle's assumption was that Athenians took for granted the way virtues were to be exercised (p.135).

The good life for human beings in Aristotelian times constituted a "structured way of living" (Sherman, 1997, p.9). In other words, to know "the good" a person had to: i) be properly brought up; ii) receive the right kind of instruction in the virtues; iii) have formed their character in the right way; and iv) possess the necessary external goods (such as friendship, citizenship, family and income) to live this sort of life (Sherman 1997, p.9). What is apparent is that "the good life was not open to everyone" (MacIntyre 1985, p.184).

There is a general problem with how Aristotelian ethics "fits" within modern moral philosophy. Aristotle lacked any strong commitment to "generalised humanitarianism" because only men, and free men at that, were considered able to possess all the virtues required to live the good life for man (Slote, 1997, p. 344). Women and slaves were viewed as having reasoning capacities that were "permanently deficient" and which curtailed the kinds of virtue they could possess (Slote, 1997, p.344). Although Aristotle was unable to sufficiently abstract himself from his cultural surroundings to consider the virtuousness of women and

slaves, MacIntyre (1985) argues that this does not detract from our understanding of the place of virtues in *all* human lives (p.159).

Whilst acknowledging that Aristotle's ethical work still has relevance for contemporary living, following Gilligan (1982), I contend that moral theories have systematically marginalised or ignored the distinctive human qualities of women. This has, over time, resulted in moral theories that on the one hand proclaim humanitarianism, but on the other hand favour as virtues only those human characteristics which are highly regarded by and in men. It goes without saying that for any virtue-ethical approach based on Aristotelian ethics to have any credence with and relevance to modern philosophy, it has to deal firstly with criticisms that it is hopelessly outdated, hence inapplicable, to modern living – its conception of women's place in society being a prime example of this inapplicability. To that end, neo-Aristotelians – followers of Aristotelian ethics who nonetheless criticise his misogynistic views – argue that with some provisos, much of his work can still apply to living morally in the modern context. As Hursthouse (1999) bluntly puts it, his ethics are still relevant even though "he was plain wrong about slaves and women" (p. 8). Although it is not my intention here to pursue the nature of these elitist and gendered "wrongs," by raising them as opposed to shying away from them, virtue theorists such as Hursthouse alert us to the complexities inherent in adopting any historical perspective. In some respects, by doing this they render visible the shortcomings of *all* moral theories – something that other schools of philosophical thought are less prepared to do.

Until the late 1950s[5] ancient views of ethics were largely neglected and discredited by philosophers. The dominant view of ethics sprung from the work of eighteenth and nineteenth Century philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and was characterised by the notion that

to be a good person, one merely needed to adhere to a number of moral rules, such as "do not lie" or "do not kill" (Singer, 1997, p.204). Known as *deontic* ethics, this rule-based approach became popular because it appeared to provide answers to pressing moral problems and dilemmas. *Aretaic* ethics, on the other hand – an approach that centres on the formation and development of character – was considered to be somewhat archaic, hence out of touch with a rapidly changing society.[6] The result of this adoption of *deontic* ethics over *aretaic* ethics was an oversimplified and misrepresentative view of human good and the good life – one that gave the appearance of requiring very little from human beings. In the former, being good and doing good was reduced to mere adherence to a set of universally agreed principles or rules, whereas in the latter human beings were obliged to shape their own character in accordance with those qualities associated with virtue. This is not to say that most moral theories do not have something to say about how character affects moral choices and decisions. What distinguishes a *virtue* theory from those other moral theories, however, is its emphasis on character and virtue as *central* to understanding human good and the good life for human beings, as opposed to being merely peripheral (Slote, 1997, p.326). In other words, a virtue theory is the study of the character of the person *actively engaged* in the process of making moral choices and decisions.

The 1950s resurgence of interest in ancient views was in part the result of the perceived failure of deontological approaches to deliver what they promised in terms of moral rules and laws that were up to tackling growing social concerns such as rising crime rates, and the breakdown of traditional institutions such as family and church. The ethical work of MacIntyre (1985) aims to rework the ancient writings of Aristotle to render them more relevant and appealing to contemporary times, as well as helping us to understand our current state of morality. MacIntyre (1985) clearly reveals why virtue ethics has re-emerged as

the approach that offers greater assistance than its rivals to deal with a perceived decline in moral standards. In order to more fully understand how MacIntyre's virtue-ethical approach – and for that matter all virtue-ethical approaches – works, it is first necessary to examine the ambiguities that surround the terms "virtue" and "virtues" as they pertain to the task of morally educating young people. Any satisfactory account of virtue ought to contain an explanation of:

> (i) What is a virtue; (ii) what are the virtues; and (iii) why are the virtues important? (Rachels, 2001, p.335)

I will examine each of these three points in turn.

5:1:1 What is a virtue?

All virtue ethicists aim to investigate what makes a human quality a virtue. Each virtue theory aims to say something about the nature of virtue resulting in a plethora of different definitions of virtue. For example:

> A virtue is a character trait a human being needs to flourish or live well. (Hursthouse, 1997, p.229)
>
> A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. (MacIntyre 1985, p.191)

These two interpretations of the term "virtue" draw our attention to different aspects of our moral lives. With respect to these differences, the fact that there is, as MacIntyre (1985) suggests, "no one single core conception of what is virtue" (p.181) is not a problem in itself. On the contrary, by discussing the differences between definitions of virtue, different aspects of a moral life can be revealed. Rachels (2001) outlines three definitions of virtue to illuminate the differences between them: (i) Aristotle's definition of a virtue as "a trait that is manifested in habitual actions;" (ii) Pincoffs' use of virtues and vices "in deciding whether someone should be avoided or sought;" and (3) his own definition of a virtue as "a

trait of character, manifested in habitual actions, that is good for a person to have" (p.335).

Each of these definitions says something different about the place of "virtue" in our lives. Aristotle's definition draws us into an enquiry regarding the term "habitual." For Aristotle, habituation is an educative process that attends to the cultivation of the child's own feelings and the development of the necessary "virtues" that enables her to understand and reason more adequately. In other words, moral character is acquired by habituation – a point I develop more fully in chapter eight. Aristotle goes as far as to say that a child is "educable" *only* if he is "properly brought up and can be moved by argument" (Sherman, 1989, p.165).

Pincoffs' definition, on the other hand, draws us into an enquiry around how we might go about evaluating character in others. Pincoffs (1986) argues that we make ethical choices based on the *sorts* of people we encounter in our lives. Our preferences for the company of some people rather than others influences the kinds of relationships we seek out and those we try to avoid, and the ways we come to view the social constraints (such as rules and laws) we face in common life.

Finally, Rachels' definition draws us into a discussion as to why virtues are valuable for a person to have. Since Foot (1978) retracted her original claim that virtues are only virtues if they "benefit their possessor" – for it has since been found that not all virtues actually *do* benefit their possessor – there has been a move to describe "the virtues" as functionally good or useful to us rather than merely being "beneficial to us" (Slote, 1997, pp.131-2). Rachels (2001) aligns himself with this movement, and extends Foot's original claim. He maintains that virtues such as honesty and kindness are "good for us" in that they help us to

shape our own characters and read problematic situations more effectively and sensitively. Virtues, therefore, help us shape our own characters and lives in accordance with "goodness" (Murdoch, 1983). Whilst each of the above definitions vary in content, they all aim to say something about the nature of virtue, its relationship to the notion of character, and the advantages virtues offer when it comes to leading the ethical or good life. As suggested above, the diversity of definitions – rather than complicating matters – can help us to illuminate the richness and complexities of a human life. Problems do arise, however, when we seek to apply only one notion of virtue in a systematic way, to the exclusion of others.

By examining how different definitions of virtue relate to human good and the good life for human beings, we can enhance our understanding of how virtue works. Aristotle's notion of the good life for human beings precedes his conceptualisation of what constitutes the virtues (in MacIntyre, 1985, p.184). Aristotle was primarily concerned with the sorts of persons we are and what it is to lead an ethical or good life. For Aristotle, there is an "ultimate good" for human beings – which he calls *eudaimonia* or happiness. If *eudaimonia* is the ultimate goal, then it is through the acquisition of virtue that one achieves it. A good person is therefore one who lives and acts according to virtue.

Aristotle distinguishes between two types of virtue: moral virtue (character) and intellectual virtue (reason). Although he separates virtue into two distinct parts, Sherman (1989) argues that Aristotle sees these two parts as inseparable in a virtuous person. To be called virtuous, a person had to posses *all* the virtues and be able to exercise them wisely. To be able to do this a person had to posses the "master virtue" (Rorty, 1988) *phronesis* or practical wisdom. To have *phronesis* means a person can be relied upon to use the virtues to make informed decisions

in certain situations involving certain persons. I use Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* throughout this thesis to highlight the importance of teachers having or acquiring the required sensitivities and sensibilities to become good judges of pupils' characters. What emerges from discussions about teacher *phronesis* can in turn shape what is made available to teachers in terms of Continuing Professional Development in PE provision.

5:1:2 What are the virtues?

With no consensus regarding a core conception of virtue, it is perhaps not surprising that there is no definitive list of what human qualities are virtues and which are vices. Critics of virtue theory have tended to focus negatively on this lack of consensus, suggesting that the selective process used by virtue theorists' to identify those human qualities that are virtues is arbitrary, hence conflicting (Kohlberg, 1981). This lack of a unified notion of what constitutes the virtues has, according to MacIntyre (1985), resulted in numerous lists of virtues and vices that find their basis in personal preference rather than reasoned judgement (p.181).

Making lists of virtues in itself is not necessarily problematic (Pincoffs, 1986). On the contrary, I argue in chapter seven that Pincoffs and Audi's (1986) list of over two hundred human qualities describing the kinds of persons we are, is helpful to teachers when they are discussing what might constitute a good sportsperson (pp.76-77). Pincoffs' and Audi's virtue framework provides a useful mapping of those qualities that are worth nurturing in the good sportsperson. As such, it can help to expand and challenge existing conceptions when teachers discuss what constitutes the good sportsperson.

Though we cannot take for granted that the virtues are built into our characters, it is equally a mistake to assume that we have nothing within us which can help us

to discern between good and bad human qualities. We know "deep down" that some human qualities are good for us (virtues) and that some are bad for us (vices) (Foot, 2001, p.333). Though Pincoffs (1986) sees this "deep down" sense of discerning virtues from vices as part of an overall understanding we have about living well with others as social creatures, MacIntyre (1985) rejects this view, stating instead that we learn to become social creatures by being initiated into socially established "practices."

Rather than having faith that "ordinary people," when left to their own devices, could decide which human qualities were virtues and which were vices, Aristotle felt that it was clearly the task of *properly educated* men (sic) to make this decision for them. A *properly educated* man (sic) had to possess *all* the virtues and be able to exercise them wisely. Aristotle claimed that only those men (sic) who had *phronesis* or practical wisdom possessed the necessary moral reasoning abilities to judge accurately what constituted the virtues.

Rorty (1988) suggests that a number of modern theorists use the notion of a *master virtue*, such as *phronesis*, in order to identify and deal with the range, diversity and conflicting nature of the virtues (p.16). The appeal of a *master virtue* (with all its gender implications) is that it appears to be simpler and easier to deal with than a whole list of smaller interconnected virtues. This, however, masks the fact that any *master virtue* is made up from a whole range of interrelated human qualities – such as honesty, courage, kindness, compassion and benevolence. These qualities are not fixed and can "shift" depending on what sorts of ideologies are politically dominant at the time (Rorty, 1988, p.20). It is for this reason, Rorty (1988) argues, that theorists tend to analyse "the virtuous person" as opposed to the virtues themselves when examining the different ways virtues are exhibited and how they interrelate.

Though Rorty (1988) questions whether this is an altogether satisfactory way to go about identifying and describing the virtues, she maintains that virtues are not "free-standing entities" (p.20). Rather, they are embedded within the structures and ways of life of a community and are particular to the social groups of which a person is a member. She argues that different systems of "checks and balances" which characterise some virtues as more or less appropriate to different age groups and social positions operate within societies (p.16). This makes defining the virtues and the virtuous person a difficult task. Any credible moral theory must take account of the life a person will typically go through, the diversity of social roles they will play, and the nature of the social groups of which they will be a member. That said, it is this inbuilt process of dealing with this kind of complexity that gives virtue ethics its greatest advantage over its rivals, and makes it particularly relevant to teachers who deal daily with a vast array of situations involving a diverse group of pupils.

5:1:3 Why are the virtues important?

One of the key tasks of virtue ethicists is to outline why the virtues are important to us, and to show how they relate to living a good life. In general, virtue ethicists agree that the virtues: (i) *are* what make humans good; (ii) define human good; and (iii) help us achieve the good life for human beings. More specifically, the virtues help us to discern between the companies of certain sorts of people (Pincoffs, 1985); help us to read and assess situations correctly (Hursthouse, 1999; Slote, 1997); provide a system of "checks and balances" for good social living (Rorty, 1988); and help us to correct what we and others do (Foot, 2001). "Virtue words" such as courage and justice do have some "power" to make us do good things (Foot, 2001, p.333). Equally, if we come to understand what virtues such as "compassion" and "kindness" consists of, then as "rational" people we

will want to possess them (Carr, 2000). This affective and practical understanding of the virtues could be said, in turn, to guide us when it comes to acting in an informed way – what some would call "acting rationally."

As suggested earlier, even though Aristotle distinguishes between moral virtue (character) and intellectual virtue (practical wisdom), there is an undeniable connection between "acting from good character" and "acting rationally" (Sherman, 1989). In other words, in order to "act rationally" a person firstly must be of good character. This good character, in turn, equips her with what she needs to read a situation correctly. In reading a situation correctly, she is then able to act in a rational manner. What has to be stressed is that each step in this process involves a mix of feeling and reason, though like the chicken and the egg, it is debatable as to which comes first. I discuss this link between "acting rationally" and our emotions in more detail in chapter eight, but for the moment it is worth noting what Nussbaum (2001) says about the importance of our emotions in making informed ethical decisions:

> We need to think of the emotions as essential elements of human intelligence, rather than just supports or 'props' for intelligence. This gives us especially strong reason to promote the conditions of emotional well being in political culture: for this view entails that without emotional development, a part of our reasoning capacity as political creatures will be missing. (p.3)

How we *feel* in any given situation can help us not only to read a situation correctly, but also to act in an appropriate way. This element of feeling in the virtues also opens up the possibilities for different actions and sheds light on how the virtues do not manifest themselves in a uniform way. Acting from good character can take many forms – all of them can be equally valid (Sherman, 1989, p.29). Acting virtuously, in other words, is more than just reproducing a set of prescribed virtuous acts. This is one of the reasons why virtue ethics is applicable to teachers, encouraging them as it does to think about moral problems in different

ways (Hursthouse, 1999, p.233). By thinking about how to deal with a problem in a different way, teachers can move beyond the notion that there is only one right answer to any given situation.

5:2 Moral education through "virtue" and "the virtues"

It is widely acknowledged that virtue is difficult to teach (Ryle, 1975). Virtue theories, however, embrace the challenges and difficulties involved in attempting to teach the virtues, especially when it comes to encouraging children to feel and act appropriately in a number of different situations. It follows that virtue ethicists expects the teacher to play a significant role in moral education. Learning how to be a good person is not something that children can get from textbooks and lectures alone. Rather, it is through "example, training and self training" (Ryle, 1975, p.47) that the development of moral character is greatly enhanced. The presence of models or exemplars that children can imitate and emulate does, for some virtue ethicists (Pincoffs included), answer this need. In their view, teachers, family members and friends provide a "moral model" around which the child can shape his own character and moral outlook. In this way, the child can see for himself, first-hand, what it is to act morally, on different occasions, under different circumstances. I discuss this educative process – what Aristotle calls "habituation" – in more detail in chapter eight but it is worth pointing out here that central to all virtue-ethical approaches is the outcome that a child learns to deal adequately with the complexities of his life through the help of these models.

In describing what might constitute "virtue" and "virtues" in the context of a moral education, most ethicists commonly start by comparing two pedagogical methods traditionally associated with the teaching of virtue (Peters, 1970). The first method, widely known as "socialisation," aims at properly instructing the

child in those virtues and traditions that are deemed culturally significant – this, unsurprisingly, is referred to as a traditionalist view of moral education. The second method involves giving a child the appropriate amount of autonomy and freedom that is necessary for her to make independent judgments on the basis of principle, regardless of social convention or peer pressure – this method is known as a liberalist or progressive view of moral education (Carr, 1996; Peters, 1970). According to Peters (1970), the seemingly opposed aims of these two approaches present the teacher with a dilemma: whilst on the one hand, she wants to ensure that children are properly "socialised" into the culturally significant norms and ways of his or her society, on the other hand, she also wants to ensure that children are given the necessary "personal autonomy and freedom" required to make independent moral choices. In a sense, the teacher is caught between the two, and therein lies the paradox (Peters, 1963). Too much emphasis placed on socialisation can lead to accusations of "indoctrination," whereas too little emphasis on these matters can engender a general lack of respect for the welfare of others. Given this confusion, it is not surprising that teachers are often left uncertain as to where to position themselves with regard to their moral role.

Rather than seeing this paradox as a problem, the merits of both approaches can be incorporated into a virtue-ethical framework that embraces numerous kinds of virtue-based learning. This is provided on the one hand, by a child's teachers, and on the other, by that child's parents, peers and extended family members. The task of the teacher is to guide and instruct children in the pursuit and appreciation of culturally valuable activities. This extends to practical experience and includes providing occasions to try out virtuous acts in highly concrete situations (Sherman, 1989). According to Sherman (1989), most forms of moral education rely heavily on our personal intuitions and appeals to our primary attachments to

family members and friends. It is the kind of moral education that *feels* "right" to us and also seems possible for us to achieve

As suggested above, in viewing character education as something that involves the whole community, virtue ethics avoids delegating moral educational responsibility solely to teachers. The proper care of and attention to young people is extended to include all members of the community (MacIntrye, 1985). This does not mean that by adopting virtue-ethical approaches a teacher's moral role is diminished. On the contrary, its adoption helps to promote and protect the important role and place of the teacher in a child's moral education (Peters 1963).

5:3 Some criticisms levelled at virtue theory

Before examining some of the criticisms levelled at virtue theory, it is worth pointing out that there are major divisions among virtue-ethical approaches. Though virtue ethicists share a common concern for character formation and development, they differ with regard to whether: (i) virtue ethics ought to be theoretical or non-theoretical; (ii) virtue ought to be synonymous with *eudaimonia* or happiness; and (iii) virtue ought to be central to virtue ethics (Slote, 1997; Statman, 1997). It is also worth reiterating that virtue ethics is *not* about coming up with a predetermined set of rules and principles for moral action. Rather, it is fundamentally about ways of seeing, thinking and feeling that all require *phronesis* or practical wisdom. Murdoch (1983) makes the point, however, that it is harder for virtue ethics to be taken as a serious contender in modern moral philosophy, given that its central tenets of "goodness" and "virtue" are seen as less *useful* than the tenets of "rightness" and "duty," as endorsed by other moral theories (p.73). However, virtue ethics is now being taken more seriously because it is beginning to show itself as "capable of producing theories with sufficient

structure and sufficiently clear implications to allow for a critical comparison with other prevalent forms of ethics" (Slote, 1997, p.336).

To both demonstrate this new capability and dispel some of the myths that continue to undermine virtue ethics as a credible moral philosophy, I have grouped the criticisms generally levelled at it under three headings: rigour and definiteness, order and systemisation, and subjectivism and relativism. As will become clearer, these criticisms often appear to contradict each other – for example, virtue ethicists are accused of being both too vague and too systematising. This is only to be expected given the open nature of virtue ethics, and its ability to accommodate a number of approaches and perspectives.

5:3:1 Rigour and definiteness

Virtue theory is frequently criticised for its apparent lack of rigour and definiteness because virtue ethicists cannot agree on which human qualities are virtues. In outlining five ways that virtue ethics can provide guidance and direction, Hursthouse (1997) not only helps to dispel this criticism but shows how virtue theories actually work. According to Hursthouse (1997), a virtue-ethical approach provides us with direction and guidance in that it:

> Has the right attitude to human life, death, and relationships; …has knowledge of what constitutes a good life; …starts from the premise of "is she living well?" when faced with a moral problem; …assesses the facts about the situation; …and knows what is the right and wrong attitude in relation to these facts. (p.233)

These five points provide a useful starting point for teachers who are interested in discussing the general merits of adopting a virtue-ethical approach in PE and sports. First, each of the five points contains language and ideas which need to be unpacked if they are to be of relevance to teachers. The very process of doing this, I maintain, can become the basis of a character education in PE and sports.

Second, the five points go some way towards dispelling the myth that virtue ethics "can't tell us what to do, only how to be" (Slote, 1997, p.342).

In considering how we ought to live we undertake an examination of the kinds of lives human beings typically pass through from birth to death. We take into consideration our attitudes and feelings about life and death and our relationships with family and friends. In taking account of our whole life in relation to others we are able to form some conception of what a good life might constitute for ourselves and others. When faced with a difficult situation involving pupils, teachers can judge how to respond to the facts about the situation in relation to what they know of the lives of those individuals involved and against their own conception of what might constitute a good life for human beings. This is crucial, for if we expect teachers to adopt a virtue-ethical approach, there must be an element of "what to do" in it, and such an approach must be applicable to everyday situations.

5:3:2 Order and Systemisation

A second criticism which is worth noting comes out of the anti-theorist camp, and is levelled at those virtue ethicists who, like all moral theorists, attempt to "order" and "systematise" the moral life. Both Sherman (1989) and Hursthouse (1999) fall prey to this criticism. What these anti–theorists contend is that the enterprise of formulating moral theories is "misguided and has distorted our understanding of the moral life" (in Baier, 1997, p.264). They contend that no moral theory can produce an adequate account of how we ought to live our lives because within these theories there is a privileging of only one or two facets of our life to the exclusion of others. This critique has merit, especially if the moral theory stops at simply creating a set framework into which we must "fit" in order to be called "morally good." A moral theory, however, that does not stop there but rather, has

built into it a way of discussing human good and the good life for human beings is useful and worthwhile. It is in and through discussing the merits and demerits of these very frameworks that the "real" work of morally educating actually happens. This then is the practice proposed by Pincoffs' (1986) non-reductionist approach to virtue ethics, which is based on moral talk and reflection. Though critics have attacked his efforts, insisting that he ends up being as reductionist as any other virtue ethicists – a point I shall return to in chapter seven and which indeed is at the core of all discussions around virtue ethics – Pincoffs' approach offers us a more open way of engaging with virtue ethics than does the approach of many of his contemporaries. This is because Pincoffs helps us to deal with the inconsistencies in the ways in which we see and interpret everyday situations, and his approach allows for the complexities of a whole person's life rather than reducing that person's life to one or two facets or dimensions. Pincoffs struggles to create an account of ethics which does not fall into the trap of unnecessarily ordering and systematising moral development in such a way as to misrepresent or underdeveloped the significance of the sorts of persons we are and want to become. Pincoffs' work is valuable because it gives us an account of what a less reductionist approach to moral education might look like, and when and why such an account might merit our attention and support.

5:3:3 Subjectivism and relativism

Since virtue ethics encourages us to make judgements by taking into account the whole life of the person *and* her environment, its attendant virtue-ethical approaches are often accused of "subjectivism" and "cultural relativism." The suggestion here is that virtue-ethical approaches are inadequate because they can *only* judge what is good *relative* to indidivual preference, choice and social constraints, all of which are culturally-defined. In other words, they are unable to make any judgments regarding what is good for *all* human beings (see

Hursthouse, 1999). Rather than striving to defend itself against this criticism (as virtue ethicists like MacIntyre (1985) unequivocally do) – virtue ethics ought instead to be pointing out the merits of being subjective especially when it comes to reading a culturally specific situation. Moreover, in embracing their own and their pupil's subjectivity and cultural situated-ness, virtue ethicists render visible the preferences and choices of individuals, and the social restraints under which they live, rather than merely shoving under the carpet these key aspects of people's lives – as so many other moral theorists tend to do. This kind of visibility helps teachers better understand where both they and their pupils are coming from, and hence they can design programmes that can best shape an individual pupil's ethical outlook and they can then evaluate the extent to which that pupil has made moral progress.

5:4 Summary

If, as suggested above, there are a number of different ways of *doing* virtue ethics, all virtue theorists agree that concepts like "goodness" and "virtue" can be described and evaluated in a way that helps shape our characters and our lives for the better. By considering the possibilities of more than one version of the good life for human beings, and in embracing and even celebrating this diversity (Kekes, 1993), virtue theories can offer teachers opportunities to expand upon and rethink their existing conceptions of human good and the good life for human beings in relation to their task of nurturing the good sportsperson. In doing this, teachers can also begin to describe and evaluate in a different way what might constitute the good sportsperson.

There is however little point in talking about *a* moral education unless there is some agreement as to what the term "moral" actually relates (Peters, 1970b, p. 45). In the next chapter I examine in more depth how a MacIntyrean approach can

help teachers address notions of what a shared morality might look like and provide the basis of a moral educational framework for PE and sports. I have chosen to base a character education in PE and sports on a MacIntyrean framework precisely because it offers a sociological approach to morality that emphasises the importance of being a member of a social group. MacIntyre does begin to answer the question of how a teacher ought to go about morally educating young people through a focus on virtues inside socially established practices like sports. That said, whilst a MacIntyrean (1985) approach offers teachers a useful way of thinking and talking about the virtues as they relate to practice, and hence provides a useful overall model for beginning to design a character education in PE and sports, he does not go far enough in detailing the importance of the kind of person who ought to be doing the educating. Nor does he go far enough in reflecting and talking about the relationships between pupils and their teacher. These oversights, along with what MacIntyre *does* provide us with, will be addressed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter Six Chapter Six: A MacIntyrean virtue-ethical approach

6:0 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, as outlined in his book *After Virtue* (1985). I explore the extent to which a MacIntyrean virtue-ethical approach to moral education can be useful to teachers in undertaking the design of a character education in PE and sports. In the first part of this chapter I outline MacIntyre's struggle against what he terms "emotivism" and "individualism" in ethics. I examine what emerges in terms of an ethical framework which aims to help us deal with what MacIntyre considers to be our current state of moral decline. I go on to critically examine three main tenets of a MacIntyrean framework – his notions of "a practice," "the narrative unity of a life," and "traditions" – each of which distinguishes his approach from other virtue-ethical approaches, and provides the necessary background for the fuller discussion that follows regarding the extent to which these aspects of his work might help teachers nurture and develop a good sportsperson.

In the second part of this chapter, I show how a MacIntyrean approach fails to take sufficient account of the personal and relational dimension of moral development. To this end, I critically examine four aspects of MacIntyre's framework: (i) his denial of teaching as a practice in its own right; (ii) his use of the term "practitioner;" (iii) his privileging of three virtues; and (iv) his framing of institutions as corruptive. Taking these four critiques into account, I go on to suggest how a MacIntyrean approach could be extended to both address these concerns and to bring into sharper focus the work of *exceptional* teachers in morally educating young people in and through sports.

6:1 Four key tenets of a MacIntyrean approach

6:1:1 "Emotivisim" and "Individualism"

In his book *After Virtue* (1985), MacIntrye claims that we are now living in a state of moral crisis. He suggests that we have reached this state as a result of the growth of an "emotivist culture," and the absence of a shared morality. For MacIntyre, "emotivism" is:

> The doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically, all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character. (p.11, emphasis in original)

MacIntyre is concerned that we have swung too far towards a form of subjectivism in ethics that views *only* the indidivual as having any moral authority. He argues that a community's practices are sources of moral authority that are vital in helping us to make sense of what it is to live a good life. MacIntyre contends that community living is under extreme threat from the pervasiveness of emotivism and individualism and ought to be protected.

MacIntyre maintains that emotivism has pervaded our society to such an extent that we have become unaware of what we have lost in terms of our ability to understand, both theoretically and practically, what constitutes "a morality" (p.11). He attributes this state of disarray primarily to the failure of what he calls the "Enlightenment project" in Europe in the eighteenth century that sought to characterise morality in terms of rules and moral principles that no "rational" person could refuse to follow (p.52). Its dominant moral theories were Kantianism and Utilitarianism.

According to MacIntyre, the Enlightenment project failed because it went too far in reducing morality to a set of rules and principles. Furthermore, moral authority

was to be found in the rules and the principles themselves, rather than have it entrusted to individuals. In placing the authority for solving moral problems and dilemmas in a static set of predetermined rules, too little was asked of individuals when it came to making informed moral decisions. It also meant that there was no adequate framework to accommodate situations which did not fit the rules, nor was there any individual adequately equipped or respected to step into a perceived morality gap when it arose. In concrete terms, a set of prescribed rules, which told people how they *ought to* behave and live, did not provide them with an adequate rationale for acting when it came to dealing with real-life social injustices like poverty, or combating what was perceived to be a rising crime rate. Enlightenment thinking also placed too high a value on reason as a means of "controlling" the emotions when it came to making informed moral decisions. In stripping the act of reasoning of an emotional component reason became an abstract entity that did not have any connection to the practices through which, in MacIntyre's view, a good moral life is constituted.

MacIntyre posits that the natural reaction to this over-emphasis on moral rules and under-emphasis on individual agency has been to go too far the other way. That is, to slip all too easily into individualism and the trap of ethical emotivism. In other words, how an individual *feels* about any given situation is enough to justify how she acts, irrespective of how her feelings and actions might affect others. In MacIntyre's opinion, individualism and emotivism advocate a form of morality based predominantly on the rights and desires of the individual *in isolation* from the larger social context in which he or she lives, and *without consideration* of the welfare of others. Though MacIntyre is averse to being called a "communitarian" (Knight, 1998, p.21), he strongly rejects any conception of individual morality which is "independent and isolable" from the needs of the rest of the community (p. ix). Moreover, MacIntyre vehemently attacks liberal doctrines which set

individualism – as characterised by freedom of choice – against traditionalism – as characterised by established norms and rituals. In order to combat liberal-minded doctrines, MacIntyre brings into sharper focus shared moralities of our past – in other words, pre-Enlightenment moralities – to substantiate his claim that we are now experiencing life in an emotivist culture.

If, as MacIntyre claims, we are indeed in a state of moral decline, his way out of it lies in maintaining and sustaining our social relations through "the tradition of the virtues" (Knight, 1998, p.9). MacIntyre gives an elaborate three-stage account of how and why "the tradition of the virtues" is important to our lives at this particular historical juncture. The first stage places a high value on virtue in terms of securing the "internal goods of a practice" (p.189). The second stage shows how the virtues help a person make sense of what it is to be a good person and live a good life. The third stage shows how the virtues are not only embedded in those rituals and traditions associated with practices, but are crucial in sustaining and keeping these rituals and traditions in good order (p.187). By charting the changing nature of the virtues from ancient Greece through to the European Middle ages, MacIntyre identifies a core concept of the virtues:

> A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. (p.191)

This definition of virtue, though regarded as a partial one by MacIntyre, is useful when it comes to designing a moral education in PE and sports because it locates the teaching of virtue inside "practices" such as sports (for as we will see later, MacIntyre views sports as "practices"), and within the whole life of a person. MacIntyre claims that Aristotle's account of the virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics embodies a "tradition of moral thought" that elevates the place of virtues in a human life, and guides us through our current state of moral decline (p.147).

Before going on to examine the extent to which MacIntyre's three stage account of the virtues – which evolves from his research into the traditions of the virtues – is useful to teachers, it is worth noting that MacIntyre claims that the place of the virtues in a human life has been seriously undermined and neglected. He insists that the rejection of Aristotle's ethical work by those who were part of the Enlightenment project – Kant, for example, and Bentham – was unwarranted.

Though MacIntyre's historical account of our "fall" into individualism and emotivism is in some ways compelling, MacIntyre overstates the case when he argues that we are living through a period that is more morally deficient than other historical periods. In many ways, I would venture that our current times are more morally responsible and inclusive of difference than former epochs have been. Certainly, this is the case for anyone who, until very recently, would have been consigned to the margins of society and suffered greatly because of their inability to fit the dominant profile of what constitutes the good citizen, as dictated and perpetuated by those traditionally in power. Thus, to hark back to ancient times as though that were some kind of halcyon moral age, as MacIntyre does, is to ride roughshod over the very real moral progress that has been made in the last fifty or so years, not least through social rights movements and progressive political agendas. Furthermore, and as I argue in chapter seven, a shared sense of what it takes to live well with others is not only found through an involvement in "a practice". MacIntyre's narrow use of "a practice" institutionalises the development of morality and fails to "capture" the potential for development in and through our often banal everyday human associations and relationships. In choosing to live well we actively participate in developing and shaping our own sense of morality in and through our everyday dealings with others. As a result, we are helping to build a morality which is shared with others. That said, and as I go on to argue in more detail in the next chapter, the acquisition of a sense of

morality neither happens incidentally nor solely through an individual's efforts but rather, requires the love, care and support of family, friends and teachers.

6:1:2 The centrality of a practice

The first stage of MacIntyre's account of the virtues views the acquisition of virtue as central to achieving the goods of "a practice."

> The virtues are first of all those qualities without which human beings cannot achieve the goods internal to practices. (MacIntyre, in Knight, 1998, p.71)

MacIntyre views practices as moral sources and thus, according to Higgins (2003), propels him to embrace the idea of a practical ethics rather than an applied morality (p.289). For MacIntyre (1985), a practical ethics is realised in and through the inculcation of virtues *inside* a socially established activity or practice. By this he means that it is only through being or becoming a participant in "a practice" that an individual can make sense of what it is to be a good person and lead a good life, as constituted in the virtues. MacIntyre defines a practice as:

> Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p.187)

By implication then we can only become moral if we consciously choose to be so as a result of a decision to participate in such a coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity, but morality is only ever achieved as a by-product of some other activity, not in and of itself. By connecting the virtues to what a person does in life, MacIntyre implicates the individual in a social web. He bases this on the Aristotelian idea that human beings are by nature social, and derive their happiness from functioning well with others. What MacIntyre also emphasises in the definition above is that it is the *form* rather than the activity that establishes whether it qualifies as a practice or

not. Maintaining that practices cannot be reduced to isolated actions, MacIntyre posits that football is a practice whereas kicking a ball is not; that law is a practice whereas issuing a high court injunction is not. In other words, by framing sports as practices in the MacIntyrean sense, teachers avoid the unnecessary de-contextualisation of sports which has, in some cases, resulted in young people experiencing sports as the teaching of technical components rather than an activity comprised of rich rituals and traditions. The other problem with this distinction is that goods external to one practice are often internal to another, and therefore it excludes from consideration a range of social elements in moral development.

An equally important element of MacIntyre's notion of a practice is that there must be a particular goal, or good, internal to it that is common to its practitioners (Knight, 1998, p.10). In pursuing this internal good, MacIntyre insists that practitioners are able to achieve excellence of character, or virtue. The internal goods of a practice (skills and virtues, for example) are those goods which are available to everyone, but can only be attained in and through a certain kind of involvement with a given practice. The external goods of practice (status, power and money, for example) are those goods which are scarce, and as such are not available to everyone. The latter are also not specific to any given practice. MacIntyre draws a clear distinction between the internal goods of a practice and the external goods of a practice.

MacIntyre's grounds for making this distinction have been the topic of much philosophical debate. McNamee (1995), for instance, has suggested that he seems to be more concerned with establishing that the internal goods of a practice are morally better than the external goods, than with showing how a balance or "mix" of internal goods and external goods can have benefits for the good sportsperson (p.77). Moreover, and following McNamee, this kind of discrediting of the

external goods underplays their motivational qualities, and the way that they contribute to driving the good sportsperson on to strive for and achieve yet more internal goods. That said, MacIntyre's separation of goods of practice in this distinctive way can nevertheless be useful to teachers, in that it helps them to convey explicitly to their pupils how different goods of practice can affect their motivations and their actions. By opening up a discussion around the respective qualities or virtues required in achieving the internal goods of practice, teachers can better promote and protect the important role they play in the moral education of young people in schools.

6:1:3 The narrative unity of a life

In locating the virtues in a person's life MacIntyre takes into account that we learn how to make sense of what is happening to us now not only from our involvement in practices, but also from what we inherit from our past experiences. MacIntyre thus argues that for an adequate account of the virtues, the virtues also need to be understood in terms of how they contribute to a person's life:

> Virtues are also to be understood as qualities required to achieve the goods which furnish individual human lives with their *telos*. And I argue that the unifying form of an individual human life, without which such lives could not have a *telos*, derives from its possessing some kind of narrative structure. (MacIntyre, in Knight, 1998, p.71. MacIntyre's original emphasis)

Whereas some theorists (Carr 2003; Murdoch, 1983) argue that the cultivation of goodness or virtue is worthwhile doing for its own sake (a non-teleological perspective), MacIntyre (1985) argues that goodness or virtue are only made intelligible to us when linked to socially established practices and traditions (a teleological perspective). MacIntyre argues, following Aristotle, that human beings are essentially social animals who flourish best in terms of their moral progress when they live in harmony with other human beings. In order to measure our own moral progress, MacIntyre argues that we have to have some conception

of what constitutes a good person and a good life. Because the good person and the good life are constituted in the virtues, the acquisition of the virtues acts as a *telos* or end point for human flourishing. Though I expand this notion of *an* end point to *multiple* end point*s* – as discussed in chapter four – MacIntyre's idea that there ought to be something to aim *for* as we morally educate (or indeed become morally educated) is particularly pertinent to the design of any character education programme.

That said, a pupil cannot be considered to be morally educated by merely aiming *for* whatever teachers set for them as a character education programme. Rather, pupils must actively participate in their own process of becoming morally educated. As MacIntyre (1985) argues:

> The good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is. (p.219)

Implicit in this view is the notion that by actively seeking to acquire the virtues pupils can come to understand for themselves what might constitute a good life in relation to others. In morally educating pupils, teachers can draw upon the unifying power of the virtues – in terms of tapping into shared understandings of what is commonly thought of as a virtue – to bring into dialogue preferences and choices, including the welfare of others. Talking about and reflecting upon the virtues – for example, honesty – inside a PE or sports context, teachers can help to make explicit to their pupils the benefits of being honest in concrete situations and in so doing show how being honest can contribute to living a good life in relation to others.

6:1:4 A focus on the traditions

The third stage of a MacIntyrean account of the virtues focuses on those traditions that are inherent in a particular practice. A MacIntyrean framework situates the teaching of virtues in real situations with real persons. In chapter eight I discuss the teaching of virtue through the education of the emotions, but for the time being it is worth noting that the more we perceive the situation to be real, the more likely we are to emotionally engage with it (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000). To successfully implement a moral education in PE and sports, teachers cannot rely on teaching abstract notions of the good sportsperson in hypothetical situations. Rather, they must focus on the traditions that comprise each individual practice. They cannot teach sports traditions without making an informed judgement of a sport's traditions moral educational worth (Jones and McNamee, 2003). This is where teacher *phronesis* enables them to discern between different sporting traditions, and to suggest to their pupils which are more appropriate to becoming a good sportsperson. Not all sports traditions are in the best interest of all pupils. For example, explicit in the rituals of many sports is the exclusion of, and discrimination against, certain sectors of society (such as women, youth, people who are disabled and elderly). As we have seen from some of the teachers in this study, there are sports (for example, football) that sanction ways of playing and ways of conducting oneself that are at the very least morally questionable, and hence unacceptable to teachers. This is not to say that these sports ought to be disregarded. Rather, it is important that pupils and teachers (along with parents) question and challenge how certain sports have been corrupted as a result of how they have been practiced, just as they must question and challenge the way that demographic exclusions have influenced the manner in which certain sporting traditions have been shaped.

Since some sports' organisations (for example, sports clubs and national governing bodies of sports) take seriously the involvement of young people in their sport, a number of opportunities – adapted competition structures and modified versions of games – already exist that are specifically designed to attract young people of different abilities and interests. These opportunities and adaptations need to be examined critically, however, to ensure the proper care of young people in sports. In some cases, opportunities that seem on the surface to be attractive to young people or filling a gap in provision are in fact designed primarily to increase membership numbers. Furthermore, and of particular relevance to this thesis, a closer examination of some of these opportunities reveals that the kind of examples that are being set, and the kind of "training and self training" (Ryle, 1975, p.47) that are being encouraged, does not take into account the sorts of persons required to run them well.

In short, MacIntyre's focus on the traditions of practices offers teachers ways of thinking about educating for good character in and through sports. By examining the traditions associated with the kinds of practices they teach, and how they go about teaching them, teachers are engaged in answering questions such as: "What is good basketball?" and "What ought a good cricketer do?" These kinds of questions help to focus attention on what the internal goods of practices like basketball and cricket consist of, and on what the good player does. The assumption here is that the teacher is well placed to answer these questions – for MacIntyre insists that only practitioners can teach the virtues located inside a practice (p.194). This means that only a person who is involved in a practice can effectively teach the inherent goods of that practice – a point I will return to later in this chapter. For the moment, however, it is worth pointing out that for a teacher to be called a "practitioner" in the MacIntyrean sense of the word, he or

she has to have a clear idea of the established norms, rituals and traditions that influence and govern the conduct of practitioners within that practice.

The National Curriculum for PE (DfEE/QCA, 1999) in England and Wales and national guidelines in PE in Scotland both include the teaching of practices such as hockey, netball, and athletics. This aspect of a MacIntyrean approach to moral education would seem to "fit" well with existing provision. That said, the extent to which the PE curriculum ought to be shaped around the teaching of selected sports is openly contested by many educationalists who argue that the dominance of certain team games over others reduces a child's experience of PE to a diet of traditionally played school sports (for example, hockey, netball, rugby and cricket). These do not necessarily suit all pupils' needs and abilities (McNamee, 1992). Given the current composition of the PE curriculum and the lack of any real guidance to teachers in terms of their moral role, however, the adoption of a MacIntyrean approach by teachers would help them to avoid making moral development "independent and isolable" from, in this case, a sporting context (MacIntyre, 1985, p. ix).

By adopting a MacIntyrean framework, teachers can look for direction and guidance as to what might constitute a good sportsperson in the practices and traditions of sports themselves. The assumption is that in being or becoming a member of a practice such as volleyball, young people can make sense of what it is to be a good person and live a good life. In order to be or become a good volleyball player a pupil is expected to have, or be willing to seek out, the internal goods or virtues located inside volleyball. This assumes that teachers are willing and able to locate and teach the virtues associated with volleyball, and are equally able and willing to initiate young people into volleyball's traditions as a means of educating for good character.

It follows then that in talking about and reflecting upon the virtues of a good volleyball player, teachers can help pupils build their own conception of what constitutes a good sportsperson and by extension, what constitutes a good human being. Although sports are all different and do not necessarily share the same traditions, they all ought to share a common concern for what it is to be or become a good sportsperson – a point fully endorsed by what the teachers said in this study. To nurture and develop the good sportsperson, inside a particular sporting practice, does not stop PE teachers from opening up a more general discussion with their pupils regarding common conceptions of the good person – an important point if one hopes to build a practical ethics that extends across and beyond sports. Having identified the positive aspects of adapting a MacIntyrean framework to a moral education in PE and sports, I now turn to its shortcomings.

6:2 Four Criticisms of a MacIntyrean approach

In attempting to bring the social nature of human beings into sharper focus, MacIntyre underplays – and in so doing undervalues – the personal and relational dimensions in ethics. In the second part of this chapter I outline four aspects of a MacIntyrean framework that highlight MacIntyre's failure to describe in any detail the sorts of persons – and by extension the kinds of human associations, as will be discussed more fully in the next chapter – that he would like to see involved in a practice. The first of these is his denial of teaching as a practice, which means that the internal goods of teaching are not considered and the work of the *exceptional* teacher is ignored. The second aspect concerns his use of the term "practitioner," which implies that *any* participant involved in a practice can adequately teach the internal goods of a practice. By failing to distinguish what is distinctive about PE teachers as "practitioners," MacIntyre undermines the moral

role and status of teachers. The third aspect of MacIntyre's framework that I challenge is his privileging of those virtues – truthfulness, courage and justice – which further his case for a socio-ethical framework. In rejecting emotivism, MacIntyre disregards the importance of how a person *feels* with regards to acquiring the internal goods of a practice. In doing this, MacIntyre sidelines those virtues that might develop a pupil's emotional engagement with PE and sports. The fourth and final aspect that I question is MacIntyre's view that all institutions are corruptive influences on practices. On the contrary, an institution is but a reflection of the practitioners who are a part of it, and of the practices that take place within it. Institutions, in other words, are not static entities, but can be changed for the better (or for the worse) depending upon how and by whom they are being shaped. This means that the *exceptional* teacher, if valued by the institution she works or volunteers for, can have a healthy impact on that institution's makeup, procedures and policies.

6:2:1 Denial of teaching as a practice

MacIntyre argues that teaching is not a practice:

> It is part of my claim that teaching is never more than a means, that it has not point and purpose except for the point and purpose of the activities to which it introduces students. All teaching is for the sake of something else and so teaching does not have its own goods. (in Dunne, 2003, p.353)

MacIntyre's denial of teaching as a practice implies that there is no place for the *study* of teaching in isolation from a practice, but only in relation *to* a practice. This is consistent with his view that there is no place for the study of morality in isolation from a practice, but only in relation *to* a practice. By denying that teaching is a practice in its own right, and a practice moreover that can be taught, MacIntyre by implication rejects the important insights that those teachers who, *because* of their pedagogical training, are able to bring to a practice. Such insights are distinct from any given practice, and do not necessarily spring from a given

practice. Rather, they are unique to the practice of teaching and as such, can illuminate from the outside what a practice itself might not see from within. These added insights cannot help but enrich and enliven a practice. Furthermore, this relegation of teaching to the *service* of a practice is unnecessarily reductionist. Quite simply, allowing teaching to be a practice does not, in itself, take anything away from that practice. On the contrary, it can enhance it.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the cultivation of virtue does not *only* happen in relation to practices. *Exceptional* teachers possess some conception of what it is to cultivate virtues that nurture the good sportsperson regardless of which practice they are teaching (Carr, 2003). Furthermore, teaching and coaching, as practices in their own right, are not only about what the teacher *does* – in this case, initiating young people into sports – but are also expressive of the kind of person a teacher is (Kerdeman, 2003).

To posit teaching as a practice in its own right is to argue that teaching has its own internal and external goods. In accepting that there is a specific set of internal and external goods that are constitutive of teaching, we move beyond seeing this activity as a mere "form of service" (Higgins, 2003, p.291). Instead, we can come to see how *the practice* of teaching contributes to the personal flourishing of teachers and pupils alike. Through identifying and talking about the internal goods of teaching, teachers can begin to argue for the protection and promotion of certain goods rather than others. In the next chapter I argue that teachers need a virtue language to help them uncover what might constitute the internal goods of teaching.

6:2:2 Use of the term "practitioner"

Leading from his denial of teaching as a practice, MacIntyre argues that there is no such thing as a teacher *per se* – only a teacher of a certain practice. In addition, a person can only properly teach a practice if he or she has a certain degree of practitioner knowledge. Leaving aside, for the moment, the argument that teaching and learning happen as much *outside* as *inside* a practice, this need to possess practitioner knowledge in order to teach a practice implies that *inside* a practice one is taught *how* to participate appropriately in that practice by an experienced practitioner. For MacIntyre, a person without the specific practical experience in a given activity can not have or gain the necessary *phronesis* required to judge the competence of others. For example, an experienced gymnast brings to the practice of gymnastics an informed judgement as to what constitutes the competent gymnast and by extension, what can be considered to be the internal goods of gymnastics.

For MacIntyre, experienced practitioners are the only ones who can make young people feel and act in the appropriate ways in accordance with a practice and its traditions. This is because experienced practitioners are the only ones who know what the internal goods of a given practice are – what MacIntyre sees as the authority that is vested in a particular practice and its associated traditions. This also means that the internal goods of a practice can only be successfully passed on to new participants if those new participants are willing to submit to the authority of a practice's traditions as embodied by the experienced practitioner. In other words, implicit in being or becoming a good gymnast is a pupil's willingness to: (i) commit to the practice of gymnastics; (ii) be initiated into the traditions of gymnastics; and (iii) subjugate herself to learning the internal goods of gymnastics, as defined by gymnastics' experienced practitioners.

On the one hand, and continuing with the above example, there is moral educational merit in pupils learning how to become good gymnasts from those who are experienced in gymnastics, as well as learning about the traditions connected to gymnastics – how they came to be, who set them, and what they require of pupils. On the other hand, in requiring a young person to *submit* to these traditions as embodied in the experienced practitioner, one cannot take as a given that mere compliance with gymnastics' predetermined traditions will result in a young person becoming morally educated. Whilst gymnastics' traditions can certainly act as a training ground for the learning and teaching of the virtues, they can equally provide an environment in which one learns and teaches the vices. As I emphasise throughout this thesis, it therefore matters a great deal *who* is doing the teaching – the sorts of persons these experienced practitioners are, and the kinds of training grounds they set up. As Scheffler rightly points out, there is no guarantee that by simply initiating a pupil into a practice, that pupil will learn what it is to be a good person who is able to live well with others:

> The exercise of the virtues does not assure the kind of life that MacIntyre maintains that it does… an excellent chess player could still be a vicious individual. (Scheffler, in Vardy and Grosch, 1999, p. 106)

In defence of MacIntyre, he would insist that to call this kind of chess player a "good" player would be a contradiction in terms. Nevertheless, Scheffler does bring to our attention the problems inherent in MacIntyre's failure to detail the sorts of persons he would like to *see* teaching and playing chess well. This is a serious oversight, especially when it comes to designing a character education programme in PE and sports – a point I shall return to in the next section.

MacIntyre's lack of specificity over the sorts of practitioners he would like to see initiating people into a practice does, however, mean that we can extend the

agency of the moral educator beyond that of teachers to everyone involved in the practice. An experienced player or referee or official within a practice, has to be aware *inter alia* of how their actions and feelings might affect others. Although all practitioners – and this includes players, teachers, coaches, referees and officials – ought to be concerned with how their actions might affect others, there are many occasions when the focus of their attention is not on how their actions appear to others. Players, for example, are often quite unaware of the extent to which their actions can be interpreted or misinterpreted by others – a point well made by the teachers in this study, as discussed in chapter four. In contrast, *exceptional* teachers are *always* concerned with how well or badly their pupils are playing sports. They, unlike some other practitioners, willingly take responsibility for making informed judgements as to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of their pupils' actions. Furthermore, because – unlike other practitioners – teachers are charged with this responsibility of being moral educators, they tend to be as concerned with how their own character might affect those around them, as they are with the character education of those they teach.

Teaching is carried out through a variety of procedures, some of which are direct, such as verbal instruction, and some of which involve more indirect interaction, such as imitation and emulation. By suggesting that *any* experienced practitioner is the best placed person to engage with this process, MacIntrye places no particular importance on the expertise of the *exceptional* teacher. He also gives undue weight to the suggestion that *anyone* can teach (Carr, 2003). In overlooking the work of *exceptional* teachers, MacIntyre pays too little attention to the degree of expertise required in good teaching. As Carr (2003) explains:

> MacIntyre seems to confirm a common view that there is little to educational and pedagogical expertise than a few basic organisational skills and executive character traits, and that anyone with half a brain and no special training might do it. (p.259)

In misrepresenting what teachers do in this way, Carr (2003) rightly points out that MacIntyre fails to acknowledge that teachers work in very specific contexts in which their expertise in dealing with often difficult circumstances has to be highly developed. Though the term "practitioner" extends the realm of moral education to all of those involved in a practice, which in many ways can improve these practices, MacIntyre's conception of the practitioner fails to place any special value on the work of *exceptional* teachers. He also fails to recognise that not all practitioners – and likewise, not all teachers – are effective moral educators.

6:2:3 Privileging of three virtues

Knight (1998) suggests that for MacIntyre:

> Anything that does not promote justice, courage and truthfulness within individuals, and anything that does not aim in this and other ways to promote the common good of society, is not properly regarded as practice. (p.10)

Whilst each of the three virtues highlighted by MacIntyre doubtlessly benefit the good sportsperson, in failing to engage more fully with other desirable human qualities – for example, joyfulness and warmth – he only offers us a limited understanding of what might constitute the good sportsperson. Granted, MacIntyre does not consider that these three virtues are *sufficient* in securing and sustaining the internal goods of practice. He does, however, rank them above those virtues more commonly associated with developing personhood. In so doing, MacIntyre risks elevating our place in society over those "felt satisfactions of a personal kind" (McNamee, 1995, p.66). Given MacIntyre's popularity amongst sports philosophers, it is hardly surprising that this reductionism has characterised many of the models of a moral education in and through sports (McNamee, 1995).

Though MacIntyre's overemphasis of those virtues associated with fitting into a social context is, perhaps, understandable given his desire to protect practices against what he considers to be the excesses of individualism, he ends up not only denigrating the importance of other virtues more commonly associated with the development of personhood, but also unnecessarily reducing the number of virtues that are open for discussion (Pincoffs, 1986). Furthermore, in his rush to champion the internal goods of a practice, MacIntyre does not sufficiently develop the important personal dimension of the virtues. When it comes to encouraging pupils to be or become certain kinds of sportspersons, teachers do not want pupils to *only* value those goods that satisfy their desire for wealth and glory. Neither do teachers want pupils to belittle those more intangible rewards associated with sports, such as setting a good moral example to those who want to play their sport well, or experiencing joyfulness in and through an involvement with sports.

6:2:4 Framing institutions as "corruptive"

In his attempt to address what he perceives as the decline of a shared morality in our times, MacIntyre urges us to protect our practices from the corrupting powers of institutions. He also encourages us to promote our practices as culturally and socially valuable. In order to do both, MacIntyre asks us to pay special attention to the internal goods of practice. MacIntyre claims that institutions – in this case schools, educational authorities, governing bodies of sports and sports councils – are inevitably more concerned with the distribution of external goods of practice than with the safeguarding and promotion of the internal goods of practice. Since external goods tend to be scarce, competition for these goods is inevitable and institutions are put in the position of having to decide how these goods will be distributed. This can lead to corruption within institutions, which in turn leads to corruption within practices when their welfare and integrity are threatened.

This corruptive relationship between practices and their institutions is not as inevitable as MacIntyre makes it out to be. What MacIntyre fails to take into account is that not all institutions are run in the same manner. Some Governing Bodies of Sports, for instance, are not run as hierarchical businesses, but are organised and run by practitioners on a volunteer basis (McNamee, 1995). This sets up a more complex dynamic between practitioners and institutions than MacIntyre would allow – a dynamic which blurs the distinction between those charged with distributing the potentially corruptive external goods of practice, and those who are seen by MacIntyre to be safeguarding the internal goods of practice. Granted, where institutions do not include practitioners in decision-making or fail to take seriously their views – in cases where the meeting of wider social and political goals such as reducing youth crime, for example, takes precedence over participating in sports for its own sake, as discussed in chapter two – the internal goods of a practice can become secondary to its external goods. However, where institutions include practitioners and take seriously their views, the internal goods of practices – and even the external goods of practices, for that matter – can serve to build institutions that are not corruptive, but that succeed rather in enhancing and furthering the practices that they are organised around, and designed to support.

6:3 Summary

A MacIntyrean approach provides teachers with a useful framework for positing sports as culturally valued and valuable activities, even if it does not provide them with the actual tools that they need to begin to talk about and reflect upon sports in this way. In framing sports as practices, teachers are better able to understand how a certain kind of involvement in sports contributes to the development of the "morally" good sportsperson. By focusing on the internal goods inside a practice,

teachers can use a sport such as hockey as a training ground for the moral education of pupil-sportspersons. By locating the internal goods and external goods of sports inside specific sporting practices, teachers avoid morally educating young people in isolation from contexts with which they and their pupils can identify. In developing an understanding of what might constitute the internal goods of different sports – and how these internal goods might be taught to and acquired by pupils – teachers are more able to go about designing a praxis-based character education in PE and sports. Once involved in this design process, teachers become more aware of the extent to which different educational and sporting initiatives currently being made available to schools, as discussed in chapter two, are actually enhancing the practices they are introducing to young people, and as a result they are more discerning when it comes to evaluating these various initiatives.

That said, a MacIntyrean approach does not go far enough in detailing the personal and relational aspects crucial to any moral educational programme in PE and sports. In failing to describe the *sorts* of persons we want to see playing and teaching sports, MacIntyre minimises the extent to which his analytical framework can actually be put into practice by teachers. In limiting discussion of the virtues inside practice to three main virtues – justice, courage and truthfulness – he unnecessarily reduces talk about and reflection upon what might constitute the good sportsperson and in doing so, minimises his framework's actual practical application yet further. MacIntyre's failure to recognise what Noddings (1984) refers to as the "receptive joy" (p.140) we experience in relation to our involvement in sports with others, is a point which, given my own particular emphasis on the need to cultivate the joyful disposition of the good sportsperson, will be picked up upon in chapter nine of this thesis.

In the next chapter I argue that Pincoffs' (1986) virtue-ethical approach helps to address these shortcomings of a MacIntyrean framework for PE and sports. I argue that Pincoffs' virtue framework helps teachers build and develop a fuller and richer conception of what might constitute the good sportsperson. By outlining a moral education based on teachers' moral talk and reflection, Pincoffs places higher value than does MacIntyre on the moral agency of teachers. Backed by the findings of my own research with *exceptional* teachers, I argue that in talking about and reflecting upon the desirable qualities or virtues of the good sportsperson, PE teachers become immediately engaged in the process of designing a character education programme in PE and sports. This in turn helps teachers develop their own *phronesis*, which in turn helps them to become aware of the significance of their role as moral educators in PE and sports. Because Pincoffs, unlike MacIntyre, offers some clear suggestions to teachers as to how to go about educating for good character, I am able to draw on these to start building a workable character education for PE and sports.

Chapter Seven: Pincoffs' approach to moral education based on teacher talk and reflection

7:0 Introduction

As suggested in chapter two, the National Curriculum in England and Wales requires that all teachers take seriously the moral development of their pupils (DfEE, 1999, p.8). There is, however, little offered in the way of guidance as to how they ought to go about this task. This is not to say that many PE teachers are not already engaged in this process. As the findings of my small scale study of *exceptional* PE teachers show, some most definitely are. However, the important work these "sorts" of persons are already doing in this area tends to be diminished or misrepresented in national guidelines (Carr, 2000), and it is overlooked altogether in the provision of Continuing Professional Development in PE (CPD-PE) (Armour and Yelling, 2004). In this chapter I bring this oversight to the fore, combining the findings of my study with Edmund Pincoffs' (1986) virtue-ethical approach to moral education. I do this in order to demonstrate the extent to which *exceptional* PE teachers are already engaged in making moral judgments based on the "sorts" of persons they meet in their everyday lives.

In the first part of this chapter I give an overview of Pincoffs' ethical work and compare his virtue-ethical approach to that of MacIntyre's. In Pincoffs' opinion, there is no reason why an understanding of virtue needs to be restricted to how its use secures and protects the internal goods of a practice (p.97). Countering this key MacIntyrean tenet, Pincoffs' goal is to show that there is such a thing as a non-reductive view of ethics. He suggests that throughout history we have placed too high a value on describing what a moral education *ought* to "look like," rather than focussing on how we currently live well with others. Whilst MacIntyre is

concerned with the inculcation of virtue through practices, Pincoffs is concerned with how we talk about and reflect upon those virtues.

In the second part of this chapter I outline Pincoffs' approach to moral education based on teacher talk and reflection. I focus in on Pincoffs' question, "What kind of person is Wiggins?" (p. 75), and go on to critically examine Pincoffs' notion of building a dispositional analysis around the whole person as opposed to selected aspects of that person, and then apply it to the actual teaching context. I examine the extent to which Pincoffs' focus on moral talk and reflection, and his advice to teachers, "fits" with the praxis of PE and sports. I conclude that Pincoffs' virtue-ethical account, though philosophically useful, does not locate virtue talk and reflection in a "doing environment" and as such, has only limited application in the PE and sports context.

7:1 Non-reductive view of ethics

Pincoffs, unlike MacIntyre, is optimistic about our current state of morality. He suggests that we can take some encouragement from the fact that we already know how to live well with others. We have learnt how to live well with others because we have, since childhood, been continuously engaged in conversation with these others. This conversation includes talk about and reflection upon different "sorts" of persons, and those qualities of persons of which we approve and disapprove. Arguing that most moral theories do not take proper account of the ways we commonly talk about and reflect upon the "sorts" of people we encounter on a day-to-day basis, Pincoffs is quick to criticise those moral theorists who do not take seriously such "common-life" ethics (p.7). Pincoffs also implies that most (if not all) moral theories are reductionist and distract us from thinking about how we actually live our lives. Both Pincoffs and MacIntyre criticise the moral theories that isolate the individual from his or her historical and social

context. Pincoffs questions whether we actually refer to, or need to refer to, moral theories to help us to deal with moral problems.

Furthermore, Pincoffs argues that MacIntyre's privileging of certain virtues and his tying of these virtues to "*a* practice" is unnecessarily reductionist (p.97). In Pincoffs' opinion, there is no reason why an understanding of virtue needs to be restricted to how its use secures and protects the internal goods of a practice. Pincoffs argues that a MacIntyrean approach focuses attention on merely "observing" how well a young person embodies predetermined, if contextually flexible, standards of excellence inherent to a practice (p.97). The moral educational processes at work here revolve primarily around people being initiated into a practice and emulating experienced practitioners. In other words, rather than becoming morally educated through learning to discern between the companies of different sorts of persons, pupils are morally educated through the processes of initiation and emulation. For this reason, Pincoffs suggests that a MacIntyrean approach fails to help people to understand *for themselves* the reasons for their personal preferences – this, in large part, because MacIntyre's distrust of emotivism does not allow him to even recognize the value of such preferences when it comes to educating for good character. Pincoffs argues that we make ethical choices based on the "sorts" of people we encounter in our lives. Our preferences for the company of some people rather than others influences the kinds of relationships we seek out or try to avoid, and the ways in which we come to view the social constraints (rules and laws) we face in common life. In other words, in helping young people to discern between the companies of different sorts of persons, teachers help pupils to develop their powers of moral judgement – a crucial aspect of the cultivation of *phronesis*. When it comes to making informed moral judgements, the ability to judge a person's character correctly is

of far greater importance to Pincoffs than merely following some predetermined moral theory. As he suggests:

> Moral character and moral judgement are far more bound together than theory advocates. Moral judgement is an expression of the character of the person who makes it. (p.4)

Whereas MacIntyre's approach to good character centres on pupils learning through "explanation" from teachers, Pincoffs' approach is based on pupils learning to discern between the sorts of persons whose companies they might prefer or avoid through "talk and reflection" (p.155). Such a process of moral reasoning, I would argue, helps us proactively shape our lives for the better.

Pincoffs' aim is to provide us with a non-reductive view of ethics that does not tie our sense of morality to a singular view of ethics (for instance, the adherence to predetermined sets of principles or rules). In claiming to be a functionalist, Pincoffs' primary concern is to teach young people how to function well within certain social constraints. He provides a perspective on ethics based in moral thought and talk which emanates from, and is rooted in, what "common human life is like" (p.7). In attempting to outline a non-reductive approach to ethics, Pincoffs leaves open for discussion what kinds of human qualities are virtues and which are vices. Though in arguing for a "common-life-functionalist"(p.6) perspective to ethics Pincoffs, like MacIntyre, stresses the important social nature of morality and how we need the virtues and vices to function well within our social groups, unlike MacIntyre, Pincoffs rejects teleologically-oriented approaches in favour of functionalist approaches to ethics. The latter do not need to have an ultimate *telos* or end point as long as there is some conception of the "sorts" of ends we want to aim towards and how we are most likely to achieve them (p.7). In other words, Pincoffs brings to our attention the dangers of aiming towards only one conception of a good person – primarily among these being the

susceptibility to abuse if left in the hands of those who have a vested interest in promoting one "sort" of person over another. Teachers therefore need to be suspicious of the promotion of one conception of the good sportsperson to the neglect of others. By adopting Pincoffs' perspective, teachers need not think about the proper functioning of the good sportsperson in relation to *a telos*, but embrace instead a number of different but equally valuable conceptions of the good sportsperson.

7:1:1 Pincoffs account of the virtues

Although reluctant to provide a definition of virtues and critical of others who do, Pincoffs suggests that there still are some things we ought to consider about the place of the virtues and vices in our lives. Pincoffs contends that "to have a virtue is to have a desirable disposition of a certain sort" (p.9). A human quality counts as a virtue or a desirable disposition if there is sufficient reason to suggest that a person who has this quality is "generally preferable" to a person who does not (p.170). For Pincoffs, the virtues help us to discern between the company of different persons in forming and developing good relationships and friendships. As Aristotle (1976) points out, we would not choose as our friends those whose company we do not like (Book ix). Learning how to be a good friend is, therefore, an essential aspect of a young person's character education. Through our choice of friends we learn about the qualities we prefer in ourselves as well as in others. In choosing our friends and avoiding our possible enemies we are already engaged in a form of dispositional analysis that involves us discerning between dispositions of a certain sort in others. The various benefits and shortcomings of this form of analysis when educating for good character are discussed in a practical way throughout this chapter.

Again following Aristotle, Pincoffs distinguishes between different types of virtues or desirable dispositions: *instrumental* virtues (agent and group) and *non-instrumental* virtues (aesthetic, meliorating and moral). *Instrumental* virtues are those desirable human qualities that help a person to achieve his or her goals more effectively (p.84). The *non-instrumental* virtues are those virtues that are important to achieving one's goals, but are *not directly* related to achieving them (p.87). There is an inevitable overlap between the different types of virtues and how we commonly talk about them in relation to what we and others do. Through talking about the *directness* and *indirectness* of certain virtues, Pincoffs highlights how we acquire and exercise the virtues differently – a point I will take up more fully in chapter nine.

By analysing the sorts of dispositions we prefer and choose to avoid we are, according to Pincoffs, actively involved in talking about and reflecting upon the virtues and vices. Pincoffs suggests that in answering a question such as "What kind of person is Wiggins?" we are engaged in thinking about the "properties" of that person (p.75). Here, Pincoffs privileges those properties which he considers to be "dynamic" – that is, those "having to do with tendencies, or dispositions" (p.77) – and that describe how Wiggins moves through life: "his reactions and attitudes, as well as his actions" (p.77). These dynamic properties seem, Pincoffs argues, "at least potentially, to be grounds for preference or avoidance" (p.77).

According to Pincoffs, we commonly speak of the virtues as "desirable" dispositions or qualities of a person we prefer. He argues that by speaking of dispositions rather than virtues, we capture more easily the language by which to assess a person's character (p.79). This is because it relates to what a *whole* person most typically does under normal circumstances. As Pincoffs points out:

> In slaves we will want obedience, patience, and vigourness, say. But since there are as many categories of person as there are bees, such an approach will yield an unordered 'swarm of virtues'. For there are old and young slaves, field slaves and house slaves, and on and on. But if my suggestion is correct, virtue and vice terms are best understood as answers to the question of what sort of person Wiggins is, not just what sort of slave, freeman, athlete, poet, and so forth, he is. (p.83)

Though MacIntyre, in his three-stage account of the virtues, also brings to our attention how the virtues help shape a *whole* person's life, Pincoffs encourages us to think first and foremost about these lives, rather than these lives *in relation to* a practice. Though Pincoffs is a supporter of virtue lists – a point I will return to presently – he is against analyses of dispositions which aim at describing what might constitute, for example, "the good sportsperson" or "the good volleyball player." The compiling of such a narrow topology is counterproductive because in focusing only on one aspect of a person's life, it fails to represent the person in his or her totality. In the case of teachers, this kind of exercise detracts attention from coming to know the whole character of a pupil. At a practical level, this means that whilst observing their pupils' actions out on a volleyball court, teachers ought not to be talking about and reflecting upon what sorts of players their pupils are, but rather the sorts of persons they are. In rejecting the idea that one ought to build a composite model of, for example, "the good sportsperson," Pincoffs further demonstrates his commitment to non-reductionism in moral education

Pincoffs correctly notes that there is little to be gained by only coming up with a few privileged virtues of "the good sportsperson." This does not help teachers educate for good character in the widest sense, nor does it encourage pupils to become fully rounded individuals. Pincoffs' view is also supported by teachers in my study who tended to address the issue of what constitutes "the good sportsperson" by talking to their pupils about real people, as opposed to relying on hypothetical types when conducting this kind of virtue-talk. That said, this process

of personalising character is delicate. In cases where those who are known to us are used for the purposes of virtue-talk – for example, other pupils in the gym – an individual could end up traumatised if the right sorts of teachers are not there to guide this process of talking about and reflecting upon that individual's actions. In cases where sporting media personalities are used – a frequent occurrence amongst teachers in my study – it must be remembered that what we are talking about and reflecting upon here are media *representations* of these people. As such, they are merely constructs of these sporting personalities – not all that different, as it happens, to the composite models that Pincoffs so adamantly criticises.

The crucial question, however, remains: just who *is* "Wiggins" in the context of PE and sports in a school? And what are the morally acceptable parameters when it comes to judging Wiggins' character in front of others? Whether Wiggins is another PE teacher, a famous sports personality or a fellow pupil, the need for a degree of sensitivity certainly applies. The *exceptional* teacher, though she struggles constantly with this dilemma, tends to deal well with these live, on-the-spot situations. However, what of the teacher who does not do this so well and wants help to do it better? A twofold process must be instigated to adequately prepare teachers to draw on the whole character of a person when morally educating their pupils, as opposed to the safer option of just picking up on certain dispositions associated with playing a sport well. In outlining this twofold process in the section that follows, I transform Pincoffs' hypothetical character Wiggins into a flesh and blood secondary school-aged pupil who is involved in PE and sports, who is known personally to those teachers discussing him or her, and whose gender – for the purposes of this particular discussion – is indeterminate. I render Wiggins real in order to probe what actually happens to Pincoffs' virtue-

ethical approach when it is used by real teachers in the everyday situations they encounter with their pupils.

7:2 Talking about and Reflecting upon Wiggins

The process of morally educating for good character through an engagement with the whole person and his or her whole character – in other words, a process that concerns actively working out and verbalising what sort of person Wiggins is – in fact takes place on two levels, at least in its initial stages. One level involves teachers as they come together to talk about and reflect upon how to engage with pupils in such a process. A second level is when teachers actually start talking about and reflecting upon good character with their pupils in the context of PE and sports.

At the first level, teachers discuss amongst themselves their judgements of the whole characters of a number of different Wiggins personally known to them. In speaking *about* a particular Wiggins' character with colleagues, teachers are involved in a dynamic process of verbalising their dispositional preferences, hence making more explicit their reasoning behind nurturing and developing certain dispositions rather than others in their pupils. Talking about Wiggins' character when he or she is not known to everyone, or is known differently to those who do know him or her, and most importantly, when Wiggins is not present, is a useful exercise that helps teachers to "check and balance" (Rorty, 1988) their own assessments of what constitutes good character in a general sense.

When it comes to engaging teachers at this first level, Pincoffs' virtue framework provides an extremely useful tool for opening up the discussion. This is because Pincoffs – assisted by Robert Audi – has compiled a list of over two hundred

dispositions that we commonly use to work out our preferences for, and avoidance of, the company of certain "sorts" of persons (pp.76-77). It is important to note that this list is not by any means exhaustive, and Pincoffs sees it more as a mechanism for initiating discussion around the virtues and vices, as opposed to defining what *is* a virtue or a vice.[7] Through using this list and compiling their own lists – something that Pincoffs encourages – teachers can illuminate the qualities they intuitively recognise as virtues and conversely, those traits that they consider to be vices. The very act of listing begins the process of talking about and reflecting upon Wiggins' character. It also means that teachers avoid starting out with definitions that limit their talk about and reflection upon Wiggins' character to a few privileged virtues. Equally, this act of listing brings to the fore how teachers *begin* to make judgements relating to Wiggins' character. Furthermore, and as Pincoffs argues, in compiling virtue lists and talking about these virtues, a common virtue language is developed and becomes accessible.

The very process of discussing how the virtues and vices relate to, overlap with, and conflict with one another in relation to Wiggins' character helps teachers develop their virtue talk. The more teachers actively engage in virtue talk with each other, the more able they become in describing and justifying to their colleagues the sorts of persons whose company they prefer and avoid. In other words, they develop their own *phronesis* around moral talk and reflection. By setting aside time on a regular basis (at least two hours a fortnight) to talk about and reflect upon the character development of certain pupils, teachers gain insight into how their colleagues deal with often complex situations involving different sorts of persons. This process of sharing ideas and concerns helps them to build their confidence, to develop their ability to read and handle more effectively an array of different situations involving their pupils, and to go into these situations more prepared with more confidence.

The next stage for teachers – the second level – is to implement this newfound sensibility and ease around virtue talk with their pupils in the PE and sports lesson. Returning once again to Wiggins, there are at least three ways of talking about and reflecting upon Wiggins' character in the PE and sports lesson. The first is to speak to Wiggins directly and on an individual basis about his or her own character. The second is to speak to other pupils *about* Wiggins' character, either in Wiggins' company or in his or her absence. The third is to speak generally about character by drawing upon role models – be they famous sporting personalities or teachers and fellow pupils who have achieved excellence in some way or other – who are known to pupils. Before looking at each of these situations individually, it is necessary to discuss what is common to them all.

Pincoffs strongly suggests that teachers do young people a disservice when they fail to help them to develop the "judgemental side" of their characters (p.167). He goes so far as to say that if a child does not receive the proper kind of help needed to develop an ability to discern between the companies of different persons, he or she will turn out to be "a personal and a social disaster" (p.167). Young people must be helped to acquire and understand why the acquisition of certain dispositions rather than others, is beneficial to their lives and living well with others, and why this process can be rightly expected of them (p.172). The kind of moral education Pincoffs has in mind, then, is one that helps pupils judge between alternative points of view regarding the company of certain "sorts" of persons they might want to prefer or avoid. In order to help to develop the "judgemental side" of their pupils' character, teachers have to be willing to engage in conversation with their pupils. According to Pincoffs, teachers have an important role to play in helping young people to judge between the company of different sorts of persons so that they can come to understand why having certain virtues is

advantageous *and* why possessing certain virtues rather than others will mean that their company is preferred over another person's company. Pincoffs also brings to teachers' attention the significance of the norms of the groups to which pupils wish to belong and the extent to which these norms might conflict with a pupil's own ethical outlook. Some teachers in this study complained that some of their pupils pulled-away-from or intentionally opposed the norms they had set up with pupils in their lesson. They were aware of and sensitive to the difficulties that some pupils faced in choosing between the conflicting norms of being a member of different groups. Teachers also helped their pupils to make informed choices as to their membership of these groups based on the sorts of persons in the group and the company of those persons they preferred or avoided.

Returning once again to Wiggins, and the three ways of talking about and reflecting upon Wiggins' character in the PE and sports lesson, it makes sense that the more teachers observe and talk to Wiggins, the more they gain an insight into how Wiggins acts and feels in certain situations under certain circumstances involving certain persons. Through wanting to know Wiggins better, teachers begin to build the basis of a relationship with Wiggins which can help them to talk to Wiggins about his or her character. By creating what Baier (1997) calls a "trusting relationship" with Wiggins, teachers create the right sort of environment which allows virtue talk to happen more naturally between them. This sort of relationship is made possible when teachers are in regular contact with Wiggins – for example at sports training sessions, PE lessons, residential and non-residential camps. Building a trusting relationship with Wiggins is vital, especially when it comes to helping Wiggins to deal with difficult situations involving other pupils. How comfortable a teacher is about talking to Wiggins will depend to some extent on the sort of person the teacher is, the sort of person Wiggins is, the amount and

quality of time they spend together, and the extent to which the teacher is prepared to work with Wiggins in developing Wiggins' character.

That said, the teachers in my study stressed how difficult it is to create a dialogue with certain pupils about their character, especially those pupils whose actions have been inappropriate. Teachers recognised that it took time to build the sorts of relationships where pupils felt comfortable enough to speak openly about their actions and feelings. This was easier with certain pupils than with others. Teachers mentioned that they had difficulty relating well to some pupils who showed a lack of effort or were disruptive in class. Teachers mentioned that they had to keep reminding these pupils over and over again – in private and in front of their peers – how their actions were negatively affecting fellow pupils, as well as their own and others' ability to play sports well. Praising a pupil when they did something right was the main strategy used by teachers to encourage pupils to develop their own character:

> To develop a positive attitude in pupils you have to recognise it first. If a person shakes hands with their opponent, for instance, you catch them doing it and you say "that was brilliant." It always helps to acknowledge the good stuff when it happens. (George: Principal Teacher of PE, G4)

Talking with Wiggins about how his or her actions affects the actions and feelings of others not only helps Wiggins to assess his or her own character; it also opens up for discussion the extent to which Wiggins' actions might affect his or her classmates' preference for, or avoidance of, Wiggins' company.

In relation to the second point – speaking to other pupils *about* Wiggins' character, either in Wiggins' company or absence – teachers have to judge the extent to which it is appropriate to talk about Wiggins' character in front of his or her peers. It matters to most of us how our actions and feelings are judged by

others. As Noddings (2003) notes, most pupils *want* to be liked by their peers and teachers. As already mentioned, teachers in this study did comment on pupils' characters in front of their peers. This was done to highlight to certain pupils when they were making progress and when they had to pay more attention to improving certain aspects of their character. In talking *about* Wiggins' character there are a number of considerations that teachers have to bear in mind. Chief amongst these is how Wiggins might feel about his or her character being talked about in his or her absence or in front of others. Other factors include: (i) the sorts of persons who are being talked to about Wiggins' character; (ii) how Wiggins' character is being talked about by others; (iii) what aspects of Wiggins' character are being discussed and why; and (iv) the accuracy of these descriptions. Taking all these factors into account, teachers are involved in a difficult task of weighing up the extent to which their comments will be well received by Wiggins and his or her classmates.

The manner in which teachers involve pupils in a discussion about other pupils' characters depends to a large degree on how able and comfortable teachers are in dealing with the sorts of judgments pupils might make regarding themselves and other pupils. There is something to be gained from being able to talk about the characters of others as long as in so doing, no pupils are traumatised by the experience. Handled in the right way by the right sorts of persons, pupils can begin by identifying those dispositions that they admire as displayed in certain persons known to them – for example, that this person contributes to building a good team. A key part of this process is learning that not everyone contributes in the same way. This is done through bringing into sharper focus how certain sorts of persons contribute to the success of the team in different ways. Further discussion could then ensue around questions such as: "What contribution do you make to this team?"; "How does Wiggins contribute to the success of this team?";

"Would you like to be more like Wiggins?" and if so, "What is preventing you from becoming more like Wiggins?" These kinds of questions encourage pupils to think about and search for ways to talk about the qualities of those whose company they prefer and avoid. They learn how to talk about their preferences and avoidances in front of others in a context where they are supported by a teacher.

In opening up a discussion about the qualities of those persons that pupils admire, pupils and teachers learn more about the sorts of persons that are preferred and avoided by other pupils and teachers. All of this said, great care has to be taken that pupils do not single out their peers in derogatory ways that might cause harm or offence to any individual pupil. As Pincoffs suggests:

> The teacher must be an enthusiastic appreciator of evidences of the right sort of dispositions, but he must be extremely cautious about deprecation of persons, either explicit or tacit. (p.173)

Teachers in this study were well aware that some pupils in their class were avoided by other pupils. At times, this was due to factors not directly related to the realm of the dispositional: for instance, they would be avoided because of their colour, gender, or sexuality, or because of more individual attributes like standards of personal hygiene or physical looks. For the purposes of this discussion, these factors – although important – are not my focus here. Rather, my interest lies in how certain dispositional qualities are singled out as reasons for certain pupils to be avoided by others, and how the potentially harmful situations that arise out of this kind of dynamic can be dealt with in a manner that educates for good character without further stigmatising those who are so singled out. I would argue that by focusing on the desirable dispositions that make certain persons' company preferred in the PE and sports lesson context, rather than focusing on the less desirable dispositions that make other persons' company less

preferred, teachers can protect those who are less preferred whilst at the same time pointing out to all pupils why certain dispositions are preferable over others. It is equally the teacher's responsibility to take aside those pupils whose dispositions single them out for this kind of stigmatisation and, in the context of a private discussion and picking up on the list of questions above, to encourage them to talk about and reflect upon how they see themselves and how others see them.

Exceptional teachers are the sorts of persons who create the right kinds of trusting and caring atmospheres that allow both communal and individual moral discussions to take place. Placed in the wrong hands, however, talk about a person's character in front of others or on his or her own can leave a pupil feeling threatened and exposed. This in turn will mean that he or she might be more reluctant to involve him or herself in similar discussions in the future. In openly discussing a person's character in the company of others and to a lesser extent, on an individual basis, pupils have to learn how to have the proper care for themselves and for others. Teachers are instrumental in developing an ethic of caring that includes care of the self *and* care of others. Slote (1997) argues that through learning to care for ourselves, for those close to us, and even for those who are distant from us, we begin to develop a better understanding of love (p.337). This point is reiterated by Pincoffs when he argues that "love and respect are the motivations of the right sort of person" (p.162). Though critical of those who advocate dubious moral practices under the auspices of caring for the child (p.154), Pincoffs also argues that to properly care for the child is to "prepare him as thoroughly as possible for the practical world" (p.165).

In relation to the third point – speaking generally about character with pupils by drawing upon moral models – there are a number of important links to be made here between: (i) the sorts of dispositions shown by moral models; (ii) the sorts of

person each pupil is and wants to be; and (iii) whether or not pupils identify with the sorts of persons that teachers portray as being moral models. Teachers in this study often used stories about sportspersons to highlight certain dispositions that they either wanted to encourage or discourage in their pupils. As discussed in chapter four, there are some problems with using moral models in a PE and sports lesson context. If teachers spend considerable time talking about and reflecting upon their *choice* of these models with their pupils, however – something they can do through the use of video clips, autobiographical excerpts, interviews and articles about that person's life – models can be useful when it comes to educating for good character. In other words, the use of moral models must go beyond mere story-telling or glorification of a sporting heroine's magnificent feats; it has to encompass a more in-depth discussion of this sportsperson's character which enables pupils to create a connection to this person in much the same way that we become attached to a character in a novel. In so doing, teachers are enlarging pupils' understanding of – and hopefully identification with – the sorts of persons that teachers want to see playing sports well. That said, there is no guarantee that all pupils will feel a connection with certain sorts of sportspersons or that they will all feel the same connection. However, what they will get the chance to do is to talk about and reflect upon their preference for certain sorts of persons rather than others, and this can help pupils to develop the "judgemental side" of their characters. In cases where a pupil is unable to identify a person in sports that he admires, he can be encouraged to talk about a person he admires in another field – like music, art, or cinema. Using moral models to educate for good character can also be helpful in those situations where attributing a disposition to a particular pupil might be traumatic or embarrassing for that pupil. In other words, talking about and reflecting upon a well known sportsperson in the PE or sports lesson can help to highlight the sorts of dispositions Wiggins possesses, or lacks, without pointing the finger at Wiggins directly.

In summary, throughout this section I have shown how working out just what sort of a person Wiggins is, and using this quest as the starting point of a disposition-based character education framework in the context of the PE and sports lesson, is by no means a simple task. On the contrary, and as the teachers in my study suggest, it requires a special combination of sensitivity and *phronesis* – something that *exceptional* teachers would seem to possess. *Exceptional* teachers make the time to get to know their pupils better and build the sorts of "trusting relationships" which encourage pupils to talk about and reflect upon their own character and that of others. They are also well aware that developing good character in PE and sports does not happen overnight, and that in the case of certain pupils, it can be a slow and sometimes painstaking process. Moreover, they seem to know when it is most appropriate to talk to certain pupils – for example, whether before, during or after a match, lesson or training session – and how to engage different sorts of pupils in discussions about their own and others' characters. These *exceptional* teachers are what Pincoffs would likely refer to as the "right sorts" of persons. In the section that follows, I outline what Pincoffs means by the "right sorts" of persons, and then briefly explore the practical guidance he offers to teachers who are interested in becoming the "right sorts" of teachers.

7:3 On becoming the right sort of person

According to Pincoffs, being the "right sort" of person means: (i) *wanting* to be the "right sort" of person as opposed to the "wrong sort" of person; (ii) *choosing* the company of the "right sorts" of persons; and (iii) *being* the "sort" of person that a "community needs" and "must have" if it is to flourish (p.155). In relation to the first and third point, Pincoffs assumes that most young people are brought

up to see some merit in becoming the "right sort" of person, and as a result can be helped to achieve this. To be the "right sort" of person is to have good character. To have good character, a person has to possess certain "sorts" of dispositions rather than others – that is, dispositions that a group or community expect, need and want a person to possess. In relation to the second point, Pincoffs suggests that we need to be able to judge between persons *and* judge between "different possible selves" so we can navigate our way successfully in the world (p.165). The role of the teacher is to bring the "sorts" of persons that exist in the world into the experience of pupils so that they are equipped to be able to judge between different sorts of persons when they go out into that world.

As for how they go about doing this, Pincoffs' main advice to teachers is to try to forget "the nonsense" that requires them to be non-judgemental when it comes to making moral judgements affecting their pupils (p.174). On the contrary, he suggests that teachers must engage in making informed judgements about their pupils' characters in order to help pupils develop the judgemental side of their own character. To do this well, Pincoffs suggests that teachers try to become "intelligent judges" of pupils' characters (p.175). Though careful to point out that teachers are not the *only* influence on a child's life, he maintains that teachers do play a significant role in helping young people to judge between the companies of different sorts of persons. Though Pincoffs does not elaborate on why this is so, teachers, unlike parents and friends, tend to see young people in a public context, hence in the company of a wide range of different sorts of persons. In this way, the school environment has the *potential* to provide an excellent training ground for a Pincoffs-style character education, based as it is on learning to judge between the companies of many different "sorts" of persons. If left in the hands of the "wrong sorts" (p. 164) of persons, however, this same environment can be very damaging to young people. For this reason, Pincoffs stresses that it matters a

great deal the sorts of persons who teach our young people. Pincoffs' suggestion to teachers that they must work towards becoming "intelligent judges" of their own and their pupils' characters renders explicit the moral role played by the teacher in her daily interactions with pupils. Working towards being such an "intelligent judge" is also part of developing teacher *phronesis*.

Apart from this important contribution, however, Pincoffs' main emphasis in his guidelines to teachers is on their *responsibilities* and *duties* as regards the child and society. In stating, for instance, that "the teacher's responsibility to society is to act as its agent in initiating the child into the modes of feeling, thought, and action that society has a right to expect of the child" (p.172), Pincoffs' tone, vocabulary and message (not to mention his gender bias) all serve to reinforce the importance of learning appropriate social roles. For the most part it is hard to see where Pincoffs' guidelines to teachers differ from those deontological approaches to moral education that he harshly criticises, and from which he is at pains to distance himself. In short, Pincoffs' failure to properly balance and check teachers' *responsibilities* and *duties* with those other kinds of "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995) that teachers get from playing, teaching and coaching sports – the joys and the sorrows, the pleasures and the pains – render his guidelines somewhat sterile and dull. This not only makes them unappealing to many teachers – a case of too much like hard work, not enough personal reward. More importantly, this underplaying of the importance of a teacher's emotional engagement with a given activity means that those who *do* adopt his guidelines are likely to underplay this key aspect of an involvement in sports with their pupils.

7:4 Summary

In summary, Pincoffs' moral educational framework with its focus on virtue talk and reflection does, in spite of its various shortcomings, offer teachers a useful starting point for designing their own character education programmes in PE and sports. First and foremost, it brings teachers together for creative thinking sessions in small groups, run by a teacher-facilitator. Here they can talk about and reflect upon the "sorts" of persons they want to see playing sports well. By sharing their conceptions and compiling lists of the sorts of dispositions they approve of and disapprove of in the context of teaching PE and sports to young people, teachers can bring to the fore what they feel is important when it comes to educating for good character. These sessions enable them to gain experience in virtue talk and become more at ease with it – something that serves them well when they go back into their practical teaching environment. Through such a joint endeavour, teachers also become more adept at examining critically what kinds of dispositions existing PE and sports programmes tend to nurture and develop in pupil-sportspersons, and the moral acceptability of these dispositions being so nurtured and developed.

In practical terms, however, it is difficult to see how Pincoffs' virtue-ethical framework could be implemented *as it currently stands* into a PE and sports lesson. This is because it fails to take into account a key aspect of this particular context, which is that teachers and pupils will be talking about and reflecting upon good character whilst running around a gym, or passing a ball to a team mate. After all, and as most documentation in PE and sports reinforces, PE and sports is primarily about doing rather than talking about and reflecting upon what one does or ought to do. This does not mean that virtue talk and reflection has no place in such a "doing environment" – far from it. Rather, the challenge to teachers hoping

to design a character education programme in PE and sports lies in finding ways that they and their pupils can talk about and reflect upon good character in this particular setting.

In other words, Pincoffs' whole process of morally educating young people through talk and reflection has a static quality to it, evoking an image of pupils sitting in classrooms to become morally educated as opposed to doing this work while participating in sports. Thus, though Pincoffs suggests that young people are motivated to learn about the dispositions because of their interest in their own character and their *involvement* in activities, he does not go that one step further to consider what *to be involved* actually entails. In the chapter that follows, I focus in on this oversight: suggesting that a physical engagement in PE and sports also elicits a highly emotional involvement which, in turn, has a profound *in situ* effect on the development of a person's character. In pushing the physical limits in sports, we also experience the emotional highs and lows. Though present in other activities, there is something special about an involvement in sports that brings these highs and lows to the fore. This observation prompts me to consider what it means for teachers and pupils to talk about and reflect upon good character whilst in a state of heightened emotional involvement brought on by actually being engaged in physical activity. A large part of designing a character education in PE and sports must grapple with the sorts of emotions that are evoked in doing different types of sports, and take seriously the extent to which the emotions are significant in educating for good character in PE and sports.

Chapter Eight: Developing good character through educating "the emotions"

8:0 Introduction

In the first part of this chapter I briefly examine Aristotle's notion of "habituation" – or early training – and the extent to which it is important in having and acquiring the "proper" pleasures and pains. Returning to Aristotle's assertion that *how* a person feels and expresses pleasures and pains is an indication of what kind of person they are, I outline once again how virtue-ethical approaches – as opposed to deontological approaches – attach a significant moral value to feeling these pleasures and pains in "the right ways." I also show how Aristotle is recuperated in those virtue-ethical approaches that highlight the important connection between "the emotions" and how they influence what we choose to do or not do, and the kind of company we prefer and avoid. In linking Aristotle's notion of "habituation," as it pertains to the training of the emotions, to our present day educational context, I discuss how young people come to know what "good" and "bad" character is: in part through their upbringing and their friendships, but equally importantly through the kind of educational processes into which they are initiated.

In the second part of this chapter I examine what we mean by "feelings" and "the emotions" and argue that our "feeling towards" (Goldie, 2000, p.19) something or someone is central to our understanding of "the emotions." I suggest that a big part of what makes sports exciting and challenging is their unpredictability and physicality: the unpredictable nature of a sports contest means that at any given moment, a person can and will experience a range of different "emotions," and these in turn will have a significant impact on the degree to which we play and teach sports well; the physical nature of sports means that whilst doing them a

person will experience heightened levels of bodily pleasures and pains and this, in turn, can induce heightened emotional states. I go on to show how Ben-Ze'ev's (2000) four components of a "typical" emotion – instability, intensity, partiality and brevity – provide, in their totality, a useful conceptual framework for analysing the "emotions" in the unpredictable and physically active context of PE and sports. I draw on my own experience teaching PE and sports, as well as on the experiences of the teachers in my study, to provide examples that demonstrate how each of these four components can help teachers to speak to pupils about their experiences in and through sports. I conclude this chapter by arguing that an incorporation of this understanding of the emotions into Pincoffs' virtue-talk framework makes his approach more accessible to and operational for those teachers interested in implementing it with their pupils.

8:1 Educating the emotions

Aristotle argues that "the emotions" must be educated in order that we develop the required sensitivities and sensibilities to feel and act in "the right ways" in different circumstances (Sherman, 1997). As Nussbaum (2000) points out, we need to develop our emotional capabilities in order:

> [To be] able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude and justified anger. (p.78)

Furthermore, Nussbaum (2001) insists that we need "an adequate theory of the emotions" to understand, not least, that our emotions are "sometimes unpredictable and disorderly operations in our lives" (p.2) – a point I will pick up upon later in this chapter.

Two opposing perspectives are generally presented when it comes to the question of how we educate the emotions. The first view, characterised by deontological

approaches to ethics (as outlined in chapter five), argues that our emotions are feelings and desires that are unpredictable and as such, need to be controlled by our ability to reason if we are to act in a morally defensible way. Macmurray (1935) suggests that one reason we do not allow our feelings (and those of young people) a free reign is that "we are afraid of what would be revealed to us" if we did (p.24). Deontological approaches underplay the "rational" value of emotions, and see them as playing a very minor role in making informed moral choices (Jones and McNamee, 2003). According to this view, our emotions are not to be trusted. Their undependable nature means that though, on occasion, they will lead us to act in the right ways, they are equally likely to make us act in the wrong ways. Followers of this view tend to disregard emotional responses to given situations. Rather, they favour the kind of judgements and actions which correspond to what any "rational" person would be expected to do under normal circumstances. This view of moral development nurtures and develops the kind of person who is self-controlled and is seen to be able to use his or her "will power" to determine how he or she ought to act in a given situation.

The second perspective, as characterised by virtue-ethical approaches (also outlined in chapter five), views the emotions as *essential* to who we are and how we act and feel. This view takes seriously the "rational" value of emotions, and sees their importance in helping to shape our moral conduct and outlook. That said, and as Carr (1999) points out, the emotions are not to be understood as servants of "the rational," but are in themselves a *bona fide* way of perceiving our world:

> Feelings and emotions are nevertheless not to be regarded as purely passive unconceptualised responses to the world, in need of rational control or suppression. Emotions, passions and feelings are sources of information about the world. (p.251)

In general, followers of virtue ethics maintain that by employing our emotions to help us to read situations better, we are involved in a reasoning process that helps us to discern between those factors which are "ethically salient" to us and those which are not (Sherman, 1989, p.38). This view of moral development nurtures and develops the "virtuous person" and places high value upon how our emotions help us respond in morally acceptable ways.

We gain important insight into "the emotions" by adopting a virtue-ethical approach. This is because such an approach encourages us to both pay attention to how we *feel* in and about certain situations involving different persons, and helps us to develop a "sensuous awareness" (Macmurray, 1935, p. 24) of how others are responding to us when we exercise our emotions in certain ways. Furthermore, this approach takes it as a given that the kinds of situations we find ourselves in can evoke a range of different emotional responses which play an important part in determining the kinds of actions we eventually take. A crucial aspect of learning to feel in "the right ways" in different situations – in other words, to develop *phronesis* – is to acquire the "*capacity to feel* what others feel" (Carr, 1999, p.224, *my emphasis*). As for how we go about cultivating such a *capacity to feel* – what in more common parlance we would call an ability to empathise – Aristotle's conception of the emotional capacities as educable is an excellent place to start.

8:2 Habituation and the emotions

According to Aristotle, our strong personal attachments to our family and friends in early childhood play a large part in developing our emotions. He believed that a child only became educable when "properly brought up" to act *and* feel in "the right ways" as constituted in the virtues (Sherman, 1989, p.165). We learn and are

taught in early childhood – through a process Aristotle calls "habituation"– how to "transform and control" our emotions (Sherman, 1997, p.82). Part of the process of transforming and controlling the emotions is learning "the right pleasures and pains" in relation to certain activities (Sherman, 1997, p.81). It is important to stress that pain, in this context, is understood as a positive aspect of learning the virtues. Just as pleasure has its rewards, so too does pain: the emotional and physical pain suffered in a moment of shame, for instance, enables the Aristotelian subject to experience the pain *and* pleasure of becoming a more virtuous person. Hence, pleasure and pain, though seemingly opposites, are intrinsically linked:

> For it is with pleasures and pains that moral goodness is concerned. Pleasure induces us to behave badly and pain to shrink from fine actions. Hence the importance…of having been trained in some way from infancy to feel joy and grief at the right things: true education is precisely this. (Aristotle, 1976, p.95)

According to Aristotle, we not only learn the "right pleasures and pains" through the acquisition of the virtues in and through activity, but our pleasure in living a good life is also increased. For Aristotle, pleasure is essential to living a good life but this life of pleasure also has to be a virtuous life; pleasure and virtue, in other words, are inextricably intertwined.

Habituation is an educative process which involves a child learning to acquire the virtues by "practice and repetition" in highly concrete situations (Sherman 1989, p.177). Aristotle recognises that this is not an easy process and needs to be "sweetened in various ways" (Sherman 1989, p.190) – for example, by special affections from parents, or from certain kinds of pleasures that a child gets from doing certain kinds of activities. As Sherman (1989) points out:

> A by-product of this sort of habituation… is a sense of pleasure which stimulates further growth. (pp.190-191)

Aristotle insists that we learn best by doing. In doing certain activities we learn how "the pleasure proper to an activity intensifies it" (Aristotle, 1976, p. 322). Just as our pleasures (and pains) are, for Aristotle, linked to the virtues, so too are they linked to the kinds of activities we do. Doing different activities affords us different pleasures and pains. Aristotle aims to "properly" order the pleasures and pains we derive from activity in relation to the "proper" function of human beings in that each person has "proper pleasure" in the same way as each person has a "proper function" (p. 324). In other words, by finding the "proper pleasure" in the activities we do, we are able to do these activities better, and in doing them better we gain further pleasure from doing them. Furthermore, Aristotle (1976) contends that:

> The pleasure or pain the actions cause the agent may serve as an index of moral progress, since good conduct consists in a proper attitude towards pleasure and pain. The pleasure or pain that accompanies people's acts should be taken as a sign of their dispositions. (p. 95)

In relation to sports, then, the pleasure of playing sports well, and the pleasures and pains derived from *trying* to play sports well, are closely related. This relationship, in turn, will to a large extent shape as well as reveal the sorts of persons these players are, or will become.

The task of PE teachers, then, is to help young people learn to *feel* for themselves what are the right pleasures and pains in a variety of situations, and to act on these feelings accordingly. In so doing, they must expect that along the way young people will make mistakes and require some guidance. By helping young people to become aware of how they feel and act in real-life situations, and how these actions and feelings influence their own and others' actions and feelings, teachers and pupils can begin to trust their feelings "to reveal the values of the world" to them (Macmurray, 1935, p.19). Here, the key issue is trust. If we can trust that we are feeling towards certain persons and situations in "the right ways," then we can

draw upon these "sense-experiences" (Macmurray, 1935, p.19) when it comes to making informed moral decisions. I first want to distinguish between "the emotions" and "feelings," before going on to show how the emotions are significant to our moral decision-making processes and our actions both in general and in the context of PE and sports in particular.

8:3 "Feelings" and "the emotions"

The relationship between feeling and the emotions pervades debates in philosophy, cultural studies and other socio-cultural analyses. Solomon (2000) considers that "what ever else it may be, an emotion is first and foremost "a feeling" (p237). Though this loose definition of an emotion keeps how we *feel* towards certain situations at the heart of any discussion about "the emotions," it is important to note that not all feelings are emotions, even if they can in the end provoke an emotional response. For example, certain feelings, according to Ben-Ze'ev (2000), can be seen more as physical responses, and consist of "bodily sensations" (cold and hot) and "tactile experiences" (smooth and rough) (p.64). In unpacking the emotions in this way, Ben-Ze'ev begins to clarify the distinct – if not entirely separate – aspects of an emotional experience (p. 50). In privileging the intentionality that underlies a typical emotion, however, he tends to leave behind the *feeling* aspect that is equally integral to any understanding of the emotions. For this reason, I prefer Goldie's (2000) overall definition of "an emotion," incorporating as it does the complexity and range of components which comprise our emotional responses:

> An emotion is complex in that it will typically involve different elements: it involves episodes of emotional experience, including perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of various kinds, and bodily changes of various kinds; and it involves dispositions, including dispositions to experience further emotional episodes, to have further thoughts and feelings, and to behave in certain ways. (p.13)

Such a messy definition gives us a truer flavour of what is at stake when discussing the emotions than does Ben-Ze'ev's far more categorical approach. Though the latter is useful in that it breaks down the emotions into concise and easily accessible components – a breakdown that I will draw upon later in this chapter – Goldie's definition resonates far more with how we actually live the emotions in our everyday lives. In other words, whilst Ben-Ze'ev intellectualises the emotions, Goldie (2000) – by his own admission – aims to avoid their "over-intellectualisation" (p.3). As a result, Goldie actually "captures" the *feel* of emotions far better than does Ben-Ze'ev. He also manages to avoid drawing unnecessarily reductionist distinctions between our feelings and our emotions – distinctions which have tended to focus on the degree to which "the emotions," as cognitive, are part of the realm of intentionality, whereas our "feelings," as non-cognitive, are ad hoc and therefore random. This is the approach dominant in social psychology and as a result seems to overwhelm much of the discussion and approaches in sports studies. By focusing on how we "feel towards the object of [our] thought" (p.19), Goldie (2000) brings into sharper focus the interrelated and complementary nature of "cognition" and "feeling" in the emotions. This latter approach, as Sherman insists (1989), is consistent with most virtue-ethical frameworks, recognising as they do that "the emotions" have both "cognitive" and "feeling" components and that the nature of these components are deeply intertwined to the extent that it would be a mistake to try to fully untangle the one from the other. As Sherman (1989) explains:

> To respond compassionately to a loved one who is suffering may not simply be a matter of (intellectually) seeing, and feeling compassion as a result, nor conversely of seeing *because* one feels compassion, but of seeing with an intensity and resolution that is itself characterised by compassion. One would not have seen in *that* way unless one had certain feelings. The mode of seeing is distinct. Thus emotions shape and colour how and what we see just as what we see refines and shapes how and what we feel. (pp.170-171, *original emphasis*).

Since our emotions are "sensitive to personal and contextual circumstances" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p.3), we can use them to help us to identify what is most significant and relevant to educating for good character. As Sherman (1989) points out:

> We notice through feeling what we might otherwise do unheeded by a cool and detached intellect. To see dispassionately without engaging the emotions is often to be at peril of missing what is relevant. (p.45)

Teachers need to understand how engaging their own emotions, as opposed to keeping themselves at a so-called "objective" distance from their pupils, can help teachers clarify the situation more effectively for themselves and in so doing help them to develop their pupils' characters. In certain situations – out on the playing field, for example, or during a swimming lesson – a teacher needs to develop the kinds of sensitivities and sensibilities which allow her to feel what others feel in these kinds of circumstances. Playing hockey in cold weather may be an exhilarating experience to some and a miserable experience for others; pupils can "feel towards" swimming in certain ways as a result of how they feel about wearing a swimming suit, or having to get changed in front of others. This latter point is reinforced by one teacher in my study:

> The changing room environment is difficult for girls. We forget as teachers how difficult an environment it can be for some girls and boys. We are often not aware of what actually happens just before the class starts. We have to be more cautious. For some kids the changing room is the biggest thing to contend with in a PE lesson. (Sharon: PE teacher/PT guidance teacher, G2)

In developing their ability to feel how pupils feel in certain situations – a process facilitated through compassionate observation and simple everyday conversations with their pupils – teachers can begin to develop the required sensitivities to make a judgement on how to speak to individual pupils about their involvement in PE and sports and how to take action in practical ways, where appropriate, to minimise those feelings that prevent a pupil from engaging fully in a certain activity. The more teachers understand how their pupils "feel towards" something

or someone, the more effectively they are able to develop certain dispositions rather than others in their pupils.

8:4 Understanding "the emotions"

Developing a capacity to feel how others feel is not easy, but it is important in educating for good character. One way of doing this is to ask others to describe how they feel in certain situations. This is not as straightforward as it might seem, for not every feeling can be described in direct relation to an emotion. That said, discussing our emotions can help us to better understand our feelings. By simply speaking to pupils about their feelings and emotions, teachers can begin to build a language around emotion – or emotion-talk – which helps them and their pupils to see and feel, as well as to describe and evaluate, what certain persons do in certain circumstances. In promoting emotion-talk amongst pupils we begin to counter the skills-based language bias which currently permeates discourses in academic PE and sports studies.

The PE and sports context differs from most other school-based contexts, however, in that the pupils doing this seeing and feeling, this describing and evaluating, will be doing so whilst pushing their bodies to new physical limits. This means that these pupils will be experiencing a range of feelings that are different from those they might experience whilst sitting in a classroom writing an exam, or working on a maths problem. The sheer physicality or physical effort involved in playing some sports also has to be taken into account by teachers when it comes to judging a pupil's character, for some pupils have the necessary physical attributes – height, strength, suppleness, stamina, and speed – to deal more effectively with sports' rigorous demands than others. In most cases, teachers in this study were aware that the majority of pupils felt a level of

discomfort when learning how to do new and more physically demanding activities. It was at these times that pupils had to be encouraged to "stick with it." By asking pupils to "stick with" something, teachers were asking their pupils to trust that by practising the action over and over again, they would eventually be able to do it. This is the kind of process teachers also need to employ when teaching "the emotions". At first it may not be apparent to pupils why they should feel in certain ways at certain times with certain persons, but by practising these kinds of feelings and through trusting teachers' explanations of why it is important that they feel one way rather than another, pupils begin to learn how to empathise. By feeling towards – as well as talking about and reflecting upon – certain circumstances in certain ways, pupils can begin to judge for themselves what is ethically salient to developing their own character.

It is equally important that teachers understand the extent to which "the emotions" shape their *own* judgments when it comes to morally educating pupils, and can as a result have a significant bearing on their own actions:

> I know I have my challenging group on Friday, so I always try to make a conscious effort to go in with a positive attitude. You know there is going to be three or four girls that are going to wind you up the wrong way. With some groups I can go in there and I can be lively and ready to start straight away and it is not a problem, but there are the odd one or two groups where I have to think of my attitude before I go in. (Linda: PE teacher, G3)

This very real presence of varying emotional states at the individual level means that there will exist, in any PE and sports setting, various degrees of closeness or intimacy between pupils and teachers. Many teachers mentioned the pleasure they got from the company of some pupils compared to others, and how in getting to know these pupils better they were able to help them develop their character, whilst getting more enjoyment and satisfaction from their work themselves. Given that some pupils will do everything to avoid this kind of personal interaction with their teachers, we cannot – as discussed in the previous chapter – situate the

education of pupils' emotions entirely within such a framework. In terms of working towards becoming a good moral educator, however, these sorts of *personal* and *contextual* interactions are vital for both developing teacher *phronesis* and developing pupils' characters in PE and sports settings.

8:5 Ben-Ze'ev's four characteristics of a typical emotion

Ben-Ze'ev's (2000) focus on the four basic components that he considers to be constitutive of a "typical" emotion – "instability, great intensity, a partial perspective and relative brevity" (p.32) – provides teachers with important insights into how to deal with "the emotions" in these personal and contextual interactions with pupils. In the four sub-sections that follow, I draw on my own experiences, as well as those of the teachers in my study, to demonstrate the significance of each of these components when it comes to understanding the nature of "the emotions" in the PE and sports context. That there are inevitable areas of overlap between each of the components only goes to reinforce their interrelated and complementary nature. It is worth noting at this point that whereas I draw on these four components to argue *for* an education of the emotions, they have also been used by followers of Kantianism to *underplay* the educative role of "the emotions" in character development.

8:5:1 Instability

According to Ben-Ze'ev (2000), the emotions "are like a storm …[They are] unstable states which signify some agitation" (p.33). This first component of Ben-Ze'ev's conception of an emotion – its instability – is particularly relevant to the PE and sports context. Just as a storm has its peaks and its troughs, we move between the highs and lows of emotional experience when we participate in sports. For instance, when a sports contest is evenly matched we are uncertain as

to how it will turn out. We find ourselves in a position where we have to quickly adjust to a wide range of ever-changing circumstances – a process that can either be helped or hindered by our equally vacillating emotional responses to those circumstances. In the case of playing volleyball, for example, a rally can reasonably be expected to last ten to fifteen seconds. Within this short timeframe players must read a situation accurately, make a decision quickly, and act effectively. Players attempt to overcome the instability of the situation by establishing a momentum with which they are comfortable, but that unsettles their opponents. If we consider momentum as flow – a concept that has been far more widely explored than that of momentum – we realise that "flows cannot be seen unless they are interrupted" (Buchanan, 2000, p.22). In other words, momentum (or flow) only becomes perceptible to us when it is interrupted in some way. We interrupt or disturb our opponents' momentum by using different strategies designed to alter the tempo, power, and direction of play.

By recognising that a characteristic of playing games well is to cause these kinds of interruptions – in other words, to render play unstable – pupils can in turn learn how to deal with these interruptions and instabilities. This, of course, demands of the pupil a high degree of emotional sensitivity and renders the pupil emotionally vulnerable. It is in such an emotionally charged state, as Sherman (1989) rightly points out, that others:

> Directly feel our presence, *know* our reactions through the direct communication of emotion and bodily response; others must become vulnerable to us just as we have become vulnerable to them. (p.49)

Since momentum shifts back and forth between two closely matched teams, players can expect to feel and act differently according to whether they have gained or lost momentum. For this reason, among others, PE and sports contexts provide a rich training ground for the emotions. Preparing pupils to cope with the

various emotional states attached to these unstable moments of play consists of helping them to read the momentum of the game correctly, and teaching them to expect that the momentum will shift during the course of a closely fought game. These are tasks that the teacher must readily take on. Teachers must also emphasise to pupils that how we feel and act in these ever-changing circumstances give us and those around us an indication of the sorts of dispositions we have or lack, and the sorts of persons we are and want to become. Teachers also have to help those pupils who do not cope well with changing circumstances and unstable situations to understand how their feelings and actions have a significant impact on how a given game situation unfolds.

As for actually implementing these steps in the context of the PE and sports lesson, teachers can create game situations that provoke a wide range of emotional responses, both pleasurable and painful. A teacher can, for example, purposely give a bad call at a crucial time of the game and then ask their pupils to talk about and reflect upon how they felt and how they responded to this call at this particular time, as opposed to how it would affect them at a less critical time in the game. The more we are able to recognise how we act and feel in response to a variety of game situations, the more we can draw upon this self-knowledge when it comes to dealing with new and unanticipated happenings. Of course, not all game situations are fraught with instability, and even in games which are, there can be long periods during which not much seems to happen. Some would venture that such periods of apparent banality are required to make the moments of intensity – those moments where our feelings either plummet or soar – stand out (Seigworth, 2000). In the next section I explore "intensity" – the second component of Ben-Ze'ev's typical emotion – more fully.

8:5:2 Intensity

According to Ben-Ze'ev (2000):

> Emotions are intense reactions. In emotions the mental system has not yet adapted to the given change, and owing to its significance the change requires the mobilisation of many resources. No wonder that emotions are associated with urgency and heat. (p.34)

In considering "intensity" as a component of typical emotions, we have to remember that not all emotional experiences when playing games are of an extreme nature. The very instability of games, as discussed above, means that moments of intensity are intermeshed with periods that can best be described as banal. Thus, it is this shifting between intensity and banality that in many ways alerts us to the fact that we are living in a heightened emotional state, albeit only temporarily so. What does happen, however, is that the more we experience these moments of emotional intensity induced through play, the more we become familiar with the feelings that accompany them. Just as teachers have to habituate pupils to the instability of game play through creating interruptions, they have to create practice situations that purposely induce intense emotional reactions. For example, re-playing the last three points of a volleyball game where the stakes are high and the scores are tied creates a high degree of intensity, and gives pupils the opportunity to test out a number of strategies for adjusting to and coping with such moments.

This has to be done in a responsible and sensitive way that takes into account individual pupils' ability or inability to deal effectively with these pressured situations. Handled well, however – and here the process of talking about and reflecting upon feelings and actions that these practice situations have evoked is crucial – these sessions can in part prepare pupils for match play, and more importantly increase their self-knowledge as regards the appropriateness of their

own and others' emotional and physical responses. For example, during a tightly fought game a teacher observes a pupil seemingly giving up the fight. This is a fairly typical reaction by a young person to such a stressful situation, but it can sometimes be misinterpreted. Teachers in my study, for instance, often saw such behaviour as an indication of a pupil's lack of effort. However, it is just as likely that the pupil is overwhelmed by the intensity of the moment and simply does not have the *emotional resources* needed to deal with it. In such a case, it is important that the teacher recognises that whereas some pupils thrive on intensity – revelling in the "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995) it provides – other pupils do not. Even those who do enjoy the intensity do not always react to it in an appropriate way: they may start laughing at others' misfortune, or shouting at team members who do not come through on a crucial play. During such moments of intensity pupils will not necessarily act and feel in appropriate ways. By helping pupils to understand the appropriateness of their emotional responses in game-like situations, teachers can help pupils to judge for themselves the morally acceptable parameters of their (and others') feelings and actions in light of these particular circumstances. In the next section I explore Ben-Ze'ev's (2000) third component of a typical emotion – "partiality" – to bring into sharper focus how the very *personal* nature of our emotions shapes and reveals our involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports.

8:5:3 Partiality

Ben-Ze'ev (2000) suggests that:

> Emotions are partial in two basic senses: They are focused on a *narrow* target, as on one person or a very few people; and they express a *personal* and interested perspective. Emotions direct and colour our attention by selecting what attracts and holds our attention; they make us preoccupied with some things and oblivious to others. (p.35, emphasis in original)

Part of the process of learning to care for ourselves and for others involves exploring our own interests and making personal connections with those whose company we prefer. According to Noddings (2002) we cannot take for granted that young people have the "self-knowledge" to know how to care for themselves and others. She defines "self-knowledge" as:

> Knowledge of self as an indidivual, as a male or female, as a member of a race and community, as part of a particular age group. (p.35)

We cannot be interested in everything just as we cannot make "personal connections" to every person we meet. As a result we tend to form relationships with those sorts of persons and those kinds of activities to which we feel intimately connected and inexplicably drawn. Aristotle goes as far as to say that:

> The greatest of pleasure is that which accompanies the activity; and it is similarly the strongest ground for love. (Aristotle, 1976, p. 299)

Though pupils will naturally feel different connections to activities such as PE and sports and will, as a result, put more or less effort into making personal connections with teachers, it is important that the latter work towards building relationships with their pupils that are oriented around sharing the love of an activity.

On the whole, the teachers in the study felt it was difficult to make the sorts of personal – hence emotional – connections they would have liked to have made with those pupils who had no interest in PE and sports. Though teachers felt disappointed by some pupils' lack of interest in certain sports, they did not give up trying to "turn pupils on" to PE and sports. By introducing new activities to such pupils, and through making existing sports appealing to a wider range of pupils, teachers actively addressed this problem. Teachers also insisted that their pupils' involvement in and outlook on PE and sports did change given the right kind of encouragement and support. Pupils' level of involvement and type of

outlook was also, according to teachers, dependent on the type of activity they were doing and the success they had in doing it. In other words, it was important that teachers worked at helping pupils find an activity that suited them, and that they could throw their energies into.

Sometimes, this process is not a direct one. Whilst teaching PE in a secondary school, for example, I volunteered to work with a group of nine, sixteen year old girls who refused to take part in PE classes. The only space free for us to use at that time was a squash court. Before they arrived I had placed a springboard, six crash mats and three volleyballs in the squash court. To begin with the girls did not want to do any activity at all, preferring to sit and chat amongst themselves. As I sat and chatted with them they told me some of the reasons why they did not want to do PE. I found that most of them did not like being in the company of boys, did not like getting changed into a PE kit, and did not feel that they were "any good" at PE. Heartened that not one of them said that she did not want to do *any* physical activity, I quickly established that they had the squash court to do the kinds of physical activity they wanted to do. Slowly one or two of the girls got up and tried jumping off the spring board on to the mats which they began to pile one on top of the other. More of the girls joined in once they saw that others were enjoying themselves. The next week they played on the mats for a short while and then picked up the volleyballs to play with them. I was aware that they didn't really know what do with the volleyballs in a squash court so I suggested that they hit them against the wall, which they also enjoyed for a short time. Together we started to invent games such as me throwing the volleyball into the air and them jumping off the springboard and trying to hit the ball mid air against the squash court wall before landing on the crash mats. They played this game for an hour. Over time and as we got to know each other better, we began to play a version of volleyball over a low net we had erected in the squash court. During the next few

weeks we learned to play volleyball together, slowly increasing the height of the net and introducing a few rules. After ten weeks the girls wanted "us" to play as a team against other teams – especially against the boys in their year. We went on to play a number of games together and won most of them. The fact that they were successful generated incredible excitement and joy in these girls, which in turn gave me a huge amount of job satisfaction and enjoyment. Eventually four of these girls went on to play volleyball in the open adult volleyball tournaments which I ran once a month within the school. I would on occasions play with them but for the most part they played together as a group.

This teaching and learning experience stands out for me not only because of the dramatic turn-around in how the girls felt about their involvement in a sport, but because it made me feel good about being a PE teacher and having the opportunity to work with these girls. Most of all, it demonstrated to me how a love for an activity like volleyball can grow out of a caring and trusting relationship that teachers and pupils develop amongst and between themselves, and out of encouraging the creation of emotional and tactile connections to the material elements that make up that activity – in this case, a springboard, a mat, a ball, a net. Even though the first two elements mentioned here are not actually constitutive of the game of volleyball, they are items that are generally selected by young people when they want to have fun. In other words, it was out of eliciting a particular emotional response based on my approach to these pupils and the equipment that I had made available to them that I was able to not only get these girls on side, but get them moving and eventually, interested in and excited by volleyball.

My own experience resonates with the findings of my study, which revealed that these *exceptional* teachers actively wanted to help their pupils discover their "own

interests and capabilities" (Noddings, 2002, p.33) both inside and outside of the PE and sports context. That said, the time teachers get to spend with pupils is often very short, especially if the only contact they have is during a PE lesson. Therefore, teachers have to use this time well if they are to reach out to pupils in ways that make a meaningful personal connection with them. Unfortunately, it is often only when pupils have acted inappropriately that teachers speak to pupils. In order to build connections we need to create the time and space for teachers to interact with their pupils when things are going well for them. Without creating this time and space, we cannot expect to develop the emotional connections with our pupils, nor nurture a love of activities in our pupils, in and through which we can successfully morally educate young people. In the next section I examine Ben-Ze'ev's forth and final component of typical emotions – "brevity" – to show the extent to which the fleetingness of any emotional state must be considered by teachers when it comes to judging when and how to intervene in a given situation.

8:5:4 Brevity

For Ben-Ze'ev (2000):

> Typical emotions are essentially transient states. An emotional event may be compared to a large rock being thrown into a pool of water: for a short time, emotional chaos reigns before calm gradually returns. (p.40)

Emotional reactions or outbursts – though often brief – can stay with us for the rest of our lives, primarily because we remember how they made us feel about ourselves and others. The teachers I interviewed were selective when it came to handling emotional outbursts, deciding more or less on the spot which ones to let go and which ones to pick up on. Before judging whether or nor to take action and with whom to take that action, teachers weighed up the degree of severity of the emotional outburst in relation to the sorts of persons involved, the circumstances around which the outburst occurred, the coping strategies that those involved had

at their disposal to deal with the outburst, and the effects the outburst might have had on those pupils directly or indirectly involved. In general, teachers in the study intervened (or did not) on the basis of the kinds of dispositions they wanted to encourage and develop in their pupils.

Most of all, teachers were well aware that though strong emotional responses were often of a very short duration, their effects could be long-lasting. For example, a teacher observes a pupil explode with anger when she is fouled by an opponent during a game of hockey. The pupil's anger quickly subsides and the game continues – as Ben-Ze'ev suggests above, emotional chaos passes and calm gradually returns. The question as to whether or not to intervene, and just who to reprimand and how, is left up to the teacher. She must read the situation as best she can in order to decide her response. A large part of how she responds will be based on how damaging she feels this brief outburst will be in the long term to the two individuals concerned, but equally how it will affect pupils' conceptions of what might constitute the good hockey player. How teachers deal with emotional outbursts by certain pupils in certain situations not only indicates the kind of person the teacher is, but also sends a message to others regarding the kinds of persons of which the teacher approves or disproves. In the next chapter I examine the extent to which certain emotional engagements – specifically those that induce states of happiness – are particularly significant when educating for good character in PE and sports.

By taking more seriously the role played by "the emotions" in the PE and sports context, and incorporating this understanding into Pincoffs' approach to character education, Pincoffs' virtue-talk framework not only becomes workable in the gym and out on the playing field (as opposed to in the classroom), but also helps to transform these environments – and "pedagogical moments" (Van Manen, 1991,

p. 11) – into sites where rich and dynamic teaching and learning experiences can happen. As Van Manen (1991) points out:

> It is the reality of these pedagogical moments that much literature has been trying to grasp and clarify under the labels of reflective teaching, teacher thinking, teacher as reflective practitioner, teacher as problem solver, teacher as decision maker, [and] teacher as researcher. (p.11, emphasis in original)

In discussing Ben-Ze'ev's four components of the typical emotions – instability, intensity, partiality and brevity – I have tried to provide some of the texture that, in addition to this literature, is integral to our understanding of the realities that constitute these pedagogical moments in PE and sports. In the chapter that follows I return to these four components once again to create a practice-based PE and sports lesson framework that aims to educate for good character in and through talk, reflection, and joy.

8:6 Summary

Good PE and sports pedagogy requires that teachers speak to their pupils about everyday situations. It is during these encounters that pupils are helped to become more self-aware in terms of how their feelings and actions affect others. The kinds of things teachers and pupils see and do not see, the questions they ask and do not ask, and the dynamics of relationships they build all contribute towards helping to achieve self- and other-awareness. Good teaching is not merely observing what pupils do in a given situation; it is also being present in these real-life situations with them and speaking to them about how they act *and* feel in these particular moments. These real-life situations can leave a long-lasting impression in the mind of pupils. When an interaction is meaningful to pupils it not only shapes their outlook in PE and sports, but can have a significant impact on other aspects of their life.

Teachers in this study were well aware of young peoples' insecurities and vulnerabilities around doing certain activities or being with certain persons. They were at pains to make these situations less trying for pupils by modifying lesson content to make it easier for some pupils and more challenging for others, or by paying closer attention to the relationships between different pupils and different groups. Beyond being aware of pupils' vulnerabilities and insecurities, teachers were also aware of the enjoyment pupils got from playing sports. This is an important point, for in addition to their unpredictability and physicality, what makes sports attractive to young people is the joy that they see as attainable in and accessible through sports. Following Noddings (2003), I assert that educating for good character in PE and sports has "something to do with happiness" (p.21). In fact, it is questionable whether those who endorse an approach to character education in PE and sports that does not take seriously the happiness of young people, can even begin to comprehend how our emotional engagements contribute to living a good life and playing good sports. In the chapter that follows, I explore the moral educational significance of pupil enjoyment when it comes to designing a character education in PE and sports. I argue that without a serious consideration of joy – an essential yet often overlooked feature of educating for good character – we miss out on an important opportunity to not only build more creative and compelling educational programmes, but to turn out of our school systems what Noddings (2003) refers to as "happy people" who are able to contribute to "a happier world" (p. 261).

Chapter 9: A Character education programme in PE and sports with a focus on the joyful disposition

9:0 Introduction

Sports literature leaves little doubt that enjoyment is what children primarily want from their PE and sporting experiences (Kirk, 2003; Siedentop, 2002). Seeing others having fun whilst playing sports makes young people want to partake of that fun as well. Quite simply, young people feel that within sports, there lies the potential for enjoyment. Though this is an important feature of an involvement in sports, its importance is not stressed in relation to moral development within existing PE and sports documentation. In this chapter I explore sports' potential for individual joy and "shared joy" (Spinoza, in Comte-Sponville, 2003, p.100), and I consider whether the moral educational potential of sports might be more easily realised in and through the cultivation of "the joyful disposition" in the good sportsperson.

Though quick to note that their own and their pupils' enjoyment was a welcome by-product of rich and dynamic teaching and learning experiences, the tendency of teachers was to see enjoyment as something that cannot be taught because it cannot be aimed at directly. This tendency to underplay the importance of enjoyment is also apparent in moral educational processes, where dispositions such as effort and respect are favoured because they can be aimed at more directly. No doubt the fact that enjoyment is seen as something that cannot be taught but is inherent in certain lucky individuals, has led to this underplaying of its importance across the board. I challenge this idea – arguing that by aiming at developing the joyful disposition in young people, teachers can still make it a central objective of all PE and sports programmes. I show how joy, like the

sporting experience itself, is at the juncture of the emotional and the physical, and as such provides a productive site for exploring what might constitute good sport and good people.

To this end, I argue, in the first section of this chapter, that teachers often fail to make the link between moral development and the cultivation of a joyful disposition in their pupils. Are they, I wonder, paying too much heed to what Whitehead (1988) refers to as "the danger of fun"? (p.7). In order to make this important link between good character and the joyful disposition I briefly consider Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* in order to show that developing "good character has something to do with happiness" (Noddings, 2003, p.21). My task here is not to try to prove or disprove that joy – an emotion that I see as integral to a feeling of happiness – is one of the virtues. Rather, I posit joy as an emotion and as an important catalyst that enables the virtues to flourish. That said, the cultivation of a joyful disposition in pupils is not always easy.

My own experience of teaching volleyball made me realise that even though we might want pupils to experience joy as they play sports, and want to share our own joy of certain sports with them, getting them to feel joy in the activities we introduce them to is a complex process. I gradually came to understand that though I felt joy playing and teaching volleyball, this didn't necessarily mean that my pupils found joy in and through learning to play volleyball. What this suggested to me was twofold: first, that I had to change my approach to teaching volleyball; and second, that I had to understand more deeply what joy is.

This process of integrating my own experience of what was lacking in my teaching with a deeper understanding of where joy is to be located is explored in the second section of this chapter. I re-visit Ben-Ze'ev's (2000) four components

of a typical emotion in order to locate firstly, where joy might be found in the teaching and playing of volleyball specifically (and by extension in the teaching and playing of all sports), and secondly, to show how a focus on the joyful disposition in the good sportsperson can help pupils and teachers comprehend ways in which their lives could be better lived.

In the third part of this chapter I outline a sample volleyball lesson that shows what a character education in PE and sports with a clearer focus on joy might "look like." This sample lesson puts into action Pincoffs' notion of moral talk and reflection in the unpredictable, physically active, and emotionally charged environment of a volleyball game, and shares his concern with helping pupils and teachers to become the right sorts of persons. It also elaborates on MacIntyre's emphasis on the internal goods of a practice, demonstrating how sharing with pupils the rich traditions of a given activity does help, in a positive way, to shape their involvement and ethical outlook in that sport. The end result is an approach that is selective, in that it draws on what I see as valuable in a variety of philosophical approaches and in the voices of the *exceptional* teachers in my study, and is customised, in that it takes into account the kind of person that I (the teacher) am and want to become. Such a selective and customised approach can nurture and develop a joyful disposition in pupils and teachers alike. It also brings to the fore the importance of the "felt satisfactions of a personal kind" (McNamee, 1995) to be had in playing and teaching volleyball well. By suggesting that such an approach can be adapted, and hence extended, to the teaching of all sports, my aim is to provide teachers with an accessible and workable approach to character education in PE and sports which, in taking as its ultimate aim the happiness of pupils and teachers, ends up developing "morally" good sportspersons.

9:1 Joy: the taken-for-granted dimension

Joy, according to Schutz (1967), is:

> The feeling that comes from the fulfilment of one's potential. Fulfilment brings to an individual the feeling that he can cope with his environment; his sense of confidence in himself as a significant, competent, lovable person who is capable of handling situations as they arise, able to use fully his own capacities, and free to express his feelings. (p. 17)

According to this definition, joy is a *feeling* which is linked to the realisation of some good. There can be a feeling of joy attached to getting things right. MacIntyre (1985) alerts us to the close link between enjoyment and excellence:

> Someone who achieves excellence in a practice, who plays chess or football well ….characteristically enjoys his achievement and his activity in achieving. (p.197)

For Aristotle, as long as what we do contributes to us becoming virtuous persons, we can expect to gain a degree of pleasure or enjoyment from aiming to become better at what we do. In relation to PE and sports, the suggestion here is that pupils and teachers can derive a certain degree of enjoyment from playing and teaching sports well. One problem with Aristotle's account of pleasure is that it takes for granted that we will derive certain joys from striving to achieve excellence. Teachers, however, cannot assume that pupils will always find joy in becoming better at sports; nor can they assume that those who do are necessarily finding joy in and through sports in an appropriate way. In other words, the joyful disposition is not only nurtured and developed through becoming better at playing sports; it can equally be attained through the social benefits of playing sports with friends, for example, or through the sensory or tactile sensations that playing certain sports afford. In recognising that there exists the potential for *all* pupils to derive joy from their involvement in PE and sports, whilst acknowledging that the ways in which these joys will be derived are varied and often unexpected, teachers can "aim at" nurturing and developing *both* a sense of joy and a level of

competency in and through a range of PE and sports programmes. Teachers thus avoid developing *only* those dispositions in their pupils that are commensurate with developing and measuring sporting competence.

We feel joy in many different ways and towards different things and persons. Joy helps us realise when we feel good about ourselves and others. Our feelings of joy help us discern between those activities that we like doing and those that we do not like doing. Following Goldie (2000), joy also appears to be an *emotion*:

> An emotion is complex in that it will typically involve different elements: it involves episodes of emotional experience, including perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of various kinds, and bodily changes of various kinds; and it involves dispositions, including dispositions to experience further emotional episodes, to have further thoughts and feelings, and to behave in certain ways. (p.13)

Neither MacIntyre (1985) nor Pincoffs (1986) mention joyfulness when they talk about the importance of the virtues to leading a good life. Pincoffs (1986) does, however, mention a number of desirable dispositions which arguably could be said to resemble "joyfulness" – cheerfulness, ebullience, liveliness, and vivaciousness (p.76 & p.85). Pincoffs categorises these dispositions under the general heading of the "temperamental virtues" (p.85). Joyfulness fits Pincoffs' (1986) definition of a "temperamental virtue" in that a person who has this disposition is "simply… easier and more pleasant to live with" (Pincoffs, 1986, p.87). In this sense, joy could be seen as being a virtue. Pincoffs also suggests that because a person cannot be held responsible for their temperaments – in other words, those dispositions they are born with – these dispositions cannot be called virtues. This observation is supported by MacIntyre's (1985) insistence that all virtues have to involve some effort on the part of a person to acquire them. In the end, however, what strikes me as most pertinent to this discussion of joyfulness's virtue status is Pincoffs' assertion that whether or not these dispositions are innate

or acquired, we still use them to discern between the company of different sorts of persons.

To this end, I focus on joyfulness as a desirable disposition of the good sportsperson, seeing it also as an important catalyst for learning the virtues in and through sports. When we feel joy in and through doing an activity it can motivate us to keep on learning to play sports better. As Aristotle (1976) suggests, "those who enjoy geometry become good at it and understand its various aspects better" (p.323). That said, Aristotle did not believe that it was sufficient for persons to be called good just because they did something that made them happy. To be called good, a person had also to possess and exercise the virtues when it came to achieving his or her own happiness. It could be ventured, however, that as a result of enjoying playing a sport, a person becomes more willing to learn how to become better at playing it, and in so doing forms personal attachments (such as friendships) and builds a self knowledge that helps that person reflect upon and adjust the ways that he or she plays a sport well.

The most obvious argument against adopting a moral educational approach in PE that takes as its starting point a focus on joyfulness, is the one put forward by Whitehead (1988). Whitehead argues that a focus on "fun" can trivialise the educational argument for purposeful learning and teaching in PE:

> It is undoubtedly most important our pupils get pleasure from taking part in physical activity. They may on occasions have fun, but physical education is not centrally a vehicle for trivial diversionary occupation, but for a much more worthwhile experience of pleasure derived from the satisfaction of effective participation in a movement activity. (p.155)

There is undoubtedly a strong connection between joyfulness and fun. We can feel joy in and through having fun. Whitehead is afraid that by encouraging pupils to *only* have fun, teachers are not properly engaging their pupils in *more*

worthwhile movement experiences. Granted, few teachers would advocate that PE is *only* about having fun; it remains, however, that to suggest that PE is *more* than having fun is to underestimate the *work* of fun in playing sports well. Fun, in other words, does not have to be relegated to the realm of the trivial – to a place beyond (and by inference beneath) the serious business of PE. After all, we make personal connections and gain self knowledge, to name but two benefits, through having and sharing fun.

This is not to say that all manifestations or expressions of fun are to be encouraged, or indeed appropriate. In the context of sports, for example, there are occasions when we are pleased to have gained an advantage as a result of someone else's misfortune, even if we do not intentionally set out to feel this way. Though these situations are perhaps "inevitable" (McNamee, 2003, p.7) in sports, it is how we respond to these situations that makes our feelings and actions more or less morally acceptable. For example, in a tennis match a pupil can feel glad that his opponent has had to retire because of an aggravated injury because this means that he advances to the next round of the competition. According to McNamee (2003) we can only judge the appropriateness of this player's response in terms of whether the player was "active or passive in the generation of the emotion" (p.7). In other words, to laugh loudly at an opponent's misfortune or take sadistic pleasure in it is not constitutive of the good sportsperson, whereas feeling joy when the other team loses, or one's own team wins, is a morally acceptable response. One of the tasks of teachers, therefore, is to learn to identify and deal effectively with different states of joy as experienced by themselves, and their pupils.

It remains, however, that if pupils are not having some form of fun when participating in an activity, teachers will be hard pressed to nurture and develop a

joyful disposition in them at all. As mentioned earlier, fun – as long as it is not purposely taken at the expense of others – is an important aspect of why sports are attractive to young people. Rather than being afraid of fun and trying to underplay its importance, teachers ought to recognise when and how their pupils are (and are not) having fun, and fully embrace the moral educational potential that lies within it. Fun, when conceived of in this manner, becomes a means by which teachers can gain important insights into their pupils' characters, and a measure through which they can assess the effectiveness of their own teaching.

As for the connection between joy and happiness, it is hard to imagine feeling joy without also feeling happiness. Though Aristotle identified *eudaimonia* as the ultimate good for human beings, he never provided an overarching definition of it. Today the term is loosely translated as "happiness" or "well being" (Aristotle, 1976, p.66), and Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* or happiness is seen as comprising two views: the "comprehensive" view and the "intellectualist" view (Noddings, 2003, p.10). The comprehensive view holds that "the exercise of reason is the major component of happiness" (Noddings, 2003, p.10). The intellectualist view holds "that theoretical or contemplative thought is happiness, and such thought is superior to practical wisdom and activity in the world" (Noddings, 2003, p10). In presenting the contemplative life as superior to the practical life, Aristotle sets up a "hierarchy of human activity that devalues the practical and those who do practical work" (Noddings, 2003, p.11). According to Noddings, this has had serious repercussions for those who teach practical subjects in our educational systems. It could also explain Whitehead's hesitancy to accord too much status to "fun" in the context of teaching PE. Certainly, teachers in my study complained about their subject's lack of educational status in schools compared to subjects like English, Maths and Science. It is hardly surprising, then, that in order to promote and safeguard PE in schools, teachers

have felt pressured to embrace similar academic goals to those of other subjects, and to justify PE's inclusion on the grounds that it contributes to wider politically oriented goals. This state of affairs leads Noddings (2003) to posit that happiness is the "missing dimension" (p.84) of current educational programmes, overly concerned as they are with measuring pupil attainment against predetermined standards, and serving larger societal needs that cannot, in the end, actually be solved by teachers.

As for re-inserting the "missing dimension" into current educational programmes, I maintain that an important part of developing pupil happiness in and through PE and sports is taking seriously a focus on the joyful disposition. In part, this is achieved through an awareness of what pupils enjoy and what they are interested in. Though teachers in my study took joy from their pupils having fun, little was made of this beyond the somewhat obvious observation that it was a *bonus* of good teaching. It is my contention that the joy to be had by teachers *in their capacity as* teachers is not just a bonus of good teaching; it is much more than that, it can actively help them to judge the sorts of persons their pupils are, and to judge what is ethically salient when teaching certain sorts of persons.

Siedentop (2002a) suggests that children's enjoyment in sports is primarily located in them *wanting* to (i) participate; (ii) get better at their sports; (iii) be among friends; and (iv) have fun (p.397). By being aware of what pupils *want* from their experiences of sports, teachers can balance these wants with what is *needed* in terms of their development of good character and where necessary, "sweeten" those difficult aspects of becoming a good sportsperson through a focus on what pupils enjoy doing.

In relation to the example I gave in the previous chapter – where I worked with a group of girls in the squash court – I used their enjoyment in jumping off a spring board on to mats as my own kind of jumping off place for building a relationship that would eventually allow us to stretch ourselves both physically and emotionally. This is not to say that jumping off a spring board cannot be worthwhile in its own right, provoking as it does discussion amongst pupils of "felt satisfactions," which in turn can enhance personal connections. The joy they experience in jumping off that spring board acts as a catalyst: prodding them to try other activities; allowing them to create trusting relationships amongst themselves and in relation to sports in general. It is important to note at this point that I am not advocating that a teacher's role in moral education is merely to give pupils what they want; rather, it is to actively educate in and through these wants, when they are appropriate, so that they can become good sportspersons.

Noddings (2003) suggests that the education of wants is both "desirable and ethically appropriate" (p.66). She shifts the attention away from the language of *needs* that so often underlies the task of morally educating, and brings into sharper focus the importance of our personal interests and emotions in this process. Noddings does not underestimate the importance of needs to developing good character; it is just that she emphasises that teachers ought to be constantly asking whether the programmes they are implementing are aimed towards the development of "happy people" (p.261). Noddings (2003) implies that happiness is infectious; if teachers are happy people, then their pupils are more likely to be affected in a positive way by their teachers' happiness and discover for themselves the joy in learning:

> Clearly, if children are to be happy in schools, their teachers should also be happy. Too often we forget this obvious connection. (p.261)

That said, and as suggested earlier, sharing one's joy of a sport is not as straightforward as it may seem. As a young PE teacher freshly out of initial teacher training (ITT) college I was keen to share my joy of volleyball with my pupils. Though I followed the teaching models of the day, I found that my pupils did not seem to be enjoying themselves. Each week I tried different approaches and found that no matter how hard I tried, very few of my pupils actually seemed to enjoy learning volleyball. This situation upset me, but it also prompted me to examine how I was teaching the game. I wanted to learn how to help my pupils access the joy of volleyball. I reviewed what I had been taught at ITT college, where I had been taught to break down the skills of volleyball – for example, volleying, digging, and serving – and to teach them in isolation from the game. The assumption was that pupils would be able to play the game from learning these discrete skills first. The real joy of the game for me – spiking or hitting the ball down over the net into the opposition's court – was considered too technically difficult for pupils to master at the earlier stages of learning the game. Playing the game was restricted to about ten minutes at the end of each class, after all the discrete skills had been learned. I realised that I was unnecessarily restricting my pupils' experience of having fun playing volleyball by forcing them to follow a set of predetermined technically-oriented steps which not only left them cold, but left me disappointed with how they responded to the game. I attended some coaching courses with the Scottish Volleyball Association and began to learn about how other countries introduced volleyball to young people. My excitement rekindled, I tried these new approaches with my pupils. I found that some were more successful than others. I spent the next fifteen years adapting the game of volleyball to suit a wider range of ages and abilities. During this time, I came to realise that joy was linked to a "felt satisfaction" (McNamee, 1995) of getting something right, or at least improving on what it had been before. Joy was also linked, I realised, to a "felt awareness" that some progress had been made.

Though my aim was simple – to share my own joy of playing the game with people, and to help people to find their own joy in playing the game whilst improving their abilities – the actual process of doing this was anything but simple. What I needed, in addition to all those coaching courses, was a better understanding of why young people want to learn sports. My determination to teach in a way that promotes teacher and pupil joyfulness prompts the following examination into this emotion and the work that it can do in developing good character in PE and sports.

9:2 General characteristics of joy

9:2:1 Instability

Joy is unstable in that its appearance depends on a series of complicated events which are not always easy to predict. We do not feel joyful all the time. Joy is a transient state linked to personal and contextual circumstances. As Spinoza suggests, joy is "accompanied by the idea of an external cause" (in Comte-Sponville, 2003, p.253). We tend to find joy only in things which affect us in certain ways and which contribute to our own happiness. In this way, joy follows no predetermined course, and its arrival can, like the dawning of new love, both delight and disarm us. In fact, Spinoza's "secret" for achieving happiness was, according to Comte-Sponville (2003), understanding that "love only exists as joy and there is no joy other than love" (p.253). In linking joy and love – in making them almost one and the same – Spinoza helps us to conceive of our love of sports as a form of joy in itself: a form that, if to some degree unsettling, nonetheless nurtures and enriches our lives. Our task as teachers, then, must be in part to help pupils find their own joys in and through sports.

Many of the teachers in this study felt that the best way to do this effectively was to keep offering new sports to those pupils who had not yet "found their joy". For those who had already discovered a love for an activity, and were deriving some sense of joy from it, the teachers saw their role as one of continuing to nurture and develop what I would define as "a joyful disposition" in their pupils, aware as they were that there would be times when pupils would temporarily "fall out" with their sport. For example, a teacher observes that one of her pupils no longer enjoys playing volleyball with her friends at lunchtime. The teacher discovers from talking to this pupil's friends that they, unlike her, have joined a local volleyball club in the evenings. The teacher discovers from talking to the pupil that she enjoys the lunchtime games less since her friends have joined the club: she feels excluded from her friends' talk about their club experiences, and she feels that they will become much better volleyball players than her as a result of attending the club. By encouraging this pupil to talk about and reflect upon why she does not enjoy lunchtime games any longer, the teacher is able to help her to read the situation and to decide what action she would like to take, if any. The teacher has to be sensitive to her pupil's assessment of the situation but at the same time, offer some support as to what options she may have to resolve the situation – for example, she could join the club herself, or work at feeling less intimidated by her friends' perceived improvement at the game – so that the pupil can re-find the joy that she once derived from playing volleyball with her friends.

This recognition on the part of teachers of the inherent instability of joy in and through a sport, or through the love of a sport, is further demonstrated in the ways in which teachers spoke of the need to *alert* their pupils to the fact that learning or playing a sport is not always easy, and that the results are not always enjoyable. By encouraging their pupils to persevere through these difficult and unstable times, teachers tried to convince pupils that they might derive newfound sources

of joy from playing their sport more effectively. As one of the teachers commented:

> It is a slow process, sometimes it is you telling them, sometimes it is them doing it on their own, but when that happens it makes you feel great, like what you have been doing has been worthwhile. (Jane: PE teacher, G3)

What was clear from the interviews was that teachers helped pupils to overcome difficult obstacles en route to becoming good sportspersons. They also helped them to understand that joy can be found in and through learning to persevere, making an effort, applying themselves in challenging situations, and overcoming difficulties. By recognising joy's basic instability, the task of the teacher is to balance these potential joys, especially when a number of them may not be immediately apparent to young people. This is a difficult task, not least because teachers may want, or be required, to develop certain dispositions – such as loyalty, courage, and reliability – that might, for certain pupils, be perceived as inconsistent with developing a joyful disposition. It is vital that teachers identify from where a pupil derives his or her joys when playing sports to check whether or not the acquisition of certain sorts of dispositions are indeed positively contributing to that pupil's happiness in playing sports.

9:2:2 Intensity

Our passion for sports can be inextricably linked to joy. As suggested above, any strong emotion such as joy (or grief) involves feelings of "transition and commotion" which sometimes can result in "real bodily upheaval" (Damasio, 2004, p.63). Television and newspaper coverage of sporting events are quick to pick up on those feelings of intensity that accompany the highs and lows of competition:

> It was there in his [Mark Messier's] eyes, the glow of high and soaring joy when he scored the goal. There in his eyes – deep pools of anger whenever things weren't going right for his team. (Fisher, 2005, p.C1)

The unpredictable and physical nature of sport is such that pupils and teachers can experience intense states of joy (or grief), especially when they have achieved (or failed to achieve) a long sought after or difficult objective. Feeling intense joy can involve a range of different emotions and feelings: it can incorporate relief, physical exhaustion, and pride; it can even include seemingly contradictory emotions like sadness – for instance, when your moment of joyful victory is accompanied by the realisation that somebody close to you is no longer there to share your joy. It is this complex mixture of emotions that constitute joy, and the way that our personal joys are intrinsically interwoven with others' joys, that give joy its intensity. On a day to day basis, these experiences of intense joy help us to build and shape our personal connections to sports and to those with whom we play sports. These feelings of intense joy can be rekindled through stories being retold amongst those who shared them, and in this way – though the moment itself has passed – joy lives on.

There is a danger, however, in living *only* for these moments of intense joy, and teachers and pupils have to learn how to deal with those players who fail to appreciate the necessary banality that not only accompanies intensity, but without which there could be no intensity. For example, a teacher observes a pupil only "coming alive" during tightly fought games. The pupil seems to "opt out" of playing games where he judges that his own team will win easily. It is the teacher's role, in this case, to suggest to the pupil that he only appears to enjoy the intensity that comes of playing closely fought games. The teacher's task here is not to discourage this pupil from seeking out these moments of intense joy; rather, it is to encourage him to increase the challenges he sets himself in the games he perceives as being banal, and equally importantly, to seriously consider how his actions and feelings are affecting his team-mates' performances as well as his own.

It is also important that pupils are made aware of the effect that their expressions of intense joy can have on those experiencing, for example, a moment of utter despair in defeat. Granted, deriving joy from their own accomplishments is important for pupils' moral development because it is in these moments they can identify what is meaningful to them about playing sports well. Pupils have to learn, however, that part of deriving joy in their own accomplishments can be at the expense of those who have failed to achieve their goals. In these instances, they must recognise that it can be hard for some pupils to be gracious in defeat, especially when they feel they have tried so hard and lost so much. In learning to empathise in these circumstances, pupils (and teachers) gain important insights into how their own actions and feelings affect others in intense moments of victory and defeat. They can learn to become more sensitive to the feelings of others – this latter being a key aspect of character development.

9:2:3 Partiality

How each pupil finds joy in and through sports gives teachers some insight into that particular pupil's interests and outlook on life. Conversely, that pupil's existing interests and outlook on life will play a significant role in determining the sports that will attract or appeal to him or her. The task of the teacher is to help to guide their pupils towards the sports that they might find joy in. By being tuned in to their pupils, and watching for signs that indicate their personal preferences and avoidances, as well as their individual aptitudes and aspirations, teachers can encourage pupils in the direction of activities that will potentially capture their interest and imagination. Once captured, the likelihood of these pupils finding joy in the activity is increased. Teachers, in other words, must develop a certain sensitivity to their pupils, taking the time to read what is perhaps not being expressed orally, and to come up with creative options for those pupils who on the

surface, appear indifferent to anything that is offered to them. In sports, pupils find joy in learning ways of moving their bodies. By finding the medium that suits them best may it be ice, water, snow, a running track, or a trampoline, they also find joy in different surroundings – in a forest, on a ski slope, in a dancehall, or in a gymnasium. In remaining attuned to those activities and environments that individual pupils seem to thrive in, or at least appear to feel comfortable in, teachers can nurture and develop a joyful disposition in their pupils.

An important aspect of sports is that they offer pupils a wide range of sensory experiences, and these bodily sensations are also constitutive of joy. By developing their pupils' *sensuality*, teachers can help them search for and locate their own sources of joy in sports. Macmurray (1935) defines *sensuality* as "the capacity to enjoy organic experience, to enjoy the satisfaction of the senses" (p.19). Teachers have to encourage pupils to develop their own sensory awareness, and to experiment with feeling it in new ways when they are playing a sport. For example, blindfolding the playmaker ("the setter") in volleyball so that she is unable to see the attacker's ("the spiker") approach to the net when passing her ("setting") the ball, forces the setter to *sense* the spiker's approach to the net. Though at first this exercise seems impossible, dependent as most of us are on *feeling* another player's position and movement through the primary sense of sight, pupils eventually begin to use and trust their other senses (touch, sound, smell, and taste), finding that with practice, they can learn to connect with the spiker. Some pupils – for instance, those who do not see well – may even find that they perform this exercise much better when relying on one of their other senses, like sound or touch. It is likely that such pupils will derive much more joy from, and success in, playing volleyball as a result of their discovery of a new way of sensing a well-established move. In short, it is through helping pupils to discover their own sensory proclivities, and teaching them how to use them to their best

advantage, that teachers can enhance each pupil's emotional engagement with an activity and by extension, the joy that each pupil experiences through doing it.

9:2:4 Brevity

A feature of joy is that even if we want to keep living it, we cannot always hold onto it for long. After a while our feelings of joy dissipate and are replaced by other emotions as we adjust to new personal and contextual circumstances. We often cannot predict when and where we will feel joy, and this adds to our sense of delight when we do feel it, and our sense of anticipation when waiting for it to arrive. This tendency of joy to appear suddenly and be over quickly means that it can take us by surprise; not always giving us adequate time to consider beforehand how our spontaneous physical manifestations of joy might affect others. For example, pupils playing on a volleyball team observe their teacher celebrating wildly after their team wins an important point during a match. The teacher jumps up and down, waves her arms in the air, and shouts triumphantly. When, on another occasion during the match, a pupil celebrates a point by shouting triumphantly and waving tauntingly at her opposition, the teacher feels compelled to caution the pupil. The pupil naturally takes offence, wondering why the teacher can express her joy by waving her arms and shouting triumphantly, whereas she cannot. Here, it is up to the teacher to explain the difference between the two joyous outbursts. At the same time, the teacher will have to question whether her own way of expressing joy could, quite inadvertently, be confusing pupils, and leading them down a morally questionable path. Teachers have to be aware of how joy creeps up on them, and what happens to them when it does. If, in taking us off guard, joy makes us act in ways that might be misinterpreted by pupils, our responsibility as teachers is to explain to pupils how we ourselves express joy, and to point out the difference between well intentioned joys and those joys that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, actively celebrate the

misfortunes of others. It is not a question of trying to control joy; rather, it is a question of teaching pupils the difference between appropriate and inappropriate joys.

Though feelings of joy are often fleeting, their effects can be more long-lasting. For example, a teacher takes several teams of pupils to their first age-group volleyball tournament. Although the teams lose most of their matches, it seems that almost all of the pupils enjoy the experience. The following day the teacher is aware that there is a joyful spirit amongst these pupils in terms of how they recall their experiences of the tournament, and how they undertake that day's practice session. Conversations with a few of the pupils reveal to her the reasons for their joy: they had enjoyed playing as a team, hanging out together, getting better as the tournament progressed, meeting other people from other schools, and being in a large sports hall specially decorated for the event. As her pupils continue to bask in the individual and shared joy of the previous day, the practice session goes well: the teacher finds that her pupils are more receptive to learning some of the things that she had struggled to teach them in previous sessions. She also finds that they are more willing to take on the responsibility of organising themselves to go to the next tournament, and that they are beginning to see themselves as volleyball players. What all of this suggests is that joy, though it might come quickly and is perceived to be short lived, can have consequences that are often far-reaching. In the example above, the more the pupils enjoyed playing volleyball, the more they came to identify with the game; the more they saw themselves as volleyball players, the more the teacher was able to help them become the sorts of good sportspersons that we want to see playing the game.

In the section that follows I merge these four components of joy into a practical teaching scenario, showing what a focus on the joyful disposition of pupils in a

volleyball lesson can do in terms of educating for good character. How teachers feel about a sport will not only affect how they teach it, but will also affect how pupils enjoy it. As suggested earlier, there is a link between teacher happiness and pupil happiness (Noddings, 2003). Teachers who approach the teaching of PE and sports with a joyful disposition are more likely to encourage pupils to develop their own joyful disposition. Once teachers find their own joy in sports they are more likely to teach them effectively and creatively to their pupils. I draw on my own joy of volleyball in shaping the teaching scenario that follows.

9:3 The joy of volleyball

The sport of volleyball is a practice, in MacIntyrean (1985) terms, that is played throughout the world and has established traditions that shape a player's involvement and ethical outlook in the game. By exploring what already exists at home and abroad – in terms of volleyball clubs and events, teaching and coaching materials and courses – teachers can learn about the game for themselves. If a teacher's intention is to find and derive joy from playing and teaching volleyball, these resources can provide a useful starting point for developing a character education that takes joy as its starting point. Many governing bodies of sports already run courses specially designed to show PE teachers how to introduce their game to young people in enjoyable ways. In many cases, these bodies actively seek out *exceptional* teachers who have a special aptitude for teaching their sports to young people, so that they can draw on their expertise and their joy of their sport when designing and implementing these courses. Some of the ideas I use and develop in this sample volleyball lesson originate from the time I spent working with *exceptional* teachers and volleyball coaches as a national development officer with the Scottish Volleyball Association and sportscotland.

9:3:1 Sample volleyball lesson

This lesson is targeted at pupils aged twelve to fourteen years of age who have little or no previous experience of playing volleyball. The main aim of the lesson is to promote a joyful disposition in pupils in and through learning to play the game of volleyball well. The lesson is divided into three parts – "Setting up the learning and teaching environment"; "Learning to become certain sorts of volleyball players"; and "Sharing what we've learnt with others" – and in each the moral role of the teacher is highlighted. During the course of the lesson, I introduce: (i) one *characteristic* of the game of volleyball: in this case, a 3-touch pattern of play; (ii) one *requirement* of the game of volleyball: in this case, learning how to read and respond to an opponent; and (iii) one *task* that helps pupils become certain sorts of persons: in this case, building a language of emotion to facilitate reflection. As the lessons progress, more characteristics, requirements and tasks are introduced and developed. The intention is that pupils, through gaining an understanding of these three different though complementary aspects of playing volleyball well – the game itself (characteristic), a sensory awareness (requirement), and the sorts of persons we are and want to become (task) – will come to see for themselves how the rich interplay between the three can help them to become good volleyball players in the fullest sense of the word. What this balancing of the emphasis between characteristics, requirements and tasks connected to the game of volleyball also means is that it opens up opportunities for different kinds of persons to find places in which they can excel and through which they can express themselves. For example, a pupil who has difficulty mastering a characteristic of the game – remembering a set pattern of play, for instance – might feel more comfortable or confident when it comes to a game requirement – developing a good tactile relationship with the ball – or a game task – talking about and reflecting upon how to deal with unstable moments

of play. This approach, in recognising that pupils have different interests, excel in different ways, and learn at different rates, accounts for *and* celebrates the wide range of sorts of persons that the game of volleyball requires to keep it healthy, vibrant and welcoming.

9:3:2 Setting up the learning and teaching environment

As most teachers know, when and how pupils arrive at the sports hall provides them with an early indication of how each might respond to the forthcoming lesson. Those dragging their heels and minus their sports kit are already indicating that they are less prepared to engage both physically and emotionally with what lies ahead; those who bound into the hall fully equipped and ready to go are already indicating their willingness to get involved. It is therefore important that the process of educating for good character in PE and sports begins, if possible, before pupils enter the hall itself, and does not just leave off as they depart from the hall. Following on from an observation made by one of the teachers in my study that interactions which go on in the changing rooms (or on buses going to a sports hall) are often overlooked when it comes to educating for good character in PE and sports, a teacher's presence in and around the changing room at the start and end of each lesson is one way of ensuring that as many pupils as possible feel at the very least comfortable about entering the sports hall. By encouraging simple conversations (Noddings, 2002) either about life in general, or about the lesson specifically, the teacher is already creating a relationship with her pupils. As discussed in the previous chapter, negotiating the PE changing room environment can be a major hurdle for some pupils. The teacher's presence at this time will not only help to alleviate those pupils' anxieties about their involvement in certain sports, but can also protect pupils from bullying – a common feature of changing room environments – and unwelcome taunts from their peers. Without this intervention on the part of teachers, negative interactions amongst pupils which

have started in the changing room can be carried over into the PE lesson and this can seriously impinge on pupils' – and by extension, the teacher's – enjoyment of the lesson.

Setting the hall up properly – for example, making sure that the tension on the volleyball net is right – helps to present a good first impression of the game to pupils. As pupils become more familiar with the game, the responsibility for setting up the volleyball hall can shift from the teacher to them. By arranging a net lengthways down the hall, the teacher can maximise the number of pupils who can play over the net at any one time, and in so doing keeps pupils as actively involved in playing the game as possible. By providing a range of different volleyballs – balls which are colourful, kind on the arm, and of varying sizes, textures and weights – pupils can choose a ball that suits their ability level or with which, for one reason or another, they prefer to play. All of these initial procedures, though seemingly incidental to educating for good character in and through the game of volleyball, help to create in pupils a certain degree of excitement and anticipation – a sense that something good is about to happen. This in turn can make them more receptive to all the forms of learning and teaching that will go on in the lesson.

How teachers welcome pupils to the game of volleyball is important in establishing the tone of the lesson. Teachers should be encouraged to convey to pupils that volleyball is a fun, dynamic and enjoyable game to play. A teacher's familiarity with the game will help her to paint a vibrant picture of what is possible in terms of learning to play volleyball well (MacIntyre, 1985). For those teachers with less familiarity of the game, it will be necessary to draw from within themselves and then evoke for their pupils that sense of joy that they experience when playing another sport. By being friendly, open and welcoming, teachers can

make pupils feel that there is potential for joy in and though learning volleyball, and that their teachers are there to help them find their own joys in and through it. During the welcome session teachers can introduce the *task* component of the lesson, asking pupils to talk about and reflect upon (Pincoffs, 1986) their previous experiences of and exposure to the game of volleyball, or telling stories about their own or others' involvement in the game. Questions like "Who has played or watched a volleyball game?", "Where can you play volleyball?", "How many people play volleyball?" and "What would you like to learn to do most in volleyball?" can elicit different kinds of information from pupils that teachers can use to set the scene for the lesson. Showing a short video clip of pupils or players enjoying playing the game can also be useful in setting the scene.

The main point is that the welcome is short and pupils quickly get to experience for themselves what it feels like to play volleyball. All too often, there is too much talk at the beginning of a lesson, and by the time pupils get to actually play they have lost some of their initial excitement. Teachers have to remember that as the session unfolds, there will be opportunities – some created and some which evolve more naturally – to talk to pupils as they are playing and learning to play. It is often the case that teachers unnecessarily stop play to get pupils' attention. I have found that pupils are generally able to take in information as they are moving. In order to avoid creating a frustrating start and stop situation, I introduce the concept of the "time out" – a period of no more than fifteen seconds in duration in which to talk about and reflect upon incidents that arise during the lesson, and to set new challenges that grow out of these incidents. Pupils are encouraged to take their own "time outs" to discuss areas of concern with their team-mates or, when appropriate, with the teacher. It is at these times that teachers can ask a mix of general and specific questions, such as "Are you having fun?", "Are your team-mates having fun?" and "Can you hit the ball to target?" These

are questions that direct pupils' focus towards their own actions and feelings, as well as those of others. As incidents involving certain pupils happen during the lesson, teachers can deal with these on an individual or small-group basis as the rest of the class continues to engage in playing volleyball. In this way pupils get the maximum amount of time to play, explore, and discover their joy in the game of volleyball.

As teachers circulate around the hall they must praise pupils individually for their effort, their decision-making ability, and their execution of shots. They can do this by speaking directly to the pupil or in a general way so that the pupil and other pupils are aware of the incident of good play. By catching pupils doing something right and simply smiling or signalling to the pupil in some way that indicates that their good play has not gone unnoticed, teachers can add to pupils' (and their own) "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995). An important personal connection is made between a teacher and a pupil when the pupil shows satisfaction (smiles to himself) after a teacher has responded favourably to something that pupil has said or done. Because the game of volleyball is unstable, resulting in pupils finding it difficult to read and control the ball in the early stages of learning how to play, teachers sometimes have a tendency to be overly critical at a point when what pupils most need is encouragement. If teachers want pupils to stick with the game, it is important that they do not focus on the errors that pupils will inevitably make, but rather find aspects of play that can be praised: for example, a pupil's patience, perseverance, and ability to make a correct decision even if the execution of the play is not successful. In this way, pupils can still see where they are making progress and continue to find joy in learning to play the game well. Teachers can also stimulate and maintain pupils' interest in the game by introducing game-like activities which are non-threatening and inclusive for pupils of all abilities. For example, the simple game of tag (with

or without a ball) can become an important teaching and learning site for developing a key *requirement* of the game, which is to read your opponent's intentions quickly and to act upon them effectively. By looking for clues as to where the person who is "it" intends to move next, and trying to read these intentions before they can be executed, pupils learn to deal with the sudden body movements and changes in direction of movement that are constitutive of the game of volleyball.

By introducing the whole game to pupils we are asking pupils to build relationships between themselves and their team mate(s); their opponent(s); the volleyball court; the volleyball net; and the flight of the volleyball. This large number of relationships can overwhelm pupils in the early stages and as a result, teachers often try to make it easier for pupils by reducing the number of players, reducing the court size, lowering the net or playing with a lighter ball. All of these strategies help to make the game more accessible to pupils, hence more enjoyable, without being overly reductionist and without flattening out the complexity of the game through reducing it to its individual components. In much the same way that we have to learn how to use all the workings of a car to drive it and to gain satisfactions from driving it well, we have to learn how to deal with the complexities of the whole game of volleyball before we can derive the "felt satisfactions" (McNamee, 1995) from playing it well.

9:3:3 Being certain sorts of volleyball players

By introducing all the key features of the game of volleyball to pupils in the early stages, teachers can give pupils an image *and* feel of what the whole game might look like. In this way, pupils get to see how the game follows a certain pattern and how players score points in certain ways. The game of volleyball involves pupils learning to be different sorts of players – a defender, an attacker, a server, and a

setter or link player – at different times throughout the game. Learning to become these sorts of players involves pupils understanding how these players work together in a well functioning team. By playing small sided games of volleyball – one versus one or two versus two – pupils can begin to feel what it is like to be each of these kinds of players at different times in the game.

To give pupils a sense of what it means to be an attacker rather than a defender or a server rather than a setter, I introduce at this point a *characteristic* of the game which brings these different sorts of players into relationship with each other. Teaching a key characteristic of the game of volleyball – in this lesson, a 3-touch system of play – through the notion of pupils being different sorts of players who are constantly in relationship with others, shifts the emphasis away from learning isolated skills, towards learning integrated patterns of play. The 3-touch system of play in volleyball, which usually comes after the serve, proceeds as follows: (1st touch) *defend* the ball; (2nd touch) *set* or link the ball up for your team-mate; and (3rd touch) *attack* the opponent's court by hitting the ball down over the net into the opponents' court. A feature of the game of volleyball is that pupils cannot catch the ball; rather, they have to rebound it off their hands and arms. In the early stages of playing the game, pupils have difficulty in rebounding the ball and will have more success if they catch the ball on the first or second touch. As they become more familiar with this pattern of play, pupils' confidence will increase when it comes to rebounding the ball. Regardless of their ability to rebound the ball, every pupil can get joy from trying to score a point by hitting the ball "like a striker" on the third touch and trying to defend the ball "like a goalkeeper" on the first touch. The serving action can be simplified and the distance away from the net can be reduced so that every pupil can experience what it feels like to be a successful server. Pupils have to learn to deal with the new physical, emotional and relational demands inherent in becoming these different sorts of players. By

introducing a point scoring system, pupils can measure their success in being servers, attackers, setters and defenders.

In addition to integrating a competitive element into individual lessons, teachers have to select intra- and inter-school competition formats which encourage pupils to have fun whilst playing at a level that is appropriate to their skill level. Such competition formats – often referred to as "festivals" because of their strong social emphasis – encourage maximum participation and acknowledge the efforts of all pupils regardless of their ability. As pupils gain in confidence and become familiar with playing in festivals, they can be encouraged to take on the organisation and running of them (Siedentop, 1994). As discussed earlier in this chapter, pupils benefit from being involved in these kinds of "culminating events" (Siedentop, 1994). They become important learning and teaching sites in themselves: by playing and exploring the game, taking on new roles, learning to work with others and deal with difficulties which arise during the course of playing at the festival, pupils build personal connections, develop new capabilities, and increase self knowledge. Given that the effects of playing in a festival are often long-lasting – generating shared memories to reminisce over, and a new energy and enthusiasm for learning more about the game – such events can also serve as a unifying focal point for pupils learning to play as a team.

9:3:5 Sharing what we have learnt with others

Though, throughout the volleyball lesson, pupils are given time to talk about and reflect upon their actions and feelings with others (peers or teachers), time also ought to be scheduled in at the end of the lesson for a conversation between pupils and teachers. As pupils cool down after playing volleyball, teachers can formally, or informally, ask them to recall any memorable moments they had during their games. When pupils (and teachers) feel good about themselves, they are often

more willing to talk about their feelings and accomplishments with each other. As Noddings (1984) suggests "receptive joy" often occurs "when we are caught up in a relation" (p.145). Here the *task* component of the lesson can be formalised. By asking pupils to write down some words or phrases that describe how they felt about what they learned, pupils (and teachers) not only get to hear what was significant about the lesson for each person, but also begin to create a shared language about what might constitute an emotional engagement in PE and sports. Such a working vocabulary becomes a useful resource for those pupils less able to put their feelings into words, by giving them access to the linguistic tools and conceptual frameworks that they require to more fully participate in these conversations. It also helps all pupils to reflect upon their experience of playing volleyball well, emotionally, physically and ethically. Such reflection is one of the gifts they take away from the lesson, and I have found that pupils often remember them as they re-enter the games hall for the next session. The self-knowledge that comes from such reflection, and the joy that it can generate, means that there will be many more pupils bounding into the hall, as opposed to dragging their heels, when next these pupils and teacher meet. Whilst reflecting, pupils often identify aspects of playing volleyball which teachers do not expect them to have learned from the lesson, or aspects that teachers have not thought of for themselves, and this can add to both pupils' and teachers' shared joys in new discoveries as they learn to work well with each other. As Noddings (2003) suggests:

> Not everything can be learned incidentally, but many things can be. Much of value sticks to us, as Robert Frost said, "like burrs" when we walk in the fields. There should be lots of free gifts in education, lots of aimless but delight-filled walks in the fields of learning. Although we agree there is more to happiness than Subjective Well-Being, it doesn't hurt to pause now and then and ask children and ourselves: How much fun are you having? (p.38)

9:4 Summary

In outlining a character education based on developing the joyful disposition, I prioritise the happiness of pupils and teachers when it comes to designing and implementing PE and sports programmes, and argue that in addition to nurturing "happy people" (Noddings, 2003), educating for good character through the cultivation of a joyful disposition also enhances the development of other "desirable dispositions" (Pincoffs, 1986). A key to teachers designing and implementing their own character education-based PE and sports programmes is that they recognise the moral educational importance of developing a joyful engagement in and though PE and sports. By nurturing such an engagement, teachers open a dialogue between themselves and their pupils which not only helps to shape their own and their pupils' character, but adds to their "felt satisfactions"(McNamee, 1995) of playing and teaching sports well. Though I use a sample volleyball lesson based on my own experiences and personal connections to the sport in order to show what such a character education programme might look like, teachers can bring their own sporting expertise and personal sensibilities to such an approach in order to adapt it to a range of different sports. They will only be able to educate for good character effectively, however, if they take seriously the importance of finding their own joys in teaching sports, and take a certain delight in creatively sharing these joys with their pupils. In the conclusion of this thesis, I briefly point to directions that further research in this area could take. I then speculate upon how the approach I have outlined in this chapter might be presented and taught in the context of Continuing Professional Development in PE provision, and then incorporated into PE and sports policy documentation.

Chapter Ten: Conclusions

As a result of a focus on the joyful disposition of the good sportsperson being taken for granted, its contribution to teaching and playing sports has remained under-researched and hence under-developed. Though I end this thesis with a sketch of a character education programme in PE and sports which focuses on the joyful disposition, this is but a beginning. I recognise that there needs to be further philosophical research into how such a programme might benefit pupils' and PE teachers' lives. I also recognise that in undertaking this research, the pleasure-related work of philosophers and theorists in other fields (Barthes, 1979; Kristeva, 1980; Nietzsche, 1974; Spinoza, 1958) would provide useful insights into what might constitute a joyful disposition in PE and sports, and where and how a focus on its development might help us to live our lives better. A deeper enquiry such as this also requires that more attention be paid to how the joyful disposition relates to the development of other dispositions which are equally associated with becoming a "morally" good sportsperson. Whilst most PE and sports scholars acknowledge that the majority of pupils can derive enjoyment from playing sports and that this is indeed desirable, there is little probing as to what kind of emotional involvement this might represent, and perhaps more importantly, how significant this kind of engagement might be to becoming a certain kind of sportsperson rather than another. By describing more fully what is meant by improving performance in terms of educating the emotions, we not only expand narrowly conceived notions of performance but begin to expand the role of the PE teacher beyond that of mere technicist, to encompass his or her moral role as an ethicist.

Sports' diversity and unpredictability, its potential for joy (and grief) and its moments of sheer physical exertion all combine to make it a vibrant and rich site

for educating for good character. By helping pupils to understand and deal more effectively with their emotions in the diverse and often intense circumstances that a participation in sports precipitates, teachers begin to shape a pupil's own involvement and ethical outlook in and through PE and sports. A good place for teachers to begin such an education is by locating where the "internal goods" (MacIntyre, 1985) of each sporting practice lie. In looking to the traditions within various sports, teachers can find some guidance as to what might be expected in terms of becoming a certain sort of sportsperson within a certain sporting practice. It follows that teachers have to be able to determine the appropriateness of certain sporting traditions over others when it comes to developing good character in each of their pupils. They have to bear in mind the age, ability, interest, and aspirations of their pupils and be prepared to challenge, where necessary, persisting stereotypes which continue to restrict male and female participation in certain sports.

It therefore matters a great deal "the sorts of persons" (Pincoffs, 1986) who teach PE and sports to young people. PE teachers must acknowledge the significant impact that they can have upon how pupils come to view their own involvement and ethical outlook in PE and sports. Given the important role that they can play in a pupil's life, teachers need to reflect upon *how* their actions and feelings affect pupils' active engagement and enjoyment in and through sports. By getting to know their pupils better in different contexts with different people, teachers can begin to build a more accurate picture of what pupils are like, and can also begin to judge what is appropriate in terms of developing each pupil's character and assessing whether (or not) each pupil is making moral progress.

In determining what might constitute the morally acceptable parameters of good character in PE and sports, teachers have to develop their own *phronesis* or

practical wisdom. The process of acquiring *phronesis* takes time and requires a willingness on the part of teachers – and by extension teacher educators – to acquire the required sensitivities and sensibilities that will help them to cope, and deal more effectively, with the complexities of those diverse situations they encounter with pupils. By learning to read situations more accurately – through discerning what are the ethically salient features in these situations – virtue-ethical approaches help teachers make informed decisions as to how to respond to pupils' actions and feelings in sometimes difficult circumstances. These kinds of approaches not only help to build teacher *phronesis;* they also help to build teachers' confidence when it comes to dealing effectively with a diverse range of situations involving their pupils.

Throughout this thesis I have therefore stressed the importance of developing teacher *phronesis* in part to promote and protect what *exceptional* teachers are already doing in terms of morally educating their pupils, but also to demonstrate to all PE teachers (as well as teacher educators) what is required in terms of support in becoming an effective moral educator in and through PE and sports. If Aristotle (1976) is right in that "all teaching starts from what is directly known" (p.207), then teachers have to be encouraged not only to build upon what they do know, but equally to explore what to them is unknown. This also means grappling with those aspects of moral education that are still being contested, as well as challenging their own and others' conceptions of what ought to be their moral role and their moral educative tasks with young people.

By providing Continuing Professional Development in PE (CPD-PE) opportunities that bring teachers together to talk about and reflect upon what might constitute playing and teaching sports well, teachers can begin to build a virtue language that can be used to morally educate their pupils. Through simple

conversations with pupils about how they feel and act in certain situations, teachers can use virtue language to begin to explore pupils' characters with them. In order to be able to effectively act upon what arises as a result of these conversations with pupils – in terms of identifying with pupils where further work is required – teachers have to be able to help them nurture and develop certain sorts of dispositions rather than others. By engaging in a process of teacher talk and reflection with colleagues – guided by a teacher facilitator who has some in-depth understanding of the tensions and issues surrounding developing pupils character in and through PE and sports – teachers can be given some guidance as to how to go about developing certain dispositions rather than others in their pupils and in so doing become aware of some of the misconceptions of what might constitute a good sportsperson.

How we go about recruiting those persons who can effectively facilitate teachers' moral talk and reflection is problematic. There is no direct link between persons being *exceptional* in one field (in this case, working with pupils) and being exceptional in another (in this case, working with colleagues). By removing those very persons who are *exceptional* in schools *from* their schools so that they can teach others how to do their jobs better, we risk impoverishing the moral educational realm that we have set out to strengthen. This, however, is an unfortunate short-term necessity in order that a good long-term moral educational solution is found. It also follows that not all *exceptional* teachers will want to leave their positions in schools to become teacher facilitators. These teachers should be encouraged to continue doing what they are already doing well with young people in our schools.

It is thus necessary that teacher education providers appoint as facilitators those *exceptional* teachers who are both able and willing to facilitate moral talk and

reflection with PE teachers, and moreover who are prepared to go through the educational process of learning how to effectively do this. In addition, they ought to be the sorts of persons who are able to recreate in a teaching and learning environment with fellow colleagues the same kinds of open and honest discussions that they have been enjoying with their pupils. They also have to be outward looking, willing to break the patterns of comfortable and often clichéd teacher-talk so that new horizons can be broached and then explored. By bringing teachers together to discuss the moral educational potential of new and existing pedagogical models and government-led initiatives in PE and sports, facilitators are at one level helping teachers to discern between the plethora of PE and sports initiatives "hitting" schools and sports clubs on a daily basis. They are also, however, encouraging teachers to reflect upon and talk about these choices in new and innovative ways, so that eventually, the ideas circulating in the field can shift, as can the programmes that evolve out of such shifts. At a more personal level, these facilitators – through being available to PE teachers, and hence able and willing to support them in their own teaching environments – can try to work through with teachers those specific areas, such as a conflict with a head teacher, with which they are having problems. Finally, through being personally involved with PE teachers in the designing and implementation of their character education programmes in and through PE and sports, facilitators become more aware of the wide range of successes and failures experienced by teachers as they struggle with this process. In other words, in helping PE teachers to develop their *phronesis*, these facilitators further develop their own *phronesis*. This means that though, for a period of time, these *exceptional* teacher-facilitator's schools may be deprived of their presence and input, they can return to their schools that much more equipped to continue their good work with pupils.

As for how we go about actually identifying those PE teachers who are not only *exceptional,* but who would fulfil this role of teacher-facilitator well, such a task requires no small amount of *phronesis* in itself. As I discovered whilst setting up the empirical component of this study, the task of recruiting appropriate candidates is not always an easy one, nor straightforward. What this experience has suggested to me, however, is that personal connections between teacher colleagues is a good starting point for revealing the sorts of persons who teachers themselves might consider to be suitable teacher-facilitators. This ability of teachers to self-select from amongst their own colleagues those teachers who they would like to see fulfilling this role ought not to be seen as the sole means of selection. Teacher contacts and connections can, however, serve as a rich initial recruitment site. As such, teachers' input on this matter ought to be taken seriously by teacher education providers when it comes to selecting teacher-facilitators.

Based on the views expressed by the teachers in this study and my own experience of working with over three hundred PE teachers and coaches in the secondary school environment, my sense is that most teachers (and coaches) *are* interested, and take seriously their role, in pupils' moral development. It is also my contention that they would welcome support in this important area. Teacher education providers' therefore need to address the current paucity of quality CPD-PE opportunities that exist for those teachers eager to further develop this aspect of their work. At the very least, teachers ought to be able to find opportunities within existing CPD-PE provision that encourage teacher talk and reflection about what might constitute a character education in PE and sports. These cannot be seen by teachers as one-off opportunities with no follow-on or follow-up. Rather, teachers need to be assured that there will be ongoing support for, and interest in, this aspect of their work. As suggested above, part of this support and interest

could come from facilitators working closely alongside them, and charting their respective successes and failures. It can equally take the form of ongoing workshops and courses run by these facilitators, or opportunities in which teachers get to work alongside those *exceptional* teachers in their schools who are not interested in becoming facilitators. What these various opportunities must have in common is a focus on developing teacher's moral talk and reflection for use in practical situations with their pupils.

As for how these opportunities can benefit pupils, in helping pupils to become good sportspersons in the fullest sense, teachers are helping them to develop their self-knowledge and personal connections. In so doing, teachers contribute towards their pupils' (as well as their own) happiness or personal flourishing. This latter, I argue, ought to be the ultimate goal of any character education in PE and sports. My final plea to PE and sports policy makers and to CPD-PE providers is thus to incorporate a fuller conception of what might constitute "the good sportsperson" into new and existing PE and sports programmes. In this way, policy makers and teacher educators can help to promote what already exists in terms of PE teachers' good work in this area and by extension, can help to expand upon what might constitute a PE teacher's moral role. They can also help to awaken all teachers to the importance of developing their own *phronesis* for effectively morally educating young people in and through PE and sports.

The nature and extent of *exceptional* PE teachers' ethical work with pupils not only enriches a range of sporting practices and contexts; it also extends beyond the confines of the PE and sports lesson, beyond the relationships created and nurtured in and through sports, and beyond the school and sporting context itself. Developing the self knowledge and personal connections that come of such an early experience of PE and sports can last a person a lifetime, helping this person

to find his or her own sources of joy, which in turn can significantly contribute to that person living a good life and living well with others.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Open Invitations to PE teachers in Gloucestershire

To all Secondary PE Teachers (24.5.04)

Dear Colleague,

Two opportunities for teacher education in June

(i) Focus Group Interviews (FGIs)

If you have been teaching PE for *more than 8 years* then this teacher education opportunity may be of interest to you. I am writing to ask if you would like to take part in ongoing research being undertaken at the University of Gloucestershire entitled 'The moral educational potential of sports.' My intention is to invite 14-16 secondary PE teachers to take part in one of two FGIs being arranged at the university.

The purpose of each focus group is to find out the ways PE teachers characterise the 'morally' good sportsperson and conceptualise the 'moral' role of the PE teacher. The data generated from this discussion will be used as part of my doctoral thesis.

Date: 17th or 21st of June Time: 3.30 to 5pm- *FGI*

Venue: University of Gloucestershire, Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester

(ii) Volleyball Workshop (Practical): New ideas and material for teaching volleyball to young people.

This workshop is *open to all secondary PE teachers*. Prior to the focus group interviews there will be the opportunity to take part in a practical volleyball workshop. The workshop is free and will explore material relevant to teaching volleyball as part of the NCPE.

- Introduction to some new concepts and ideas for teaching volleyball more creatively to young people.

- Exploration of movement fundamentals (balance, focus of weight and contact point).
- Introduction to simple tactics and strategies of attack and defence.

Date: 17th *or* 21st of June Time: 2-3 pm- *Volleyball Workshop*

Venue: University of Gloucestershire, Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester

If you are interested in both, or either, of these opportunities please fill in and return the tear off slip below to: Rona Brodie, University of Gloucestershire, Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW. To be received *no later than Friday the 11th of June.* On receipt of your letter indicating you wish to participate, confirmation will be by telephone to your school on either the 14th or 15th of June.

Kind regards

Rona Brodie

University of Gloucestershire

----------tear-off slip----------

I would like to attend the FGI and/or Volleyball Workshop on the following date : Thursday the 17th of June or Monday the 21st of June (please underline as appropriate)

Name:_____School/address:_____

_____

_____

tel nos_____email _____

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Appendix 2: Telephone Invitation (adapted from Krueger and Casey, 2000, p.94)

Name of Person:_____

Phone number:_____

Time called:_____

Better time to call:_____

Hi, my name is Rona Brodie and I'm with University of Gloucestershire. I am a research student working with the sport education department. I got your name from……., and she said you might be interested in what I am doing. I want to talk with PE teachers that have been teaching for more than eight years and are involved in after school sport. I am getting together a small group of about four to six PE teachers. I am trying to get ideas about what PE teachers think constitutes a 'morally' good sportsperson and what sorts of moral practices they use to present and teach sports effectively to pupils. It will be:

Date: Time (max. 2 hours):

Place: University of Gloucestershire, Oxstalls or FCH Campus

I recognise that your time is tight and I will be happy to do an in-service slot for your department on volleyball as a thank you for giving up your time. Would you be able to join us?

No _____ OK. Thanks for your time.

Yes_____ Great. I'd like to send you a letter just to confirm everything

Can I check (name and address). Great, I'll send out the letter and I look forward to seeing you at the discussion.

Appendix 3: Host teacher follow-up letter (sent by email)

Name and address of host teacher (x3)

Date (June –Dec 2003)

Dear _____

Phase 1 of Doctoral Research at University of Gloucestershire: Informal Group Interviews (August-December 2003)

Thank you for kindly agreeing to be involved in setting up an informal group interview to take place on .....The group interview will be run by myself and is expected to take 2 hours. The information gathered at this interview will be audio recorded and used only for the purposes of my doctoral research.

As agreed in our last 'phone call DATE I have included the following information for recruitment purposes.

Purpose of the interview

The purpose of the interview is to discuss informally the relationships between moral education and PE and sport

What is my thesis about?

This thesis seeks to clarify what it is be a morally good sportsperson. It explores what PE teachers have to say about being and become a good sportsperson and the factors that contribute to this.

What is my research designed to find out?

It aims to:

- gain an understanding of what might constitute a morally good sportsperson
- analyse the moral role of the PE teacher in PE and sports
- discuss existing good practice and guidelines for moral development of young people in and through PE and sports

Thank you again for your kind agreeing to host this group interview and I look forward to seeing everyone on _____

If you need to get in touch with me please contact me by email at _____ or by phone on_____

I will telephone you before the interview date to check on any point of clarification regarding the format of the interview.

Kind regards

Rona Brodie

(Research student: University of Gloucestershire)

Appendix 4: Small group interviews: questions and prompts

Introduction: (NAMES)

Background: (PHD title)

- what constitutes a "morally" good sportsperson
- what ought the moral role of teacher be
- what kinds of practices do PE teachers use to morally educate young people
- assess existing CPD-PE provision

The Interview format:

1hour 30mins with 15mins feedback at end

Discussion between group members

Get up move about

Audio recording and note taking

The Questions:

Q1. In 60 seconds tell us your name and something about your involvement in PE and sports?

Q2. In literature the term "morally" good sportsperson is used to describe someone who is "a good sport"…what is it to be a good sport? Prompt: What terms do you use and what do they mean to you?

Q3. [A creative thinking session] ….what character traits are you trying to get at in teaching young people to be a good sport/morally good sportsperson?

(LIST QUALITIES)

Q4. What qualities do you value most – are they valued in the PE curriculum/ethos of your school?

Q5. Who has influenced your conceptions of being or becoming "a good sport/morally good sportsperson?" Prompt: are you aware of any strong influences (or ethos) at university/ school / friends/family which helped shaped your picture of what a good sportsperson ought to be like? What qualities did you admire most in that person (ethos)?

Q6. Do you use certain personalities from class/sports/media to highlight ways in which sports should be played? Which ones and for what purpose?

Q7. What are your strengths and weaknesses in teaching PE and sports and do you see any of these characteristics appear in your own pupils?

Q8. What kind of sportspersons do you want to see playing sports well in PE *and* sports? Prompts: How do you specifically guide this process? [Praise, thanks, demonstrations, rules, expectations and rewards] Does it differ in different contexts?

Q9. How important is the moral task of the PE teacher and coach? (Atmosphere, environment).Prompt 1: Do you lead all sessions?

Q10. What ought to be expected from a PE teacher tin terms of developing a pupil's ethical outlook in PE and sports?

End of Interview

Summarise main points from the interview and ask participants if they agree with the summary. Thank participants and ask for feedback on the interview.

Is there anything to add or has been overlooked during the interview?

Is there consensus among those present as to the type of person a good sportsperson ought to be?

Appendix 5: Beginning the small group discussion (adapted from Krueger and Casey, 2000, p.107)

- welcome
- an overview of the area of research
- things that will help our discussion go smoothly
- introductions
- the first question

Good evening and welcome. Thanks for taking the time to join our discussion of what constitutes a moral education in PE and sports. My name is Rona Brodie and I am a research student at Gloucestershire University (mention own background in teaching). I am interested in the ways PE teachers characterise a morally good sportsperson and the moral practices you use towards promoting your own conception of the good sportsperson. I want to use what you say to inform provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for PE teachers.

You were invited because you are all PE teachers who have worked for a minimum of 8 years in a secondary school and have or currently been involved with taking pupils in after school sport. I want to tap into your experiences in teaching and presenting sports in PE and after school sports clubs. There are no right and wrong answers. I expect that you will have differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

I am tape-recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. No names will be included in any reports. Your comments are confidential. Keep in mind I am as interested in negative comments as positive

comments, and at times the negative comments are most helpful. If you want to follow up on something that someone said, you want agree, or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Don't feel you have to respond to me all the time. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. I am here to ask questions, listen, and make sure everyone has a chance to share. I am interested in hearing from each of you. So if you are talking a lot, I may ask you to give others a chance. And if you aren't saying much, I may call on you. I just want to make sure I hear from you all.

Feel free to get up and get more refreshments if you would like. Let's begin. Let's find some more about each other by going round the room one at a time. Tell us your name and something about your interest and involvement in PE and sports.

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Endnotes

[1] EUPEA, *Code of Ethics and Good Practice Guide for Physical Education* (Belgium: European Physical Education Association, 2002) and & British Institute of Sports Coaches: Code of ethics and conduct in appendix of Council, *Coaching Matters: A review of coaching and coach education in the United Kingdom*

[2] Sparkes (1992) offers us a way categorising teacher experience in terms of nine "life stage categories": a) Student teachers; b) Inductees-probationers (in first year of teaching); c) Early career (2-7 years); d) Mid – career (8-19 years); e) Late-career (20 years and still teaching PE); f) Retirement; i) Retried from PE but employed in schools; ii) Retired from career in teaching/school employment; iii) Career change (held a teaching position, and then decided to leave teaching for another profession). A. Sparkes, Templin, T. J., 'Life Histories and Physical Education Teachers: Exploring the Meanings of Marginalities.' in Research in Physical Education and Sport., ed. by A. C. Sparkes (London: Falmer Press, 1992), p.123

[3] On reflection, sending out an open circular to PE teachers in selected areas in Scotland may have worked better as a recruitment strategy than it did in Gloucestershire, given that both the host teacher and I were known to many of the PE teachers in these areas. However, I went with the host teachers' feelings that by-in-large, PE teachers did not read the volume of circulars that came into their departments. I found out later, during the feedback session with host teachers, that most participants had agreed to be involved in the interview because either the host teacher had asked them to or because they knew me well and wanted to support what I was doing. Had I known an experienced PE teacher in Gloucestershire who was willing to act as a host teacher, or had I myself been better known in the area, I might have attracted more teachers to attend the Gloucestershire interview sessions. Once again, what this reinforces is the need for personal connections and one-to-one contact when recruiting participants for studies.

[4] see Noddings (2002, pp. 118-130) for a fuller discussion of different types of interrelated conversations used in moral education.

[5] Following G.E.M. Anscombe's (1958) paper

[6] see Carr and Steutel, 1999, pp.3-18

[7] As already discussed in chapter five, there is a great deal of negative criticism levelled against virtue lists. Pincoffs (1986) argues that this is primarily due to the way Kohlberg's "bag of virtues" approach to moral education has been wrongly interpreted as haphazard and arbitrary, hence of little use when it comes to analysing human dispositions. He suggests that as a result of this negative attention, virtue lists and virtue talk have been passed over as important tools for educating for good character (p. 99).