

# The Four Marks of Holistic Kinesiology

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*What, to borrow a theological phrase, are the marks of a truly holistic kinesiology department? In Kinesis and the Nature of the Human Person (2010), I examined the theoretical impact of Aristotle's definition of kinesis and Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge on kinesiology. The intention here, however, is practical rather than theoretical. How would a holistic philosophy impact the day-to-day activities within the discipline of kinesiology? What tenets would a holistic department of kinesiology hold? What direction and aims would such a department have? Four areas of impact and reform are offered. First, kinesiologists should engage the humanities. A vibrant humanistic presence in the field will not only make kinesiology more holistic; it will give kinesiologists the tools to articulate a holistic understanding of the nature of the human person. Second, kinesiologists should recognize the importance of experience, practice, and apprenticeship within the field. Third, departments should embrace rather than shun specificity. Finally, kinesiologists are encouraged to acknowledge that a field dedicated to "physical activity" must require, engage in, and passionately profess the actual practice of "moving well."*

**Keywords** Philosophy, kinesiology, holism, epistemology

## The Four Marks of Holistic Kinesiology

Andrew Hawkins (2011) recently challenged sport philosophers to focus more attention on "what it's really all about." Hawkins' concern is that the "fragmentation [of] the disciplines" leaves kinesiologists with "little common purpose" (p. 261). In fact, Hawkins declares, "we have become so pragmatic that asking the big questions seems to get in the way of getting the job done. The trains are running on time; we just don't know where they're going" (p. 261). Hawkins is right on two counts. First, it is vitally important that kinesiologists think deliberately about where the discipline is going. Second, many kinesiologists seem curiously indifferent, or even hostile, to those who raise such philosophical questions. Nonetheless, if one pays attention, one sees that rival answers to this question have been offered.

Mark Latash (2008), a kinesiologist in the area of motor control, answered this question—where are we going?—by insisting that "The main challenge of motor control (and kinesiology in general) seems to be turning it into an exact science, just like physics" (p. 27). For Latash the materialistic and therefore scientific nature of kinesiology is simply a given. The quicker we acknowledge this reality the sooner we will make progress.

At about the same time, Scott Kretchmar (a colleague of Latash at Penn State) was arguing for a completely different destination. In contrast to Latash, Kretchmar suggests that kinesiology may be entering one of Kuhn's (1996) "paradigm shifts." Perhaps, Kretchmar (2007) surmises, "We need a paradigm shift, a revolutionary vision akin to the

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one that suggested that the earth was not, in fact, the center of the universe” (p. 378). This destination requires that we move beyond a materialistic (or idealistic) self-understanding, towards a holistic self-conception. For Kretchmar kinesiology is a human field, neither independent of, nor reducible to science. In fact, “Not only do cells implicate ideas, but ideas in turn have cells written all over them” (p. 378).

Which of these two contending conceptions (represented by these archetypes) is correct? How should we conceptualize the nature of the field? Where *should* we go? What difference would it make? In two previous *Quest* articles, “Kinesis and the Nature of the Human Person” (2010), and “What is Kinesiology? Historical and Philosophical Insights” (2012), I tried to answer these questions on a theoretical level. I made the case that by using the work of two philosophers, Aristotle and Michael Polanyi, kinesiologists could lay the groundwork for a robust, broad, self-confident, and holistic discipline. In essence, I argued that it is Kretchmar who is right. This new foundation is vital because to a very large degree the history of kinesiology indicates that the field remains unsettled and in need of clarification. To reiterate Hawkins (2011), we still do not know where we are going.

In the first article, I used Aristotle’s conception of *kinesis* to show just how fundamentally important motion is to human *being*:

Motion, according to Aristotle, is not the mere dislocation of mass in space. Instead, Aristotle argues that there are four basic types of *kinesis* that correlate to the type of change we see in the world. Change of quality, change of quantity, change of place, and change of being. However, motion is not synonymous with change, but rather a co-extensive means by which that change occurs. . . . Although human movement relies on physics and chemistry, it is not reducible to a biomechanical phenomenon. Rather human movement is an organic phenomenon born of the reality of the entire being (i.e., the being-at-work of the entire organism). (Twietmeyer, 2010, p. 136)

Both materialistic and dualistic understandings of the human person fail. Motion is not “physical” but born of the entire organism. Human beings are wholes, not mere bodies:

Living things are more than bodies; they are organized self-maintaining wholes. Such organization, though it requires material, is not reducible to material. This organization is a being-at-work-staying-itself, and that is exactly what Aristotle says the soul is. The soul is the being-at-work of, or more traditionally if inadequately put, the form of the body. (Twietmeyer, 2010, p. 143)

Human being is a type of activity whereby our identity is maintained by and through change. Movement literally allows us to maintain our identity as living human beings. Kinesiology (the study of human movement) is anything but a trivial discipline:

For human beings, motion is a fundamental aspect of human nature, encompassing all that human beings are and do. To cease moving, in this richer Aristotelian sense, is not simply to become sedentary, but to cease being human. It is death. (Twietmeyer, 2010, p. 138)

Nutrition, for example, is necessary to remain a living human person. Without this type of activity humans cannot remain alive. In Aristotelian language, nutrition is one example of how humans *stay-themselves* by *being-at-work*. Human life is dynamic rather than static.

Interestingly, even if one focuses solely on nutrition, one can still see the holistic nature of human being, for nutrition is as much a function of heritage, culture, and sociology, as it is geography, physiology, and biology.<sup>1</sup> To summarize, Aristotle's insights indicate that the human being is an *organic whole*, whose entire being is dependent upon *kinesis*. If this is true, then the currently dominant materialistic assumptions in the field of kinesiology are an insufficient foundation upon which to proceed.

Polanyi's (1962) insights cause the plausibility of a materialistic foundation for kinesiology to crumble further. Knowledge, he argues, is born of the knower, who cannot help but rely on fiduciary commitments in his pursuit of truth. "To avoid believing," Polanyi asserts, "one must stop thinking" (p. 314). Trust and authority are basic ingredients of all knowledge. To explain this rather simple assertion he advanced a triadic theory of knowledge. This triadic theory was a description of "from-to" knowledge. The triad consisted of the self, subsidiaries, and focal point(s). The self (a person), reached out to engage and understand part of the world (the focal point) through the subsidiaries she had acquired (habits, skills, experience, culture, etc.). Understanding truth was a matter of skilled acquisition. Access to truth was impossible outside of acculturated experience and apprenticeship. "To learn by example," Polanyi reminds us, "is to submit to authority" (p. 53). It is for this very reason that tradition is so important. Knowledge, though dependent upon individual skill and engagement, is impossible without either community or belief. To summarize again, *all knowledge* depends upon culture.

Such thinking moderates the tension between scientists and humanists within the field of kinesiology, for neither area of inquiry has epistemic superiority to the other, because both types of inquiry rely on trust, authority, and skill. Yet although a re-conception of *kinesis* and epistemology within the field of kinesiology leaves room for reconciliation, it does not require it. Reconciliation must be initiated by the membership and leadership of the field of kinesiology. This is why a deliberate examination of the field's foundation is so important. If holism is correct, if reconciliation between the sciences and the humanities is not only possible but necessary, then kinesiology must begin articulating a vision of kinesiology as a reconciled holistic discipline.

The insights of Aristotle and Polanyi are so important because they indicate that a materialistic definition of kinesiology is not self-evident. Therefore, insofar as kinesiology has taken a materialistic self-understanding for granted, the field's self-understanding is ripe for reappraisal. But this begs a very simple question. What measures should be used to evaluate the health of a kinesiology department? In other words, what practical impact do the technical insights of Aristotle and Polanyi have and how would these insights be implemented? What difference would an embrace of their thinking have on the field of kinesiology? What would an alternative foundation—one that was truly holistic—look like? It is obvious, then, that my intention here is no longer theoretical. Rather, the goal is to use the theoretical foundation provided by Aristotle and Polanyi to address the *practice* of kinesiology by providing benchmark principles upon which to shape the future of the discipline.

How might this be done? Aristotle's understanding of the nature of *kinesis* as well as Polanyi's epistemology suggest four practical ways—four marks if you will—of a truly holistic kinesiology department. First and foremost kinesiology departments must encourage an explicitly holistic self-understanding through a direct and sustained engagement with both the humanities and the sciences. Second, kinesiology departments must develop a renewed appreciation of the central role played by experience (skill) and practice in kinesiology. Third, kinesiology departments must embrace definitional specificity. Finally, kinesiology departments must see the performance of physical activity as central

to their mission—including requiring the actual practice of skilled, culturally resonant movement forms, in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

It goes without saying that such a proposal will be controversial. That does not mean, however, that the pursuit of an operational understanding of “orthodoxy” in kinesiology is mistaken. The boundaries and philosophical presuppositions of the field can either be implicit or explicit, but they can never be eliminated. Kinesiology is too important to continue to blow around in the philosophic wind. The nature and purpose of kinesiology must be deliberately examined. So being, I welcome challenges, disagreement, and debate.

### Mark #1: Holism & the Humanities

For the whole must be prior to the part. Separate hand or foot from the whole body, and they will no longer be hand or foot except in name . . . . (Aristotle, 1981, p. 60; 1253a19).<sup>2</sup>

*Kinesiologists must embrace a multi-dimensional approach to human locomotion that embraces both the humanities and the sciences.* As Aristotle insisted, the nature of *kinesis* cannot be understood if it is reduced to math, physics, and chemistry. Human locomotion is intentional and therefore bound up in ethics and values, as much as it is in biology. Human beings are not static things, but rather dynamic rational organisms (beings-at-work). Human beings are soul-filled *creatures* who yearn, hope, and desire. Human beings are also indisputably historical beings. They have ancestors, and therefore a heritage that is both biological and cultural. Our ideas are not fully our own. Ideas are born in part as the result of our predecessors’ ideas, language, and values.<sup>3</sup> Inheritance is inescapable. Deliberate engagement with one’s culture and heritage would then seem to be a mark of education and responsibility.

*Kinesis* cannot be properly understood if it is de-contextualized from the whole of human life. Our being is not static and fixed but rather *alive*. It is in and through motion that humans remain what they are. No account of self-directed locomotion makes sense without perception and desire. Consequently, the kinesiological humanities must receive a greater role in departmental curricula. Ideas, values and culture profoundly affect human motion and physical activity, just as physiology and anatomy do.

It must be emphasized that this is not a call for the humanities to overtake the sciences in kinesiology. Nor is it an attempt to avenge previous slights, but rather a call to reconciliation.<sup>4</sup> The aim is to point out the complementary and necessary role of the humanities in departments of kinesiology. Culture, even in the sciences, is ubiquitous. As philosopher Doug Anderson (2002) declares, “To know the mechanics of hitting tennis balls effectively, but be ignorant of Arthur Ashe’s social battles, is to be an incomplete kinesiologist” (p. 91). In other words, it is in scientists’ self-interest to embrace and defend the role of the humanities in kinesiology. Similarly, if the tables were turned, humanists should embrace and defend the vital importance of scientific inquiry to the field of kinesiology. A proper understanding of human *kinesis* needs both types of inquiry.

Yet, it is the humanities that are currently being ignored in our discipline. This is most unfortunate for although human inheritance is biological, chemical, and physical, it is also cultural, intellectual, and metaphysical. Questions regarding the import, meaning, and value of kinesiology will not and cannot be answered by turning solely to the sciences. In fact, such an assertion only makes sense within the confines of a strict commitment to scientific materialism, a worldview, that is a *philosophy*, in which atoms and void are the sum total of

reality and human consciousness is a mere epiphenomenon of underlying chemical machinery. To say that materialism is a philosophy is not to make a pedantic point. On the contrary it is vitally important. Materialism, whether true or false—and I am fully convinced it is false—is born of commitment, not detached objective observation. That is not to say that knowledge is mere commitment, but that commitment is inescapable. To the degree that we find the truth, we always find it as situated and cultured human beings.

In other words, all commitments (even scientific ones) rely on ideas, values, and meanings. Because of the vital role that such commitments play in understanding the human person, to which the “study of human movement” is dedicated, every kinesiology undergraduate program should have as part of the required curriculum a vigorous engagement with the humanities (e.g., history, philosophy, sociology, literature, etc.). This should apply across sub-disciplines; to students in athletic training as much as to students in teacher preparation.

Although I have personal biases regarding curriculum content,<sup>5</sup> the particular organization of such an engagement with the humanities could be done effectively in many ways. For instance a cross-disciplinary structure could integrate epistemological, ontological, and scientific questions directly into a single course. A course designed around the topic of “encouraging physical activity” for example, could provide ample opportunity to investigate the role of the humanities in kinesiology.

A more traditional disciplinary model could also be followed. Courses in history, psychology, philosophy, literature, or sociology would be added to the existing curriculum, and then would be required across all majors within the department. However, specific curriculum decisions are a function of interest or expertise, and should therefore be left in the hands of the kinesiology departments themselves. Department faculty and department heads know their own programs, goals, and resources.

Nevertheless, the claim that the humanities are vital may still seem questionable to some.<sup>6</sup> What value is there in having history, philosophy, and the “soft” sciences of sociology and psychology in departments of kinesiology? Why are these sub-disciplines so important to kinesiology? In short, the humanities are vital because they recognize the essential role of the human, the local, and the idiosyncratic in the study of human movement. Although explicit cases could be built for each area of the humanities, for the sake of brevity, an expanded defense of only history and philosophy will be offered.

History matters in kinesiology because it allows students to engage their heritage and see where ideas—both within and without the discipline—came from. Too often, such ideas are merely taken as self-evident. The study of history centers students within an intellectual and cultural tradition which gives them a sense of context; a sense that they are, as Aristotle continually pointed out, born into the middle of things. Students of history learn that they belong, for both better and for worse, to a tradition.

History sheds light on both human virtues and human failings. History allows students to see that the human story is a story of choices, choices that were made, and choices that must continue to be made regarding what matters in life, and what it means to be a human being. Similarly, the future of kinesiology is also bound and defined by human choices that may be either wise or foolish. Since such choices cannot be avoided, it would be wise then to try and make informed choices.

A student who has no appreciation of the historical character of human culture will be hamstrung when addressing the types of practical problems they encounter as kinesiologists. That is, they will be ill-informed. For example, one might consider how a recent kinesiology graduate would go about changing attitudes and behavior among their students or clients regarding proper diet and nutrition. Changing such behavior is not just a

matter imparting knowledge regarding caloric intake. Nor is it merely a function of rational argumentation.<sup>7</sup> Nutrition is certainly a matter of science, but *it is also a matter of culture, values, and tradition*. People eat what they eat because of how and where they were raised, because of habits, because of memories they associate with certain foods, even because of their deepest convictions.<sup>8</sup> To change a person's diet is not merely a matter of addressing the science of caloric intake and expenditure, or of convincing "minds" that a healthy diet is in their own best interest. It is a matter of engaging *people* who are situated, cultured, and value-laden beings.

It is appropriate then, to reflect on—that is philosophize about—how such human choices are made. By learning to think philosophically, students attempt to contextualize and evaluate how such choices—whether about nutrition, exercise adherence, or even the proper role of youth sport in society—*should be made* in the future. In fact such philosophical choices are unavoidable. The only question is *how* they are made. Convictions regarding the nature of reality, the scope and limits of knowledge, as well as the nature of the human person, all deeply influence how one thinks about the field of kinesiology. What is motion? What is a human being? What does it mean to know? How and why does kinesiology promote the human good? The humanities, in short, are a direct engagement with, and call to, human responsibility.

Scientific research is also engaged in serving such a call, but in a different way. Through systematic experimentation, scientists attempt to understand the world. Such understanding improves human lives; by improving humanity's ability to alter and improve conditions in the world. However, scientists take the nature of human responsibility for granted; at least in terms of being a course of formal study within their discipline. In other words, scientific data can influence normative conclusions, and give evidence in support of certain normative conclusions, but it cannot ultimately decide between differing normative conclusions.

Likewise, scientific understanding can offer solutions to many pressing human problems. But that only furthers the point. Scientific research, as Polanyi insists, is not done in a vacuum. No matter how vital science is in solving the world's problems, pressing human problems cannot be *identified as problems* through the writing of a complex equation or through looking into a microscope. Scientific progress offers the possibility of solutions, but does not demand them. Scientific progress absent moral progress is at best impotent.<sup>9</sup> Scientific inquiry is intimately tied to human concerns because science is a human enterprise. Philosophy is integral to the scientific enterprise.

Studying the humanities helps students realize that all inquiry relies upon a cultural and intellectual foundation beyond the scope of any individual. Inquiry relies on a community that is necessarily broader than the particular expertise of the inquirer. Scientists constantly rely on colleagues' research and expertise without which they could not conduct their own research. Polanyi (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975), a world class scientist himself, described the idea this way: "Scientists must rely heavily for their facts on the authority they acknowledge their fellow scientists to have" (p. 185). Humanists are no different. They rely on each other's work when looking for inspiration and ideas, as well as interpretation, insight, and the vocabulary needed to speak about a particular problem. The simple matter of translation makes this abundantly clear. For most, exposure to Dostoevsky, for instance, must rely on the knowledge, skill, and insight of others.

However, this dependence is broader than a merely intra-disciplinary parochial reliance. Both scientists and humanists also rely on one another. Science is philosophically committed. Philosophy is scientifically bound. Scientists cannot escape how they *should* approach their research and how it *should* be used. Philosophers cannot ignore



scientific insight. To do so, would be to create a philosophy of no real value, born merely of dreams.<sup>10</sup> Both philosophers and scientists are bound to directly engage experience in the world, even if their interpretations of the meaning of that engagement will sometimes conflict. Although academic departments may be compartmentalized, human life is not.

Kinesiology, rightly understood, is in a unique position to demonstrate this mutual dependence to the rest of the Academy. Unfortunately many kinesiologists have philosophically misconstrued experience by believing that human motion and human beings are adequately described by a purely material world. One outcome of this type of worldview is the explicit doubt of any truth claims that are not “objective,” or that are not based on direct observations or careful measurements. According to such thinking, only quantifiable data count. Since intangibles such as love, or truth, or justice cannot be measured they are not real. The results of this philosophy are obvious. If the claims of materialism are true, the need for the humanities in kinesiology is dubious at best.

Despite widespread dedication to materialism in kinesiology departments, no human inquiry can proceed without commitment and trust. The ultimate foundation of knowledge is belief not doubt. Intangibles make the world of tangible inquiry possible. No individual can hold, understand, and verify all knowledge. No person has the intellectual capacity, memory, or time to learn and verify all human knowledge. All inquiry, therefore, no matter how critical, proceeds on a necessarily a-critical foundation. For example, one cannot learn language without accepting its rules. One cannot accept the rules of language and critically analyze them at the same time. For the very concept of critical analysis is language bound. Therefore, skepticism cannot be an ultimate epistemic principle. “Strict skepticism,” Polanyi (1962) insists, “should deny itself the possibility of advocating its own doctrine, since its consistent practice would preclude the use of language, the meaning of which is subject to all the notorious pitfalls of inductive reasoning” (p. 315).

The a-critical foundation upon which all knowledge is built, is formed out of the local culture, values, and language of the knower. Polanyi (1962) is blunt in making this point: “To postpone mental decisions on account of their conceivable fallibility would necessarily block all decisions for ever, and pile up the hazards of hesitation to infinity. It would amount to voluntary mental stupor. Stupor alone can eliminate both belief and error” (pp. 314–315). It is high time—especially in a field as ripe with cross-disciplinary opportunities as kinesiology—that scientists and humanists begin to admit their codependence.

This type of cross-disciplinary respect will only flower in departments that have adopted a holistic self-understanding.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately this call to include human values, purposes, and meanings has all too often been neglected in departments of kinesiology. Yet, even when ignored, stewardship plays a necessary role in human life. Today’s kinesiologists are temporary caretakers of the discipline, a discipline they inherited, a discipline they will leave behind. Human beings carry, for a little while, a torch left to them, that they—in turn—must leave to others:

The social order was built, maintained, and left to us not just by a vague and nameless antiquity but by particular people, within living memory, whose serial deaths link us to the past. We receive the buildings they put together, the languages they spoke, the books they wrote, the ideas they had, the economic opportunities they made possible, the moral consequences of the things they did, the memories they left in us—just as others will receive ours. (Bottum, 2007, p. 24)

Kinesiology, no matter how much some kinesiologists may try to ignore the fact, is not free of this historical reality. Only a naively “whiggish” (Butterfield, 1965) interpretation of the history of kinesiology, would assume that the present configuration of kinesiology is inherently superior to the past.<sup>12</sup> Both progress and regress are possible. Kinesiology, like any discipline, is a philosophically and historically laden field. Debates regarding the nature and purpose of the field, as the work of Roberta J. Park (1980, 2005) clearly demonstrates, go back to the very founding days of the discipline in the United States. As was discussed in *Kinesis and the Nature of the Human Person*, the history of the philosophy of the human person is equally rich.

Philosophic arguments have been and continue to be employed in kinesiology. Therefore, a well educated student of kinesiology must be conversant in the history and the philosophy of kinesiology. This, in turn requires at the least, an introductory engagement with philosophy and history as such. *Kinesis* engages the whole human being. Kinesiology departments, if they are to understand human movement, must also engage the whole human being!

## Mark #2: Experience, Practice, Apprenticeship

All knowing is personal knowing—participation through indwelling. (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, p. 44)

*Kinesiologists must embrace the centrality of skill(s) to the discipline.* The humanities give kinesiologists the tools necessary to see the full range of possible futures open to the discipline. Polanyi forcefully demonstrates that these evaluative tools are only gained through apprenticeship and practice. What is obvious to the scientist is missed by the laymen. What is obvious to the plumber is missed by the scientist. The master embodies knowledge that the novice does not. Apprenticeship and training literally opens up whole new arenas of knowledge. Through skill acquisition, the student learns to see what was unseen before. It is vital, then, that kinesiologists reject the materialistic claim that knowledge is a self-evident matter of “bare facts” that requires no skills, judgment, or adjudication. Kinesiologists must be willing to stand up for the power of practical, inarticulate, and embodied knowledge. “Know-how” is born of human experience and human experience cannot be entirely encapsulated by textbooks or procedure manuals.

As a consequence, skill is central to knowledge. The student absorbs knowledge through emulation and observation, as much as through explicit instruction. Because so much of what is learned is non-verbal, embodied non-verbal skills are understood as legitimate knowledge forms. If this is correct, physical education and kinesiology cannot be accused, on the grounds of being primarily “non-verbal” and “non-theoretical,” of being inherently inferior knowledge domains.

A new attitude towards experience and practice is possible. Knowledge is not the impersonal accretion of the explicit and the measurable. Skills, connoisseurship, and the inarticulate have a rightful place at the foundation of knowledge. Expertise is a matter of growth. It is a matter of *kinesis*, a movement from ignorance to insight that requires time, effort, and trust. Expertise in any given domain is a skill-set acquired by situated and historical beings in the world. Knowledge is an art *embodied in the personal skill of the knower*.

To become an exercise scientist, for example, is more than merely assenting to the appropriate theories. Rather, it is to engage, soak up, and learn the techniques, perception, values, and intuitions of the discipline. It is to learn from and then become part of a



community. Similarly, in the performing arts becoming a dancer is more than mastering the pronunciation of *plié* or *relevé*. A dancer must learn to embody the *plié*, *from which* they reach out *to* the rich world of self-expression offered through dance. Neither the dancer nor the scientist can see as much during their apprenticeship as they will upon achieving mastery of some of the central skills of the discipline. Both empirical observation and artistic expression are dependent on the development and refinement of skills. Such skills, such knowledge, literally move the knower. They are changed. They are liberated to do more, see more, and understand more than they had before. This has two important implications. First, there is no need for kinesiologists to defend themselves by hiding behind theory. Second, activity classes, student teaching, internships, practicums, and clinical experience are absolutely vital to the field.

Of course, some might argue that although skills are central to all knowledge domains, the importance of some skill domains trump the importance of others. Is it not the case that kinesiology students should be more skilled at scientific research than that they are skilled at sport? Is it not clear that science is more important than sport? In a general sense, there is much truth to this point. Certainly education is about learning *important* skills, and this mandates serious reflection on the question of “what counts as important?” However, good philosophical reflection on the nature and role of *kinesis* in human lives demands a reconsideration of the *importance* of supposedly trivial skills such as those found in tennis.

Being highly skilled at tennis, may in some senses be inferior to being highly skilled at scientific research, but not in every sense.<sup>13</sup> Traditionally, the university has been dedicated—in principle if not always in practice—to respecting the breadth of human excellence. It is true that the exact nature of human beings and human excellence remain matters of contention. It is also true that lines need to be drawn. However, despite these difficulties, most academics have no trouble agreeing on the importance of the “renaissance” principle that overspecializing in one type of insight warps human development. Universities are (at least theoretically) interested in the *universitas*, the whole. They are in the business of creating good people not just good scientists . . . or good tennis players.<sup>14</sup>

The recognition of the common role skill plays in knowledge domains should only deepen this holistic respect. Tennis, although it does not have the gravitas that scientific research does, is still a source of rich personal human meaning. Therefore “tennis” is not justified on the grounds that it produces important things, just as music, art, and theatre are not justified on the grounds that they *produce* important things. These practices are so fascinating and meaningful that they are justifiable and important in and of themselves. Such meaning is *intrinsically* valuable and should not be easily dismissed. Nor should the potential instrumental goods such skills provide be dismissed. Tennis certainly has the potential to increase health, lower stress, and build community. Although at first glance this reasoning may appear insignificant in the face of scientific research that can cure disease and ease suffering, further reflection on the point suggests otherwise. As I have said elsewhere (2007):

Play is one of the reasons humans want to live. In other words, we consider starvation, disease, and death bad things, only because we consider life worth living. But on what grounds is life worthwhile? I would argue that play is fundamental or elemental in nearly all of them. Joy, art, games, sport, humor, music, spirituality, are arguably all deeply informed by play or its implications. (p. 208)

Obviously scientific research is also often pursued on such meaningful levels. The point is not to elevate tennis over science. The point is to insist that intrinsic goods should trump

the crudely utilitarian motivations that often underlie the claim that some skills are more important than others. Finally, it is worth remembering that one set of skills need not come at the expense of others. Disciplines often interpenetrate, facilitate, and affect one another. The university should be dedicated to developing the whole person. Both science and “play” deserve an important place at the table in departments of kinesiology and in the Academy as a whole.

If skills, apprenticeship, and practice are at the roots of human knowing, then physical education and kinesiology are—insofar as they teach skills—a legitimate domain of human knowledge. Athletic and recreational skills are no less significant than the skills found in the arts or the sciences. To be a physically educated person is to live in a richer world, a world full of experiences, opportunities, and environments that are unavailable to the uneducated. The quality of life of a child is clearly threatened by illiteracy. So too, a child’s quality of life is threatened by kinesthetic illiteracy.<sup>15</sup>

These insights into the centrality of skill to knowing should also help kinesiologists see value in areas outside their own realm of expertise,<sup>16</sup> which in turn should help them embrace a broader conception of knowledge and research. This would directly affect the hiring and tenure process as well as the prestige of clinical faculty/instructors. If skills, particularly non-verbal skills are essential to knowledge, then they should also be considered as valid academic qualifications in sub-disciplines built on cultivating those types of skills. If an artist can receive tenure by demonstrating mastery of a particular medium, why should a pedagogist (who is in the business of teaching skills, just as the art professor is) be evaluated on the basis of empirical research alone (Kretchmar, 2005)? It would seem in pedagogy at least, that there should be other relevant measures of scholarly output besides traditional research. To demand that a pedagogist master empirical research before being taken seriously as a scholar is to misunderstand the nature of knowledge. It is to deify “knowing that” and to undervalue “knowing how.” It follows then that kinesiology departments should consider, where applicable, a broadening of the scholarly evaluation of faculty.

Although kinesiologists should be generalists in spirit, who respect the insights and research methodologies of the other sub-disciplines of kinesiology, there are important reasons to insist on continuing the practice of specialization within field. If mastery of skills is central to attaining knowledge, and if apprenticeship builds skill over time, then specialization is vital in higher education. Connoisseurs are not generalists. Mastery requires specificity.

### **Mark #3: Specificity**

Each citizen acquires a thousand sons, but these are not one man’s sons; any of them is equally the son of any person, and as a result will be equally neglected by everyone. (Aristotle, 1981, p. 108; 1261b42)

*Kinesiologists must embrace definitional specificity.* Reflecting on the nature of connoisseurship indicates how important this is. Abstract definitions of the field’s core such as “physical activity” have severe limitations; at least insofar as these definitions are a retreat from, or are uncomfortable with, the specific activities that actually make up the field. To be committed to “movement” absent of content, is a function of rationalization; be it political, educational, or ontological.<sup>17</sup> A passionate commitment to “movement” is impossible, just as a passionate commitment to “humanity” is impossible. One cannot

love all people “without first loving particular, individual humans” (Twietmeyer, 2007, p. 206). No one is passionate about, nor an expert in abstractions. Sport philosopher Scott Kretchmar (2008) makes the case this way: “Likewise, we rarely hear anyone say that they have fallen in love with movement. I’m not even sure what that would be like! But we do understand people who say they are golfing fanatics, skiing enthusiasts, distance runners, or that they fell in love with table tennis” (p. 10). If kinesiologists are going to be passionate they need to have something tangible around which to rally. Passion is a function of relationships. Passion is a function of holding something valuable in common. Knowledge, as we have seen, relies on apprenticeship and community. It relies on time and devotion. To be an expert is to dedicate one’s attention to something specific. It follows that specificity, not abstraction, should be kinesiologists’ mantra. A core, if it is to have any gravitational pull (unity, inspiration, passion) cannot be afraid of specific content.

Yet, despite the real weaknesses of abstraction, such thinking is still dominant in kinesiology today. There are two commonly used objections to the claim that a more specific core such as “games, play, and sport” is better for kinesiology than more abstract definitions of the core. First, following Newell (1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 2007), critics of specificity argue that “games, play, and sport” is too narrow of a definition. These critics allege that embracing such a definition excludes too many activities that should be a part of kinesiology. Furthermore, such a narrow focus would stunt research opportunities by all but eliminating theoretical research in the field. Under a “games, play, and sport” paradigm the kinesiological sciences would be limited to applied research that investigates “sport” or closely related phenomena.

Second, it is charged that moving away from “games, play, and sport” is politically advantageous. Games, play and sport do not sell well, particularly in the Academy. More “academic,” more abstract names and titles, such as “kinesiology” and “physical activity” give the field much needed respect. In turn, this respect makes the procurement of scarce resources in higher education that much easier to achieve.

What then, given the clear logic of these criticisms, could a defender of a “games, play, and sport” model be thinking? First, that some types of “physical activity” always are, and always should be, excluded from departmental and school curricula. It makes no sense to be all things to all people. It is philosophically and practically impossible. If that is the case, what then is our *core*? Games, play, and sport, though still abstractions, though still problematic, seem to be the most honest and accurate representation of the heart of the field.

Second, the proponents of the “games, play, and sport” model would insist that the terminology indicates the embrace of specificity, not a dogmatic or rigid commitment to exclusion. It is both practically justifiable and philosophically consistent to say that surrounding a “games, play, and sport” core would be other similar and culturally resonant physical activities such as exercise, and dance. It would also be philosophically consistent to say that a “games, play, and sport” model *summarizes* the core of kinesiology without encompassing all of it. Dance—for example—would be a core element without being named every time the core is mentioned.

Of course, under such a defense of the “games, play, and sport” paradigm, it might be rightly pointed out that “physical activity” is a more succinct and less clumsy placeholder for the field. If physical activity, and this is key, is understood as a *placeholder for* rather than a *retreat from* the specifiable and culturally resonant recreative activities that make up the field, then this criticism is exactly on target. It is activities such as baseball, and square dance, and fly fishing, and jogging that are the core of kinesiology. The key point is to focus on the centrality and intrinsic importance of the activities themselves. The inter-relationship

between, as well as the fundamental importance of these activities—in *their various particular forms*—is arguably clearer the more specific the core is. But ultimately terminology is unimportant if the commitment to the indispensability of the underlying specific activities remains.

In other words, terminology does not matter as much as the motivation for using it. The key is not to banish “physical activity” or “movement” from kinesiology. The key is to see that a holistic kinesiology department will use these words as convenient placeholder terms that stand in for and summarize the *specific activities* that are the core of the discipline. Although still deeply important concepts in the field, their importance would be moderated by the fact that much of the time “physical activity” and “movement” are actually less accurate descriptions than “games, play, and sport” of the actual practice of skilled *human kinesis* in the discipline of kinesiology.

Although admitting “games, play, and sport” entrance into the core of kinesiology is imperfect, it is far superior to an ambiguous and abstract interpretation of the term “physical activity.” As currently understood, “physical activity” all too often suggests *in its very ambiguity*, that particularity, human experience, and human culture are insignificant concerns for kinesiologists.<sup>18</sup> Such ambiguity also implies that what *really matters* is the abstract, the generalizable, and the measurable. A commitment to “physical activity” seems indifferent to the content and context of the activities that make up the core of the field. In contrast, though “games, play, and sport” might not hit every descriptive nail in the field on the head, they undoubtedly hit three of the most important.<sup>19</sup>

Let us consider what “physical activity” looks like absent such reforms. Newell (1990b) argues that physical activity should be “very broadly defined” (p. 247). Following Newell, the textbook definition of physical activity in *Introduction to Kinesiology* (2000) is, “intentional, voluntary movement directed toward achieving an identifiable goal,” which includes “typing, handwriting, sewing, and surgery” (Hoffman & Harris, p. 8). To call kinesiology’s core “physical activity” in this sense leaves open for potential study every single activity a human person engages in. How is this preferable? When “physical activity” is understood in this way, direct associations between kinesiology and sport, recreation, or exercise, are left with only two possible explanations. Either an association between kinesiology and sport is implicitly taken for granted though never actually justified by the terminology; or in the name of logical consistency, the relationship is explicitly reduced to contingency, a historical anachronism.

Neither situation is healthy. The first is too precarious, for it lacks any philosophical justification of the relationship between kinesiology and sport. If the relationship is in fact solid, then why play word games when describing the core? The second scenario is born of this ambiguity and acts like a cancer slowly consuming and destroying a once healthy relationship between kinesiology, sport, and exercise. This cancer will not ultimately be satisfied by the mere concession of contingency, for a contingent relationship is, after all, an unnecessary relationship.

Therefore there is no reason to believe that an ambiguous core, that constantly requires cutting away the largess of its own ambiguity, is healthier than having a specific, but not all-encompassing core. It is better to be precise if slightly inaccurate, than to make both accuracy and precision irrelevant by making the target so big that any physical activity hits the bull’s-eye. This is particularly true when the field of kinesiology seems to be on the verge of disintegration (Rikli, 2006). How exactly will “physical activity” hold kinesiology together? How well has “physical activity” as traditionally understood held kinesiology together? If physical activity is such powerful glue, why do so many fractures and fissures in the field remain?

If one turns one's attention to the question of research, it must be conceded that the scenario as painted by critics would be lamentable. However there is no necessary relationship between defining the core as precisely and honestly as possible, and an insistence that research within the discipline must be strictly limited to "applied research." Nor would it have to be strictly tied to sport. Why must a specific core mandate research rigidity?<sup>20</sup>

Scientific concerns are, as Polanyi insists, born of and dependent upon human concerns. It is not a coincidence, nor a source of shame that biomechanics and exercise physiology have grown up in gymnasiums. The location of kinesiology departments in gymnasiums and recreation buildings should not therefore be seen as a historical anachronism, or as an embarrassment in need of remedy. A specific core should both bind us together and be a source of inspiration; it should not be a source of heavy handed restrictions.

Under a reformed paradigm, games, play, and sport, would be at the core of kinesiology, without being the sum total of kinesiology. A core, if it is to be of any value, needs to be part of a whole larger than itself. Certainly sport has spurred, and will continue to spur research into more abstract questions of gait, posture, motor control, and learning. It is also certainly the case that once more abstract questions have been raised new inquiry can begin, *at that level*, without "offering sacrifices at the altar of sport." However, although scientists are free to pursue theoretical research without any direct application to games, play, or sport, scientists in kinesiology should not be ashamed of, nor look to reduce the central role games, play, and sport, play in their departments.

A specific core if embraced in a spirit of intellectual inquiry rather than doctrinaire conformity would not threaten such research. Theoretical research would be done within a larger context. It is worth remembering Polanyi's (1962) point that all research, no matter how theoretical, is done within such a context. Scientists investigate what matters to human beings, what they find intriguing, what they believe will bear fruit. "For, as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt to rigorously eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity" (p. 3).

In this vision theoretical researchers would be free to pursue their own questions, but such questions would be seen to orbit around a specific core. If, however, it is charged that theoretical research must be entirely free of a relationship to such specific content, then there is no need for the disparate sub-disciplines of kinesiology to be together in any type of department at all. If that is the preferred scenario, how then is the danger of "exclusion" any greater than the danger of "inclusion"? How can kinesiologists—when under such an inclusive paradigm—honestly adjudicate which sub-disciplines actually belong together? Furthermore, on what grounds could they defend these choices? Although some scientists may consider this type of proposal stifling, how can kinesiology survive with a core so abstract that it leaves kinesiologists with essentially *nothing* in common? In the event that "inclusion" continues to be the dominant philosophy of kinesiology, the continued dissolution of kinesiology departments will be the inevitable result.

Finally, although political concerns should not be ignored, it seems naïve to think that purely political solutions to kinesiology's problems are possible. In the end, the critics of physical education and sport take issue—right or wrong—with more than the field's nomenclature. Following from this insight, a disturbing question must then be asked. Are kinesiologists moving away from "games, play, and sport" in search of academic respect, or are they moving away from "sport" because they agree with the critics that "sport" is a trivial, non-intellectual, and childish domain? Unfortunately in many cases the answer appears to be yes on both counts. Yet, it does not have to be this way. If kinesiologists learn

to engage the philosophic foundation of the discipline, they will see principled grounds upon which to stand and defend themselves. They will see that there are grounds upon which to defend the intrinsic human importance of “games, play and sport.”

The current strategy of accommodation makes little sense. It will lead either to disintegration, as disparate and unrelated sub-disciplines slowly break free of their purely bureaucratic bonds, or it will lead to a department so blurred in purpose that it bears no resemblance to its historic roots, departments in which there will almost certainly be little or no humanistic presence. Most importantly, understanding will be stifled, for a department of kinesiology dedicated to only the scientific aspects of kinesiology is incapable of fully understanding human movement.

Maintaining the status quo is not a sufficient solution. The slow but steady transformation of kinesiology into a purely scientific field will lead to the same end result of disintegration, with everyone going their separate ways. The only difference is that scientists would keep the name kinesiology for a newly exclusive field. One can see, in the imagined scenario, how a deep and abiding commitment to “inclusion” often leads to exclusive results.

While specificity regarding the core nature of kinesiology is needed, there is no need to re-ignite the name wars. Kinesiology is a fine name for the field, and there is nothing wrong with gaining politically from the name change. In fact, as stridently as I have argued for the importance of “games, play, and sport,” it is worth reiterating that I would be comfortable with “physical activity” remaining the name for the core *if the philosophical underpinnings behind such abstraction shifted in the directions that have been proposed*. “Physical activity” must be seen as *human* activity not *physical* activity. Human beings must not be seen as machines. The soul must be recognized.<sup>21</sup> Specificity must not be seen as an inherent vice. Motion must be seen holistically as a fundamental and meaningful aspect of *beings that value, perceive and desire*. Knowledge must be understood as more than bare empirical facts. Embodied skills must be *celebrated* rather than tolerated or denied.

Problems arise however when the motivation for name changes and ambiguity is shame. Avoiding such problems is why a reevaluation of what the term kinesiology means is so important. *Kinesis* is far richer and more important than most kinesiologists have ever imagined. Human locomotion is the source of incredibly meaningful human activity. It is a part of what it means to be a human *being*.

It is again worth pointing out the value of such human experiences. It is again worth reiterating how these meaningful experiences embrace rather than shun specificity. “Sliding into second base just ahead of the tag,” “running to daylight,” and “catching your second wind” are never experienced as abstractions, or theoretical injunctions. They are not functions of “movement” but functions of baseball, football, and running. They are experienced in the rich, sensual, and value laden world of time and space. These experiences engage us as human beings, not mere bodies.

Games, play, and sport, among other wonders, make our often troubled and painful lives, just a little bit brighter.<sup>22</sup> These specific experiences create passion. They give us one more reason to affirm the goodness of life. More importantly for kinesiologists, they give us reason to affirm the goodness of our field. As Polanyi (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) argued, human beings are “carried away” (p. 73) by such experiences. We dwell in them and they become part of who we are. Passion is best developed through actual experience; through direct engagement with the activity itself.

Polanyi’s re-conception of knowledge and Aristotle’s holistic understanding of motion and its role in the human person allow kinesiologists to develop backbone and pride about the meaningful nature of their field. There is no longer a *need* to hide behind abstraction.



This should allow kinesiologists to focus on the intrinsic value of “mere games” without immediately retreating to utilitarian justifications when attacked. Sometimes it is good to be *good for nothing!*<sup>23</sup> Polanyi was fond of saying that the more meaningful something was the more real it was (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975). “Games, play, and sport” certainly bear the mark of being meaningful. The people who should know this best must start standing up for their intrinsic worth.

#### Mark #4: Activity

Connoisseurship, like skill, can be communicated only by example, not by precept. (Polanyi, 1962, p. 54)

*Kinesiologists should require “activity classes” at all levels of study in kinesiology, even graduate study.*<sup>24</sup> We must learn to *show* why we matter, by embodying and cultivating the actual practice of specific and meaningful movement forms. As both Polanyi and Doug Anderson argue, academic arguments can never fully carry the day. For such arguments are by nature incapable of expressing the visceral appeal of the activities themselves. To truly understand the argument in favor of kinesiology is to have already “dwelt-in,” the type of specific movement form(s) that have given rise to this academic field. As Anderson (2002) reminds us, “This good [the importance of gym class] cannot be argued nearly so well as it can be felt in the actual experiences of moving” (p. 93). This type of direct experience encourages kinesiologists to stand up for themselves and remain confident even in the face of criticism and scorn. They do not need the approval of others because what they profess *has actually changed and improved their own lives*. Such insight and confidence is only found, however, in the actual practice of moving well. Anderson makes the same point when he states “The meaning of movement must be *had* as well as be learned about” (p. 92).

Therefore, kinesiologists and physical educators should demand that activity classes are not only required, but graded on performance not just effort (Kretchmar, 2005). To grade on “effort” or “participation” is to indicate to both students and the larger Academy that the subject matter is in fact trivial, that skill and knowledge in this particular domain are in fact optional. It is to concede that the physical education is not real education. If physical education matters, if physical education makes for a better life, if human beings are beings in the world, then it is important to learn how to perform well—that is, skillfully—at activities that have been and continue to be important to people!<sup>25</sup>

These “movement” experiences are embodied as well as specific, both to time, place, and the type of activity. Human beings are not indifferent to place. Commenting on Aristotle’s understanding of place, philosopher Nathan Anderson (2004) insists that, “Unlike geometrical spaces, places are not indifferent to that which they contain. Indeed they seem to have a kind of power” (p. 5). These movement experiences are lived in the world and are enhanced, or hindered, by the places in which they occur.

There is a *specific interaction* between a locale and the human beings in that place. Similarly, these experiences are not indifferent to skill, tradition, or community. In fact, as skill is built, the dynamic relationship between place (playground) and that which it contains (the player) can itself change. A long-term committed engagement with baseball, or karate, or swimming, will grow skilled players. Developing skill is a *historical* process. This type of dedicated relationship between a player and a playground liberates people, by freeing them to experience skillfully, a domain in which they were previously unskilled, clumsy, or even afraid. As a consequence, both the player and the place have changed (Kretchmar, 2005).

It follows that understanding and defining the core of kinesiology may ultimately be best served not by reformed terminology (though that is a discussion worth having) but rather by a renewed commitment to active participation in the *particular* activities themselves. It is the practice of skilled physical activity that will hold the field together. "If there is to be a new passion for the profession," philosopher Doug Anderson (2002) declares, "I think it must come from the perennial heart of its studies, from reawakening to the experiences of movement" (p. 95).

It is this insight that in part explains my commitment to vigorously defending specificity within the core; passion is generated through the skillful practice of individuals engaged with specific types of physical activity. Although "games, play, and sport" do not encompass all of these activities, the terminology—for all its limitations—openly acknowledges the importance of practice, skill, and context. By better specifying the types of activities, kinesiologists are reminded that the individual—that is, specific—practice of these physical activities are the heart of the discipline.

What then would this requirement of activity classes in departments of kinesiology look like? Certainly it would not require the elimination of theoretical work from the field. Rather the requirement of physical activity by both graduate and undergraduate students would remind everyone in kinesiology that they are researching, learning, and theorizing about something in the real world, something that deeply matters to human beings. Something that is so powerful that experiences with particular movement forms have been described as transcendent or even religious experiences (Berger, 1969; Herrigel, 1981). Because of the power and importance of the actual practice of physical activity to the field, it only seems appropriate that the next generation of kinesiologists is exposed directly—within the confines of their programs—to the wonders of moving well.

Theoretical research in kinesiology is vitally important, but such research needs a target. Therefore, although graduate students who are majoring in research heavy disciplines should not be turned into generalists, a basic but serious engagement with the actual practice of physical activity should be required. Programs that adopted such a recommendation would not be changing their curriculums radically; they would simply acknowledge the centrality of practice, by requiring an activity class or classes as part of their program.<sup>26</sup> Because of this requirement, sport philosophers would not be free to leave their heads in clouds, moving only for the sake of scratching their chins while in deep contemplation, nor would scientists be free to hole up in their labs, examining the physiology, anatomy, and mechanics of such movement only through microscopes, cadavers, and theoretical models. Contemplation and scientific research are no doubt important to kinesiology, *but they are not the core of kinesiology.*

Rather than being ever-penitent regarding activities such as "sport," kinesiologists must instead be proud of such specific human movement forms. Kinesiologists should jealously guard them as the treasures they are. *Being associated with games, play, and sport is a privilege not a burden.* The practice of specific movement—whether weight training, swimming, or dance—should no longer be feared as *prima facie* evidence of "exclusion"; as if exclusion was by nature a bad thing. Engagement with the specific is one of the best ways to come to theorize about the general. To stand for everything is in actuality to stand for nothing. (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) clarifies this point beautifully regarding religion: "These must of course be specific rites and myths—not just rites and myths in general. There are no such things. Religion 'in general' is thus not religion, just as language in 'general' is not language. To be religious we must have a religion" (p. 179). It is just as true of kinesiology. Movement in general *is not kinesiology!*

“In-dwelling” in this way is the key to a passionate and engaged department that has a sense of common purpose, and respect for one another. As many voices, as many viewpoints, and as much experience as possible is necessary in the continuing struggle to articulate, understand, and embody the amazing human phenomenon that kinesiology is charged with professing. We must grow our understanding of what we should be preaching as kinesiologists. Such preaching will never flower however if not rooted in the actual practice of the “games, play, and sport,” call it what you will, that so fascinate human beings, and of which we as kinesiologists are so mysteriously ashamed.

## Notes

1. Insects for instance, due to their abundance, high nutritional content, and flavor, are on the menu across the globe (Dicke & Huis, 2011). However in the United States and much of the Western world the thought of ingesting insects is disgusting. Obviously the consumption of insects is an acquired taste, dependent not upon mere reason, but also upon culture.
2. 1253a19 refers to the Bekker numbers, a cross-translation reference marker for Aristotle’s texts.
3. In turn, all of these cultural influences cross-pollinate with our biological inheritance. Genes and ideas are inseparably linked. Our biology limits and influences our choices. Our choices reform and guide our biology. For recent scientific support of this type of thinking see, Hedden, Ketay, Aron, Markus, and Gabrieli, (2008), “Cultural Influences on Neural Substrates of Attentional Control,” *Psychological Science*, 19(1), pp. 12–17.
4. Nor should scientists see this call to reconciliation as a threat. Holism does not ignore or denigrate science. It does however boldly insist that a science built on the assumptions of materialism is incapable of adequately describing reality.
5. I would recommend a core history class that covers the broad range of historical engagement with sport and physical activity, as well as a core philosophy class that introduces basic philosophical concepts as well as some of the key philosophic dilemmas in the field.
6. This may be a function of “catch-22” logic. Because the humanities are considered unimportant, course offerings are thin and the courses themselves are often unimpressive. For example, many sport ethics classes are currently taught by people without any training in philosophy. This lack of quality and rigor is then used as evidence to justify the neglect of the humanities. The classes are soft because the subject matter is unimportant. The subject matter is unimportant because the classes are so soft.
7. This is not meant in any way to denigrate the vitally important role science has to play in the promotion of health. The emphatically pro-humanities tone found in this article is a function of the current state of kinesiology, in which the importance of the humanities is doubted on both theoretical and practical levels.
8. Religious dietary restrictions should readily come to mind, but so should the eating habits resulting from the ethical commitments (whether right or wrong) of hunters, vegans, and vegetarians.
9. A similar point is made by Pope Benedict XVI (2007) in his recent Encyclical *Spe Salvi*. “To put it another way: the ambiguity of progress becomes evident. Without doubt, it offers new possibilities for good, but it also opens up appalling possibilities for evil—possibilities that formerly did not exist. We have all witnessed the way in which progress, in the wrong hands, can become and has indeed become a terrifying progress in evil. If technical progress is not matched by corresponding progress in man’s ethical formation, in man’s inner growth (cf. Eph 3:16; 2 Cor 4:16), then it is not progress at all, but a threat for man and for the world.”
10. Even if a philosopher disagrees with the interpretation of the results in a given scientific paper, they must engage the data, methodology, or assumptions of the paper in order to critique it.
11. For it is only within a holistic framework that a department can accomplish two vital goals. First holism allows for pride in the profession, and second holism asserts the vital importance

- of humanistic inquiry. Dualism allows for the second but not the first. Dualism takes humanistic inquiry seriously, but in quarantining and elevating the mind from the body, leaves kinesiology in a constantly defensive posture.
12. “Whiggish history” refers to the idea that history is necessarily progressive. Tomorrow is always better than today. Things are always getting better. The present moment is necessarily a culmination of all that came before it.
  13. It is true that not all arenas of skill should be considered important on the basis of skill alone. Universities seem to rely on arenas of skill that contribute to “human flourishing.” Although the precise meaning of such a term is debatable, it should be clear that skill domains that harm human flourishing (by being cruel, sociopathic, or banal) would not be considered *important*. As Polanyi saw, adjudicating such distinctions is a matter of tacit knowledge, and personal judgment.
  14. Whether this conception of the university still exists has been seriously questioned. “Universities have become, perhaps irremediably, fragmented and partitioned institutions, better renamed ‘multiversities,’ as Clark Kerr suggested almost 50 years ago. I remarked of Aquinas, and I could equally have remarked of Newman, that his conception of the university was informed by his conception of the universe. By contrast the conception of the university presupposed by and embodied in the institutional forms and activities of contemporary research universities is not just one that has nothing much to do with any particular conception of the universe, but one that suggests strongly that there is no such thing as the universe, no whole of which the subject matters studied by the various disciplines are all parts or aspects, but instead just a multifarious set of assorted subject matters” (MacIntyre, 2009, p. 174).
  15. The most obvious content area in which to develop such literacy, as well as the one most historically associated with physical education is that of games, play and sport. While the case could be made that games, play, and sport are not the necessary province of physical education, such recreational and athletic activities are important human activities and would therefore (especially after being buttressed by Aristotle and Polanyi) seem to be worthy of academic study. Why would kinesiologists, of all people, want to distance themselves from games, play, and sport? Are they not our “pearl of great price”? If games, play, and sport are not, what is?
  16. Such a re-commitment to the role of skill, apprenticeship, and experience could also facilitate the growth of cross-disciplinary research in kinesiology. If the sub-disciplines of kinesiology are built on the same epistemic foundation, and if the sub-disciplines of kinesiology actually cross-pollinate each other, then cross-disciplinary research is not only politically advantageous, but may actually be a key to deepening the efficacy of research within the field.
  17. By political rationalization, I mean that “movement” sells better. By educational rationalization I mean simply that play, games and sport are often accused of being both non-academic and childish, while movement sounds serious and scientific. By ontological rationalization I mean something similar. This type of rationalization claims that sport is ontologically insufficient because it is merely a “body” activity. Given such assumptions, abstraction makes perfect sense.
  18. Nor is the ultimate logical insufficiency of “play, games, and sport” unique. It is true that a core defined as “play, games, and sport,” cannot exclude chess or monopoly from a literal interpretation of the core, but neither can a literal interpretation of art exclude quilting or fashion design or carpentry from its core. Similarly everyone knows what physical education is, even though the term itself is—if taken literally—overly broad.
  19. I am convinced that “physical activity” has been accepted as the core of the field—in the name of inclusion—despite the fact that it aims at, and hits no nails on the head. It is of course true that the type of specificity I am proposing, if it were to avoid a sense of insular self-superiority and chauvinism, would need a broad, outward looking disposition.
  20. One speculative answer for the resistance to specificity is that ambiguity makes it is easier to recruit “big-time” or “name” faculty to a kinesiology department. A department centered around an abstract core like “movement” instead of “sport” is an easier sell, especially to scientists who do not have a background in kinesiology, but who may be a potential source of grant money and prestige. In that sense, it may be the tail (Research Universities) that is wagging the dog.

21. For a rigorous defense of this claim, see my article *Kinesis and the Nature of the Human Person* (2010).
22. The point is not to say that “sport” is *the thing* that gives meaning to our lives, but rather to get a place for “games, play, and sport” at the table. Certainly there are myriad other human arenas that move people just as profoundly including, literature, art, music, theater, dance, and religion. It also true that science, when pursued in a spirit of wonder, can have much the same effect.
23. Just as Shakespeare, Van Gogh, Beethoven, and my wife’s new favorite, Jane Austen, are not justified on the grounds of utility. Similarly, the confidence with which I hold Shakespeare in high regard makes me functionally immune to criticism; that is, it is the critics’ loss, not mine. Kinesiologists *should be* in the same position but with a different yet no less fascinating love.
24. I am unconvinced by the counter argument that most “students are already doing it.” Undergraduates are already writing, and yet we require them to take writing intensive classes, because the Academy values and emphasizes the importance of writing well.
25. The typical counter-arguments that not all children are athletic, or that not all children like “sports” are unpersuasive. Not all children speak well. Not all children are good with numbers. Not all children read well. Not all children like Shakespeare. Not all children enjoy history. Yet we make children study Shakespeare, we make children study history, and we make children master mathematics and reading because we believe the basic mastery of such material is important; even in cases where there is no practical or useful application for the material. (Few job applications quiz applicants on whether or not Hamlet had an Oedipal Complex. Yet school districts and universities around the country continue to insist that studying literature matters.) Likewise, to complain that students don’t need to master “basketball” because demonstrating competence at “basketball” is an “arbitrary” and “accidental” measure is not convincing. The same could again be said of Shakespeare. We don’t ask students to study “literature” absent of specific content, nor should we ask them to study “physical activity” absent of specific content. Basketball and Shakespeare are contingent only in the way that the entire culture is contingent.
26. This would be above and beyond any activity requirement that may be mandated by a college or university’s general education requirements. The lack of such requirements in many kinesiology departments reflects on their own sense of self-respect. English department after all do not consider the requirement of a general education requirement in English Composition as sufficient engagement by their students with the activity of writing well. Instead they have additional requirements—within their own departments—because engaging the English language is at the heart of who and what they are.

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