Good at sport, but not at schoolwork

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Q37 and those that follow were designed to elicit a few of the stereotypical labels which abound in the school playground. Because these labels are actively discouraged by the majority of teachers, it was not possible to elicit anywhere near the full range. However, we wished to attempt to elicit at least a small number. These were carefully chosen in pairs, each representing one of the polar positions in relation to the topic in question. We hoped in this way to provide some balance from the point of view of the teachers. Despite this, not all teachers were happy asking these questions. One of the (not unexpected) patterns which emerged was that the question which was our real focus was answered with fairly stock labels, while the one we had included to balance it was answered either with "no special term" or with labels created for the occasion. This of course confirms that the stereotype labels for behaviour patterns which children reject remain in use, even in schools which are working hard to eradicate them. Q37 was:

37 A person who is really good at games and sports, but not good at schoolwork can be called:

It was the counter-balance to Q38, which asked about terms for people who were good at schoolwork, but not at sport.

39 schools did not provide a term for this. Quite a large number of those which did provided a fairly standard term of abuse, e.g. *loser, dick, faggot*, which appeared in the answers to almost every question in this section. The answers which were specific to this question fell into two main groups: those which focused on the ability at sport, and those which focused on the lack of ability at schoolwork. However, most of the terms in both groups were extremely low frequency, an indication of the fact that they are not standard labels, but ones created for the occasion. To illustrate this, the full range of answers using the root *sport* was as follows, with the number of reports in brackets:

sporty (59); sport maniac (2); sportaholic (3); sports freak (12); sports fanatic (4); sports nerd (1); sporty spice (2); a good sport (2); sporthead (1); sporting (1); sportsperson (7); sport nut (1); sport (1); sports addict (2); good sportsmanship (1); sportalec (1); sportive (2); sportative not workative (1).

One of the interesting things about this group is the inclusion of a number of terms which to the authors do not mean 'good at sport', but rather 'someone who shows fairness and good humour in sport': *a good sport, sporting, good sportsmanship. Sportive* is also standardly used to mean 'playful', rather than good at sport, and *sportative* (and the contrasted *workative*) appears to be a piece of word-formation for the occasion. *Sportalec* also appears to be a coinage for the occasion, presumably on the pattern of *smart alec*.

Some of these *sport* terms were grouped thematically: *sport maniac, sports fanatic,* and *sport nut* were clearly linked (*sports mad* did not appear, perhaps surprisingly). However, even after such groupings, most of these terms were too low in frequency to be of any interest.

There were also many variants on the theme 'not good at school work', but most of them were also extremely low in frequency. The only one with enough reports to make it worth considering was *dumb* (including *dumbarse, dumbo*).

In the end, only 8 items were frequent enough to be examined further: *sporty* (59); *jock* (25); *dumb* (20); *athletic* (18); *sports freak* (12); *sports fanatic* (12); *sportsperson* (7); *good sport* (4).

Sporty was spread very evenly across the country from Northland to Southland. There is perhaps a slight tendency for it to be reported from higher decile schools, but the tendency is not particularly pronounced.



Jock was very strangely distributed. In the North Island, there were two principal clusters, one in Auckland (6 reports), and one in Wellington (6 reports), with a few isolated reports elsewhere. In the South Island, it was dotted round and certainly does not appear to be primarily urban. The figures are shown in the following table:

	North Island				South Island			
Schools	93		62%		57		38%	
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
Schools	41	44%	52	56 %	19	33%	38	66%
Jock	12	71%	5	29 %	3	38%	5	63%

It is not clear what conclusions, if any, can be drawn from this.

Dumb was dotted throughout the country from Northland to Otago, with no sign of any particular patterning.

Athletic was reported from Northland to Otago, again without any evidence of patterning to the reports.

Sports freak was reported from Northland to south Canterbury, again without patterning.

Sports fanatic was reported from Northland to Southland, although there was a very large gap from the south Waikato to Christchurch. The majority of reports came from the Northern Region:

	Northern Region		Central	Region	Southern Region		
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	
Schools	57	38	78	52	14	9	
Sports fanatic	9	75	2	17	1	8	

However, this is a group made up of a number of items (*sports fanatic, sports maniac, sport nut*), and not too much weight can be placed on this.

Sportsperson was reported sporadically from south Waikato to central Otago, with no obvious evidence of patterning.

Good sport (including *good sportsmanship, sporting*) was reported only from the Northern Region. However, because this is also a mixed group, little weight can be placed on this either.

During the school visits, we tried to find out how widespread it was to use *good sport* for someone who is good at sport. We asked the following question:

Here are descriptions of two people who behave differently:

- a Chris is very good at all kinds of sports. He is in the top team for everything, and usually wins at athletics. He hates it if someone beats him.
- b Pat enjoys sport, but he's not all that good at it. He's usually in the second team, but he sometimes gets into the top team. He often comes second or third at athletics, but he never minds if someone beats him, and if he beats you, he never boasts about it.

Would you say Chris or Pat (or neither) was a good sport?

The children in the schools visited were entirely consistent in choosing Pat as the answer. It thus appears that the phrase *good sport* is normally understood in the standard fashion by children, and the original responses which suggested otherwise were from misguided individuals.

Thus this topic did not yield a great deal of useful data.

Statistical Analysis

Only one term was deemed worth statistical analysis: *jock*. The only result from the analysis is that *jock* is urban rather than rural (p-value 0.0205). This seems to be typical of Americanisms: they appear chiefly in Auckland and Wellington, probably due to immigrants from North America.

The map showing the distribution of *jock* follows.

Map: *jock*



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Key

Note that the insets are not to scale, nor all on the same scale for practical reasons. Each box represents one school in both urban and rural areas.



jock

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See urban map insert

Q37 Statistics: Jock Jock by Decile

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•	•	•	•	
item	jock	-2.1781	0.5475	-3.2511	-1.1051	-3.978	0.0001
decile*item	jock	0.0947	0.0804	-0.0629	0.2522	1.1777	0.2389
scale	0.9997		•	•	•	•	

Jock by Main Region

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•		•	•	
item	jock	-2.5649	1.0377	-4.5989	-0.5310	-2.472	0.0134
item*region1	jock, 1	1.0174	1.0946	-1.1280	3.1628	0.9294	0.3527
item*region1	jock, 2	1.0451	1.0789	-1.0694	3.1597	0.9687	0.3327
item*region1	jock, 3	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
scale	1.0000						

CONTRAST Statement Results

Contrast	DF	ChiSquare	Pr>Chi	Туре
1 -2 for jock	1	0.0037	0.9515	LR

Jock by Sub-Region

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•	•	•	•	
item	jock	-2.5649	1.0377	-4.5989	-0.5310	-2.472	0.0134
item*region2	jock, 1	0.9555	1.5089	-2.0020	3.9130	0.6332	0.5266
item*region2	jock, 2	0.9555	1.5089	-2.0020	3.9130	0.6332	0.5266
item*region2	jock, 3	1.7918	1.1491	-0.4605	4.0440	1.5592	0.1189
item*region2	jock, 4	0.0800	1.2722	-2.4135	2.5736	0.0629	0.9498
item*region2	jock, 5	0.1671	1.4724	-2.7187	3.0528	0.1135	0.9097
item*region2	jock, 6	1.5841	1.1428	-0.6558	3.8241	1.3861	0.1657
item*region2	jock, 7	1.3122	1.3114	-1.2581	3.8825	1.0006	0.3170
item*region2	jock, 8	0.9555	1.5089	-2.0020	3.9130	0.6332	0.5266
item*region2	jock, 9	-0.2683	1.4614	-3.1326	2.5961	1836	0.8544
item*region2	jock, 10	1.7177	1.2462	-0.7249	4.1602	1.3783	0.1681
item*region2	jock, 11	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
scale	1.0000	•		•		•	

Jock by Island

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•	•	•	•	
item	jock	-1.8124	0.3813	-2.5598	-1.0650	-4.753	0.0000
item*island	jock, 1	0.3149	0.4663	-0.5990	1.2287	0.6753	0.4995
item*island	jock, 2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
scale	1.0000		•				

Jock by Catholic

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•	•	•	•	
item	jock	-1.4663	0.6405	-2.7217	-0.2110	-2.289	0.0221
item*catholic	jock, 1	-0.1340	0.6818	-1.4703	1.2024	1965	0.8442
item*catholic	jock, 2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
scale	1.0000						

Jock by Urban/Rural

Analysis Of GEE Parameter Estimates – Empirical Standard Error Estimates Empirical 95% Confidence Limits

parameter		Estimate	Std Err	Lower	Upper	Ζ	Pr> Z
intercept	0.0000		•	•	•	•	
item	jock	-1.0761	0.2990	-1.6621	-0.4901	-3.599	0.0003
item*urb_rur	jock, 1	-1.0704	0.4621	-1.9760	-0.1648	-2.317	0.0205
item*urb_rur	jock, 2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
scale	1.0000	•	•			•	