

COMMUNICATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT LESSONS

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Abstract

Developing effective communication in physical education is a necessary ingredient for encouraging students to engage in physical activity. The purpose of this paper is to understand how to build trusting and effective relationships with students as an essential part of a support teacher's role in physical education and sport lessons. This paperwork explores ways to communicate in different situations and contexts and the importance of following procedures for confidentiality and information sharing.

Communication is one of the most important skills that a physical education teacher can possess. Clear communications to your students helps them to learn your lessons and keep them safe. Effective communication builds a sense of community where students feel confident in their abilities. With greater confidence and support, students are more likely to embrace physical activity as a source of fun. A good communication facilitates students learning and increase participation.

Keywords: communication, professional relationships, physical education and sport

Introduction

Good communication is pivotal when working with students to establish and maintain relationships. It is an active process that involves listening, questioning, understanding and responding. We should always communicate appropriately to match the stage of development, personal circumstances, and needs of the participant we are communicating with.

Communication is the act of expressing (or transmitting) ideas, information, knowledge, thoughts, and feelings, as well as understanding what is expressed by others. The communication process involves both sending and receiving messages and can take many forms (Burton & Raedeke, 2008).

Research shows that when we communicate feelings and attitudes, only a small percentage of our overall message comes from the words we use. 55% of our message comes from body language (especially from movements of the small muscles around the eye which can convey shock, disbelief, doubt or disgust), 38% of our message comes from tone of voice and only 7% of our message is conveyed by the words we use (Mehrabian, 2007).

Objectives

The study focuses on identifying direct or indirect forms of communication in physical education and sport lessons and how we used them in certain moments of the practical lesson.

- Understand the principles of developing positive relationships with students;
- Understand how to communicate with students.

Methods

In preparing the paper we used the following research methods: bibliographic study and observation method, which help us to understand the role of teacher language in the teaching and learning of physical education.

Why is effective communication important?

We are more likely to communicate information to one another if we have positive relationships. Parents and other adults who come into the schools/university are more likely to give beneficial support if communication is strong and effective – this, in turn, benefits students. It is also important for students that we model effective communication skills. This means checking what we are saying sometimes in moments of stress or excitement, so that they can understand what our expectations are in school/university. If we ask students to

behave in a particular way when communicating and then forget to do so ourselves, they will find it harder to understand the boundaries of what is acceptable. In each communication appear the same elements, but the goals are different. We usually communicate for:

- to persuade (a student to go to aerobics to get rid of the overweight);
- to evaluate (students' performance at annual control samples);
- to inform (a student/player on a specific technique of volleyball game);
- to motivate (the basketball team before a confrontation with a strong opponent);
- to solve (problems arising from a conflict between two students during the PE hour).

The principles of relationship building

Effective communication is the key area for developing relationships with others and also covers many different forms of communication.

Respect. It is very important to be courteous and respectful, and to listen others points of view. Students with whom we work may also be from different cultures and have different beliefs or values from our own. We should ensure that we acknowledge and respect the views of others at all times and take time to remember names and preferred forms of address. Treating the people around you with respect makes them more likely to respect you and your program.

Be considerate. Take the time to consider the positions of others. We may be working with a student who is under particular pressure at a given time and need to understand why they may have behaved or reacted in a certain way or out of character.

Personalization. As a physical education teacher will invariably have to deal with different students with different personalities, so it is important to construct your message to suit the student you are working with. A "one size fits all" approach simply won't work.

Listen. Make sure that you take time to listen your students, in particular if they are asking for advice or help, or if they need to confide in you. You should always show that you are interested in what they have to say and respond appropriately.

Clarity is an essential quality of teachers speech. If students can't hear or understand teachers, they will not be in a position to do what is required of them (Bailey, R., 2007).

When you have conversations with students in which you are giving them information, you should always ensure that they are clear what you have said at the end of the discussion. This is because it can be easy to be distracted from the main point of the conversation.

Humour. A sense of humour can be an invaluable skill for the PE teacher. Humour can be a useful strategy for defusing tense situations, or simply helping to maintain a pleasant, positive learning environment (Bailey, R., 2007).

Communication skills in physical education and sport lessons

Verbal communication is the spoken word, while **nonverbal communication** involves actions, facial expressions, body position, and gestures. Communication can occur in one-one-one or group settings, and in written formats (e.g., printed materials) or in visual formats (e.g., pictures, videos, and observational learning) and it involves not only the content of a message but also its emotional impact, or the effect the message has on the person receiving it (Burton & Raedeke, 2008).

Webster (2010) proposed six skills that every physical education teacher should have it in order to improve the effectiveness of their instructional communication processes and increase student participation and motivation. The first three are rhetorical communication skills (being clear, content relevance, and using humor) while the second three are relational communication skills (immediacy, communication style and listening).

As PE teachers and coaches, we probably use verbal communication more than any other method. We know from experience that talking with students/players, rather than at them, can be one of the most effective means of communication. When you tell students/players what to do, always consider how they will receive your

message; try to anticipate their reactions. Through the verbal communication the PE teacher sets out the themes of the lesson, explains the activity to follow, communicates different elements specific to the sport activity. They use commands associated with specific actions at various times of class organization, checking the position of the body: straight, resting or moving direction (left, right).

The PE teacher has to contend with a variety of context (classroom, gymnasium, sports hall, swimming pool, playing field), and must also recognize the intrinsically practical nature of the subject. Good use of spoken language is essential, explanations and instructions should be succinct, talk must not dominate in practical sessions where the objective is to get class moving (Capel & Whitehead, 2010).

Physical education teachers' classrooms are often much larger than those of teachers who teach other subjects. Therefore, it is important that physical education teachers speak loudly. They should take extra care to ensure they are not yelling - something that is very easy to find yourself doing in a gymnasium! It's a good idea for physical education teachers to have students gather around in a small group when giving important directions to avoid needing to yell to students who are far away. When in an outdoor setting where students can be spread out in various directions, it's a good idea to use a megaphone if available.

When speaking, physical education teachers should modulate their tone to maintain students' interest and attention. It's also a good idea to repeat important points and directions. This is important because students can potentially get hurt if they do not hear or follow all directions.

The traditional view of the PE teacher has often been one of a strict teacher adopting military-style discipline to a fearful group of students. Recent trends in education have attempted to move away from this image, even to a point where shouting is seen as unnecessary (Grout, H. & Long, G., 2009).

Nonverbal communication. Physical education teachers cannot solely rely on verbal communication. Sometimes, verbal communication may not be feasible or the teacher doesn't want to lose his or her voice from speaking loudly for several hours a day. Fortunately, there are a number of *non-verbal* (using actions and body language) means that physical education teachers can use to communicate with their students.

Physical education teachers can use gestures and body language to communicate with their students. They can use gestures to get students' attention (such as waving their arms at a student who is looking at them, but too far away to hear them). Teachers can also use body language to model how to do specific activities and communicate the proper technique or form for activities. A physical education teacher can also hold up a hand while speaking to indicate to a student who is interrupting that they need to stop.

Nonverbal messages are less consciously controlled and that's why they're harder to hide. They can reveal our unconscious experiences and attitudes. For example, PE teacher asks a student how he/she feels before the exercise begins. The student sighs, look down and mumble, "I'm fine". Although the words convey that it is all right, the teacher will perceive another content by interpreting nonverbal messages.

Although nonverbal messages are very strong, they are often difficult to interpret in a fair way. Therefore, we must take care in their interpretation and try to correctly judge the context in which it is received.

Physical presence. Often, the first impression across a person depends on its physical presence. We observe, since first glance, that someone is fat, weak, clumsy, familiar, attractive or agreeable. A small thing can convey a consistent message. Twenty years ago, if a student appeared in front of the teacher or with a tattoo or an earring in his ear, he would have been quickly kicked off from hour. Now it's quite acceptable for a student to wear an earring in his ear and this conveys a different message. Clothing and hairstyle provide extremely consistent information.

Posture. The shoulders leave express a low self-esteem or depression, while a right posture transmits control and energy.

Gestures. They transmit messages even if we do not propose. For example, crossing your arms on the chest, usually expressing a defensive attitude, the lack of willingness to open up in front of others. The tightening of the arms on the back of the neck denotes superiority. Coaches often express themselves by gestures – if they express their thoughts verbally, they risk being severely penalized by referee.

Position of the body. It refers to the preservation of a space between the interlocutors and the position of the body relative to others. It's an aspect of proxemics that studies how people communicate through the way

they use space. An example of the language that uses the corporate position is when the coach approaches more than the players with whom the game will start, rather than the backup players. This denotes a kind of favoritism and should be avoided.

Facial expression. The face is the most expressive part of the body. When listening to others, people often study facial expressions and eye movements to find hidden meanings of messages. Maintaining visual contact means most often that the listener is interested in the message. When people feel embarrassed or uncomfortable, they tend to avoid eye contact and look the other way. The smile is the universal means to overcome language barriers and the most effective way of communication. Smiles and other facial expressions can invite us to communicate and provide feedback on communication efficiency.

Voice characteristics. Verbal communication is often strengthened or contradicted by the sound of the voice. It's important what you say, but it's more important than what you say. The voice characteristics betray the true feelings, dispositions or attitudes. The voice characteristics are height (high or low), tempo (Speed), volume (hard or slow), rhythm (cadence) and articulation (statement).

Questioning. You can often achieve far more by asking students rather than telling using what is known as the question-and-answer technique. For example, if you ask a student a question such as, "Who can tell me why that was such a good pass?" or "What defensive systems are our opponents using?" you will achieve two objectives. First, you will elicit the correct technical diagnosis; and second, by involving the students in the discussion, you will encourage them to develop their own powers of observation and critical analysis. Getting students to appreciate and develop their own knowledge of the game is surely at the heart of good teaching, and the question-and-answer technique enhances this process.

Listening. People feel more comfortable if they express their ideas and the feelings of someone who wants to listen. Listening to efficiency denotes sensitivity and encourages an open exchange of ideas and feelings. If you really want students to come to you and trust you, you have to make a considerable effort to listen to them.

Listening is a very different skill from hearing. Hearing is receiving messages, but it does not guarantee the message has been interpreted and given consideration. The fact that we receive information does not mean that we understand the message or emotion attached.

During classes of physical education the PE teacher must listen to any problem of the students and try to help them. They should feel comfortable to ask for advice and help, problems that occur most frequently are health problems (a student does not feel well, dizziness from effort), conflicts between students.

Skills such as empathy and sympathy. Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference, i.e., the capacity to place oneself in another's position.

Compassion and sympathy are terms associated with empathy. Compassion is often defined as an emotion we feel when others are in need, which motivates us to help them.

Sympathy is a feeling of care and understanding for someone in need. Some include in sympathy an empathic concern, a feeling of concern for another, in which some scholars include the wish to see them better off or happier.

To manifest our sympathy and empathy towards our students we use the following communication skills: oral - questioning by asking questions to find out their problem, listening to the problem, non-verbal by touching, hugs, attitudes of encouragement like head-approval movement, mimic and visual contact.

Conclusions

As a PE teacher, in order to contribute to positive relationships, we have to demonstrate and model effective communication skills in our dealings with students. This means that we should consider both how we approach other people and how we respond to them.

Effective communication and positive relationships do not happen by chance. We should think about the way we relate to others and the messages that this sends out. In situations where communication breaks down, misunderstandings can lead to bad feeling.

Communication is one of the most important skills that a physical education teacher can possess. Clear communications to your students helps them to learn your lessons and keep them safe. Effective communication builds a sense of community where students feel confident in their abilities. With greater confidence and support, students are more likely to embrace physical activity as a source of fun. A good communication facilitate students learning and increase participation.

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