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**Teaching Affective Qualities in Physical Education**

By Brent Heidorn and Mindy M. Welch

Teaching physical education is exciting! It is important that we teach more than just knowledge, skills, and strategies. According to Rink (2006), “Affective objectives describe student feelings, attitudes, values, and social behaviors…Unless teachers address affective goals in their programs, students may be skilled and may even be knowledgeable but may choose not to participate" (pp. 6-7). In addition, teaching to the affective domain directly aligns with two of the National Standards for Physical Education (NASPE, 2004, p. 11).

* Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
* Standard 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

The purpose of this article is to promote teaching to the affective domain and provide physical educators with strategies for implementation. Physical educators at all levels have observed learners in a school-based physical education setting as well as physical activity or sport settings outside of organized school curricula demonstrating behaviors deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with professional standards (NASPE, 2004; Graham, Holt/Hale, & Parker, 2007). The following scenarios might be familiar in physical education: 1) the teacher ignores high school students taunting each other during game-like situations; 2) students grouped according to gender often leads to students making demeaning comments about other individuals or groups; 3) students do not "play fair" or "pass the ball" to certain members in their group or on their team, showing favoritism to some, or dislike of others; or 4) less skilled or physically unfit students are alienated by their peers during skill work, cooperative activities, or modified game play. Because sport is such a public, social, and international phenomenon, students have many opportunities to observe amateur, recreational, and professional athletes competing in countless sports in their neighborhoods, at their schools, and across the globe. Unfortunately, sport participants do not always demonstrate social behaviors that are consistent with desired physical education learning outcomes. One of the outcomes at risk is that students may be learning 'bad habits' or anti-social behaviors from the so-called role models they observe. As physical educators we have a responsibility to intentionally incorporate appropriate affective qualities and behaviors as part of our teaching objectives and learning outcomes. What follows are three explicit strategies for integrating the affective domain in the physical education curriculum.

First, physical education teachers should purposefully accept the fact that they are the role models for developing individual and group characteristics highlighted in NASPE Standards 5 and 6 (NASPE, 2004). Leading by example and demonstrating appropriate behavior in the context of developing motor skills is a powerful ‘teaching tool.’ In fact, role modeling can become an asset a teacher brings to the classroom every day! In order for the students to develop positive character traits such as responsibility and respect for self and others, the teacher must model the desired outcome in the same way he/she demonstrates the critical elements of performing a motor skill. In addition, the pedagogical skill of demonstrating examples and non-examples applies to the affective domain. For example, at no time should physical educators display favoritism, or communicate sarcastically in ways that portray negative attitudes or inappropriate actions. Teachers should structure activities to maximize the participation of all students (NASPE, 2000). Singling out or marginalizing individual students at the low end of the motor skill continuum can result in embarrassment or humiliation. Likewise, valuing physical activity for health benefits should not be reserved for high- or low-skilled learners. The notion that we teach to groups, but students learn as individuals suggests that a teacher must not presume that students with competent or proficient skills automatically bring an engaged disposition to an activity. High-skilled students must not succumb to the role of "competent bystander" (Placek, 1983) or in any way warrant exemption from health-enhancing benefits in our classrooms. In addition, the physical educator must be deliberate when designing learning experiences that present meaningful and relevant challenges for all learners. The affect of learning sport-related skills that will sustain a physically active lifestyle combines a dynamic balance of challenge, skill, and enjoyment (Jackson & Eklund, 2004; Kretchmar, 2005). Teachers have a professional responsibility to model enthusiasm for teaching and learning as a classroom expectation by being on time, prepared for instruction, and excited about the lesson.

Second, physical education teachers should intentionally devote time in the curriculum to teaching affective goals such as teamwork, cooperation, and respect for self and others. These characteristics have a place in the planned curriculum, just like skills and strategies. Affective goals are important and will not 'just happen' in the dynamics of teaching a lesson. For example, while learning basic motor skills in educational gymnastics, students can learn to value safety of self, classmates, and proper use of equipment when learning or practicing new skills or in performing routines. Likewise, students can practice teamwork during modified game play while continuing to be highly motivated to meet individual and/or group goals. Teachers cannot assume that students know what it means to be a good teammate, or what it means to be "successful" in a group effort. In his legendary Pyramid of Success, John Wooden (1948) theorizes a building block approach to contributing to the success of the individual and the team. In a similar way, the teacher can develop a checklist including characteristics of good teamwork such as encouragement, enthusiasm, self-control, cooperation, confidence, using praise and compliments, or unselfish play. More than the goal scored or shot made, students can learn to intrinsically value the amount of practice or hard work required to achieve affective outcomes. (Insert Figure 1 here)

Third, teachers should hold students accountable for tasks related to the affective domain. When students are held accountable for behavior that reflects responsibility and respect, the teacher sends a powerful message of what he/she values, or what really matters in a learning environment. For example, whether on a bulletin board or through a homework assignment, students need to know that their affective behavior is taken into account. The teacher must make behavior expectations as part of the whole learning experience explicit, and mirror these in their assessments. Designing rubrics to this effect can serve multiple purposes as a reward system, reinforcement of teacher expectations, and also a mechanism for establishing grades. Rewarding students in this way will contribute to learning affective qualities. Further, students will also be able to see the progress they have made over time (See Figure 1).

There are several other strategies to incorporate teaching to the affective domain in physical education.  The National Standards for Physical Education advocate teaching students to develop personal and social responsibility (NASPE Standard 5), and to continue developing these characteristics so they eventually transfer to activities beyond physical education in the school setting.  Don Hellison's Developmental Levels in the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) curriculum and instructional model (Hellison, 2003) is one commonly cited strategy for teaching students to develop responsible behaviors.  Hellison's model progresses through six different stages, which are identified and described below.

***Level 0: Irresponsibility*.**  In this level, students are often unmotivated, undisciplined, and do not demonstrate personal responsibility for their actions.  They may be inconsiderate or mean to other students, consistently interrupt when others are talking, or become engaged in off-task behaviors.  The teacher must continually monitor and closely supervise these individuals.

***Level I: Self-control*.**  In this level, students are not usually discipline problems, but are also not fully engaged in the lesson.  The term "competent bystander" may be closely associated with students demonstrating the level of self-control.

***Level II: Involvement*.**  Students meeting the characteristics of this level typically demonstrate enthusiasm and high participation in lessons.  They want to be successful and try and learn new things.

***Level III: Self-responsibility*.**  Students demonstrating self-responsibility do not need the direct supervision of others.  They become independent learners when pursuing new activities, and may even be able to identify the areas in which they need to improve.

***Level IV: Caring*.**  Some students may initially demonstrate "caring" behaviors, and consistently want to help and support their classmates.  As other students in the physical education program continue to develop responsible behaviors, it is ideal that they too become concerned with the needs and interests of their peers.  When a majority of the class becomes concerned about the needs, interests, and feelings of others, the environment can be extremely positive and rewarding for the students and the teacher.

***Level V: Outside the gym*.**  Teachers should continually promote positive behavior and responsibility not only in the physical education program, but also to activities in which students are engaged outside of the class and school.  Students can learn to develop self-control, become involved, increase their self-responsibility, and care about others in physical activity settings outside of the gym.  This may include behavior during recess, special events, and other school activities, as well as when participating at home and in their community.

In addition to the work outlined by Hellison (2003), teachers may also emphasize other approaches to developing personal and social responsibility appropriate for the classroom setting which may include: 1) conflict resolution and cooperative learning; 2) positive reinforcement in physical education; 3) moral development in physical education; and 4) a classroom being a public setting.  Each of these approaches is described below.

***Conflict resolution and cooperative learning in physical education:***  Students can learn to handle situations that arise in activity settings appropriately, and negotiate ways in which they can cooperate and get along with others.  Some physical education programs focus primarily on cooperative learning games and activities, with the notion that misbehavior and poor conduct often takes place during competitive learning environments (Rink, 2006).  Many of these programs not only promote physical activity, but they also teach sport-specific skills, while emphasizing cooperation, communication, personal responsibility, respect for others, positive competition, critical thinking, and problem solving (Hughes, 2005).

***Positive reinforcement in physical education:***  In addition to motivating students and providing positive feedback, many physical educators teach and promote affective behaviors through the use of extrinsic rewards.  Using the cognitive evaluation theory and other research, Bonnie Tjeerdsma Blankenship (2008) provides guidelines for teachers giving extrinsic rewards (See Figure 2).

***Moral development in physical education:***  Most teachers and many students are familiar with the term "sportsmanship," but often do not demonstrate "good sport" behaviors.  One strategy teachers can use is to clearly identify what it means to be a good sport, and what behaviors lead one to become a good sport in physical education.  The positive characteristics should be explained to students at the beginning of the school year, and periodically throughout the year.  It is also recommended that the definition of a "good sport" should be written down and placed in a location in the teaching facility where students can clearly see it, and refer to it during class time (Blankenship, 2008).

***Publicness in classroom settings:***Walter Doyle (1986) identified six important 'ecological' elements that comprise the nature of the classroom environment when teachers and students arrive at the classroom door (multidimensionality, simultaneity, immediacy, unpredictability, publicness, and history).  Considering that each classroom is a behavioral setting, *publicness* refers to the notion that, "classrooms are public places" (p. 395). That is, "Teachers act in fishbowls; each child normally can see how others are treated" (Lortie, 1975, p. 70). A large percentage of the participants in the classroom readily witness the interaction of management and instructional events.  How the teacher responds *or does not respond,* sends an explicit or implicit public message. Although Doyle was referring to organization for learning in traditional classroom settings, the concept of publicness applies easily to the affective domain and student behavior in physical education.  If students are taught to recognize how their actions can significantly affect other students in their class and are held accountable, they might be more or less inclined to react in a certain way in a specific circumstance.  Physical education teachers can positively impact students by directing their attention to actions which are seen by others, with the goal of reinforcing positive behaviors and decreasing inappropriate behaviors.

**Implementation and Accountability: Practical Suggestions for Teachers**

Teachers need to take advantage of “teachable moments,” recognizing good behaviors or interactions that are positive. Too often, we focus our attention on negative situations, and ignore acts of kindness, fairness, and generosity. The teacher must make it part of his or her instructional plan to: a) demonstrate and model explicit expectations, and b) recognize, reinforce, and reward these positive behaviors. In this way, teachers not only promote but also create a classroom culture of a caring community. Giving special attention and rewarding students for positive behavior may encourage other students to do the same. Specific suggestions that allow for reinforcing desirable attributes of the affective domain during instruction include: 1) having students help another student who has fallen; 2) recognizing the student that made the pass, in addition to the student that scored the goal or basket; 3) encouraging students to work with a variety of classmates, not just their friends or familiar groups; 4) emphasizing participation and enjoyment over winning and losing; and 5) using public postings of students’ names who have demonstrated exceptional character qualities. We have included a sample rubric (Figure 3) designed for students to self-monitor daily efforts and attention to characteristics attributed to the affective domain as a means to cultivate personal responsibility. The rubric can be used as a self, peer, or teacher assessment, and can be modified to any skill or activity.

(Insert Figure 3 here)

PECentral ([www.PECentral.com](http://www.pecentral.com/)) provides helpful suggestions and ideas for incorporating strategies for teaching to the affective domain. Below are three examples that are especially effective and can be accessed using the *Updated Lesson Ideas* link.

1. **Incredible Encouragers:** The purpose is to teach students how to encourage their classmates in a positive way through verbal and non-verbal communication. Teach students to compliment one another beyond just saying “good job.”
2. **Class “Goals”:** The purpose is to give an incentive for students to do their best during class. Teachers decide what the class goals are for a particular lesson or unit (i.e., participating, listening, following directions), and student behavior is rewarded.
3. **R-E-S-P-E-C-T:** The purpose is to have students participate in a running/concentration game on teams and learn the expectations of physical education class. This is a great first day of the year physical education lesson. Each letter in the word “respect” represents a different teacher expectation including rules, enthusiasm, safety, purpose, effort, challenge, and team.

It is important that physical educators specifically plan for and teach to the affective domain. Students arrive in our classrooms each day with individual and collective histories that amount to a complex social dynamic (Doyle, 1986). Attitudes and behaviors that a teacher believes will contribute to a positive and productive environment conducive for optimal learning may not come naturally to all students. The good news is that the dynamic and multidimensional nature of a physical education setting provides ongoing opportunities for developing personal characteristics and redeemable affective qualities that can effectively enhance sport participation during or outside of school. Achieving such a significant goal through physical education would be one more substantive contribution to the quality of life we all want to enjoy.

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**Figure 1. Self, Peer, or Teacher Assessment by Content**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Instructional Goal | Content | Activity/Strategy | How to Assess? |
| Teamwork | Soccer | Modified Game Play | Peer Checklist:  “Good Teammate” Characteristics |
| Respect | Striking | Equipment | Self-Assessment: Reflection  Write two examples of positive actions; one suggestion for improvement |
| Responsibility | Gymnastics | Safety | Teacher Rubric:  Student adherence to established protocols |
| Challenge/Enjoyment | Basketball | Give-and-Go  Small Sided Teams | Self-Assessment  Success Checklist:  Areas of Improvement |

**Figure 2. Guidelines for Giving Extrinsic Rewards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Guidelines for Giving Extrinsic Rewards** | **Example: Soccer at the Elementary Level** (concepts taken from Luxbacher, 2005, pp. 135-148) |
| Clearly define the target behavior in observable, measurable terms | The teacher can specifically recognize a pass from one student to another.  The teacher can teach students to dribble less and pass more, focusing on cooperation, teamwork, and unselfish play. |
| Establish clear criteria for earning the reward | The teacher might implement a rule that all teams must have five consecutive passes before any shot can be taken. The statistician (in a Sport Ed model), can keep track of passes, assists, etc. |
| Criteria for earning rewards should be individually based or based on self-improvement, when possible | The teacher can focus on skill development and the team concept.  Documentation of student improvement over time can be recorded throughout a unit or tournament. |
| Minimize giving rewards based on the performance of others | The self-selected task of passing to an open teammate is not contingent upon the more advanced players in the class.  Students with novice skills can still be successful and "earn rewards", even though they may not score the goal. |
| Make sure rewards are contingently earned | The reward depends upon demonstrating not only passing skills, but also incorporating teammates in the overall affective objective(s). |
| Let the reward system be optional for students; obtain input from students | The students establish the passing quota (e.g., the number of passes, etc.).  Teachers can have students identify the team goal for the total number of team passes in the modified game, in a predetermined amount of time, etc. |
| Verbal praise for student accomplishments should accompany extrinsic rewards | Verbal praise should not only come from the teacher, but also from the students.  This concept can be emphasized during the lesson closure.  The teacher can allow students to make special notes or recognition of how they accomplished their goals, completed a successful number of passes, etc. |
| Use fading \* | When the teacher is satisfied with students "passing to others", he/she might no longer "reward points" for passing, and only focus on verbal praise during the closure of the lesson.  The teacher can also incorporate other affective characteristics and concepts (e.g., helping another student to his/her feet). |

\* Fading is the process of gradually changing the reinforcer that controls a behavior so the behavior eventually occurs in response to a new reinforcer (Martin & Pear, 2003).

Note: the column on the left is taken directly from *The Psychology of Teaching Physical Education* (Blankenship, 2008, p. 42).  The column on the right was created by the current authors and contains examples in which the column on the left can be used.

**Figure 3. Self, Peer, or Teacher Assessment: Effort (Daily or Weekly)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Proficient  4  Gold Medal | Competent  3  Silver Medal | Basic  2  Bronze Medal | Emergent  1  Contender | No Progress  0  Ineligible | Score  (Hypothetical) |
| Personal Goals | Consistently puts forth best effort toward achieving personal goal(s) | Consistent effort toward achieving personal goal(s) | Solid but inconsistent effort toward achieving  personal goal(s) | Some effort toward achieving personal goals; inconsistent and could try harder | Minimal effort towards achieving  personal goal(s) | 2 |
| Skill Development | I actively engage in practice to learn new skills with consistent effort | I actively engage in practice to improve my existing skills with consistent effort | I actively engage in maintaining my existing skills with consistent effort | I gave inconsistent effort to engage in the activity to maintain or improve my skills | I did not give consistent effort to engage in the activity | 3 |
| Teamwork | I praise the success of my teammates and opponents, participate unselfishly, and maintain my self-control at all times | I praise the success of my teammates or opponents, participate unselfishly, and maintain my self-control most of the time | I participate unselfishly and maintain my self-control most of the time | I sometimes criticize my teammates or opponents; I am sometimes selfish during play | I tend to put my needs ahead of the group | 4 |

Note: the authors advocate that learners achieve the Gold (Proficient) or Silver (Competent) levels. Numbers associated with each level are optional as a means for grading.