Teachers Communication in a Physical Education Class

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Abstract

Our study covers the correlation and usage of the verbal, non-verbal and preverbal communication of the teacher at a physical education class. As well the profit and results to be acquired through such combination. At a physical education class the teacher should not simply say something, impart a worded message, but he or she should raise a reaction on the part of his/her pupils. A verbal explanation is not enough in the teaching process. A non-verbal communication is needed to impart new knowledge, skills and activities. He should “breathe” life into his words through the usage of gestures, mixed kinematic and dynamic movements and body language. Every element should be tested practically by demonstrating it so that the pupil can learn the said element. It is of immense importance the way the teacher says the words, communicates a certain information. The way the words are pronounced, the rhythm, the volume, the pauses, the twinge of the voice all are important in stimulating the pupils. The communication of the teacher of physical education is not composed of only the content of the message, but also of the results to be acquired by the pupil.

Keywords; Communication, pupil, teacher, physical education, results, etc.

1. Introduction

True the teaching process takes place in a limited micro-pedagogical environment, yet judged by its communication dimensions it is quite wider, deeper and a much more complex one. Here we shall display the quality, the density, the intensity and the space of this communication. The style and the communicative strategy used by the teacher do influence not only the nature of the relations between the parties making up the teaching process, the development of the teaching process and the creation of a certain climate in the classroom, but also that the effects of the communication of the teacher are multilateral.

They are deeper and wider than that. In our paper we shall stress the importance and the usage of the communication teachers versus pupils during the teaching process and especially at the physical education class. We shall also cover the three main levels of communication to be defined along the application of such method i.e. verbal, nonverbal and para-verbal communication. We shall also concern ourselves with the way the teacher chooses to efficiently combine these three components in order to become as best understandable and as best influential to the pupils.

The communication between the teacher and the pupil should be a two way vehicle which enables the circulation of the information imparted by the teacher to the pupils.

2. Characteristic Qualities of the Physical Education Teacher

In such systematically organized mobile activities such as schooling, class etc the role of the teacher is one of the main factors, with visible and influential effects not only on the performance of the school and the results of the pupils, but also on the personality of the pupils, thus directly influencing its formation and proper development.

The teacher of physical education alongside his communicative abilities should possess a series of qualities which are imparted to his pupils in different forms and through different means. The outer characteristics of the physical education teacher are easily perceived such as clean and appropriate clothes to manage physical activity which also serve to convey a certain image and to identify him and his job. At the same time such clothing communicates to the pupils a kind of preparedness for the coming teaching process.

The visible qualities such as the anthropometric and motor ones, a harmonic body etc. possess not only esthetic values but also communicative and orientative ones. Another characteristic is the close relations of the teacher to the pupil on individual or group bases as per the needs arising from different situations to come across the teaching process. The individual treatment of the pupil does not mean that a favorable or discriminatory treatment is offered to a certain pupil, but as I explained in another paper “the teacher should select and adopt the communication in order to
motivate the pupils according to their specific characteristics and needs.” (Panxhi, 2013).

Thus the process of the verbal, para-verbal and nonverbal (practical one) which includes the help, the encouragement, the intellectual and physical abilities, the understanding, the advice, sometimes even the authority enjoy a lot of importance not only to give an impetus to the feelings, the emotions in a positive direction, such as optimism, hope, happiness, perseverance, endurance, inspiration which are experienced by the pupil closely connected with such feelings as the pride of the victory, and the high results, friendship, cooperation, mutual assistance, respect for the other guy, harmony and the aesthetics of the movement, the colours and the furniture of the classroom, but also the role of the teacher is of special importance. His pedagogical and communicative abilities serve to resolve conflictual situations especially the grave ones caused by the feeling of the defeat.

He should explain to his pupils that negative emotions in case of defeat such as fear, inferiority, shame, dissatisfaction etc. can be less severe when the activity of movement is a successful one causing that such negative emotions are gradually replaced by initiative, courage, satisfaction and enthusiasm. In this case it is of great importance that all negative manifestations of the emotional sphere to be overwhelmed by the intellectual qualities, and those of the character of the individu in question.

The teacher of the physical education should also be immediately well aware of the physical capabilities, the motor and intellectual ones of each individual pupil as compared to the group. The teacher of the physical education should also be a creative one. Being a creative one means finding way outs, whenever he comes across obstacles during the teaching process and also a communicative one away from every kind of standardization in ideas or methods.

The creative abilities of the teacher call for not only intuition, but they should also rest on the foundation of the professional, pedagogical and psychological knowledge. During the process of the overcoming of the difficulties in communication it is imperative for the teacher to offer quick orientation, maturity, love, and respect to his pupil.

3. Methods Used by the Physical Education Teacher to Impart New Knowledge

According to A. Mehrabian the nonverbal signals are of great importance in a vis a vis interpersonal communication. In this case only 7% of the meaning of the message is transmitted verbally. The para-verbal communication (volume and the tinge of the voice, the rapid or the slow speech) covers 38% of the communication of the message and the nonverbal communication (body language, movements and gestures, the mimics of the face and eyes) cover 55% of the communication (Mehrabian, 1972).

![Diagram of the pyramide of the types of communication]

**Picture 1:** The pyramide of the types of communication

Naturally such percentages might not be quite correct ones, yet nobody belittles the importance of nonverbal behaviour in communication. By all means the teacher during the physical education class should combine these three aspects of the communication in order to impart knowledge aiming at forming and excelling of movement skills, in securing the needed influence in the function of the organism, in the development of motor skills in an optimal degree, in order to enable the pupils to understand and to apply different exercises. That's why the teacher applies the three main groups of the methods:

- The group of verbal methods (explanation, commands, directions etc.)
- The group of nonverbal or concrete methods (exercises, the demonstration and the concretization in different ways.
- The group of correcting methods verbal and concrete ones.

We have two main groups here, according to the special character of the lesson and the application the teacher
can choose between the group of verbal methods (explanation) or the group of nonverbal methods, the concrete ones (exercise, demonstration etc.)

3.1 Verbal Method

First the teacher describes the technique, the tactics, defines the biomechanical structure and the practical importance of the movement action, to be learned by the pupil and latter he demands from the pupil to carry it out. Immediately after the execution of a certain activity by the pupil, the teacher defines and clarifies verbally the way the action was executed and then the teacher himself demonstrates the model and sets new tasks, new targets to be attained.

3.2 Nonverbal method, the concrete one (exercise, demonstration)

First the teacher demonstrates the exercise, the action to be learned, then he sets the technical requests and further on he describes in detail the peculiarities of the practical execution of such an exercise. Thus most of the action to be practiced by the pupils is received by them let us say “ready made” Such a method enables a rapid way of receiving information through the visual channel (the human eye).

In the first case (the verbal method) the activity of the teacher is verbally enriched and the results are visible ones, as since the very beginning the instinctive aping of the exercise by the pupils is avoided. In order to imagine as clearly as possible of a given action or exercise through words, the pupils have to concentrate their attention especially to the words of the teacher in order to understand the technical elements and then thanks to a powerful imagination they can create in their mind the whole figure, all the dynamics of the motor action and latter on to apply it.

These shoul be generally be considered from the point of view of the verbal instructions, which can produce different and valuable sets of information during the move, such as the initial position of the limbs, or the “tools” used in a certain position, what to see, what to listen to and what to do. Maybe the most important thing is to create the “idea”, or the image of the movement which can be converted and can serve as a guide to help carry out the first test. The verbal instructions can also serve to emphasise the way someone can be aware of his own mistakes.

For instance the teacher can offer to the pupil this instruction: immediately after the movement check whether your arms are in a straight position. Such a type of instructions can serve to urge the pupil to develop the capability of the perception. Anyway such a method alone is insufficient to cover all the elements of the motor action. Only after the pupils observe once again a demonstration of the model, the example offered by the teacher, only after they compare the way the action was carried out to the additional, verbal explanation of the teacher, they acquire a more useful visual and logical information. In this case the educative effect is of special value i.e. the active attitude, the development of the thinking, the imagination and the initiative.

Anyway this method, the verbal one of the organization of the common actions (pupils and teachers) should not be considered as a unique one and as being always a necessary one. On the contrary the teacher should always search for new elements, better combinations of his actions with those of his pupils etc. The feedback serves precisely to define how successful was the application of this or that method, and their combination. The feedback also serves to show the progress in understanding the information, the message imparted by the teacher.

Actually the success of the communication regarding certain problems or situations is based on the feedback, which is an indispensable communicative stage in order to evaluate not only the success and the effect of the information, or the message, but also to appreciate the reaction of the subjects (the pupils) towards the situations created by the influence of the verbal and nonverbal communications imparted by the teacher.

The feedback also represents the element of the experiencing of the message, of the content, that’s why it has an individual and concrete character. One of the essential aspects of the feedback is that it reflects the perception and the acceptance of the information, of the messages which serve to gauge the quality and the degree of the communication between the teacher (imparting) and the pupil (receiving).

4. Para-Verbal Communication as a Tool to Achieve Higher Results

The way the teacher chooses how to say things, the words needed to communicate a certain information is quite important, not only the selected words in themselves are important, but also the way they are pronounced, the rhythm, the volume, the pauses, the twinge of the sound, in general the para-verbal communication plays a part not at all less important in order to stimulate the pupils.

As Mr. Dornyei puts it “without enough motivation even the individuals with good abilities can not achieve long...
term goals, also even the suitable curricula and a good teaching in themselves are not good enough to achieve the success by the pupils. On the other hand a good motivation could make for a lack of linguistic skills and the conditions the pupils are in” (Dornyei, 2005).

The voice tone is one of the most important factors, which is so powerful that sometimes inspite of the content of verbal communication it can receive another meaning even quite contrary to the meaning of the words we just pronounced. The tone of the voice can also impart to the listeners an emotive impact. Based on a particular situation it can transmit enthusiasm, happiness, sadness, apathy, liveness or motivation.

This is achieved thanks to its qualities such as speed, which can transmit tension, while slowness can transmit calmness, relax, a situation of comfort or monotony.


The volume of the voice helps in the variation of the intensity. The variation of the volume i.e. a low or a high volume of the voice can serve to make more conspicuous, to emphasize some words more than some other words.

For instance the tone and the rhythm being the force and the speed of the words of the teacher can cause tension, but suitably used it can serve as a means to motivate and mobilize the pupils in the first part of the class the preparatory one conditioning the pupils to be ready to participate in the class. This can be done through different commands, which on one hand serve to increase and equilibrate the attention and concentration, but on the other hand a slow communication and at a low tone can transmit calmness, relax, which can be used by the teacher of the physical education by the end of the class, i.e when the class is almost over, it can be used alongside physical exercises of a relaxation character to calm down the pupils, to relieve them not only of the physiological but also psychological tiredness.

5. Conclusions

We can conclude that the communication in the physical education class from the point of view of the communicational dimension can be quite a complex one. The teacher of the physical education is the composer of his teaching class. It is precisely him who selects the usage of the group of methods, either verbal or nonverbal methods ( concrete ones), or the group of the correction ( verbal and nonverbal).

He uses and combines the different methods of the communication ( verbal, nonverbal, para-verbal ones) with the maximum efficiency and results to his pupils as it is him who knows the situation and the needs of his pupils, his class, better than everybody else in order to stimulate the motivation of his pupils to achieve high results, not simply in the educational process but also beyond it.

It is important the selection of the group of methods to be used to transmit information and knowledge, but it is also important the way the teacher chooses to say things, the words to be used to communicate a certain information. Here not simply the words in themselves are important but also the way they are said, the rhythm, the volume, the pauses, the twinge of the voice in short the para-verbal communication plays an important part in order to achieve the mobilisation of his pupils.

That’s why the teacher of the physical education needs to embody a series of qualities such as professional, communicative, psychological, pedagogical and intuitive knowledge. All of which are communicated by him to the pupils in different ways using different methods. All these qualities taken together have a positive effect to the pupils, who very often simply adore the personality of their teacher and try to imitate all his positive qualities.

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