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55. Effective Learning Environment: A Key element in Effective Teaching Physical Education

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Keywords: learning environment, teacher, effective teaching.

Introduction:

A key element in effective physical education teaching is creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment. An environment where all students feel comfortable participating, regardless of their skill level, and are actively involved in the lesson through variety of activities with clear instructions.

Learning is an ongoing process and it is a result of the interaction between individuals and environment in which those operate. Learning environment is the surroundings in which individuals interact to enrich experiences. A positive learning environment is crucial for optimal student learning. To obtain maximum output in students learning, creating good learning environment in the classroom is very important. Learning environment of a classroom is one of the important factor which are directly associated with learning outcomes and physically active students.

The physical educator's working environment however can be vastly more complex than that of classroom teacher. For Physical education teacher a classroom refers to outdoor movement space/play ground or a gymnasium or multipurpose hall. In such a classroom the teaching areas is larger, majority of the time the students are moving, a variety of large and small equipment is in use, the teacher and a physical safety is always is a concern. The classroom of an effective elementary physical education teacher has a positive and stimulating learning environment which also provides a feeling of safety of students.

Effective learning environment:

Rink (1993), Siedentop and Tannehill (2000) have said organizing and managing activities which deals with organizing of learning environment and managing the lesson to maintain appropriate behavior; and activities for developing and maintaining effective learning environment are the distinct categories that teacher does in a PE lesson broadly.

According to the Sidentop (1994), when climate of health and physical education is favorable, student's learning is influenced in greater extent. A learning environment is an environment that is characterized primarily by those teacher and student activities. An effective learning environment is important because of greater gains in student's learning. Developing an effective learning environment that results in maximal gains in a student's motor learning depends on the teacher's ability to structure the class and to design learning experiences. Here are some criteria of effective learning environment;

- The learning environment should be structures to allow the teacher to concentrate on pertinent skill information.
- The learning environment should be free of student activities that interfere with the student's concentration on the learning task and teacher's ability to provide information and feedback.

- Learning activities should be designed so that students feel comfortable.
- The effective learning environment in physical education is one that provides the opportunity for the maximal quantity of practice, trials, and the teacher should minimize the amount of class time spent in non-practice activities.
- In effective learning environment students are excited; majority of student's time is occupied by those student's activities that contribute to learning.
- In effective learning environment misbehavior is almost non-existent.

Establishing Learning Environment:

Teachers play a central role in providing good learning opportunities and learning environment for students for promoting their learning (Hattie, 2009). Teachers can produce effective learning environment by incorporating various strategies. Following are the needful strategies a teacher must adopt while establishing effective learning environment:

1. Ready the learning environment:

Getting ready to teach is a critical step in the process of establishing an effective learning environment. Ready the learning environment reveals the teaching areas or spaces whether it is indoor or outdoor, the storage of equipment, the hardware and software available, other things such as office spaces, Bulletin boards and first-aid kit.

2. Handling equipment:

Teachers are often responsible for setting up and taking down large pieces of equipment. Teacher should perform these duties before actual teaching period or during planning period. Designing and arranging the teaching environment well will promote optimal learning. The teacher should have enough equipment. Distribution of equipment should be such that minimum time of the class spent on it. There should be more than one access points of the equipment.

3. Rules and procedures:

For less opportunity to disruptive behavior, rules and procedures should be established. Teacher should consider what behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable in the class and sets rules and procedures/ protocols. Rules can cover specific behaviors. Rules related to the handling equipment carefully, working in discipline, being polite with others, entry and exit protocols, dressing pattern, roll calls, expected behaviors should be clearly instructed to the students.

4. Beginning school activities:

During first few days of school, students will form work habits, attitudes and behaviors that will shape the rest of the school year. The teacher should make students to feel positive and successful. The initial activities should be such that the students can enjoy and do successfully. The teacher should focus on activities that will involve students quickly and maintain the attention of a whole class.

5. Strategies for potential problems:

The teacher's physical presence and full attention are needed to develop tasks, monitor students, manage the environment, give feedback and set limits. Teacher should plan strategies for variety of problems like interruptions, injury sickness, noise, misbehavior of students, handicapped students etc. the strategies help the teacher avoid trouble and maintain an effective learning environment.

Maintaining the Learning Environment:

Teachers who make a concentrated effort at establishing learning environment at the beginning of the school year set the framework for maintaining the environment throughout the year.

1. Monitoring:

Careful monitoring of student behavior help[s] detect problems before they become acute. A plan should be developed to practice monitoring as it is a difficult process. The teacher should watch misbehavior and notice any problems and how widespread or restricted they are. The teacher should observe students ability or inability to perform tasks or procedures.

2. Stopping inappropriate behavior:

Every effort should be made to stop inappropriate behavior quickly. Quick action establishes the teacher's intent to follow rules and procedures and as a result established credibility. At the same time teachers make an effort to understand the goals of misbehavior and take steps to establish a program that will develop responsible and cooperative behavior. Sometimes ignoring small violations may be appropriate.

3. Student accountability and instructional clarity:

Effective student accountability procedures depend on the teacher. Teachers must give clear and specific instructions. They must communicate assignments and instructions so that every student can understand. Teacher should work at developing good oral communication skills. The teacher should be specific and direct, give concrete examples and use clear precise language.

Conclusion:

It is concluded from the study that, learning environment influence learning outcomes. Teachers cannot be effective unless they can establish and maintain a learning environment conducive to learning. Learning environments are maintained through careful monitoring, stopping inappropriate behavior, working with instructional clarity and establishing student's accountability.

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