

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FROM AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The use of the classroom ecology paradigm in physical education teaching research is reviewed in this article. In order to respond to the central question: "Why do some physical education classes seem so remarkably alive with learning potential and other classes seem so devoid of that very characteristic?" the review traces the development of a research program from its beginnings in the United States at the Ohio State University through the development of more advanced techniques. The managerial, instructional, and student social systems are three interrelated systems that interact to form the classroom ecology paradigm, which looks at how changes in one system affect how the other systems evolve.

Keywords: student, practice exercises, ecological paradigm, Primary vectors, secondary schools, model Griffey described, classroom ecology paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of accountability is central to this representation, and this review offers a longitudinal account of studies on this aspect of the paradigm. The main conclusions of this analysis paint a picture of physical education that involves significant bargaining within many classes, where teachers exchange collaboration in the management system for a reduction in the demands of the instructional system. The responsibility that is still in place generally emphasizes student cooperation, orderly management, and making at least a minimal effort in activity tasks. Poor student performance is generally caused by a lack of alignment between the unit objectives, practice exercises, and accountability measures. Compared to secondary schools, elementary school instructional environments are more demanding. Finally, this analysis makes recommendations for future physical education research, advising us to place more emphasis on student responses than instructor behaviors in our efforts to comprehend instructional success.

The majority of research on teaching physical education has been descriptive (Silverman, 1991), conducted within the dominant paradigm of quantitative research supported by common presumptions that students attend school to learn subjects and develop as individuals, and that teachers' primary responsibilities are to instruct students in those subjects and effectively support their development (Tinning, 1991). The classroom ecology stream, which Silverman (1991) defined as only using ethnographic and interpretive methodologies, was one of the research streams he cited. Although Siedentop's demand for study on task structures in physical education has not been heeded, Griffey (1991), in his response to the Silverman review, acknowledged the potential efficacy of the "task structure" model for comprehending the complex dynamics of instructional physical education (Griffey, 1991: 383).

The 'call' that was made has not gone ignored; in fact, there is enough research on physical education that employs the ecological model to support the review that follows. But like with other new fields of study, there are still lots of unsolved issues. The initial goal of this work is to summarize the main results of ecological model-based physical education research. Then, in accordance with Cooper's (1989) recommendations for reviews, we will add the information that is absent. After that, a research plan will be put forth. Walter Doyle's work served as the foundation for the task structure model Griffey described. Doyle initially emphasized the need of viewing classrooms as interconnected systems because changes to one system can have a significant impact on how other systems behave. Although it was established in classroom research using qualitative methods, Doyle referred to this concept as the "classroom ecology paradigm" (Doyle, 1977: 183), and its implementations in physical education have used a range of methods.

The Classroom Ecology Model

An ecological model depicts classroom behavioral dynamics in a way that aids instructors in understanding, anticipating, and reacting to those dynamics (Siedentop, 1988). The work that students conduct in their classrooms is the emphasis of study in the ecological paradigm, as opposed to those models that attempt to explain student accomplishment, a predominantly distal issue. It looks at the immediate effects that a class's structure and plan of instruction have on students' assignments. The ecological model examines classroom life as it develops naturally, and in that regard, it offers an anthropological viewpoint that can only be attained via consistent and extensive observation of that life.

The administrative, instructional, and student social systems are depicted as a set of three interconnected systems in the model, where changes in one system are likely to have an impact on changes in the others. Clearly, the ecological model's two main problems are order and academic performance, and the two are closely related (Doyle, 1986). For instance, modifications in student behavior, whether favorable or poor, clearly affect the volume of academic work that may be completed. It is more probable that the teacher will intervene to maintain order if pupils start acting out, briefly suspending the lesson's instructional focus in the process. Similarly, chances for student socialization may be reduced if teachers uphold strict expectations for performance in the managerial system.

The establishment and maintenance of order through a managerial system that typically emphasizes cooperation rather than compliance is, in fact, the compelling agenda for physical education teachers, according to the results of the earliest studies in physical education using this model. It has also been observed that by lowering the demands placed on the instructional system, many teachers are able to gain and sustain such cooperation in the managerial system. The idea of the program of action (Doyle, 1986) needs to take center stage when discussing the finished product in this paradigm. The phrase is used to describe the point at which management and subject-matter content concerns interact in complex ways that make them difficult to disentangle. The administration, positioning, and sequencing of the information inside lessons are all included in the plan of action. The program of action, which has a clear direction, momentum, and energy, decides what behaviors are appropriate for pupils to exhibit in various instructional contexts.

According to Merritt (1982), classroom activities contain "vectors" that, when activated, pull events and participants along their trajectories. The word "vector" is intentionally used to imply that the course of the action plan draws people and events to it. The teacher's lesson plans' agendas contain the primary vectors, which specify the course of action to be taken as well as the sequence in which it must occur. Primary vectors with their teacher-controlled or content-embedded accountability are tested to see how well they hold up through secondary vectors, which are often student-initiated. Students start secondary vectors for a variety of reasons, such as to diminish the rigors of a task, decrease the likelihood of being held accountable, look for a task that is more "interesting," interact socially with friends, or even just out of boredom. Teachers frequently respond to these secondary vectors, and their actions will "determine the bounds and strength of the primary direction vector and shape its direction" depending on when and how they do so (Doyle, 1986: 420).

The plan of action is laid out through a series of exercises that highlight three facets of students' work: (i) the products they must create, (ii) the processes they must use to create them, and (iii) the resources they must utilize to create them. Whatever the task, pupils will respond in some way, from active or passive non-engagement to full participation, and the teacher will then respond in some way. Therefore, the action plan is not a static item that is placed in place and left undisturbed, but rather a dynamic vector, the direction of which is controlled by how teachers observe and react to the possibility of or presence of secondary vectors generated by students. Although the majority of studies indicates that the more frequent effort is to decrease the primary vector, it should be highlighted that secondary vectors created by students may have the capacity to improve or strengthen the program of action.

Doyle (1980, 1983) has made several crucial claims about accountability. The foundation of any task system, whether administrative or educational, is accountability. Without responsibility, there would be no task, and pupils would only work as hard as their own interests drove them. Additionally, the tasks that students actually do in class are defined by the student responses that teachers accept and praise, and task completion is affected by how rigorously teachers evaluate these responses. Accordingly, only assignments that require accountability are those that students take seriously: "If no answers are required or any answer is accepted, then very few students will truly pay attention to the topic" (Doyle, 1983: 186).

The distinction between the "stated task" (i.e., the teacher's instructions) and the "actual task" will depend on the degree of accountability (that is, what the students are allowed to produce and what is accepted by the teacher). More than teacher instruction, teacher consequences dictate the tasks' character, and students frequently learn more about the tasks' requirements from a teacher's responses to performance than they did from the instructor's initial instructions. This is referred to as a contingency-developed instructional task system by Alexander (1983).

However, it is crucial to recognize that a class ecosystem is a dynamic, interdependent process in order to comprehend a plan of action. It shouldn't be interpreted as being one-way. Indeed, Doyle had special reservations about studies that concentrated solely on teacher-related factors. He stated that the idea of unidirectionality, according to which teachers directly influence student outcomes, oversimplifies how work is accomplished in classrooms. According to Doyle (1977), numerous research showed the opposite, demonstrating that student behavior

frequently influences teacher behavior. Its segments are only presented sequentially for the purposes of presenting the study employing this approach.

Task and Task Presentation

The idea of tasks and task systems is essential to the study of a class ecosystem. The first analysis of classroom assignments was published by Doyle (1980). Doyle (1983) referred to instruction as "academic work" and said that the curriculum might be thought of as a collection of "academic tasks" or subject-matter assignments. The task identifies the situational framework that compiles and guides students' reasoning and behavior (Doyle and Carter, 1984). The three dimensions of managerial, transitional, and instructional task systems in physical education were first articulated by Tousignant and Siedentop (1983). Managerial responsibilities include those that have to do with behavior, attendance, and, in some subject areas, proper attire. The activities that students were expected to carry out in order to complete the instructional tasks are referred to as transitional tasks (Tousignant, 1982: 99). The accomplishment of subject-matter objectives is the subject of instructional assignments. There are various ways to classify these tasks in the context of physical education. One strategy is to concentrate on whether the activity simulates a scrimmage, game, or practice environment. According to Rink's (1993) proposal, instructional tasks can be divided into three categories based on their instructional purpose for skill development: informing tasks, which inform students about the upcoming task and explain its requirements, refining tasks, which aim to raise the caliber of the students' performances, and applying tasks, which give students opportunities to use their skills in game or scrimmage situations.

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