

Practice of Reciprocal Teaching Style in a Hong Kong Primary School

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Introduction

According to Hong Kong physical education (PE) scholars (李宗、高達倫和曾卓權，2009), PE teacher should renovate their concept of physical education curriculum and pedagogies, and recognize the development of social cultural aspects of physical education. Instead of controlling all aspects of the PE lesson, the roles of the teachers are becoming coordinate and guide the students. The responsibility is given to the students to experience independent learning.

Concerning teaching methods of PE, lesson should be with more focus on communication, collaboration, and exposure to social skills learning environment. For instance, teachers should arrange the students to practice collaborative learning, critical thinking, communication, leading and accepting the views of others, to expand their learning experience.

In assessment, teachers are not the only possible assessor. Students being assessors are suggested by the Hong Kong Government, and the observation checklist is examples of student learning record and report (Curriculum Development Council, 2002). Therefore, reciprocal teaching (Style C) is suggested to be implemented in schools to achieve the above mentioned goals of PE.

The Reciprocal style of teaching

For the implementation mode of the reciprocal style, students are paired and exchanged roles of doer and observer. While the doer performs the task, the observer observes and gives feedback based on information provided by the teacher or in the form of criteria sheets (task cards) (Iserbyt, Elen & Behets, 2010). As planer of the learning task, the teacher coaches the observer to help teaching the doer as well. It should be noted that the implementation of reciprocal style of teaching, teacher should guarantees switching the role of doer and observer, ensuring equal practice times and opportunities for giving feedback and practicing (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002).

With the emphases of student-centered pedagogies, feedback is given by observer, instead of teacher. It implies that the responsibility of instruction and providing guidance for learning is transferred to the students. Training observers to provide effective and appropriate feedback, making them understand the motor skills, helping both doers and observers’ self-improvement, and enhance personal growth are some of the characteristics of the reciprocal teaching style. It also develops collaboration, communication and critical thinking, which are advocated by the Curriculum Development Council (2002) to nurture positive values and attitudes in PE. They are the foundation for students’ life-long and life-wide learning. Accordingly, launching a study on applying reciprocal teaching and investigating students’ learning is a timely initiative.

Criteria Sheet (Task Card)

In this study, criteria sheet is used. It may be defined as a guide through which the observer watches and gives appropriate feedback to the doer. It also serves as records of the doer’s performance (Jackson & Dorgo, 2000). The design of criteria sheets in this study was user friendly, which included:


- the activities description ;
- the parts of the task;
- the performance skill cues;
- the pictures with supplement words as an example;
- the possible disturbing part of the learner;
- the parameters within which to perform the task.

Basketball two-handed chest pass Criteria Sheet



日期：_____成績：1234

全句
我怎樣愛你們，你們也要怎樣相愛。(約翰福音13：34)
四年級 (籃球—雙手胸前傳接球)

同儕互評(同學班號：____)

1. 傳球：十指分開盡量包著籃球，十指持球時是向著自己。	☹
2. 傳球：雙臂用力推出籃球，傳球後手指指向接球者。	☹
3. 接球：兩臂在胸前準備接球，手指自然分開，成籃球般大小，前臂肌肉收緊，盡量預測來球位置。	☹
4. 接球：當球碰到你的手指時，雙手一合，以十指把球穩住，之後兩臂後引減低球的來速。	☹

Methods

The study included 1 primary 4 class of 40 students in a Hong Kong aided primary school. Students have no previous basketball experience as well as learning in the form of the reciprocal teaching.

A teaching unit of basketball was planned for the students. All lessons in the unit were conducted in the form of reciprocal teaching style. To facilitate the communication and social skills of the students, the teacher introduced some positive communication language for student through brain storming technique before the skill practice (Appendix attached). The positive communication language could avoid conflicts caused by the rude comments offered by the observers. Encouraging wording, such as “Never give up” “You can do it”, were introduced students in the lesson. They aimed to develop students’ communication skills, and assist them to accept the views of others.

Teaching Process

Firstly, the students acquired the knowledge of the techniques of the basketball two-handed chest pass through the use of criteria sheets and teacher’s demonstration.

Secondly, the teacher paired up the students in group of four, with two doers and two observers. During the practice of the two doers, two observers assessed and provided feedbacks on their skill performance of the doer by using the following criteria sheet.

Thirdly, the doer and observer exchanged their roles periodically. The teacher continued to monitor the observer to control the quality of the implementation. Finally, the students gathered, debriefed and reviewed the main points of performance skill and their behaviours involved in the teaching and learning process.

Data were collected through students’ reflective journals and teacher’s reflection. They were asked about their perceptions on the experiences in the teaching unit. How did they feel about the learning experiences taught in the form of reciprocal teaching? What kinds of benefits had they gained?

Data analysis was conducted with reference to the content analysis and constant comparison methods. Triangulation of data from different sources and peer debriefers were adopted for enhancing the credibility of the research.

Discussion of the Results: Students’ Reflection

Data were collected through students’ reflective journals. Two questions are asked in the students’ reflective journals:

1. What was your feeling when your classmate pointed out that your techniques could not meet the requirement?

In the first question, only 24% (n=10) of students offered positive feeling after being criticized by the observer. For example they appreciated for the corrective feedbacks or thought that the observer had reminded them. They regarded as helpful for skill improvement. 60% (n=24) of students had negative feeling because of the critical comments offered by others. However, half of them still tried to improve their skills even under such displeasing feeling. It achieved the basic purpose of the teaching.

The second question was:
What benefit can the doer or the observer get from their peer assessment?

In the second question, most of the students (n=27) found out reciprocal style teaching benefited the doer from the peer assessment. The doer’s skill was clearly improved. Some of students knew that the reciprocal teaching was beneficial for the observer. When the observer was helping others to improve, they were training their own observation skill and understanding of the skill as well. Therefore both the observer and the doer were educated.

Teacher’s reflection

All students acknowledged their learning experiences through involving in the reciprocal teaching. They were more aware of their learning. They could master their skills as well as understood the teaching points more. Their observation and critical thinking skills had been improved. The girls were more capable of communicating with their classmates. The experiences of taking the role as doers and observers and teaching others were experiences liked by the students..

Although it is time-consuming to prepare the criteria sheets at the beginning, the repeated use of the criteria sheets, with the increase of production experience, teacher’s efficiency in designing the criteria sheets was improved. It was also helpful in developing students’ social cultural values. Therefore the time spent is worth of doing.

However, students were sometimes found providing unclear instructions for pinpointing specific corrective feedbacks for skill improvement. Some students were found weak in presenting themselves and communication skills. This very often caused conflicts between the doers and observers. On the whole, students’ cultural and social values were enhanced

Conclusion and recommendations

The reciprocal style of teaching is capable of promoting students’ social and cultural skills of the students. Measures are required for improving students’ weaknesses in presenting, communicating and giving instruction to others for the effective implementation of the reciprocal style of teaching. Future research of extending the application of reciprocal style of teaching to all classes is suggested.

Reference

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