

A Research on Fairness of Teacher-Student Contacts in College Sports Classes

ZHANG Bingwei^{[a],*}

^[a]P.E. Department, Qufu Normal University, Qufu, China.
*Corresponding author.

Received 15 August 2014; accepted 23 October 2014
Published online 26 November 2014

Abstract

Sports classroom interaction between teachers and students is one of the basic forms of the classroom teaching practice. Fairness of the interaction is the most essential representation of the fairness of physical education classroom teaching, and it is also one of the important means of achieving fair education. However, there is much unfairness in present sports classes, which may be reflected from the selection of communicating objects, communicating content, communicating ways, communicating place and evaluation methods. Not only does the unfairness affect the quality of sports teaching, but also has a negative influence on the students' psychological health. The purpose of this thesis is to make an in-depth analysis of the present unfairness of teacher-student interaction in college sports classes and offer some constructive and helpful solutions to realize fairness of sports teaching.

Key words: Sports classroom; Teacher-student contact; Fairness

Zhang, B. W. (2014). A Research on Fairness of Teacher-Student Contacts in College Sports Classes. *Studies in Sociology of Science*, 5(4), 97-101. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sss/article/view/5903>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/5903>

INTRODUCTION

Teacher-student and student-student contact is a kind of purposeful interactive activity in classroom teaching, by means of which both the teachers and the students can

communicate, coordinate, and conduct in harmony to achieve some presupposed goals (Xiao, 1999). In fact, physical classroom teaching practice is an interactive process for school work development, affective communication and exercising behavior between teachers, the teaching subject, and students, the teaching object. It always exists and continues in class contact, and by means of which both the teachers and students can achieve to coordinate, communicate, and improve with each other.

What is Fairness? It refers to doing things reasonably, without favoritism (Zhang, 2010). It is equated with justice, which means integrity and excludes favoring. The fairness in sports class ensures that the students are provided with equal opportunities for contacting, including proper ways, places, and topics to contact. By this, students can develop their ability to the maximum extent.

In view of that, a correct understanding of the problems existing in the contact between teachers and students in sports class, and an active attempt to construct a highly effective sports classroom teaching mode are particularly important in improving the quality of college sports classroom teaching.

1. UNFAIRNESS OF TEACHER-STUDENT CONTACT IN COLLEGE SPORTS CLASSROOM TEACHING

Nowadays, there are many unfair phenomena in college sports classes which seriously block the way to have a smooth sports class. These phenomena include: Improper selection of the contacting objects, unfair application of teaching contents, unfair communicating methods, segmentary selection of contacting targets, and unfair evaluation of the communicating effects. These phenomena will be discussed in sequence below.

1.1 Improper Selection of the Contacting Objects

Based on the investigation of the present situation of the contacts in sports classes, it is found out that the teacher-student contacts are to a large extent selective, with the teachers as the original initiator of the contacts in most cases. The teachers select their contacting objects on the basis of students' gender, athletic competence, inherent personality and different roles in class. Male physical education teachers tend to contact more with male students, while female teachers tend to prefer female students. As to students with different athletic competence, the P.E. teachers are more willing to associate with students with high sports scores, while those with low competence usually tend to be neglected. When it comes to the students playing different roles in class, those students ranking high in the class community will have more opportunities to contact with the teacher than other ordinary students (Cheng, 1995). It is revealed that the unfairness of teacher-student contact does not only exhibit in the contacts between the teacher and the poor students, but the more than half students with average performance will be overlooked as well. It is argued that this kind of unfairness in selecting contacting objects does have a great influence on students' identification of their roles and their socialization development.

1.2 Unfairness in Applying Teaching Materials

In P. E. class, the interestingness and difficulty of the teaching contents are in most cases determined by the teachers on the basis of the condition of the students. As a result, fairness factor is also involved: If the teachers choose over demanding teaching content, it will cause most students (average students and poor students) to feel embarrassed and result in reducing the opportunities and frequency of teacher-student contacts. Instead, if the teachers choose the contents too easy, it will undermine the motivation and enthusiasm of the students with better athletic competence. Based on the investigation, it is found out that the students with poor P.E. scores, e.g. those students who are over fat or physically weak, can only be the bystander. They cannot participate in any grouping exercises and miss any opportunities to contact with the teacher, which is apparently unfair to them.

1.3 Unfair Communicating Methods

The ways in which the teachers contact with the students are in many cases unfair. It is revealed by many researches that college P.E. teacher will be more democratic, encouraging, fair and considerate when they contact with top students, and they will be more arbitrary, critical, prejudiced and aggressive when contacting with students of poor P. E. score. Moreover, the poor students will be offered fewer opportunities to exercise and behave themselves (Shen, 1994). Moreover, unfair communicating methods are also reflected in the

means of communication, i.e. verbal communication and nonverbal communication. The former refers to the P.E. teachers' language and tone, while the latter refers to their face expressions, actions, expressions in eyes, etc. It is revealed that the total quantity of applying different communicating methods may to some degree shed some lights on the teachers' fairness. Finally, the teachers' fairness may also be reflected from the language that they decide to use contacts with their students.

1.4 Segmentary Selection of Contacting Targets

Based on the observation of authentic physical education classes, it is found that most of the contacts between teachers and students are focused on the P.E. monitor himself/herself and the students who stand in the front of the queue. While for the students who stand on the back, they have few opportunities. Therefore, P.E. teachers' segmentary selection of contacting targets based on their relative position in the queue not only hurts students' learning enthusiasm, but also may cause disparity of college students' identity, sometimes even discrimination, thus affecting the development of their mental health.

1.5 Unfair Evaluation of the Communicating Effects

In college P.E. Sports, the evaluations made by physical education teachers not only determine whether the contact can continue, but also have an important impact on students' mental health. College students receive teachers' evaluations through various channels. Given these evaluations, they will either be encouraged or be frustrated, which are how unfair evaluation effects are brought about.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR UNFAIRNESS OF TEACHER-STUDENT CONTACTS IN P.E. CLASSES

Based on our investigation, the reasons for unfairness of teacher-student contacts in P.E. classes can be summarized as the following.

2.1 Incapability of P.E. Teachers

The comprehensive teaching capability of college P.E. teachers is composed of three aspects, i.e. the ability to perform P.E. teaching, the ability to guide students to accomplish physical training and the ability to fulfill the assigned teaching tasks. Put in more specific terms, it mainly includes such activities as: preparing lessons, knowing about students' P.E. competence, digging into the P.E. textbooks, selecting and organize the teaching materials, applying appropriate teaching methodologies and strategies, communicating with students by verbal and nonverbal means, monitoring the classroom teaching, etc.. In general, sports teaching class is a process of contacting

between teachers and students, and P.E. teachers' teaching capability is the major factors that affects the effects and fairness of teaching-student contacts.

2.2 Intrusion of the Market Economy

With the development of the market economy, the students' universal ethical principle orientation has changed greatly. Consequently, in order to get more attention and care from the teachers in P.E. classes, they may bribe their teachers in one way or another. Moreover, many sports teachers themselves choose to ignore their duties and teachers' regulations. They are in favor of vanity, snobbish and seek personal gain by taking advantage of their students. As a result, some of them may decide to contact more with some students depending on the benefits gained from them. For them, the only standard to evaluate a student is money. They will give special rights to those students who bribe them with money. And some other teachers cling to power and give special privilege to the students who are from the families with some political background. In one word, both such teachers and students help to occurrence of the unfairness in P.E. classes.

2.3 Idiosyncratic Differences Among the Students

Multiple Intelligence Theory states that each person's intelligence is the combination of different types of capacity. Because of individual differences, some students may exhibit superiority in linguistic, mathematical or intellectual aspects, while others may excel at sports. Yet, there will also be some students who are inferior in both above aspects, and therefore cause some teachers to believe that they are "poor" or even "dumb". Then the teachers will have "sound" reasons to treat them unfairly, and sometimes even to discriminate them. In addition, different students have different characteristics. Some students are more outgoing and innocent and apt to express their feelings directly, which help them to be more actively involved in the teacher-student contacts. On the other hand, some other students seem to be more introverted and silent and are left in disadvantageous position in the teacher-student contacts. Therefore, it is foolproof to come to the conclusion that the idiosyncratic difference among the students is also one important factor that leads to unfairness in teacher-students contacts.

2.4 Oversized P.E. Classes

At present, college physical education classes are generally oversized. Due to sports teachers' limited energy and time, in a large class, it is very difficult for them to take every student's needs into consideration and give the students enough appropriate guidance. At the same time, sports belong to a kind of performance activity that is bound with high demands for desire to show off. As a result, the students with superior sports capability will feel

at ease in exhibiting themselves, while the students with poor sports capability will feel ashamed, which will finally widen the gaps between themselves and their teachers and result in their disadvantaged position in the contacts with the teachers.

2.5 Single and One-Sided Evaluation Mode

For a long time, the summative assessment method, i.e., to use the final grade to evaluate students learning efficiency, is the only evaluation method used in sports classes in China. Therefore, passing the ultimate tests and getting high grades become the only pursuit for most teachers and students. In sport classes, on the one hand, the P.E. teachers actually try to ignore or suppress those kinds of exercises which cannot improve students' grade in exams. On the other hand, teachers usually prefer to contact with high-grade students, isolation and even look down upon the low-grade students.

3. SUGGESTIVE SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE FAIRNESS IN COLLEGE SPORTS CLASSES

3.1 Forming Correct Conception About Teacher-Student Contact in P.E. Classes

Ideal conception about the teacher-student contacts in college sports classes should be based on such value orientations as kindness, beauty and truth. In other words, by means of communication, guidance and reflection, the P.E. teachers should aim to make the relationship to the students achieve a common spiritual resonance. In this process, both the teachers and the students try to respect and understand each other; they can feel the existence of themselves as real beings (Tian, 2002).

First of all, P.E. teachers should come to the realization that the students are the unique center and theme of teaching activities. The keys to achieve fairness of the contacts between teachers and students in sports classes are that the teachers should acknowledge and respect the principal status of students, devise and organize the teaching activities from the real condition of the students, and aim to cultivate and develop the students' potential capability. Moreover, the teachers should consider every student as a learner with subject consciousness, independent participant and coordinator of sports activities.

Next, P.E. teachers should try to transform their roles and become students' learning guides, collaborators, and participants. In college sports classes, P.E. teachers should change their roles as the outside leader to the inside participants. Now, the major responsibility of the college P.E. teachers is to inspire the students to think and encourage them to take part in physical exercises

rather than simply transfer physical knowledge, skills and technology. In addition to formal classroom teaching, the roles of college P.E. teachers should also be knowledgeable consultants, communicative partners, and reflection initiators. Their major task is not to simply tell the students what is right or what is wrong; instead, they should try to offer the students with contradictory arguments, to tell them how to make their own decisions (UNESCO, 1996).

3.2 Improve Teaching Skills and Teaching Students in Accordance With Their Aptitude

Along with the increase of courses and enriching content in college sports classes, the requirements for college P.E. teachers teaching ability are also gradually increasing. In general, a P.E. teacher's teaching can be understood from the following aspects.

Improving P.E. teachers teaching ability mean improving their abilities to go into teaching material and earnestly prepare lessons, to select and organize the teaching content, to know about students, to choose and apply appropriate teaching methodologies, to control and monitor the rhythm of classes. These abilities are also the factors that influence the teacher-student interactions in sports classes. In sports classes, most of the communications between teachers and students lie in such phases as teachers' explaining and students' understanding, requirements and sports practice, evaluation and feedback, individual guidance, eye contact, body contact and so on (Wu, 1999). College sports teachers should master these specific sports teaching skills and techniques as much as possible, trying to avoid the unfairness phenomena. Sport teaching activities should be aimed at covering all students of different levels. To achieve that, the students should firstly be classified into groups of different levels and be served with different practicing activities in accordance with their real aptitude. The common procedures should include: explaining the basic principles and contents, dividing the students into several groups on the basis of their aptitude, organizing and monitoring different groups to practice the different items that best suit themselves.

3.3 Treating Students' Idiosyncratic Differences in a Right Way

Owing to genetic endowment and separate growing environment, there are many great differences in students' physical exercise ability, but they show little difference in the intelligence aspect. A student's all-round development, to a large extent, does not depend on whether he or she is intelligent or not; instead, it is mainly determined by a teacher's teaching method. At the same time, P.E. teachers should also take into consideration the students' different personality traits. They should make more efforts to guide and encourage those students

who are usually not actively involved in class activities. P.E teachers should show confidence in students' sports potential and have higher expectations for every student, especially those students who are excessively fat or weak. Special attention should be paid to the introverted or physically vulnerable students. P.E. Teachers should be well prepared to contact initiatively with each of them, take care of each of them, and create favorable conditions for the physical and psychological development of each of them.

3.4 Downsizing Sports Classes and Optimizing Parade Formation and Group Division

In sports classes, the larger a class is, the less interactive opportunities there are. Therefore, the administrative departments in colleges should try to downsize P.E. classes in accordance with the requirements of each P.E curriculum, to increase the mutually contacting opportunities for both the teachers and the students. Replacing the traditional "square" type of queue structure with the circular, round, or "horseshoe" types, is also the effective way to enhance the communication between teachers and students. When dividing the sports class into groups, the P.E. teachers should try to put the students at similar sports levels and with similar interests into the same group, which will arouse their enthusiasm and initiative for training.

3.5 Devising Multiple Source Evaluation Models

Compared with the summative evaluation method, the process evaluation method has much priority in P.E. teaching evaluation. However, as a matter of fact, the present evaluation system of college physical education curriculum mainly uses the summative evaluation mode, namely evaluating the students' schoolwork exclusively through the final examination. This is not only incomplete or even unfair, but also a serious setback for the students' learning initiative. Contrary to this, the process evaluation method is to assess the students' whole learning process in P.E. classes, namely to make reference to the final score and the regular learning performance, these two indicators, to assess students' final P.E achievements. It is proved that such an assessment method will greatly encourage the students, especially the introverted students, to actively participate in sports classes.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that there are quite a lot of factors contributing to the quality of college P.E. teaching activities. These factors may be subjective—the teachers' improper performance—or objective—the unavoidable condition—, controllable or uncontrollable, all of which predestine that there will be a long, arduous way to achieve the aim of realizing fairness in college P.E.

classes. However, we have good reasons to believe that, with the deepening reform of college P.E. teaching, the reinforcing democratic awareness of the society, the continuous improvement of P.E. teachers' teaching skill, the unfairness situation of teacher-student contacts in P.E. classes will change greatly. Most important of all, such a change will be of great practical significance to build a fair and harmonious society.

REFERENCES

- Cheng, X. Q. Q. (1995). Analysis of the distinctions among teachers' contacting objects in class. *Educational Review*, (2).
- Shen, G. P. (1994). Study of oral communication in junior high school classes. *Educational Theories and Practice*, (1).
- Tian, H. Z. (2002). *On interactive pedagogy* (pp.26-27). Changsha, China: Hunan Normal University Press.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (1996). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow* (p.108). Beijing: Educational Science Publishing Company.
- Wu, K. N. (1999). *Sociology of classroom teaching* (p.200). Nanjing, China: Nanjing Normal University Press.
- Xiao, C. (1999). On teaching and contacts. *Educational Research*, (2).
- Zhang, J. G. (2010). *New learners' modern Chinese dictionary*. Changchun, China: Jilin Education Publishing House.