

The importance of physical education education essay

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Within Physical Education progress is a key target for a student. Progress is the development of an individual in a direction considered more beneficial than and superior to the previous level. There are many ways that teachers or coaches can ensure their students' progress through physical education however for students to progress they need to have positive attitudes towards physical activity and want to participate. Attitude is regarded as a construct that, though not directly observable, precedes behaviour and guides choice and decisions for action (Dismore and Bailey 2010). Making the lessons fun and enjoyable or being a caring teacher and creating a good relationship with the students are two different ways that ensure progress can be made. One goal of physical education programmes has historically been the development of positive attitudes (Siedentop 1991). Enjoyment can be defined as a more reflective process that focusses on an internal evaluation of both the process and the projected outcome of an activity and is regarded as helpful in fostering positive attitudes towards physical education (Dismore and Bailey 2010). Progress can only be made if the students have a positive attitude towards physical education, this way they will want to improve. Subramaniam and Silverman (2002) carried out a qualitative study which revealed that student enjoyment of physical education, for the most part was self-initiated, the researchers found that those with positive attitudes towards physical education tended to take charge of their engagement and enjoyment, whereas those with negative attitudes chose not to engage in the task and enjoy themselves. Consequently, this study is contradicting the fact that teachers need to make the lessons fun and enjoyable so that the students want to engage, it is

stating that it is down to the students to have those positive attitudes to make them want to participate. Therefore, the teachers do not need to make the lessons fun and enjoyable they need to however transfer their positive attitudes over to the students so they are then able to enjoy themselves and progress. In order for children and youth to develop a lifestyle of regular physical activity to maximize the long-term health benefits, they need to be 'turned on' to physical activity by making it enjoyable (Coulter and Woods 2011). This will keep children coming back because of an intrinsic desire to be physically active. Getting children to enjoy physical activity is not hard, children are built to move and they want to move. The key is to understand what promotes, this enjoyment, harness it and build it into our school experience for all children (Coulter and Woods 2011). When questioned both students and teachers voice a desire to engage in activities that are fun (O'Reilly, Tompkins and Gallant, 2001). Many believe the promise of fun acts as a motivator; it is seen to help draw students into an activity where they will learn skills that will enable them to progress and pursue active, healthy lifestyles as adults. Some educators have argued that making 'fun' a stated goal for physical education classes may in the long run trivialise the whole program (O'Reilly et al. 2001). This is because the term 'fun' can be defined in many different ways and misunderstood, the pocket oxford dictionary defined 'fun' as 'sport; amusement; jest'. Therefore in this case 'sport' is not meant to be understood as athletic endeavour, but 'to make fun of or ridicule' (O'Reilly et al. 2001). Griffin (1993) however, argued that fun can be purposeful if there is an organising structure that provides conditions emphasising skill development, realistic challenges and a de-emphasis on

winning. Fun is perceived to be an important factor in motivating students to participate and if students are motivated to participate they are able to progress (O'Reilly et al. 2001). As a result of this students are going to progress in their skills if teachers are able to make their lessons fun for the students. If a student and their teacher have built a good relationship through the teacher being caring they are then able to enjoy the lessons together with the student feeling comfortable in a laid back, fun environment. Teachers' are able to help students progress in sport by exhibiting caring behaviours. Luke and Sinclair (1991) believed that the nature of interaction from teachers is a powerful influence on students' positive and negative feelings toward participation. If students have a positive feeling towards physical education they are going to want to take part and progress throughout the different activities. Physical education students become engaged in programs when they realise that the teachers care for them by taking an interest in their lives (Ennis et al., 1997; Cothran & Ennis, 1999). If the students have a good relationship with their teachers they are able to feel as comfortable as they can when they are with them, these efforts help create an environment that makes learning comfortable for the students. It also increases the likelihood that each will develop an enjoyment of physical activity and want to progress (Larson & Silverman 2005). Larson, Anne and Silverman, Stephen J. (2005) carried out a study on four teachers to find out why they exhibited caring behaviours. Each believed that it naturally is part of their job as a teacher to be caring. The teachers collectively felt strongly that physical education develops and sustains positive self-esteem. To a large extent these teachers acted this

way due to their personal biography- they had all experienced positive physical activity while growing up and had many role models. They then wanted to be their student's role models with the ability to motivate them to carry out a lifelong sport. Ennis (1997) found that students expressed the importance of teachers establishing a personal connection with them, that a personal connection to a teacher can lead to students feeling a greater sense of school membership (Cothran & Ennis, 1999), and that caring relationships between teachers and students can enhance possibility of these students engaging in physical activity (Ennis, 1999), and therefore progressing. If a student is not motivated to participate in class then they are not going to progress. Students identify teaching behaviours elicited by physical education teachers to positively and negatively influence their attitude towards physical education, participation in class and participation in regular activity (Nodding's, 1994). If a teacher succeeds their students will have a positive attitude towards physical activity, they will want to participate in as many sports as possible, and also carry on a lifelong sport. Nodding (1992) stated that brief words of encouragement and recognition to the students can be characterised as confirmation - 'an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others'. Providing confirmation is important for human development because during confirmation the students will spot a better self and encourage their development. This encouragement of development will therefore mean they will progress with their skills and knowledge further in that certain activity. In conclusion, the way teachers can get students to progress in physical education can be either of the two methods explained or even both together. Firstly, understanding how

students form attitudes seems a key vehicle for improving their dispositions towards physical education (Subramaniam and Silverman 2007). Secondly, a better understanding of these attitudes can be used to make physical education a more valuable experience for students and in doing so, can help produce better physically educated individuals (Graham, Holt and Parker 1998). And finally promoting good attitudes towards physical education is an important component in encouraging an active lifestyle among children and young people (Ennis 1996). By exhibiting caring behaviour teachers are able to understand how students form positive attitudes. By understanding how students form positive attitudes the teachers will know what lessons to plan, and what the students enjoy about physical education so they have fun and build up these positive attitudes further. Overall, teachers or coaches can use either of these methods to create positive attitudes in their students towards physical education to ensure their students' participate and therefore progress within physical education.