

The Curriculum of Physical Education and Moral Education

體育科課程與道德教育

Siu-wing Yeung

Department of Education,
Hong Kong Baptist University, HONG KONG

楊少榮

香港浸會大學教育學系



Abstract

Recently, much emphasis has put on the training of physical fitness in Physical Education (PE) subject. In fact, one of the most important objectives of PE is to promote the qualities of desirable moral behaviors, co-operation in communal life and the ability of making moral judgment in students. PE is a significant media to provide real life situations for students to re-exercise the moral reasoning and reappraise the value of PE. This coincides with Kohlberg's theory (1987) that moral reasoning has to go through the process of re-evaluation of own value system in different situations, thus achieving a balance and fostering the advancement of a person's level of moral reasoning. This essay discussed the relationship between moral education and PE, and the way to implement moral education in PE is suggested.

摘要

近年來，體育科的發展多集中在體能方面，對於其他方面的發展則略嫌忽略，道德發展正是其中一環。體育科正正能夠作為一個極之有效的媒介，讓學生有機會重覆遇上兩難的情景，而進行重覆練習道德思維判斷，尋找出一個在內心世界的平衡點——體育的價值。這個歷程正符合近代心理學家勞倫斯郭耳堡 (1987) 的認知道德發展模式，當一些價值在實際選擇情景中發生衝突時，道德價值的認知便邁向評量價值更具批判責任的一步，這樣便能提升個人的道德思維層次。這篇文章就是探討兩者的關係。

Introduction

The aims of Physical Education are to promote physical growth and mental health of students. According to the Curriculum Development Council (1999), the objectives of Physical Education include (1) to improve the organic system, the neuromuscular system and physical fitness of students (2) to develop students' desirable social attitudes and patterns of behaviour (3) to help students to understand essentials of cooperation in communal life (4) to cultivate students' sense of aesthetic appreciation (5) to cultivate students' powers of observation, analysis, judgment and creativity, and (6) to stimulate students' interest and positive attitudes towards physical activities.

It can be seen that one of the objectives of PE is related to moral education, that is, to develop students' desirable social attitudes and patterns of behaviour (including fair play and sportsmanship). However, PE normally emphasized much on

physical fitness and personal development was often neglected. In fact, personal growth and moral development are the most important aims among those objectives. The present article attempts to describe and analyze how moral education and PE is related.

Physical Education and Moral Education

Moral education has three-folds: moral reasoning, moral judgment and moral behaviour. Moral behaviour is the outcome of moral judgment and moral judgment is made after going through a process of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1987). A lot of factors will affect the process of moral reasoning, these include social factor, instrumental factor and political factor. These factors will affect the ultimate moral judgment, thus behaviour (Spencer, 1993). For example, during a volleyball competition, a 'touch-out' condition occurs and the judge has missed the 'touch-out'. As a player who involved in the 'touch-out', what kind of judgment should he make? The player may feel that honesty is the quality

of a player and therefore he may choose to tell the truth to the judge. The player knows that if he tells the truth, the team will lose the right of serve or lose one score and such loss will not affect the final results. On contrary, a player may choose not to tell the truth because he knows that if he tells the truth, the team may lose the competition. The whole team or his nation may lose the prestige, the prize/award, the money or he may lose the position as a national team member. In making such a decision, the player has to go through a painful process of moral reasoning and he has to choose between sportsmanship and substantial gain and loss (Butler, 2000; Lumpkin et al, 1999).

Sportsmanship refers to the 'right conduct' and desirable social attitudes of a sportsman, involving honest competition, graceful acceptance of results, having the sense of fairness and consideration for others (Lidor, 1998). Moral refers to the principles of right and wrong and moral education refers to the teaching and illustration of principles of right and wrong. It is true that to a certain extent, law and regulations cannot protect the right, justice and property of an individual. Peace on earth relies very much on personal attributes like noble characters, thoughtfulness and considerations of people so that everybody can enjoy happiness and peace. Kohlberg in 1987 explain moral reasoning into three stages, namely pre-conventional stage, conventional stage and post-conventional stage. In pre-conventional stage, moral reasoning is based on rewards and punishments. In conventional stage, moral reasoning is based on social norm and others' expectation while in post-conventional stage, moral reasoning is based on universal ethical principles. According to Kohlberg (1987), moral reasoning should not be evaluated according to the moral judgment a person made but according to the moral reasoning behind. Moral development can be enhanced through repeated moral reasoning with moral dilemma. Moral dilemma provides the impact of right and wrong and the process of moral reasoning brings about internalization and re-evaluation of one's own moral values. Students can achieve a higher level of moral reasoning by means of moral dilemmas and moral dilemmas can be used to measure the maturity of a person's moral judgments. Moral Dilemmas can stimulate students' critical thinking and moral reasoning. And students can progress to a more advanced level of moral reasoning, thus making more advanced level of moral judgment.

In practical teaching, Kohlberg suggests to implement moral education by means of hidden curriculum and he comments that this is the most effective way to conduct moral education (Kohlberg, 1987). It would be easier for students to make moral judgment in moral dilemma as students can make more objective appraisal of the situation. A real life situation where the student himself is the centre of the situation can be an effective way to learn as well as the student himself has to bear the consequence of the decision made. PE is an effective and significant way to

conduct moral education as it provides a lot of real life situations. Win and loss, glory and shame etc. all appear in PE. If teachers can grasp these golden opportunities, students' noble characters (fair play and sportsmanship) can be fostered, especially during and after any competition (Nucci, 1989; Sedgwick, 1994). Kohlberg's theory can be applied during PE teaching and moral reasoning can be re-exercised during real life situations, thus, further affirms a person's moral judgment.

Moral reasoning can be fostered through a lot of situations occurred during PE lessons or sport competitions. A student can choose to win at all costs and on the other hand, he can also choose 'friendship first, victory second'. A student may choose to continue the competition out of sportsmanship although it is obvious that the team will lose. He may strive for the best performance although he is in the state of exhaustion (Gibson, 1993). These are the situations that a student is confronted with making moral judgment. Another example is 'struggles': a student may have to struggle between internal/public examination and sport competition at the same time.

Implementation of Moral Education in Physical Education

During PE teaching, teachers can grasp the situations to guide students in making moral judgment. Students can be assisted or guided to justify their moral judgment in various situations. To make it easier, there are eight steps in formulating a teaching plan for implementing moral education in PE:

1. *Identify the main ethical problem e.g. violence, spirit of rules, use of drugs, strikes, etc.*
2. *Identify the contributing factors*
3. *Predict the possible consequences*
4. *Consider the personalities of the people involved*
5. *Formulate the most relevant, possible and meaningful alternatives to one of the key person involved*
6. *Outline the pros and cons of the proposed alternatives*
7. *Select the alternative with more vital pros than cons*
8. *Generalize the selected alternative for future use (as guidance in similar cases)*

Conclusion

As a conclusion, PE helps to promote the qualities of desirable moral behaviors, co-operation in communal life and the ability of making moral judgment. PE is a significant media to provide real life situations for students to re-exercise the moral reasoning and reappraise the value of PE. This coincides with Kohlberg's theory that the level of moral reasoning has to go through the process of re-evaluation of own value system, thus achieving a balance and foster a person's level of moral reasoning.

References

- Butler, L.F. (2000). Fair play: respect for all. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 71(2), 32-35.
- Curriculum Development Institute. (1999). *PE as a key learning area in Hong Kong schools: the present situation, the wider context, the forces of change and the ways ahead*. Paper presented in the Seminar on Holistic review of the school curriculum for CDC members.
- Gibson, J.H. (1993). *Performance versus results: a critique of values in contemporary sport*. State University of New York.
- Kohlberg, L. (1987). The development of moral judgment and moral action. In Kohlberg, L. (Ed.). *Child psychology and childhood education: A cognitive-developmental view*. New York: Longman.
- Lidor, R. (1998). *Development of character through sports activities*. *International Journal of Physical Education*, 35(3), 91-99.
- Lumpkin, A., Stoll, S. K., & Beller, J. M. (1999). *Sport ethics: application for fair play*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- McNamee, M. J., & Parry, S.J. (1998). *Ethics & sport*. London: E & FN Spon.
- Nucci, L. P. (1989). *Moral development and character education*. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Sedgwick, F. (1994). *Personal, social and moral education*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Solomon, G. B. (1997). Fair play in the gymnasium: improving social skills among elementary school students. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 68, 22-25.
- Spencer, H. (1993). *Education: intellectual, moral and physical*. London: Routledge/Thoemmes.
- Zeigler, E. F. (1984). *Ethics and morality in sport and physical education: an experiential approach*. IL: Stipes Publishing Co.
- 劉秋木、呂正雄譯 (1996)。《德育模式》。台北：五南。
- 李萍 (1996)。《現代道德教育論》。廣東：人民。