Class Management of In-Service Physical Education Student Teachers 在職體育師訓學生的班級經營

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Abstract

Classroom management is essential to effective teaching. However, there is little information about how physical education student teachers manage their classes. Berliner (1988) proposed five stages of learning to teach and argued that experience is a predominant element to the development of expertise in pedagogy. Cruz (2000) suggested that the in-service student teachers taught better than their pre-service counter-parts as they had more in-field experience. The purpose of the study was to examine the class management practices of in-service physical education student teachers. Three in-service student teachers were randomly selected and invited to participate in the study. They were observed teaching two ball games lessons and took part in two pre-lesson interviews and two post-lesson stimulated recall sessions. Qualitative data were collected through lesson observations and interviews. Constant comparison and analytic induction were used to organize and categorize the data. Results showed that there were common managerial behaviours and management strategies adopted by the student teachers during teaching. Teaching style, organization and supporting were the identical managerial behaviours observed, whilst the preventive management, equipment management and interactive class management were the common class management strategies identified. The findings hold implications for the preparation of physical education teachers.

摘要

班級經營與教學效能息息相關。Berliner(1988)提出五階段學習歷程理論及教學經驗為發展成教學專家主要元素。Cruz(2000)指出在職師訓學生的教學表現較職前師訓學生為佳是他們有較多實踐經驗。本研究目的是探討在職師訓學生的班級經營行為及策略。三位在職師訓學生被隨機抽樣參與此研究。他們被觀察兩教節球類課及接受兩次課前訪問及課後刺激回憶訪談。其後以持續比較法分析蒐集資料。結果顯示師訓學生有其共通班級經營行為策略及給予體育師資培訓啟示。

Introduction

Classroom management is a key component of effective teaching. Doyle (1986) identified that there are two major tasks of teaching: learning and order. These tasks are indeed served by instructional and managerial function. Without order in the classroom, instruction and students learning cannot take place. Therefore, establish and maintain a favourable classroom context for students to learn is one of the important teaching tasks of teachers.

Keeping things run smoothly in class is no easy task. Classroom management problems have been central concern for teachers. Teachers of all experience levels report that classroom management is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching (Edwards, 1993). Good class management relies mainly on the management skills of the teacher (Brophy & Good, 1986; Kounin, 1970). Educators pointed out that excellent teacher performance usually comes from appropriate curricular pacing, lesson pacing, and transition management (Hofmeister & Lubke, 1990). With little class time is lost and teacher

can maximize the learning opportunities of students. Siedentop and Tannehill (2000) maintained that effectively managed classroom resulted in increased student learning in teacher effective research. However, they further elucidated that effective class management did not result directly in learning, but management was a necessary, although not sufficient, component of teacher effectiveness. It seems that class management is a prerequisite to and is regarded as one of the principal factors of effective teaching (Reynolds, 1992).

As aforementioned, class management is more than concerning students discipline and control of behaviours in classroom. It refers to teacher actions to create, implement and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning (Brophy, 1983; Doyle, 1986). In other words, it may include a wide range of teaching activities such as arranging the physical environment, establishing and maintaining classroom rules and procedures, monitoring pupil behaviours, dealing with misbehaviors and keeping student on task in a productive environment (Emmer, 1987; Sanford, Emmer, & Clements, 1983).

In physical education, the learning environment is different from other subjects. Student learning takes place in both indoor and outdoor open area. Specifically, the learning environment in physical education includes all behavioural conditions in the gymnasium, outside field, pool or traditional classroom setting (Ratliffe, Ratliffe, & Bie, 1991). Facing with these varied physical, environmental and practical constraints within school settings, physical education teachers always have more difficulties in class management than other subject teachers. Rimmer (1989) raised that physical education teachers have to establish management strategies to control students who might have been sitting at classroom for a long time and may have difficulty controlling them in an open arena. Other factors like weather, noise, movement of equipment and large open spaces are also concerns of physical education teachers when teaching. Physical education teachers need to consider more contextual factors when establishing effective learning environment for their students.

In practice, it is not easy to establish a favourable learning environment in physical education settings. It requires physical education teachers to develop a repertoire of control techniques and managing strategies to adapt to their own particular situations (Henkel, 1989). Besides, establishing effective learning environment in physical education always takes time. This is always a difficult task to beginning or student teachers.

Veenman (1984) pointed out that classroom management and discipline was the most seriously perceived problem experienced by beginning teachers after an extensive international review of 83 studies. Other researchers also substantiated this findings and revealed that classroom discipline and management to be the most consistent problem among beginning teachers (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1989; Huberman, 1989). In physical education, Ratliffe (1987) found that lacking management and organization skills are common obstacles that beginning physical education teachers encountered. For physical education student teachers, class management was always one of the major concerns listed during their field experience (Behet, 1990; Capel, 1998). There is no exception to Hong Kong physical education student teachers. Cruz and Chow (1999) found that the Hong Kong pre-service physical education student teachers in their study sample mentioned class management as one of their major concerns during the teaching practice. Indeed, discipline and class management problems are constantly major teaching issues of physical education student teachers. Belka (1991) reported that student teachers in his study believed that they were not responsible for their student misbehaviours and often felt frustrated and inadequate. Study conducted by Fernanez-Balboa (1991) also showed the pre-service teachers lacking the experience to anticipate what would happen in class and planned without much consideration to management issues. Further, they had problems in establishing and reinforcing class rules and routines.

However, there is little information about how physical education student teachers manage their classes.

Practice of Teaching and Experience

Educators have long been aware that instructional experience might closely relate to effective teaching. Studies were carried out utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how the teaching experience influenced the practice of classroom teachers (Adams, 1982; Ayers, 1986). Findings of these studies indicated that teachers had improved their class management skills after some years of time. It seems that teaching experience may influence the classroom practice of teachers.

Berliner (1988) has also argued that experience is an important component of expertise and proposed five stages of learning to teach and the development of teachers: novice, advance beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. One who learns to teach is expected to go through each stage. Later stages will not be achieved until earlier ones are mastered. Teachers take some time to develop from one stage to another.

In this model, experience helps beginning teachers move towards the second and perhaps even the later stage of expertise. However, as some never learn much from their experience, experience is a necessary but certainly not a sufficient condition for expertise.

Based on this assumption, the investigator conducted a study to examine the teaching behaviours of in-service and pre-service primary physical education student teachers (Cruz, 2000). By using a systematic observation instrument, he found that there were significant differences of time spent in both instructional and management behaviours between the two groups of student teachers. He further suggested that the in-service student teachers seemed to have better teaching performance than the pre-service counterparts. When inspecting the managerial behaviours of the participants, the in-service student teachers spent significantly less time in equipment management, organization and behaviour management than the pre-service counterparts. It seemed that the in-service participants possessed better management skills. However, the quantitative data generated in the study did not reveal the full picture of the teaching performance of the student teachers. As a follow up to the study, the investigator would like to understand how the in-service primary physical education student teachers managed their classes in physical education lessons. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to examine the class management practices of the in-service student teachers. What were managerial behaviours and management strategies adopted by the in-service student teachers in their physical education lessons are the two major research questions that guide the inquiry of the study. The findings of the study are important to teacher educators as this information will help to understand the practices and teaching development of the in-service student teachers.

Method

As a follow up to the previous study, the investigator randomly selected three in-service student teachers participating in the last investigation and invited them to take part in the present study. Two females and one male agreed to participate in the follow up investigation. The teaching experience of these three in-service participants ranged from three to seven years. To insure protection and to gain the trust of the participants, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed concerning the collection of data and the report of the study. Pseudonyms were also used throughout the study to protect the participants' identities.

The three in-service student teachers were observed and videotaped two lessons teaching in ball games activities in their serving schools, and field notes were also recorded by the investigator accordingly. Before the lesson observations, the participants were arranged to have two pre-lesson interviews. The pre-lesson interviews were conducted after the participants completed their lessons planning, but prior to the start of the lessons. The purposes of the interviews were to understand a) the participants' beliefs and knowledge about the content they would teach, b) their preparation in teaching ball games lesson, c) their workplace, and d) their understanding about their students. The interview was semi-structured and open ended. The interview questions were developed according to the research question and the purpose of the study. The internal validity of the interviews was established by having the interview questions examined and commented upon by an experienced colleague in the field of the interview process (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). The interview protocol was also pilot tested with two pre-service student teachers from an institute of education who were not the research subjects. The purpose was to test the design of the interview questions and enhance the investigator's interview techniques and the consistency in data collection. All pre-lesson interviews were audio-taped recorded to provide verbatim transcriptions for analysis. These transcriptions were translated into English and reviewed by two English teaching instructors working in an institute of education. After the reviewing, no major revisions were made. All pre-lesson interviews lasted between forty five to seventy five minutes.

Two lessons of each of the participants were then observed and videotaped. Field notes related to the instructional and managerial activities were taken down in the form of a field journal in order to give a better understanding of their teaching practice. The participants were encouraged to teach with their normal practice. These observations were regarded as one of the major sources of data for this study. After the lesson observation, the field notes were expanded, transcribed and commented by the investigator. As recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the notes taken down should be descriptive and comprehensive with "observer comments". The field notes of the present study included both objective observation and subjective comments and feelings about the participants' teaching behaviours. It is important to note that the field notes of the non-participant observation function as an additional data source for triangulation and provide supportive findings and validate findings for making conclusions.

Two post-lesson interviews with stimulated recall sessions were also conducted within one week after the observation of two ball games lessons. The interviews included common questions for all three participants. These interview questions were also pilot tested with the same two pre-service student teachers aforementioned. Several questions were revised or eliminated based on the results of the pilot test. Interviewing skills in terms of questions, procedure and timing were improved after the pilot test. The participants were given a copy of the interview guidelines and briefed again on the general procedure before the start of each post-lesson interview. The post-lesson interview questions were semi-structured and open ended and sought to elicit information from the participants about their a) instructional and managerial performance in the lesson, and b) perception of the students' responses.

Within the post-lesson interview, the participants were asked to view eleven 2-min video lesson segments of their teaching and asked to respond to a series of semi-structured interview questions to stimulated recall of decisions made during teaching. The purpose of employing the stimulated recall technique was to elicit information about their explanations of and reasons for pedagogical decisions made. The procedure of the stimulated recall session was modified from the study of Byra and Sherman (Byra & Sherman, 1993) investigating the decision making of pre-service physical education teachers when teaching lacrosse. The stimulated recall interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The participants commented on their teaching behaviours, thoughts and decisions made while teaching and these were audio-taped and transcribed for further analysis. All interviews were transcribed by the investigator. These transcriptions were also translated into English and reviewed by the two English teaching instructors. Only minor revisions were made.

Analysis of Data

Data collected were organized and analyzed depending on their sources. Qualitative data for this study consisted of interview tapes, stimulated recall records and field notes of the lesson observed. The analysis of these data was based upon the methods of inductive analysis and constant comparison and coding procedures (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Initially, all interviews, stimulated recall sessions and field notes of lesson observation were fully transcribed. Through inspection and careful reading of the data, interesting or surprising themes were identified within data. This allowed categories to emerge from the data which were separated according to each theme.

Lastly, the investigator searched for the dominant trends and patterns within the study as a whole. The resulting data developed from the inductive process included the summaries of what was said and observed. Participants' direct quotations were used to provide validity to the data. Other events, incidents and evidence obtained during the lesson observations were used to supply answers for the aforementioned research questions.

The investigator utilized three major strategies to establish the trustworthiness of results: triangulation, peer debriefing and member checks. Findings from interviews, stimulated recall sessions, and lesson observations were compared and contrasted to cross-check data and interpretations. Consistent findings from different sources couple with good explanations for differences in data from divergent sources enhanced the overall credibility of the study results. In addition, an experienced qualitative research colleague was invited to read and comment on the preliminary analyses and interpretation of the data. Lastly, all the interview and stimulated recall record transcripts were returned to the participants and they were asked to correct errors or inaccuracies in the transcripts. Only minor changes were made before the data analysis.

Results

The purpose of this study was to describe and examine the managerial behaviours and management strategies of three in-service primary physical education student teachers in their physical education lessons. The analysis of the data generated from various sources helps to provide answers to the research questions. With regard to the management behavioural aspects, several major categories emerged from the analysis. The commonalities in their classroom management practice among the three participants were teaching style, organization, and supporting.

Management Practice

Teaching Style

The in-service student teachers adopted a teacher-directed approach in conducting their physical education lessons. The student teachers dominated and initiated most of the classroom activities. They structured the learning of the students by informing, directing and explaining. They provided feedback and corrections to the students' performance. From the analysis of the field notes, little genuine student initiating activity was recorded. In this sense, the teachers adopted the command

and practice styles of teaching (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). They made all the decisions, directed and designated how students would practice. The following episodes reflected the directed teaching styles of the student teachers:

Chu gave a demonstration and then asked a student to perform the skill technique in front of the class....... all students then spread out quickly and had their own practice. Teacher walked around and gave feedback to the students.

(Chu field notes 2)

Yung stopped the class and he demonstrated the inside foot passing technique with a student (demonstrating).......He instructed all the boys to get the balls for the practice (directing)......Yung walked around and gave feedback to the students (providing feedback).

(Yung field notes 2)

Organization

Efficient organization of learning activities will maximize the learning time of students in the lessons. The in-service student teachers demonstrated good organization skills. They were proficient in equipment dealing and the apparatus handling. The transition time between activities was short. Some of the equipment for the next task was set up while the students were practising. They seemed to be effective classroom managers and little time was devoted to off-task behaviours. The following episodes reflected the organizations behaviours of the student teachers in the physical education lessons:

Within a very short time, all three groups had interchanged their practising activities. This demonstrated the teachers' skill in class organization and management.

(Choi field notes 1)

......all six groups had switched and rotated their participation in the different applied activities. This makes the whole class run smoothly without stopping all students to listen to the instruction and demonstration......this kind of class managing strategy saves a lot of organization time.

(Chu field notes 1)

Supporting

Giving support to students while they are practising will facilitate their learning. Field notes data indicated that student teachers seemed to exhibit numerous supportive learning behaviours. They were rather active in monitoring the students' performance. They always moved around and stayed close to the students in order to provide feedback. Proximity control and warm supportive behaviours were recognized. In addition, they behaved energetically and enthusiastically in their teaching. They can be described having good 'withitness' and are able to monitor class events while doing other things at the same time. The following episodes reflected the supporting behaviours of the student teachers during the physical education lessons:

Yung moved quickly around and gave feedback to the students' performances. He stayed a while with the students who did not perform the technique properly.......Students practised this refined drill and Yung kept on moving around and providing feedback to their performances. Yung was energetic and keen on his teaching.

(Yung field notes 1)

She [Choi] also kept motivating the students by giving positive feedback on their performances as well as instructing them the proper techniques of stretching. She praised and encouraged the students' performances.

(Choi field notes 1)

On the whole, the student teachers demonstrated some efficient managerial behaviours in the lessons and the students practice time was maximized. Students had more on-task movement behaviours in the lessons.

Student Learning and Teaching Strategies

To increase student learning, physical education teachers try to develop high levels of student engagement with the content. Engagement with the content is a necessary condition for learning and it is also a minimum criterion for effective teaching (Rink, 2002). To achieve high levels of student engagement in the learning activities, the teachers usually adopt a variety of teaching strategies to ensure the students are able to function within these strategies. Metzler (2000)

categorizes teaching strategies into two main groups of operation: managerial and instructional. Each group of strategies contains specific actions that teachers complete in order to promote the learning outcomes within each. As the focus of the present study is to understand the management strategies adopted by the in-service student teachers in their physical education lessons, therefore, the investigator would only concentrate to analyze the management strategies identified.

In practice, the teachers use different strategies for different purposes and in different contexts. It is expected the student teachers in the present study will adopt a variety of teaching strategies in their teaching. From the analysis of the interviews and field notes, several categories emerged with respect to the management strategies employed. The common strategies of the student teachers were preventive management, equipment management, and interactive class management.

Preventive Management

Good classroom management is a pre-condition for effective teaching. Effective physical education teachers usually introduce certain management strategies to prevent or reduce instances of managerial problems in complex physical education settings. Their main purposes are to minimize the likelihood of behavioural problems in class in order to increase time on task and student learning. The student teachers in the present study seemed to recognize the importance of preventing management problems occurring in class. Most student teachers said that they would establish rules and routines for their classes. They claimed that they would tell the students the class rules and their expectations at the first lesson. They trusted that reinforcing routines would help to minimize the opportunity for student misbehaviours. The following quotes from the pre-lesson interviews are examples of the management strategy that student teachers used to prevent classroom discipline problems:

To teach and to train them how to behave properly in PE lessons at the beginning of the year. I also remind them again if they do not follow my instructions.

(Chu Pre-lesson Interview 1, p. 9)

By the routine training, I have to tell the students how they should behave in the lesson clearly.

(Yung, Pre-lesson Interview 1, p. 7)

Besides, from the non-participant observation of the teaching lessons, the investigator was strongly impressed by the instant activity introduced by the student teachers. The student teachers started their teaching as soon as they brought the students into the playground. The investigator trusts that the student teachers believe providing instant learning activities would reduce the opportunity for misbehaviour to occur. It is apparent that this deliberate action is a popular management strategy of student teachers at the start of class.

Equipment Management

Instructional time can be lost when teacher is spending much time in arranging equipment during the lesson. An improper way of equipment arrangement increases management time and loses lesson momentum as students wait for the next activity to be organized (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000). If possible, effective teachers usually have their equipment arranged before students arrive at class. They place the equipment in close proximity to where they will be set up and have students assist in arranging it for use. Data of the field notes indicated that the student teachers in the present study have students assist with equipment dispersal and return. This reduces management time considerably and keeps students involved in the flow of the lesson. The student teachers gave clear directions and made this kind of transition quickly and in an orderly fashion. The following episodes gave the examples of this equipment management strategy:

He [Yung] instructed all the boys to get the balls for the practice. The students moved and got the balls in good order......some students helped and collected the footballs to the equipment room.

(Yung field notes 2)

Choi asked some students to put back the balls while the others were having their warm down exercises......

(Choi field notes 2)

Interactive Class Management

Most class management strategies are planned before the lesson. However, teachers need to make some management decisions and actions within the lesson periods when they are teaching. These interactive management actions involve consideration of many things going on at the moment. The success of the lesson will depend on the teacher's effectiveness

during these interactive management times. Effective interactive management strategies will minimize the disruption and maintain the momentum of the lesson. According to the observations, the classroom discipline and student behaviours were good in the lessons. Due to their effective routine training and active supervision with proximity control, students' off task behaviours was rarely seen in their lessons. They moved actively around and supervised student work as well as providing feedback during task engagement. Besides, they would know their students well as they met and taught their students regularly. By understanding more about their students, they could manage their classes easily.

......Yung kept on moving around and providing feedback to their performance...the class behaved very well and with good discipline. The students seemed to have good routine training.

(Yung field notes 1)

They [the students] seemed to behave very well and with good discipline. The students must have good routine training......Choi walked around and gave feedback and supported students learning.

(Choi field notes 1)

In all, the implementation of the teaching strategies is based on the teachers' abilities and performances. The data in the study revealed that the in-service student teachers adopted various effective management strategies. This explained why there were significant differences in percentages of time on behaviour management between the pre-service and in-service student teachers in previous study (Cruz, 2000).

Discussion

This study sought to explore the managerial behaviours and management strategies of in-service primary physical education student teachers in ball games lessons. Analyzing the data helped to give a better picture of how the student teachers managed their classes and supplemented the understanding of the differences of management practices adopted between the pre-service and in-service student teachers in their teaching (Cruz, 2000).

As teacher's beliefs exerted influence on classroom practice, it was not surprising to find that the teachings of the student teachers were related to their beliefs. From the interviews, the participants indicated that their lesson objectives focused on skill development. This explained why their classroom behaviours were mainly on how to help students learning games skills. Therefore, they adopted a teacher-directed teaching approach and specific management strategies to ensure maximum student participation and learning in the lessons. They felt that the direct instruction method was the most appropriate and effective if they wanted to control their students and promote learning in a safe environment.

Teaching environments in physical education lessons are indeed dynamic and complex, they demand sophisticated classroom management from the teachers. Recently, Brophy (1999) further suggests that new methods of organization and management are required for the teachers to accommodate the expanding diversity of students and settings. Having much teaching experience would definitely put the in-service student teachers into a better position when dealing with these new demands.

Besides, teaching experience has been viewed as a crucial element in the learning-to-teach process (Richardson, 1990). Clandinin and Connelly (1986) state that teachers gain practical knowledge through experience from the cyclic nature of schooling and classroom life. It is expected that the in-service participants in the present study have gained knowledge in teaching physical education through their on job experience.

With respect to managerial behaviours, the data also supported that they were efficient in handling equipment set up and distribution. They demonstrated active skills in organizing learning activities as well as managing students' behaviours. By gaining more in-field teaching experience the in-service student teachers would be more familiar to the instructional environments as they knew their students better and learned how to plan and handle the class more wisely. As Choi and Yung said, they understood the learning of students better after they had experience in teaching them. The in-service student teachers seemed to have more confidence in teaching after gaining in-field teaching experience.

Implications of the Results

The findings from this study held several implications for the preparation of physical education teachers. Field notes data confirmed that the in-service student teachers exhibited skilful managerial behaviours and adopted effective management Teachers' experience did influence how teachers behave in a classroom, such as their communication skills and higher level of flexibility (Stroot & Morton, 1989), presentation skills (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Westerman, 1991), class disciplining (Sabers, Cushing & Berliner, 1991; Tam, 1997), and managing change (Westerman, 1991). Teacher educators should take note of this and make better planning of the field experience programme. Providing more opportunities for the student teachers in practicing teaching or lengthening the practicum period would definitely help the teaching competent of student teachers.

However, the investigator in the present study has no intention to favour the adoption of the apprenticeship style itrainingî of the student teachers. He understands the improvement of classroom practicum experience will help to master a repertoire of teaching skills but it does not guarantee the student teachers will be able to make proper judgment about what ought to be done in a particular situation. The apprenticeship model of teacher training seems to be inadequate for preparing student teachers to teach in the complex unstable world of practice.

Nevertheless, with the increase of the classroom practicum experience I believe the student teachers will be benefited by having more opportunities in reflecting about their teaching practice. By active reflection process, the student teachers may construct their knowledge of teaching.

During teaching practice, the student teachers may need to use a variety of techniques and employ multiple management strategies in their teaching. Physical education teacher educators should help student teachers to understand the pedagogical principles behind and apply the appropriate management practice if necessary.

In terms of limitation, participants of the study came from one teacher education institute. Data from this sample may have biased the findings. Readers should interpret the results with caution. Studies that expand the sample populations and teacher education institutions to replicate findings are recommended.

Conclusion

On the whole, the in-service student teachers in the present study demonstrated effective managerial behaviours and adopted various management strategies in their physical education lessons. These supplement why the in-service student teachers spent significantly less time in managerial behaviours than the preservice student teachers in the previous study (Cruz, 2000). The data in the present study further support the notion that the in-service student teachers manage their classes better than the pre-service counterparts during their teaching practice. This reinforces the findings of the importance of the practice of teaching to student teachers. Since classroom management is a common problem of physical education student teachers (Bogess, McBride, & Griffey, 1985; Cruz & Chow, 1999), there is a need to further understand how the pre-service student teacher manage their classes during their teaching practice. However, there is a paucity of research concerning the management practice of pre-service student teachers in Hong Kong. It is advised to conduct further studies on this issue and in turn help the teacher educators assisting their student teachers during the teaching practice.

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