The Teaching/Learning Process Through Mosston's "Spectrum of Teaching Styles: The Reciprocal Style"

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The Teaching/Learning Process Through Mosston's “Spectrum of Teaching Styles: The Reciprocal Style”

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Mosston (1994) created the Spectrum of Teaching Styles to identify the various alternatives that exist to design as well as present instructional episodes. As there are most likely as many ways to define the styles of teaching as there are learners, Mosston’s original seven teaching styles have evolved into eleven. As identified by Mosston, each of the styles is differentiated by the decisions that are made by teacher or learner. The sequence of decisions that are made by either the teacher or learner during each of the three specified phases of instruction, before (pre-Impact), during (Impact) or after (post-Impact) helps to create a different learning environment that can be categorized as a teaching style that fits into one of the eleven identified by Mosston’s spectrum of teaching style.

Introduced in the 2008 October/November OAHPERD Journal were the first two teaching styles in Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles (see Figure 1). The ease with which a teacher moves from style-to-style or stays focused on any one of these teaching styles can best be determined by the “readiness” of the students to embrace the decision-making process. Often, there is flow within the teaching/learning process allowing for several decision-making visits to, as well as back and forth between styles creating interesting and effective instruction. Experienced teachers as well as future professionals need to be encouraged to venture out of their “comfort zone,” using the different teaching styles alone as well as in combination. These instructional efforts will also provide for new and exciting challenges for students who will be forced to join teachers in the educational arena of accountability as they focus on the teaching/learning process.

If a person were to walk into a typical physical education class, they would probably see students interacting in many different ways. For example, the students might be giving feedback to each other during an activity. Some students might be working together to successfully score a goal, basket or complete a task. Other students might be giving each other high-fives or other congratulatory expressions. As a result of the instructional environment of a physical education class, the above mentioned student interactions are typical, and are not likely to be seen in a math, English or history class. In Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles, the reciprocal style of teaching requires students to have social interactions between peers and to give immediate feedback to a peer (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994). The purpose of this article in the series is to continue the presentation and explanation of Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles and the applications in physical education, and will present how the reciprocal style of teaching is utilized in the teaching/learning process.

Style C (Reciprocal Style)
The reciprocal style of teaching is the third teaching style on the spectrum of teaching styles, and continues with a growing number of decisions being made by the student. When examining the anatomy of the reciprocal style, the teacher is responsible for the pre-Impact set, creating and planning the learning activities. Also, the teacher prepares and designs the criteria sheet. The criteria sheet will be discussed in greater detail later in the article. During the impact set the doer will perform the desired task(s). For example, a criteria (see Diagram 3) sheet has been prepared for the student to practice the forehand stroke in tennis. The criteria sheet will instruct the student to a) use the forehand stroke to bounce and hit 10 balls over the net as demonstrated in class, and b) switch sides of the net, retrieve the balls and hit 10 balls over the net. The observer will look to see that the doer: 1) Stands with left side turned to the net, with weight on the right foot, 2) Swings the racket back at about hip height, keep eye on the ball, 3) Transfers weight onto the front foot, and swing the racket on a fairly straight line, 4) Watches the ball until it is hit by the racket. Bends the knees slightly through the stroke, 5) Contacts the ball with the racket when it is even with the front foot, 6) Keeps wrist firm and swing with the whole arm, from the shoulder, 7) Rotates the trunk so that the shoulders and hips face the net on
1. The AXIOM: TEACHING BEHAVIOR IS A CHAIN OF DECISION MAKING

2. The ANATOMY of any STYLE:

   PREIMPACT
   IMPACT
   POSTIMPACT
   Sets of decisions that must be made

3. The DECISION MAKERS:
   Teacher: Maximum - Minimum
   Learner: Minimum - Maximum

4. The SPECTRUM:

5. The CLUSTERS:

6. The DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS:
   Physical Channel
   Social Channel
   Emotional Channel
   Cognitive Channel
   Moral Channel

Diagram 1 The Structure of the Spectrum
Diagram 2 The Anatomy of Any Style of Teaching on the Spectrum
follow through, and 8) Follows through with the racket, upward and forward in the direction of the hit. The post impact set is initiated by the observer. As mentioned the learning is shifted to the learner. In the reciprocal style of teaching, a new twist occurs by placing more decisions on the learner. This occurs through or as a result of organizing students with a partner. One student will be the doer (d) and the other student will be the observer (o). The teacher’s (t) role is to move around the class and assist where needed and answer questions from the observer and check for student learning. The lines of communication are as follows:

From the illustration, the doer and observer communicate with each other during the activity. The doer can ask questions to see if he/she is performing the skill properly. The observer gives feedback to the doer regarding the skill practice. It is during this process that the teacher communicates only with the observer. The teacher does not communicate at all with the doer.

Criteria Sheet
As mentioned previously, there is a criteria sheet used by the students to evaluate/assess the student on their performance of the given task. When designing a criteria sheet there are

Sample Criteria Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name ____________________________</th>
<th>HHP 1832 Pedagogy of Sports Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date _____ / _____ / _____</td>
<td>Lesson Number 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTP 1832 Pedagogy of Sports Skills</td>
<td>Skill Partner ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment sheet #4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tennis – Forehand Drive

Player: Hit ten (10) forehand drives, of fifteen (15) tossed from a class member, over the net into the opponent’s court on the forehand side. Second opportunity, Hit ten (10) forehand drives, of fifteen (15) hit off the racquet of a class member, over the net into the opponent’s court on the forehand side.

Partner assessor: Observe the person playing, use the 10 criteria listed below to assess performance, offer immediate verbal feedback related to performance, make notes on the assessment sheet, and record assessment after each fifteen (15) ball opportunity has been completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Key Elements” to identify when observing</th>
<th>Player 1</th>
<th>Player 2</th>
<th>Comments To Strengthen Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toss Hit with Racquet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toss Hit with Racquet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Stand 1’ behind the baseline, knees bent, feet shoulder width apart, standing on the balls of your feet, weight balanced |
| Grip the racquet correctly, holding it “up” in the correct position, supporting the shaft with the other hand |
| Turn to the forehand side with your shoulder facing the net, bring the racquet back to the ready position |
| Begin to shift weight toward the net, step directly toward the ball, point lead foot toward the net |
| Begin to execute swing by moving the racquet forward, head of the racquet remains above the butt of the racquet during the swing, begin to pivot on the plant foot |
| Maintain a stiff wrist throughout the swing |
| Position the racquet face slightly open |
| Contact the ball on the “Sweet Spot” of the racquet, just in front of the lead hip with the shaft of the racquet near parallel to the net |
| Accelerate the speed of the racquet through the ball as you make contact |
| Follow-through and return to the ready position as described above |
five parts that needs to be considered during its construction. First, there needs to be a specific description of the task, skill, strategy or activity to be performed. This includes a breakdown of the skill into sequential parts. Second, the criteria sheet looks for specific points to look for during the student’s performance of the skill. Third, a picture or sketch could be beneficial for the student to see. Fourth, the criteria sheet suggests samples of verbal feedback that can be given to the doer. It should be stressed to the students that this feedback needs to be specific to the skill being performed and focused on the instructional cues. If a students’ feedback is “good job” or “try again”, that will not help the doer as it gives no substantial feedback to focus on. Darst & Pangrazl (2002) have stated that feedback should be positive in nature and specific, for the purpose of informing the student what they did successfully, or what needs to be done successfully to execute the skill successfully. Fifth, a reminder of the observer’s role, again their role is to observe and give feedback to the doer as they perform the skill. Once the observer learns their role, this will no longer be necessary. Another positive aspect of having students use a criteria sheet is that it eliminates unnecessary communication between the doer and the observer and the observer and the teacher. For example, the doer may ask the observer, “What am I suppose to be doing?” The observer can look at the criteria sheet and tell the doer what is required of them. Also, there may be times that the observer may ask the same question to the teacher. The teacher will then direct the observer to look at the criteria sheet and review each element.

Some Things to Think About

The main characteristic of the reciprocal style is the social component of student interactions during the activity. One thought teachers need to think about when using this style of teaching is the students’ ability to give appropriate feedback to their classmate. Ward, Smith, Makascl and Crouch (1998) investigated 4th grade students that were paired together and instructed to give feedback while performing a right-handed lay-up. The researchers found that if the students were unskilled in playing basketball they were ineffective in giving appropriate feedback to their classmates.

Another thought that teachers should keep in mind is something Mosston calls “collision and collusion.” When pairing students together the teacher needs to know that students are working together to accomplish the performance objectives for the lesson. If students are in collision with each other, they are probably arguing, bickering, or in some cases could be fighting. If this is the case, there will not be much learning on the doers’ part. If students are colluding with each other, the opposite occurs. These students will be too friendly; will probably be very lackadaisical with each other, also resulting in little to no learning of the required skills. The teacher needs to be mindful that if either of these situations presents themselves during class, the students need to be assigned to work with a different classmate, giving them the opportunity to learn the required skills.

Conclusion

When examining Mosston’s teaching styles, each style is unique from the other styles. What makes the reciprocal style so unique is that students work in pairs, focusing on students’ social interactions. One student is the doer and the other student is the observer. When the doer is finished practicing the prescribed skills, he/she will trade places with the observer and now the observer will be the doer of the activities. Something else unique about this teaching style is the use of the criteria sheet. The criteria sheet serves as a guide for both the doer and the observer. Mosston calls this the weaning process. The student is being weaned from frequently relying on the teacher for many of the answers.

References

