



Applying the TARGET Pedagogic Principles in Physical Education to Enhance Students' Physical Literacy

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AIM

The aim of this article is to **propose TARGET as a pedagogical framework** to enhance students' **physical literacy in the PE curriculum**. Specifically, this article will attempt to justify why the TARGET pedagogical structures are, in the author's opinion, consistent with physical literacy. Further, it will make some suggestions as to **how the TARGET structures can be manipulated to enhance the components of physical literacy** – namely, the knowledge and understanding, perceived competence, confidence, and motivation to remain physically active for a lifetime.

MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

Motivational climate is defined as a situationally dependent, psychological (perceived) environment directing goals of action (Ames, 1992).

Mastery Climate

When the teacher places an emphasis on learning, self-referenced goals, improvement and effort, **a mastery climate is promoted**. When such a mastery climate is perceived by students, they are **more likely to adopt positive behaviors** such as trying hard, selecting challenging tasks, and persisting in the face of difficulty (Ames, 1992; Braithwaite, Spray, & Warburton, 2011).

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Ego-oriented Climate

In contrast, when the emphasis is placed on social comparison and outperforming others in PE, **an ego-oriented climate** is more likely to be perceived by the students. In this case (particularly when perceptions of ability are low), **students often adopt more negative behaviors and demonstrate anxiety, boredom and a lack of effort and engagement**, in an attempt to protect themselves from demonstrating low ability (Ames, 1992; Braithwaite et al., 2011)

Xiang, McBride and Solmon (2003) identified that PE **teachers often create a "blending" of mastery and ego-oriented climates** in their lessons. However, Nicholls (1989) argued that, **at any one moment in time, individuals (students) can only be mastery or ego involved**. It is unclear whether individuals can perceive the motivational climate to be task- and ego-centric at the same time, but it is difficult to imagine how such discrepant perceptions of the motivational climate can occur simultaneously (Duda & Balaguer, 2007).

MANIPULATING THE TARGET STRUCTURES TO BE MASTERY FOCUSED

Manipulating the TARGET structures – task, authority, recognition, grouping, evaluation and time – in PE to be mastery focused has been **related to positive motivational responses** such as higher levels of perceived competence, satisfaction and enjoyment; less boredom; a stronger preference for engaging in more challenging tasks; higher intrinsic motivation; and a stronger belief that success is the result of effort (Braithwaite et al., 2011; Digelidis, Papaioannou, Laparidis, & Christodoulidis, 2004; Morgan & Carpenter, 2002). **Such student responses are highly consistent with the dispositions that physical literacy aims to develop (Whitehead, 2013)**. The following sections will identify some specific pedagogical principles and strategies that can be employed for each of the TARGET structures in order to enhance students' physical literacy.

How the TARGET structure can be manipulated to enhance physical literacy:

Task

- Share the **intended learning outcomes** develop **knowledge and understanding** of physical activities and healthy lifestyles.
- Teach students how to **set goals** using the SMART acronym to promote personalised self-referenced mastery goals and **enhance motivation**.
- **Differentiate tasks** for different levels of ability and allow **student choice** for inclusion and optimal challenge, to **develop confidence** and **physical competence**.
- Include a **range and variety of tasks** within and between lessons to **enhance motivation** and develop a broad range of **physical competencies**. Include multidimensional lesson designs, where **several different tasks take place simultaneously**, to help **motivate** students and de-emphasize opportunities for ability comparisons.

Relationships and Recognition

- Encourage all students and attempt to **recognize them equally** for their individual learning, effort and progress to allow them equal opportunity for success and to develop their **confidence, competence and motivation**.
- Urge students to **track their own progress** instead of comparing their performance with others, to develop a growth mindset and enhance **self-confidence**, perceived **competence**, and self-determined **motivation**.
- Consider **students as individuals, with different learning needs**, and educate them to realize that they are all at different stages of personal development, thereby enhancing their **self-confidence** and perceived **competence**.
- Value all students equally and aspire to **create a caring and considerate atmosphere** that is sensitive to individual differences, needs and interests to boost **confidence and motivation**.
- Aim to develop **good teacher-student relationships** by getting to know and understand students as individuals, to help boost their **motivation** to participate.

Evaluation

- Base student evaluations and rewards on **improvement, progress toward individual or team goals, participation, and effort** to enable equal opportunity for success and to develop **physical competence and confidence**.
- Use **formative assessment strategies**, such as informing students of the criteria against which they are being evaluated, questioning, and including them in self-evaluation and reflection activities, in order to improve their **knowledge and understanding** of performance and healthy lifestyle behaviors. The Programmed Practice Sheet (Prusak, 2005) is an excellent example of an effective skill evaluation tool that fits especially well with a motivational climate and with promoting physical literacy.
- Identify where the students are in their **individual learning journey**, communicate with them about their **strengths and areas for development**, and agree on the next **steps for improvement**.

Authority

- Encourage students to participate in **decision-making** during lessons to develop their **confidence** in and **knowledge and understanding** of physical activities and healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- Provide students with **autonomy and choice in lessons** – for example, on the type and difficulty level of tasks and the time to spend on each activity – to enhance their **self-determined motivation** and **perceived competence**.
- **Create opportunities** for students to take on **leadership roles** – for example, captain, coach, referee or timekeeper – to develop their **confidence, knowledge and understanding**.
- Adopt **student-centered teaching styles**, such as reciprocal (peer teaching) and guided discovery along with other styles from the “production cluster” in Mosston and Ashworth’s (2002) spectrum of teaching styles to promote a mastery learning environment. See Morgan’s (2011) “Athletics Challenges” for examples of how this can be achieved in track and field lessons.

Grouping

- Use **varied grouping arrangements** by regrouping students regularly, both within and between lessons, to develop interpersonal and social skills for lifelong participation in group-based physical activities.
- Encourage **cooperative groups**, where students work together toward a common goal and help one another to improve and to develop **confidence** and **motivation**.
- **Implement the cooperative learning model** (Dyson & Casey, 2012) to develop students’ **confidence and motivation** to participate in PE by enhancing their feelings of relatedness.

Time

- Allow students **flexible learning time** on tasks to accommodate their individual differences and learning needs and to develop **competence, confidence and motivation**.
- Include **extension tasks for those students who finish tasks early**, and allow additional practice and learning time for those who need it to promote optimum challenge and to encourage students’ **motivation, confidence** and inclusion.
- Encourage students to be **physically active for as long as possible during lessons** while also allowing for learning opportunities and the development of **knowledge and understanding**.