Highly Applicable Management Methods regarding Physical Education in an University Environment

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Abstract

The management whereabouts of a teacher, in general, and that of an university professor more specifically, stand as an adaption tool for the ever-changing mentality and attitude towards work, authority and quality, which the liberal society based on freewill and competition is all about.

Considering all of this, the society is in constant need of highly entrepreneurial, initiative-driven, healthy, team-working individuals who are also aware of the fact which clearly nominates professional knowledge or know-how against any amount of experience that one or many senior workers may have at any given time, setting aside the massive technological progress of our recent days.

Many of these motivated young people will reach a leadership position at an age at which, ten years ago, would have been considered unimaginable; examples here already grow in numbers especially in the communication and IT fields. Physical education supports this complex growth of the young population and offers a remarkable opportunity for merging the professional evolution with the personal or private one.

Keywords: *educational management, management education, physical education, company culture, competiveness*

JEL classification: **M14, M30, M31.**

Introduction

The educational management's area of spread is not limited to operating the central and individual systems and subsystems of an institution; its implications also regard the process of training/education, in which every single professor or teacher becomes the manager of their assigned student group, with which they work together.

The management plan they propose is well adapted to an operational level, in which the professor interacts freely with their group; the effects are straightforward and manifest themselves in area such as way of thinking, emotional, operational and attitudinal. It's a kind of internal marketing, bein able to know your customers (Gilbreath, 2010). In the management perspective, relation improvement, work climate improvement, communication barriers removal, increasing group cohesion and work satisfaction, all achieved through planned activities, are key points.

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The management whereabouts of a teacher, in general, and that of an university professor more specifically, stand as an adaption tool for the ever-changing mentality and attitude towards work, authority and quality, which the liberal society based on freewill and competition is all about. Whether we agree to it or not, a new type of relationship takes the place of the traditional ways which we, as today's teachers, were used to and trained for.

Considering all this, society is in constant need of highly entrepreneurial, initiative-driven, healthy, team-working individuals who are also aware of the fact which clearly nominates professional knowledge or know-how against any amount of experience that one or many senior workers may have at any given time, setting aside the massive technological progress of our recent days. That's important to be able to assess the development of our students and the way that the university is able to reach its targets (Martell, Calderon, 2005). Many of these motivated young people will reach a leadership position at an age at which, ten years ago, would have been considered unimaginable; examples here already grow in numbers especially in the communication and IT fields.

1. Educational management and physical education in universities

The educational management, whose inherent methods and specifications I tried to apply, is a new science, which is still in the search of more efficient way of fusing management principles with the tutoring field, without damaging any of these two apparently distant areas of expertise. The educational management and physical education in universities have also an important component of corporate social responsibility as we work with the students and prepare them for the society (Gligor-Cimpoieru, 2012). Clear training objectives, appropriate learning scenarios, objective-based and useful end teaching strategies, the use of feedback, important for precise activity tuning (at any given moment of the teaching process) or ensuring the end of the activity corresponds with the actual use of a future job; these aspects are not new to the teaching world, being solely fresh, practical, realistic and modern tune-ups of some older theories.

The operational level educational management can be regarded as a simultaneous process to the teaching one, which has the same objectives but which orients the tutoring activity towards maximizing the effects ensuring a high competiveness at the same time. In the case of a university environment, competiveness translates into the quality of the tutoring act and success of students in their future lives on the open job market, as it happens for any other organization (Burdus, 2008) all of which will eventually boost that university's prestige and appeal to new or wannabe candidates.

The insertion of management in the physical education sector does not interfere with the general schematics of this segment of the system. The management ways aim for creating the right conditions of applying the principles, methods and teaching theories, maximizing and guiding the effects of all these aspects directly towards the desired careers of students. It's practically about

knowing your market, your customer (Raşcă, Deaconu, 2012). We must also consider other aspects of a competitive environment of work such as prolonged intellectual effort, low physical activity periods, constant quality and deadline driven stress; physical education can be a way of dealing with all of these harmful side-effects.

Using the researched management aspects and by applying them in my teaching activity I witnessed an increase not only in the quality of the lessons but also in the communication, leadership, teamwork and initiative departments of most students, all of which will prove useful in building a successful career.

The management plan described in this paper has already been applied and experimentally checked during classes, here in our university's economical world. The main aspects I focused on were based on improving training, communication, teamwork and also on using the competiveness and authority to motivate students to have an active way of thinking regarding their own education.

2. The motivation for effort

Training is a general management function which Romanian researchers in the field of educational management often forget or misinterpret. The work structure of physical education is much similar to the real economical life, (for which management has become a must-have) in contrast to the theoretical classes in which the feedback process is most of the times prolonged and even delayed. The promptness of a dual-way feedback during physical education classes makes clear the use of training as an important management function for our discipline but also for professional sport activities.

The main instrument on which training is relying on is motivation, and according to the general description of management the quality of this motivation depends heavily on all other functions: prevision, organization and coordination. But all of these should be approached in a strategic manner (Nastase, 2010). The motivation matter is extremely sensitive here in the upper learning institutions, where sometimes, physical education is sometimes an optional class and grades are quite limited: Pass and Rejected. A lack of ways of setting apart students, and in some cases even not attributing credit points to this class are bound to lodge the physical education as an university class to its same status without any opportunity of significant growth in the future.

There was a time when the common belief was people only needed clear orders in order to do their jobs. Newer generations are more reluctant to constraint, they want to know what is the purpose of these orders and what part does it play in the general tableau of their career training. It's about creating an attractive vision, but also knowing the characteristics of transaction relationships that are often brought into discussion or behavior (Li, Nicholls, 2000). The mission of a physical education professor in revealing the long-term benefit is made harder by a major lack of immediate gain – a grade or credit points. For some, obtaining a medical

permission of skipping classes seems a good way to save some time, which in a major city's context seems an immediate advantage.

A professor's art and skill of motivating his/hers students can be a factor for increased, aware and proper class attendance. The satisfaction of physical exertion can gradually become a motivation itself. This objective is easier to fulfill in case of male students, as female students seem more reluctant to put themselves in situations that involve a high degree of effort or cooperation and direct contact with an opponent.

Not all students have to be convinced of the necessity and usefulness of physical exertion, some have already gained a proper education that makes our job, regarding this aspect, much easier. Basically, the higher the motivation in a student, the less time we will need to make sure he/she practices. Another very important thing is that different individuals may have different motivation drives, so we shouldn't assume things that motivate us as specialists also raise interest in students and pupils of all sorts.

By applying Maslow's needs hierarchy, I consider higher needs like social interaction, group belonging, self-esteem, recognition and self-fulfillment to be the purpose of higher-level education. The need to belong is mostly satisfied during group activity, in which an individual has the possibility of interacting with others, has a friendly supervising unit who's always open for help or suggestion, has the chance of working as a team and also develop fresh social connections. Team spirit and collaboration skills can be built upon the need of social interaction, friendship or company.

The self-esteem need, which corresponds to feelings like competence, independence, strength and confidence is useful to support our student's efforts, especially because most people wish a proper degree of recognition among their peers, partners, friends and teachers. This recognition boosts self-confidence and self-esteem. According to a study made here in ASE on a pool of 120 female students, self-image and self-confidence is marked with a worrying 63% of negative tendency. The guidelines promoted by the society are very restrictive for some young women, and this comparison puts them in a negative situation that often has repercussions over their self-esteem and self-confidence. These women's wish to improve their physical status scores a point in our favor as unit of education, point which must yield high attendance at our classes as well as a motivation for independent workout. Once known, their needs and wishes will bring us closer to gaining a higher percent of interest for our activity, with the progress offering the much desired satisfaction and recognition.

Self-fulfillment or the need for self-exceeding performances brings into light a desire to develop the maximum potential a person has to give, better expressing skill, talent and emotions in a way that brings full inner comfort. Self-fulfillment requirements involve activities with a great potential for creativity and progress which favor self-development. This need is probably the hardest to fulfill for physical education students who have other professional goals. Regarding all of these, personal goals like enhancing physical appearance, strengthening up health

or even climb Mount Everest represent the same amount of reasons for taking part in physical education classes. The most difficult part is uncovering these personal needs; only through a good and solid self-knowledge students will be able to share their goals. Communication in a climate of mutual respect and trust is essential to motivating a person in obeying an educational plan. By giving them the possibility to satisfy their own needs, our students will find internal reasons to sustain the effort of self-exceeding.

Closest to this level of achievements are students and pupils who have born traits abilities and knowledge well above the average. They have the option of evolving and giving 110% of their capacity during various school competitions and contests. They are often lead and guided by experts working as teachers and professors, whose main job is to motivate these few exceptional youngsters to contribute to glory and reputation. Most schools today in Romania are still reluctant of promoting on large scale these kind of values and competitions. On the other hand, time is a valuable resource, therefore an youngster must be motivated to invest in physically demanding activity, and this motivation must counteract the other ways of spending his/her free time, which can be much easy to enterprise.

As individual priorities change, it is possible that people reasons change as well. Health deterioration, accidents, marriage, pregnancy and some other problems of this sort can alter the need hierarchy which sets in motion a certain type of behavior pattern. In the university segment, a professor is often confronted with these kind of situations at which he can adjust by approaching a more flexible schedule, by adapting teaching programs to concrete needs of different groups of students and, in general through a balance of job requirement and beneficiary needs.

Another theory that involves motivation is that of E. Locke, called "the objective theory". Locke proved by using an experiment behavior and performance are related to the objectives that individual is setting in his mind. People who set a more difficult set of objectives to fulfill have a much higher performance level than those who settle themselves with lesser objectives. Using this as a starting point, one good technique is to ask students to put together a personal chart in which to write down their exam results and then to set the performance level they want to achieve. Between these stages, a ranking list is to be done in order for every student to see his/hers progress at any given moment and to also maintain a constant correlation between goals and real possibilities. Setting objectives made properly ensures their viability, and according to Locke's principles, only clear, realistic and accepted objectives motivated a high level of performance.

General management theory underlines or highlights a whole range of advices concerning motivation, some of which can be converted into useful tips for our department as well:

- Clearly state the objectives you follow through your physical education lessons, make tasks mobilizing, but easy to fulfill for all students. If any significant level difference is acknowledged, set differentiated tasks accordingly.

- Give every student feedback regarding his performance during classes. At least once a month, if not every class, mention the aspects on which students must focus on more, what to give up and of course, what is done so good that it deserves your appreciation.
- All decisions regarding students, such as events and sudden changes that can occur and may affect classes, must be made public as quickly as possible. Also, when possible get in contact with students before taking a decision that affects them directly, in order to prevent any complaint.
- Make sure students are aware of the fact everyone is responsible for their own performance, but also for their contribution in a team.
- Share responsibility to those who can see them fulfilled and also leave some room too for any personal suggestion or initiatives.
- Make sure you give credit to every single student for their performances, either privately or publicly. For those who have exceptional results and leadership ability, appointing them as team leaders or some other high position can act as a motivator.
- An encouragement, a smile, a sincere "well done", giving credit or appointing higher responsibility positions are tools to boost confidence and motivation, all being available to a professor.
- Competition is a form of activity inherent to physical education, which mobilizes awareness and energy all for winning, which can also unlock a big desire for making a better physical effort for longer.
- Setting a high standard triggers a high performance output, while modest goals will only get modest results and performance.

In order to be successful in the attempt of motivating students it is absolutely necessary to uncover individual needs and to direct them into the right direction – a direction in which they feel supported and encouraged to grow in a way they consider valuable. To this purpose, it is important to show real interest for our students activity and difficulties to talk to them and to start building a relationship, relationship in which a professor has the duty to lay down the first bricks. Maybe it would be useful to remember the time when we were students and would go anxiously to some classes where the professors were very involved into their job but also try to avoid some other classes where, although the subject was treated by the book, the roughness of the teacher would make us reconsider a little the thought of attending classes. Now that we have the same jobs as them, it would be of real help to remember these aspects and make sure we apply to our work.

A professor, by using his own personal example, determines the nature of the relationship between him/her and his group of students who will react according to their supervisor's traits. Most youngsters and teenagers look for a model to follow and react positively when they meet him/her. If you , as a group leader do something and you ask your students to do something else , they are prone either to reject the instructions or be unsatisfied. They most likely will not express their feelings through words, but you will notice it in their behavior and quality of practice. If, for example a professor tells a group of female students to

begin a fitness program and then he/she sits down and starts reading a newspaper or magazine, soon after most of the students will take the example and do the same thing as the professor. There is a general opinion which claims members of a group tend to copy, even unconsciously, their leader's attitude and behavior, all starting from the belief a leader knows best what needs to be done, therefore everyone must follow. One possible explanation would be 87% of the information are captured by eyesight, and when words do not match actions, people will only believe concrete actions and not words.

The principle is simple: you, as a professor, must behave the way you want people in your group to. Whether you enjoy it or not, you're an example for your students, the important thing here being keeping your behavior and way of action as positive as possible.

A professor must show enthusiasm, initiative, engagement energy, trust, fairness, care, competence and fair-play, traits which he/she expect fulfilled from their students as well. Francis Bacon said back in the 16th century: "A person who gives good advice and is a good example builds with both hands, on the other hand a person who gives good advice but is a bad example builds with one hand and with the other ruins everything he/she just built".

We already know that there is a close relation between motivation, communication and authority delegation. If the team or the people we work with are motivated, the process of communication and delegation will be highly lessened, students will also be more willing to listen and do what is asked of them. The flipside is also true: efficient communication and delegation are two management methods of great help in motivating people.

3. Efficient communication

To the learning process, communication is the key-tool for influencing individuals and groups, in order to achieve the objectives which help guide the teaching activity.

Communication between a professor and students helps translate the scientific content of the educational plan, as well as establishing power, subordination, coalition, social, emotional or collaboration relations, all needed to reach common ground and goals.

From a student's point of view, the possibility to communicate creates self-identity highlighting opportunities, competence recognition possibilities, a way of expressing feelings and relationship building, group activity and authority manifestation. Through all these, students answer their professor's intended influence, giving the necessary feedback of a properly built communication process. By getting most of this type of answer, a professor will choose the most appropriate ways and methods to fulfill his/hers objectives.

Educational communication is a two-way process which needs constant adjustments between the two sides – the professor and the student/pupil. This two-way trait is the main aspect in formal communication, being opposed to one-way

communication which is the main aspect of informal communication. S. Cristea, (1998) claims a professor must obey the following series of objectives if he/she wants to better this correlation:

- design an educational message based on:
  - The psychological and social fields that surround this activity;
  - The educational ambience – result of both inner and outer educational actions;
  - The nature of their assigned student groups;
- focus every single educational intended message on every single student's social, emotional and psychological particularities;
- ensure common ground with the student through object-subject correlation in a simultaneous process of intellectual, emotional and motivational communication;
- perfect in a continuous way the teaching action by fully exploiting the feedback value.

The communication relationship, established during the learning process is a complex educational intervention which, through the means of specialized teaching language, determines student personality structure modifications. These modifications can be of different size and are of cognitive, emotional and behavioral nature.

The mechanism of communication, just like the teaching process codes and ways of communication have been thoroughly discussed in the introductive chapter of this paper. At the same time, we have to encourage both men and women to take the leadership role (Radu, Năstase, 2011). Regarding that, I will continue by developing most practice-valid measures oriented towards teaching communication efficiency enhancement.

Among the educational subjects/disciplines, physical education is best defined by action that is why the oral message has to be precise and condensed. This shortness in speech does not suppress expressivity, metaphorical and analogy use. These last ones have the purpose of creating a clearer image in those who listen to you and also, properly used that they can shorten additional explanation and save time. The exactness of this information alone cannot by itself ensure its future use, also the way in which it is transmitted to the student has a contribution – the student's cognitive, sensorial and sporting movement experience must resonate and create new guidelines in his/her mind. An athletics teacher colleague of mine, discipline in which technique has a crucial role in obtaining performance, considered bad information relaying is done so by the coach's own fault, who cannot find the right way of triggering the right response in an athlete.

Like I mentioned before, it is advisable the message gets out clearly and positively even when we try to make some adjustments. I have heard so many times questions like: "Why are you doing that?","Didn't I tell you to bend the knees?", "Stop spreading your elbows away from each other" or "What did I tell you to do ?". Usually, one cannot find an answer to these questions, setting in motion a defensive reaction from the student/athlete, a reaction that is not

necessarily beneficial for communication. It is good the message contains information on what the student should do and what are the advantages of a correct action. Obviously, the amount of information will be much larger for beginners. It is also vital that you give everyone the right orders and time they need to advance. Designing questions will leave open the possibility of much complex answers than "Yes" or "No".

4. Factors that affect the communication process in the physical education

In every communication endeavor, the receiver has to be motivated to listen and to accept the message. If we associate the workouts we want done with the physical advantages students gain by doing them , there is a good chance of increasing our guideline-following rate. We will therefore take advantage of the natural inner inquiry of students: "How does this help me?".

Communication rhythm, fluency and effects. Most people talk at a rate of 120 words per minute. The average listening capacity is 480 words per minute, four times greater. That's why students lose the ability to focus at some point during their professor's speech. It is recommended speech comes out fluent, with a higher than 120 words/min rate and also having gestures, posture and non-verbal elements attached, in order to give more potency to words. Meaning is given mostly by the tone of your voice and body language than just words. These non-verbal aspects are processed four times faster by comparison to the verbal methods-therefore, non-verbal methods is the right way to give useful information fast.

It has been proven by using the experiment method that in an oral communication, the actual information causes only 25% of the final effect, while non-verbal elements (face expression, look, gestures, body language) and some other non-verbal skills like tone, voice volume and accent have a 3-to-1 increased effect on the receiver. All this data prove how important is communication and its aspects for a professor's career. He has to look permanently and to understand the characteristics of the stakeholders for getting the intended performance (Pop, Henţeş, 2006).

The chosen communication style will determine how pleasant will the work climate will be. A open, relaxed working environment expresses trust, encouragement for students and increases the pleasure of exercising. A rigid behavior that is always based on authority or a suspicious and criticizing attitude will more likely bring a grey environment and a defensive posture from the students. Experts say a positive emotion-charged environment gives way to retaining information better and faster while a negatively-charged working space or zone is prone to trigger information lacks and a resistance to retain useful lessons. Students have also got their share of effect on communication, being able to make things easier or harder by taking a positive or negative attitude.

In our quest of talking as smoothly as possible, it is possible to develop some repetitions or stereotypes. We generally use them as time-filling in which we

build our next message, but when they become automatic, things can get blurry and upsetting. Generalizations such as : " Oh , I know you guys" are also harmful. This stereotype comes from the tendency of judging people based on their group of belonging. This phenomenon is useful in the learning process because it integrates information into a much wider system based on our experience, but in communication, just like in the instructive-educational process, is still far of increasing fluency and efficiency. Repetitions, stereotypes and clichés are counter-productive in the process of communication and can be rightfully considered as communication barriers.

Communication barriers can be found in every communication component as well as in the process itself. Torrington and Hall (1991) quoted by Painisoara identify five types of barriers: in letting out the message, in its understanding and receiving, in its acceptance and action barriers.

Barriers regarding letting out the message account for the existence of some inappropriate information, rush-judging people as well as unplanned elements in the original message.

Barriers regarding the way message is received are mostly caused by environment, but also by the receiver. Communication takes place in a certain physical environment whose stimuli can interfere with the message, altering the efficiency of communication. In the receiver's case, problems can be based on values, beliefs, fears, attitudes, opinions, expectations, or lack of paying attention to lessons.

Understanding barriers can be found either at the professor (communication skills, semantics, communication length and channel of transmission) or at the receiver (focusing, listening abilities, meaning of the message, willingness to listen to new ideas).

Accepting barriers act on both communication partners through their personal traits but also through differences of status and previous experience between speakers or through so-called "emotional clashes".

Barriers caused by action can occur either at the spokesperson (memory and degree of acceptance) or at the receiver (memory, attention, level of acceptance, willingness to change attitude, behavior or personal characteristics).

Lack of confidence can also be a communication barrier. When students trust the professor's level of competence, the contents of the messages better and easier received and they also feel more open to any class-related suggestion. Identifying communication barriers and also the attempt to reduce their effects becomes a communication enhancement tool.

Communication involves information exchange being different from plain briefing, and the role of feedback tuning is vital. In this partnership, appreciation must be mutual, even if the professor's status is obviously higher. We can express our consideration towards our students and athletes by giving them support and paying attention to them, by trying to avoid putting them in an inferiority-like situation, by calling them on their surnames and also by paying attention to the

feedback they give. Most people receive in a positive way commitment manifested towards them in all contexts not only in our discipline's case.

Conclusions

Technical language raises a series of problems and needs adaptation according to students needs. It comes as a surprise when, after 12 years of physical education, a significant number of students cannot tell two simple but different maneuvers apart from each other – jumped-pace and high-pace. I plead for the use of precise technical terms but also for a moderate and step-by-step introduction in the student vocabulary. In the situations where students lead the exercises a good professor must suggest them to mention the starting position and also the technical names of the moves which are about to be executed.

I don't agree to a theory that states explanation occurs after the demonstration and both courses of action cannot be simultaneous. Examples where gymnastics instructors and other derived exercise styles (tae-bo, aerobics and so on) talk almost relentlessly making suggestions, offering explanation, underlining the rhythm, show the advantages of a simultaneous communication-demonstration relation. When possible, I, personally attach to an exercise demo some explanation because I consider approaching multiple channels of relation building increases the effectiveness. Another argument is the proven fact that only 50% of the verbal message is perceived from first hearing. On the other hand, use of a complex range of communication ways (verbal, non-verbal and so on) brings an appeal bonus to the lesson, maintaining students interest.

Active listening is an important premise that ensures an authentic communication. To listen means being patient to hear absolutely everything the other has to say without any interruptions or rushing the end. It is very likely to catch the idea half-way from its beginning and try to shave off some time by trying to shorten the phrase or finish it yourself. A student faced with this situation will feel frustrated and will think twice whether he should respond, answer or remain silent. If you ask clarifying questions or make a short conclusion in order to ensure you heard correctly you will prove that you paid attention in class and also a real concern for your students and their issues. Such attitude helps create a favorable work-climate that is open for any communication and which also helps gaining students trust.

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