

The Difference in Leadership Behaviors When Teaching and Coaching

What Was the Question?

Physical educators are often required to fulfill the role of both physical education teacher (PET) and coach. Some have argued that teaching and coaching are indistinguishable, so Kwan, Pyun, and Kim (2010) examined whether PETs exhibit different leadership behaviors when they teach a physical education class than when they coach.

What Was Done?

This study included 80 physical education students and 79 student-athletes at two junior colleges in Singapore who had been taught or coached by one male or one of two female PETs who also coached in the school. The participants' perceptions of their PET's or coach's leadership behaviors were measured using the athletes' perception version of the Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). After a regular training session or physical education lesson, the student-athletes and students completed a 40-item questionnaire that measured five dimensions of leadership behaviors of their PET or coach: (1) *training and instruction*—aimed at improving student-athlete performance by facilitating training; (2) *democratic behavior*—allowing student-athletes to participate in decisions about group goals, practice methods, game tactics, and strategies; (3) *autocratic behavior*—using independent decision making and stressing his or her authority when working with student-athletes; (4) *social support*—concerning the welfare of student-athletes and building warm interpersonal relationship with them, regardless of their performance; and (5) *positive*

feedback—consistently praising or rewarding student-athletes for good performance. The PETs and coaches were not present during data collection. Due to low internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .57), the autocratic behavior dimension was not included in further analyses or discussion.

What Was Found?

Best practices encourage PETs and coaches to engage students and student-athletes by using all five dimensions of leadership behaviors. It is interesting that this study revealed statistically significant differences between PET and coach leadership behaviors. First, student-athletes perceived that their coach provided training and instruction more often than the PET. Further, physical education students perceived that their PET demonstrated a significantly different type of decision making when in the role of coach than when in the role of physical educator; specifically, the PET used a more democratic decision-making style when teaching physical education classes and a more autocratic decision-making style when coaching. Second, student-athletes perceived that their coach provided more positive, specific feedback than physical education students perceived getting from their PET. Third, there were no significant differences between the physical education students' and the student-athletes' perceptions on the social-support dimension.

What Does the Study Mean?

Physical educators have a unique position in that they are often required to carry out two roles. The results of this study indicate that to improve the quality of instruc-

tion, PETs may need to provide more training and instruction in their physical education classes. In addition, providing more positive, specific feedback to physical education students when in the role of PET may improve the students' perception of teachers' leadership behaviors. This is important due to the valuable contribution made by effective leadership in many instructional situations. Regardless of which role the physical educator is playing, implementing each of the five dimensions of leadership behaviors with students and the student-athletes appears to maximize a positive learning environment. Despite the fact that the roles of a teacher and a coach are different, both are equally important in the development of students and student-athletes.

Reference

- Chelladurai, P., & Saleh, S. (1980). Dimension of leader behavior in sports: Development of a leadership scale. *Journal of Sport Psychology, 2*, 34-35.
- Kwon, H. H., Pyun, D., & Kim, M. (2010). Perceived leadership behavior of physical education teacher-coaches: When they teach vs. when they coach. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 29*, 131-145.

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Submissions Welcome!

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