TEACHERS' INTERPERSONAL STYLE AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENT MOTIVATION

Autonomy support, structure and interpersonal involvement are independent but complementary dimensions of a teacher's interpersonal style. Student motivation thrives under conditions in which teachers find ways to provide optimal structure and high autonomy support (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Structure facilitates students' intentions to act, while autonomy support allows those formulated intentions to be self-determined and aligned with their inner resources (Reeve, Deci &Ryan, 2004). Skinner and Edge (2002) advance the idea that a high level of interpersonal involvement is needed to provide optimal structure and to support students' autonomy.

Tessier, D., Sarrazin, P., & Ntoumanis, N. (2010) discovered that students were more engaged (physically, cognitively and affectively) when being taught by teachers that organized and communicated the content of their lessons to facilitate student engagement and were more involved with their students at an interpersonal level.

1. **Develop learning tasks that are more adapted to the diversity of the students' physical skills, gave feedback more frequently, praised and encouraged more individual effort and progress.**
- For example in badminton, to better adapt the learning tasks to the diversity of students' physical skills, develop for the less-skilled students a game in which they could score more easily, e.g. increasing the size and accessibility of scoring areas. For the more skilled students, make it more difficult by developing a game where they can only score in specific areas on the court or diminish scoring areas.

2. **Listen to students more and offer more empathic statements, to reduce apprehensions related to engaging in practicing new motor skills.**
- Try to give more encouragements such as: ''now you're getting the hang of it, let's go''. To better affiliate with the students, use more empathic statements such as ''I can see that you are starting to get tired, you can have a break if you want''.

3. **Offer greater support for students' autonomy by suggesting different possibilities and enhancing initiative taking.**
- For example in table tennis, organize a ''Davis cup'' type tournament (i.e., singles and doubles matches) in which students can choose the teammate with whom they would want to play.
- For example in basket-ball, offer a student who performed poorly two possibilities to shoot (i.e., aim at the black rectangle at the back of the ring or moving to one side and then shoot). Additionally, offer the students a chance to decide what is best for themselves by saying ''maybe you could try 10 times each position and then choose the best''.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Autonomy support refers to behaviors by a person in position of authority that show respect, allow freedom of expression and action, and encourage subordinates to attend to, accept, and value their inner states, preferences, and desires (Deci & Ryan, 1987).

Structure describes the extent to which a social context is structured, predictable, contingent, and consistent (Skinner & Edge, 2002). More specifically, when a teacher provides challenging tasks, negotiates clear and short-term goals, delivers contingent feedback related to students' endeavors, and encourages their effort and progress, he/she tends to nurture the students' need for competence and their self-determined motivation. The opposite of structure is chaos.

Interpersonal involvement refers to individuals' opportunities to feel related and belonging when they interact within a social environment that offers affection, warmth, care, and nurturance (Skinner & Edge, 2002). The opposite of interpersonal involvement is hostility.

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